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Vulnerability and nationalism: The support for the war against Iraq in five established states

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Per Becker

The Graduate School of Social and Political Research
University of Edinburgh, Scotland, the UK

Edinburgh, 2003

Supervisor: James Kennedy

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I declare that this dissertation is written in my own words representing my own work.

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Per Becker

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Abstract:

This dissertation attempts to answer the question of why the 2003 armed conflict against Iraq received such varied support within the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Spain. This is achieved by introducing a model in which the support for armed conflict is connected to elite persuasion operating in particular contexts. This model is tested in a comparative study, using international opinion polls, official policy statements, newspapers and information on past terrorist attacks. It would be reckless to claim to have a clear and simple answer to the research question after such a limited study, but the results do supply an interesting framework for further research. The main function of nationalism is shaping and maintaining national identity so as to promote popular loyalty to the state. In order to mobilise substantial support for the policies regarding an armed conflict the justifications for it must be endorsed in the national identity of that particular state. If not, either the justifications or national identity has to be modified. It is therefore not only the initial definition of the particular national identity that is important, but also how this could be amended. The dominant elite appears to be essential to this process, as does the public experience of vulnerability. A recent attack by international terrorism with severe consequences, which a large part of the targeted population can relate to, appears to supply an opportunity for moulding national identity at that time, as well as in the near future. It thus appears that the war against Iraq received such varied support within the five chosen states at least in part because the initial definitions of their national identities endorsed the justifications for the war to different degrees, the dominant elites promoted different opinions and the people experienced different degrees of vulnerability.

Summary

This dissertation attempts to answer the question of why the 2003 *armed conflict* against Iraq received such varied support within the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Spain. This is achieved by introducing a model in which the support for *armed conflict* is connected to elite persuasion operating in particular contexts. This model is tested in a comparative study, using international opinion polls, official policy statements, newspapers and information on past terrorist attacks. It would be reckless to claim to have a clear and simple answer to the research question after such a limited study, but the results do supply an interesting framework for further research.

The main function of *nationalism* is shaping and maintaining *national identity* so as to promote popular loyalty to the *state*. In order to mobilise substantial support for the policies regarding an *armed conflict* the justifications for it must be endorsed in the *national identity* of that particular *state*. If not, either the justifications or *national identity* has to be modified. It is therefore not only the initial definition of the particular *national identity* that is important, but also how this could be amended. The dominant elite appears to be essential to this process, as does the public experience of *vulnerability*. A recent attack by international terrorism with severe consequences, which a large part of the targeted population can relate to, appears to supply an opportunity for moulding *national identity* at that time, as well as in the near future.

It thus appears that the *war* against Iraq received such varied support within the five chosen *states* at least in part because the initial definitions of their *national identities* endorsed the justifications for the *war* to different degrees, the dominant elites promoted different opinions and the people experienced different degrees of *vulnerability*.

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Contents

1. Introduction

This report is written as the final dissertation for a *Master of Science by Research in Politics* on the *Graduate School of Social and Political Studies* at the *University of Edinburgh*.

Background

On the afternoon, the 11th of September 2001, I was attending a lecture at Malmö University College about the Cold War and its legacy in contemporary international politics. After the mid-session break, the historian giving the lecture entered the auditorium and told us, with a pale face and a trembling voice, that an aeroplane had crashed into the World Trade Center in New York. Nobody knew then what had happened, but I managed to get home fast enough to my television set to see the first tower crashing down over the lower part of Manhattan…

After the initial shock passed and communication lines started to function again, condemnations of the attacks were expressed from practically all corners of the world and we all wondered about what was to come. Regardless of the relative consensus in the condemnations, the peoples of the world seemed to have different opinions on how to deal with the problem that had so suddenly been brought to the world's attention: the problem of international terrorism. This division was not clear as long as the hunt for Osama bin Laden, the al-Qaeda network and other terrorists was carried out as a police operation. But this changed when the threats to invade Afghanistan, if the terrorists there were not extradited, became reality[1] and a multinational coalition[2] engaged in combat in a country ravaged by *armed*

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[1] Great majorities of people (more than 60% of respondents) in some states tended to agree with the military action, such as U.S.A, the U.K, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Israel, Albania, Czech Republic, Kosovo, Poland (Gallup International, 2002) and Canada (Parkin, 2002), while similar majorities tended to disagree in others, e.g. Greece, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Malaysia, Pakistan (Gallup International, 2002), Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco and Saudi Arabia (*Polls apart*, 2002).

[2] The coalition, active in 2001, included troops from U.S.A, the U.K, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan, Russia, Australia, Jordan, the Netherlands, Poland and Turkey (*Armed Conflicts 1946-2001*, 2003).

Introduction

conflict for over twenty years. However, the main western powers[3] were all united and seemed to have vast domestic support for their policies as they engaged in Afghanistan.

After quickly toppling the Taliban, the eyes of the world's only superpower and victim of the 9/11-attacks were turned against others. Its president threatened to expand the "*war* against terrorism" to include "rogue states"[4], especially North Korea, Iran and Iraq, which allegedly had connections to international terrorism (*State of the Union Address*, 2002). This intended scale up further divided the world and sowed a growing split even among the main western powers[3]. The rhetoric in the U.S and its closest allies against these "rogue states" toughened during 2002, especially after the 12th of October when explosions ripped through two crowded nightclubs on Bali killing 202 people, mainly westerners[5], and injuring more than 300 (*Bali Bombings: Horror in Paradise*, 2003). Terrorists had struck again.

The focus of concern connecting international terrorists and "rogue states" centred on Iraq, a *state* which had been brought to the attention of the U.S and its closest allies with its invasion of Kuwait more than a decade ago. Its leadership had survived a Gulf War, western encouraged- but not supported insurrections and more than a decade of economic sanctions it and was now faced with an ultimatum: disarm immediately or face the most advanced invasion force in history.

Most people in the western world know what happened then, given that our television sets were filled by live news coverage 24 hours a day from journalists in Baghdad or embedded in the invasion forces. The total death and destruction from that invasion is not yet known as the occupation of Iraq is still in its early phases.

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[3] The main western powers I refer to are the western members of G8; U.S.A, the U.K, France, Germany, Italy and Canada.

[4] The original idea of "rogue states", that they would threaten world security in the near future with long-range missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, became more prominent in American foreign policy after 1993 and reached a peak in February 1997 (Eland with Lee, 2001: 3). This "Rogue State Doctrine" in American foreign policy has in short served as a justification for the continuing widespread presence of American forces after the end of the Cold War (ibid: 2-3).

[5] 13 Indonesians, 2 Japanese, 2 South Koreans, 1 Ecuadorian, 1 Singaporean, 1 South African and 1 Taiwanese was also reported dead (*Bali death toll: Breakdown by country*, 2002).

2

What we do know though, is that *armed conflicts* ended around 2.3 million lives around the globe between the multinational interventions in the first Gulf War and in Afghanistan, and had an impact on an average of 31 million people annually during the same period (*World Disaster Report*, 2001). Statistics also show an increase in the number of ongoing *armed conflicts* in the world since the end of the former millennium (Schreiber, 2002). A trend that must be taken seriously even if there are less ongoing *armed conflicts* in the world since the mid-90s than at any time in the last 30 years (Soysa and Gleditsch, 2002).

A lot of research has been done in order to explain and understand *armed conflicts,* and many researchers have been focused on identifying causal structures, such as international alliances (Levy, 1981), balance of power (Singer et al., 1972), arms races (Wallace, 1982), recurrent crisis (Leng, 1999), territorial contiguity (Vasquez, 1999: xxiv-xxv), weakness of *states* (Holsti, 1996) etc. Regardless of their great importance, these structural accounts fail to explain through what processes these causal structures influence the actions of individuals (Little, 1991: 112), which is as important as structures in any attempt to explain and understand *armed conflict*[6]. It is very important to try to grasp the underlying causes of *armed conflicts* though*,* as well as the reasons and motives for the policies and rhetoric of the leaders of warring *governments* or *opposition organisations*, but as a student of *nationalism* I perceive it as even more interesting to focus on why aggressive ideas gain support within *states*, since that is critical for explaining and understanding *armed conflict* in the modern world.

Research problem

In order to study why ideas to engage in *armed conflict* gain support within *states* I turn to the study of *nationalism*. Unlike most other research areas where

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[6] I do not advocate the view that we can make the explanation "complete" by supplying micro-foundations to the macro-phenomena (Taylor, 1988: 63-64), but consider instead structure and agency to be intrinsically linked since human actions are influenced by social structures which themselves are produced by human activity (Keat and Urry, 1975: 137-138 and Giddens, 1984).

Introduction

the core concepts generally are strictly defined, the concept of *nationalism* remains elusive. This elusiveness may be the greatest weakness of the discipline, but on the other hand, in a constantly changing world it may be its greatest strength. However, *nationalism* is an ideology in which people view themselves as distinct in their culture, history, institutions <u>or</u> principles and should therefore rule themselves in a political system that expresses and protects those distinctive characteristics (Snyder, 2000: 23). Looking at the world today, no matter if people are struggling to set up their own *state*, to change their *state* to fit them better or against/in other *states* to protect the interests of their *state*, the idea of the *state* itself is hardly ever questioned. The ideology of *nationalism* is in other words the patterns of belief and practice, which reproduce the world as a world of *states*[7] in which we live as citizens (Billig, 1995: 15). So what role does *nationalism* play in the support for *armed conflict*?

The connection between *armed conflict* and *nationalism* has been the focus of western research of the "periphery" since the end of the Cold War, when the old focus on "communist-led insurgencies" gave way to the "discovery" of "ethnic wars" (Holsti, 1999: 291-292). These violent examples of *nationalism* have during the years of intense mass-media cover embedded a general view in the West that *nationalism* is something evil, isolated and only around in other parts of the world[8]. Regardless of how wrong I perceive this view to be, it has not only reshaped everyday news cover and discussions, but also the widely used and criticised[9] categorisation of "civic" and "ethnic" *nationalism*[10] into a value-laden dichotomy.

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[7] Billig uses the term *nation-state* which is contested by Charles Tilly who instead advocates the use of the term *national-state*, since only a very few *states* have ever qualified as *nation-states* when it comes to shared "linguistic, religious, and symbolic identity" (Tilly, 1995: 3).

[8] An interesting view is inspired by Foucault and regards "the production of discourses by Western countries about the Third World as a means of effecting domination over it" (Escobar, 1984: 377).

[9] Civic identities are as much cultural artefacts as ethnic identities (Kymlicka, 1995 and Yack, 1996) and the only distinction is what the cultural inheritance centres on; political symbols or language and ethnic origins (Yack, 1996). The dichotomy is also questioned when it comes to the idea of individual consent to become a member of the "civic" nation, since the members are being born into "civic" nations as well (ibid.).

[10] In the "civic" version, the *state* comes before the *nation* and defines its culture, while the *nation* comes before the *state*, which is defined by the national culture, in the "ethnic" version (Brubaker, 1996). The "civic" *nation* is thus based on rational choice and defined by individuals who voluntarily choose to become members or

4

"Ethnic" *nationalism* is portrayed in this dichotomy as a foreign, irrational, violent force which has awakened again after a long slumber (e.g. Ignatieff, 1993: 2-6 and Tehranian in Billig, 1995: 47), while "civic" *nationalism* is portrayed as a positive rational force which emerged in the West and is not connected to violence and *armed conflict* (e.g. Ignatieff, 1993: 9). Researchers, who normally adhere to this dichotomy, tend to forget the "civic" side altogether and refer to "ethnic" *nationalism* as *nationalism* in general (Billig, 1995: 47-48).

What researchers who focus on these "ethnic" qualities of *nationalism* and *armed conflicts* tend to forget though is, first of all, that much of ethnicity is not inherently conflictual at all, even if the focus on the carnage of a few major ethnic conflicts has made it appear that way (Young, 2001: 165). Secondly, they often characterise "ethnic *wars*" as reflecting primordial "ethnic hatreds", which do not make much sense since most of the massive killings in the last century have been launched by *states* against their own citizens[11] (Holsti, 1999: 302). Massive killings which themselves are a modern phenomenon (Mann, 2001). Even if there are ethnic conflicts that have escalated into *war*, e.g. Bosnia, Rwanda, placing the "ethnic tag" on an *armed conflict* hides more fundamental problems of *states* and governance (Holsti, 1999: 295). Finally, these killings, ethnic or not, are nothing new just because the mass-media started to pay attention to them quite recently, they both preceded the Cold War as well as occurred during it (ibid: 294-295).

On the other hand, the idea of "civic" *nationalism* as a positive and solely benign force may be explained by the geographical locations of *armed conflicts*[12]. The absolute majority of *armed conflicts* since the Cold War can be found outside the western world, which is traditionally seen as the home of "civic" *nationalism*. When analysing this more closely for the years between 1989-2001, it turns out

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not, in contrast to the "ethnic" *nation* which the members are born into and thus based on emotional ties (Yack, 1996).

[11] With only two clear examples of "ethnic *wars*", Bosnia and Rwanda, among the politicides between 1945-1999 (Holsti, 1999: 302).

[12] More than 99% of the approximately forty million deaths by armed conflict during the second half of the 20th century have been suffered outside the West (Holsti, 1999: 293-294).

Introduction

that a *state* outside the West is roughly seven times more likely to be the location of at least one *armed conflict* than a western *state*[13]. When looking at the involvement in the *armed conflicts* during the same period though, the benign appearance of "civic" *nationalism* seems to fade somewhat as several western *states* have been involved in many *armed conflicts* even if they have tended to do their battles abroad. However, western *states* are still roughly 45% less likely to be involved in at least one *armed conflict* than non-western *states* in the same period[13]. When dividing up the *armed conflicts* in categories by their intensity in terms of battle-related deaths per year[14], an interesting trend appears though. Focusing on *armed conflicts* with at least 1000 battle-related deaths per year, western *states* are just about as likely to be involved as non-western *states*[13]. Such a trend directly challenges the idea of the benign "civic" *nationalism* of the West regardless of what the official purpose of the involvements is.

Even when not inclined towards "ethnic" descriptions or explanations of *armed conflicts* and *nationalism*, western research after the Cold War has had a tendency to focus on *internal armed conflict*[15] since this is by far the most common type of *armed conflict* in this era[13]. This is also the category of *armed conflicts* with the traditionally most clear cut connection to *nationalism* given that it includes "*war* for autonomy", "*war* of secession" and "*war* for reunification" (Falk, 1971: 18-19). These all ring with the familiar tone of nationalist struggle, as the driving force for autonomy and secession can be found in Mann's "state-subverting" *nationalism,* while his "state-creating" *nationalism* may be the force behind attempts for unification (Mann, 1995: 46). The nationalist aspect of the last type of

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[13] Based on the data set from the Uppsala Conflict Data Project at Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, version 1.2. The West in the analysis comprises of U.S.A, Canada, the U.K, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Germany (only BRD before the reunion), Austria, Italy, Malta, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Australia and New Zealand.

[14] *Minor armed conflict* with at least 25 battle-related deaths per year and fewer than 1,000 battle-related deaths during the course of the conflict, *intermediate armed conflict* with at least 25 battle-related deaths per year and an accumulated total of at least 1,000 deaths, but fewer than 1,000 per year, and *war* with at least 1,000 battle-related deaths per year (Strand et al., 2003: 3).

[15] An *internal armed conflict* is a conflict within a *state* between a government and one or more opposition organisations. This could be purely internal, if there is no interference from other *states*, or internationalised, if the government, the opposition or both sides receive support from other governments (Strand et al., 2003: 8-9).

internal armed conflict, "*war* for hegemony"[16], is somewhat vague given that the *state's* control over its territory is never disputed, rather the way it governs its people. In other words, the supporters of the opposition do not want a new *state* but seek nevertheless to reform the existing *state* in order to be governed in accordance with their own principles. Hence, "reform *nationalism*"[17] is at work (Breuilly, 2001: 39). Influential accounts on *internal armed conflicts* indicate that weak *states* seem to be causal for this kind of *armed conflict* (e.g. Holsti, 1996 and Holsti, 1999). There are *internal armed conflicts* which are not nationalist though, since some are fought in collapsed *states* more or less by local strongmen and mercenaries for their own personal interests[18], such as control over local resources, smuggling, gun-running etc (Holsti, 1999: 303-305).

If *nationalism* seems to be important in most *internal armed conflicts*, what about its role in the involvement in many of these conflicts by other *states,* and what about the role of *nationalism* in *interstate armed conflict*[19]? Going back to Mann's framework, the type of *nationalism* that is active to strengthen already established *states* is "state-reinforcing" *nationalism* (Mann, 1995: 46). This type is not only active to strengthen existing *states* to withstand threats from the outside though, but also from rival *nationalisms* within them[20] as well as to bolster the legitimacy of governments and their decisions. Hence, looking at our contemporary world of mass-politics, all *interstate armed conflicts* must be

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[16] In Falk's categorisation there are two more: "standard civil *war*" and "*war* of hegemony" (Falk, 1971: 18-19). The difference between "*war* of hegemony" and "standard civil *war*" is, according to Falk, the amount of interference from third-party states, where a "*war* of hegemony" is less confined within the borders of a state then Falk's "standard civil *war*" (ibid.). Since both are connected to the struggle over political power, I consider Falk's distinction between "*war* of hegemony" and "standard civil *war*" to be of no use to my study.

[17] Quite closely related to Kennedy's "state-reforming" *nationalism* (Kennedy, 2003: 3), but with the use of violence to reform the *state*.

[18] What Kaldor calls "new *wars*", in which a far greater variety of actors than ever before in modern history are striving to achieve very disparate goals through different modes of warfare, *war* economies and external support (Kaldor, 1999).

[19] An i*nterstate armed conflict* is a conflict between two or more *states* (Strand et al., 2003). It is quite difficult to make a precise distinction between *internal-* and *interstate armed conflicts* though, and many of the conflicts in recent years, e.g. Yugoslavia, Eritrea-Ethiopia etc, have been borderline cases where both parties have recently been part of the same state (Soysa and Gleditsch, 2002).

[20] E.g. if Gellner's (1964) A[1] become nationalists and seek to secede from a *state* controlled by A, attempts by A to counteract that claim by mobilising nationalist sentiments for continuing A-hegemony would be "state-reinforcing".

Introduction

nationalist in character[21] (Beissinger, 1998: 176) and correspondingly, so must the international involvement in *internal armed conflicts*, especially in cases with strong domestic public support for the involvement.

Research on how support for "nationalist conflicts" is created and maintained has tended to focus on weak non-western *states*, where self-interested elites are believed to persuade the masses for support by promoting popular loyalty in contexts of weak political institutions (Snyder, 2000: 46-69). But where do support for *armed conflicts* come from in firmly established *states* with "strong" institutions?

The western preoccupation with the outside has clearly left a gap in the study of *nationalism,* which is important to better explain and understand why ideas to engage in *armed conflict* gain support within *states.* This dissertation therefore focuses on established western *states*, the home of the allegedly benign "civic" *nationalism* and with "strong" political institutions, which nonetheless involve themselves in *armed conflicts,* often with great domestic support.

Even if the majority of the western *states* have been involved in at least one *armed conflict* since the Cold War[22], the majority of these involvements played more of a political role than any real and decisive role on the battlefield[23]. However, the western *states* which have mustered and used decisive force in *armed conflicts* in this era are the U.S, the U.K and France, and also to some extent

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[21] With a historical starting point with the decline of what Holsti calls "institutionalised *war*" (pre-WWI, except the Napoleonic Wars) and the emergence of "total *war*", as well as in many of the later "*wars of the third kind*" (Holsti, 1996: 28-40).

[22] Based on a data set for 1989-2001 from the Uppsala Conflict Data Project at Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, version 1.2. The West in the analysis comprises of U.S.A, Canada, the U.K, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Germany (only BRD before the reunion), Austria, Italy, Malta, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Australia and New Zealand.

[23] E.g. the total Norwegian, Danish and Dutch forces in the first Gulf War was one Coast Guard ship (Forsvarets skolesenter, 2003), one corvette (Søværnets Operative Kommando, 2003), two frigates (later relieved by three) and missile defence squadrons (Ministerie van Defensie, 2003), compared to the massive French and British deployments of tens of thousands of troops, hundreds of aircrafts, helicopters, tanks and armoured vehicles, and tens of warships and even more so compared to the gigantic American deployment of half a million troops thousands of tanks, armoured vehicles, airplanes and helicopters, and over one hundred warships including nuclear submarines and six aircraft carriers (*Allied Forces in the Gulf Theater*, 2002).

Australia[24] and Spain[25]. Spain differs somewhat from the others in that they are all sea powers with a tradition to fight abroad even in modern times (Friedman, 2002). The U.S is the contemporary hegemon, followed by the United Kingdom and France, the main global pre-WWII powers, and the regional power of Australia with its historic relationship with the U.K. Spain's hegemony was lost long ago with the defeat of the Spanish armada in 1588 and its role as a great power dwindled over the following three hundred odd years with the escalating secession or foreign occupation of its colonies (Wolf, 1997). It has had a relatively marginal role in modern international politics.

These five western *states* all played key roles in the 2003 Iraqi crisis with somewhat different agendas though, which is why this crisis may form a suitable framework for comparison. The governments of the U.S, the U.K, Australia and Spain all advocated and supported the *armed conflict* while the French government was its biggest opponent. As already said, it is not the reasons for the policies that are under study, but instead why the ideas of engaging in an *armed conflict* gained support within some *states* and not in others. Looking at the opinions in these five *states* in January 2003 reveals that it was only in the U.S and Australia where majorities supported an *armed conflict* against Iraq (Gallup International, 2003a). The British (excluding Northern Ireland) were more ambiguous towards an *armed conflict*, while great majorities in France and Spain were against it (ibid.). This dissertation is thus an attempt to explain and understand why the support for the 2003 *armed conflict* against Iraq was so different in these five established *states*. If it can accomplish that, it may provide a basis for generalisations regarding the role of *nationalism* in the support of *armed conflict* within established *states* in general.

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[24] With its increasing involvement from three warships in the first Gulf War (ibid.) to its leading role on East Timor and the 1500 Australian troops in Afghanistan and 2000 in the 2003 *war* against Iraq with aircrafts, warships and special forces (Department of Defence, 2003).

[25] In the 1991–92 resurgence of the *armed conflict* against ETA (Euskadi ta azkatasuna) in the Basque Country, see footnote 22.

Hence, the research problem of this dissertation is to look for **the underlying mechanisms and contexts in which *nationalism* influenced the support of the 2003 *armed conflict* against Iraq within the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Spain**.

Outline of the dissertation

The second chapter presents the *Theoretical background,* regarding *nationalism* and how it influences the support for *armed conflict*, on which the research is based. The third chapter, *Operational framework*, starts by dealing with philosophical issues and continues by presenting the research question, research strategy and proposed model for answering the question. It also presents the comparative methodology and what kind of sources and research methods it uses. Thereafter, there is a section presenting the main limitations of the research as well as how the results of the empirical research may have more general implications. The fourth chapter deals with the *Empirical study* and starts off by presenting its results, which is followed by a discussion about how it relates to theory. The last chapter, *Conclusions,* attempts to answer the research question in order to meet the purpose of this dissertation, which is followed by some ideas for future research.

2. Theoretical background

This chapter presents the theoretical background on which the research is built.

Armed conflict and the modern state

It is not only the concept of *nationalism* that is somewhat ambiguous and filled with various meanings, but also the concept of *armed conflict*. The definition that is used in this dissertation has become rather influential though, and states that:

> "An *armed conflict* is a contested incompatibility which concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a *state*, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths" (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 2001, italics added).

The use of armed force in this context connotes the use of any material means, e.g. manufactured weapons, knifes, sticks, stones, fire etc, in order to promote the parties' general position in the conflict, resulting in a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per year and per incompatibility (ibid.). A party is a government of a *state* or any opposition organisation or alliance of opposition organisations, where a government is the party controlling the capital of a *state* and an opposition organisation is any non-governmental group of people having announced a name for their group and using armed force (ibid.). The incompatibility, as stated by the parties, normally concerns the type of political system, the replacement of a government or the change of its composition, the status of a territory[26] or a combination of two or more of the above (ibid.). The kinds of *armed conflicts* which this dissertation focuses on are *interstate-* and *internationalised internal armed conflicts,* where established western *states* secure their interests by amending the government and/or territory of other *states* through the use of armed force.

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[26] The change of the *state* in control of a certain territory (*interstate armed conflict*), secession or autonomy (*internal armed conflict*).

Theoretical background

A *state* is, in the context of this dissertation, what Weber defined as a modern *state*, with its key characteristics of territoriality, legitimacy, and impersonal structure of power (Weber in McCrone, 1998: 87). Where territoriality connotes having fixed and defensible borders as well as monopoly on the means of violence, both internally and externally, legitimacy requires the loyalty of its citizens and impersonal structure of power means that the sovereignty of the *state* does not rest on a few individuals.

Nationalism as an ideology

The study of *nationalism* has traditionally been focused on attempts to form modern *states* and a good example of this kind of research comes from Miroslav Hroch. In this highly interesting work, he identifies three sequential phases of *nationalism* which all must succeed in order to establish a modern *state* (Hroch, 1993). In phase A, there is a time of scholarly interest, in which parts of the intelligentsia find and invent the building blocks for *nationalism,* such as a "memory" of a common past, linguistic and cultural ties etc. In phase B, an emerging elite tries to spread these nationalist ideas through agitation, which in phase C has lead to a mass-movement (ibid.). In the cases where all these phases have successfully taken place and where the political climate made it possible, the end products are modern *states*. *Nationalism* is thus important in the formation of modern *states*, but is there a "phase D" or does *nationalism* die after a state is firmly established?

One of the more influential answers to that question comes from Billig's work in *Banal Nationalism,* where he shows that *nationalism* does not die and disappear at all after a *state*[27] is firmly established (Billig, 1995). He does that with numerous examples on how it is used to continually reproduce even the oldest *states* of the West, where *nationalism* supposedly should not exist outside extreme

right-wing movements. It is this daily reproduction through rhetoric, mass-media, sporting events, flags, symbols etc, which he labels "banal" *nationalism*.

When looking at *nationalism* as an ideology in my attempt to explain and understand the support of contemporary *armed conflict*, it matters little if it was industrialisation (Gellner, 1983), modernisation (O'Leary, 1998), the search for appropriate markets (Hobsbawm, 1990), different types of capitalism (Mann, 1992 and Anderson, 1983), uneven development (Nairn, 1977 and Hroch, 1985), the development of direct rule (Hechter, 2000) or the coming of the modern *state* (Breuilly, 2001 and Mann, 1992) that was the key reason for its emergence. If *nationalism* is the ideology in which people view themselves as distinct in their culture, history, institutions or principles and should thus rule themselves in a political system that expresses and protects those characteristics (Snyder, 2000: 23), it does not only reproduce the world as a world of *states* but permits the *states* to exist in the first place (Billig, 1995: 15). For no matter what reason, the modern *state* has had success in establishing itself as the universal form of sovereignty (ibid: 22) and a main actor in *armed conflicts*. *Nationalism* is thus not destined to only operate in distant and marginal places but is instead a global feature of modernity[28] (ibid.), and needs to be understood as a transnational phenomenon that is strongly influenced by what is going on in other *states* (Beissinger, 1998: 184-185).

It is not at all strange that people in general perceive it as natural to be citizens of *states*, since that is the core feature of an ideology[29] which consists of

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[27] Billig uses the term *nation-state* which is contested by Charles Tilly who instead advocates the use of the term *national-state*, since only a very few *states* have ever qualified as *nation-states* when it comes to shared "linguistic, religious, and symbolic identity" (Tilly, 1995: 3).

[28] We do not know the future, but even if the modern *state* may be under threat in several parts of the world, either through regionalisation and globalisation (Hettne et al., 1998: 397-399) or because it is not yet firmly established everywhere, it is still the universal idea of sovereignty as well as the major power container of the contemporary world (Billig, 1995: 175-176). Critics argue that globalisation is an exaggeration and several of the transformations traditionally believed to be connected to globalisation may actually strengthen some states (Mann, 1997: 237-260). Even advocates of globalisation theory urge caution against exaggerations regarding its extent, the wholesale idea of the decreasing importance of territory, the idea that it is only a process towards homogeneity etc (Hettne, 2001: 9-10). Culturally, globalisation appears to be quiet the opposite with new identities emerging through growing interaction among the people affected by it (Tomlinson, 1999 and Eriksen, 1994).

[29] Ideological discourse in original

the behaviours and beliefs which make the social world appear natural to its inhabitants (Billig, 1991). Marx may have been accurate when he laid down two vital conditions for a dominant ideology to be present; the objective concealment of contradictions and the interest of the dominant class (Larrain, 1979: 210). The importance of the dominant class, or elite as I call them, is dealt with in a later section, but the former condition is unmistakably visible in the ideology of *nationalism* and pointed out by Hobsbawn in his poetic phrase that "[w]hat holds humanity together today is the denial of what the human race has in common" (Hobsbawm, 1996: 265).

The label "banal" *nationalism* does not automatically indicate something benign though[30], since it reproduces institutions which have weapons as well as preparing *states* to use them (Billig, 1995: 6-7). Hence, this "banal" form in Billig's argument seems to be a prerequisite for more noticeable "hot" variants when an established *state* is under pressure. Billig argues that the home of "banal" *nationalism* is in the established *states* of the West, which is a bit strange considering the apparently identical phenomena both in established non-western *states*, such as Turkey (Yumul and Özkırımlı, 2000), and in Scotland (Law, 2001) which is not a *state* at all. This dissertation therefore argues that *nationalism* is like gravity, both a spectacular and a mundane force that influences all (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001: 3). "Banal" *nationalism* is in this view representing a mundane element, while "hot" *nationalism* represents a more spectacular element of the very same ideology.

Nationalism and armed conflict

Since *nationalism* comprises the mundane and subtle, as well as the overwhelming and violent, it is important to remember that even if this study

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[30] Some scholars do argue that the contemporary "Western European *nationalisms* are benign" (Van Evera, 1994: 8), which is strange considering the involvement in, or support of *armed conflicts* and destructive economic sanctions of many western *states*.

focuses on its role in the support for *armed conflicts,* it rarely leads to violence (e.g. Gellner, 1994).

I am not the first student of *nationalism* who is interested in its role in *armed conflicts.* Some scholars have tried to identify and map traits of *nationalism*, which increase the probability of *armed conflict*, both within and between *states.* Some of these traits are quite straightforward, such as statelessness or malign attitudes towards minorities and other nationalities (Van Evera, 1994: 10-15). Other traits are more complex, such as balance of power, intermingled demography, illegitimacy of borders, malign past and present relations to other *states* and glorifying self-images accompanied by demeaning images of others (ibid: 16-33). Many of the more structural traits, e.g. statelessness, balance of power, intermingled demography etc, are the results of historical and political events. This is also true to some extent for how people view themselves and others, since myths and memories of these events often play an important role as building blocks in the construction of *national identities* (Smith, 2001) as well as in the continuous reproduction of them. There are other identities, which may underlie conflict too, but these do not seem to be significant explaining *armed conflicts*[31].

This *national identity* is an identity above identities, which forms through social interaction both within the *state* as well as with groups without (Barth, 1969). In other words, to have a *national identity* we must see ourselves as having common but particular characteristics. This identification is more often done by exclusion through the comparison to non-members of the group than by reference to its own characteristics[32] (Armstrong, 1982: 141-142). Citizens of a *state* do not need to directly interact with all other citizens to form a *national identity*, as long

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[31] Hardin mentions ethnicity alongside *nationalism* as an underlying cause of major conflicts and *wars* (Hardin, 1995: 47-48), but the major distinctions between ethnicity (or macro-ethnicity) and *nation* to be the latter's possession or claim of a "homeland and the exercise of collective political rights therein" (Mann, 2001: 209). Since an *armed conflict* by definition involves a contested incompatibility regarding government and/or territory any ethnicity which make such political claims transforms into, or at least approximates a *nation.*

[32] Our identity is not only shaped by our own comparison to others though, but also by the recognition, absence of recognition or misrecognition of ourselves by others (Taylor, 1994).

Theoretical background

as they share a simultaneous experience of belonging[33]. A lot of things have happened since the development and spread of printed media made that experience possible (Anderson, 1983: 9-46). The use of radio, TV and, for a growing part of the world the internet increases that vital shared simultaneous experience (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001: 14-15).

National identities are intrinsically linked to *nationalism* not only since they form the common denominator around which the idea of peoples' distinctiveness is built and maintained, but also since *nationalism* is the process that shapes and maintains *national identities* in the first place (Billig, 1995: 60-69). This dissertation does not deal with what identities really are, since that question is too vast and complex to answer briefly. However, *national identities,* or more correctly the shaping and maintaining of *national identities* do play a key role in the mobilisation of support for *armed conflicts* and they are therefore treated as if they are just there.

National identity has obviously a lot in common with other identities[34], but it is important that it is looked upon in the particular since if *national identity* is viewed as any other identity, the specific meanings of *nationalism* are lost (Breuilly, 1985: 65-75). What does distinguish *national identity* from other identities in quite earthly terms is the charismatic quality of territorial ties (Grosby, 1995). It is in other words not only the community that has to be imagined, but also the homeland (Billig, 1995: 74-78). It is impossible to deny the importance of the attachment people can feel to these homelands and there are plenty of examples of cases where this homeland psychology has been a major motivational factor for both nationalist struggles and interstate warfare (Connor, 2001: 58-63).

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[33] To be able to share this simultaneous experience we need to (1) see ourselves as acting together through time, (2) share a print language accessible for everybody and (3) be bounded by national frontiers which coincide with the boundaries of social opportunities (Anderson, 1983: 9-46).

[34] The general necessity of a social group to give itself an image of itself, to represent and to realise itself, is believed to be linked to the Weberian concepts of social action and social relation, where the former is human behaviour that is meaningful for individual agents and oriented towards the behaviour of others, and the latter is a system of meanings (Ricouer, 1981: 225).

The reason for the extraordinary powers invested in *national identities* on a personal level compared to all other identities is that they have become the fundamental categories by which people actively construct their views of the world on an everyday basis[35] (Finlayson, 1998), but why is that? And how does the construction and reproduction of *national identities* sometimes lead to growing support of *armed conflicts*?

Mobilisation and collective action

Social psychology in general seeks to explain and understand how, why and when collective sentiments embed themselves in individuals and groups, and it emphasises the need for human beings to define themselves as members of collectives in various social contexts (Comaroff and Stern, 1995). It is in this context that Social Identity Theory attempts to explain the formation and the function of groups through group identification and self-categorisation[36]. There is a strong motivational theme in this theory where positive stereotyping of the members of the group and negative stereotyping of non-members serve to maintain a positive self-identity (Tajfel in Druckman, 1995). If we now go back and look at the "civic-ethnic" dichotomy[37], where rational-irrational, political-cultural etc easily can be translated into useful-dangerous, good-evil etc, a good example of this may appear.

Holsti explains that the exaggerated view, that most *armed conflicts* in the "periphery" are "ethnic", primarily is a projection of western social concerns (Holsti, 1999: 295). The emergence of these dichotomies after World War II may have been a result of the atrocities of Nazism and fascism, which suddenly turned

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[35] Stuart Hall is on a similar track when arguing that "national culture is a discourse, a way of constructing meanings which influences and organises our actions and our conceptions of ourselves" (Hall in McCrone, 2000: 30).

[36] The main critique of Social Identity Theory is related to the fact that the theory itself neglects any difference between different types of identities (Billig, 1995), but if consciously used it can still supply some interesting views.

[37] This dichotomy is an offspring from Kohn's attempt to define western; political, individual and rational nationalism versus Eastern; cultural, collective and irrational nationalism (Kohn, 1945), which has influenced the definition of several dichotomies of nationalism since the end of the Second World War, e.g. Geertz's dichotomy between civil ties versus primordial ties to the *nation* (Geertz, 1963) etc.

Theoretical background

nationalism into an almost purely negative term, something the "civilised" *states* of the West could not be a part of. The "civic-ethnic" dichotomy has in other words not only been used as an analytical tool, but even more so as fundamental stereotypes. The stereotyping of "ourselves" as rational and civilised in contrast to the "others" as irrational and violent is evident in this dichotomy and has clearly served its purpose of maintaining a positive western self-image. Social Identity Theory may explain the reasons behind stereotypes but not the collective actions and mass-mobilisations that they may facilitate. To that we need an offspring; self-categorisation theory (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001: 32-38).

When an individual belongs to a group she categorises herself as a member of that group. The definitions of that particular group provide her with the values, norms and understandings which guide her in what she can and cannot do and still be considered a member. The members always try to maximise inter-group compared to intra-group difference, which make the categorisation dependent upon who is present. This determination to be similar within the group forces the members to adopt common stereotypes, but that does not mean that the stereotypes are fixed and insensitive, since they are constantly negotiated within the group and altered accordingly[38]. The stereotypes are thus always "a flexible representation of the comparative context" (ibid: 39).

The self-categorisation is thus the psychological process that makes collective behaviour and action possible (ibid: 37-39). The basis for mobilisation is the providing of a definition of the group in which the mobilisation seems to be self-evidently in the interest of the members, where the boundaries of the definition determine the extent of, and the contents determine the direction of the mobilisation (ibid: 48-49).

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[38] Reicher and Hopkins call this process consensualization in which all members are involved to different degrees, but to which only one outcome is possible; consensus (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001: 40).

The role of elites

Marx may have been right when he wrote the often quoted line that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (Marx and Engels, 1998). One reason for the support of *armed conflict* in some *states* can be found in the prominent role of those elites, "the entrepreneurs of identity" (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001: 49), in shaping and maintaining *national identities*. *Nationalism* is thus not simply about the construction and reproduction of *national identities,* but more fundamentally about the struggle for control over the construction and reproduction (Beissinger, 1998: 175). This becomes particularly significant when political demands gain salience (Hroch, 1993: 88). E.g. the bloodshed in former Yugoslavia "should be ascribed not so much to "ancient hatreds" as to internal struggles for political power and economic gain" (Prošić-Dvornić, 2000: 317).

All elites who exaggerate threats in order to rally support to contain that threat have some incentive to do so (Snyder, 2000: 49). This could for instance be an urge to bolster their power in times of low legitimacy of their regime and/or when high demands are posed by it on its people[39] (Van Evera, 1994: 26-33). *Nationalism* can in these cases be used to divert the blame for the disastrous situation from the elite to an outside enemy, a scapegoat, by transforming social and economic problems into grievances between groups of people (Prošić-Dvornić, 2000: 321).

Dominant elites are the carriers of the building blocks for the construction and reproduction of *national identities* (Smith, 2001) and their definitions are, as already mentioned, based on their comparisons to others. Since these comparisons are done on a collective level, it often matters little if the privileged members of the oppressed are better of than many of the members of the oppressors as long as the oppressed as a group remains under the yoke (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001: 33). But how do the elites mobilise people to support *armed conflict*?

Theoretical background

Elites mobilise people and direct collective action through their ability to influence the definitions of *national identities* so they require the sought after mobilisation and action, and they accomplish that by "making these definitions seem so self-evident that they are immune to counter positions" (ibid: 48-50). In order to gain mass-support, the elite must also present themselves as prototypical to the group and make sure that any competitors are presented as outsiders (ibid: 152-180). The definitions of *national identities* and claims to be prototypical are thus at the very heart of politics (ibid: 179). Many scholars have pointed out that elites have an increased ability to affect people in ambiguous situations (e.g. Edelman in Beissinger, 1998: 176) or during periods of crisis (e.g. Stern, 1995), and I will come back to that later in this chapter.

When looking at the role of *nationalism* in the support of *armed conflicts* within established western *states*, the dominant elite, or the ruling classes as Mann calls them, mainly constitutes "the dominant economic class and the political and military rulers" (Mann, 1988: 190). These groups are not static or always united, but they form a discrete class in society due to their much greater power than others' to influence social structures (ibid.).

The main function of *nationalism* is in this case to promote popular loyalty to the *state* (Billig, 1995), which is the most powerful actor when it comes to dominating public discourse (Beissinger, 1998: 176-177). The fostering of *national identities* by *states* is one of the major reasons for the distinction in the importance between *national identities* and all other identities (Taylor, 1998). The dominant elite manages this fostering through the adept use of modern mass-media (Mann, 1970: 437), which confers extraordinary powers to the controllers (Hroch, 1993).

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[39] Mann takes this even further when explaining the emergence of *nationalism* as a response to the development of the modern state (Mann, 1995), with "its growing fiscal and manpower costs, and its office-holding benefits" (ibid: 52-53).

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The ability of any elite to persuade the people is greater if (Snyder, 2000: 56):

1. it controls sources of information,
2. it can divide the public into segments that can be individually targeted with chosen information, and
3. the level of journalistic independence and professionalism is low.

If these three factors are fulfilled, people's stereotypes may swiftly be sharpened and, if used as propaganda, be transformed into "lethal verbal weapons" (Prošić-Dvornić, 2000: 322). But how are these factors influencing the support for *armed conflict* in established western *states*?

The strength of institutions

In the modern world where mass-media is the premium interface between human beings, flaws in the institutions of mass-communications are especially important in creating opportunities for elite persuasion (Snyder, 2000: 55). Weak institutions allow elites to avoid full accountability and facilitate mythmaking and scapegoating by facilitating for the elite hijacking of mass-media (Van Evera, 1994: 26-33 and Snyder, 2000:53-56).

An institution is in this context a rather wide concept which is made up of a repeated pattern of behaviour around which expectations converge[40] (Snyder, 2000: 48). At its core you always find an elite who shape and maintain it (ibid: 50-51), but it is important to understand that it is not only the elite who shape the institutions since the institutions also shape the social world in which the elite moves. Institutions that are built by people with a wider range of ideas are thus more likely to resist attempted hijackings (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001: 48). This is why a well developed civil society connected to a liberal society can act as a bulwark against more violent forms of *nationalism* (Gellner in Hearn, 2001: 26), but saying that it is important to stress that parts of civil society can still play an

active role in mobilizing support for a particular elite's agenda (Hearn, 2001: 26). However, the role of civil society in the support for *armed conflict* is not directly dealt with in this dissertation.

Political stability in general is a very important factor in safeguarding from violence (Gellner, 1997: 103-106) while rapid transitions, on the other hand, often lead to times "of instability, ambiguity, and crisis when confrontations and animosities become particularly strained and marked by increasing degrees of intolerance" (Prošić-Dvornić, 2000: 317). Strong political institutions seem in other words to be important when it comes to counter the radicalisation of *nationalism*, both generally by endorsing political stability and more specifically by impeding aggressive elite persuasion.

The importance of the institutional context is well researched and even if the relatively strong political institutions in established western *states* cannot guarantee the absence of successful aggressive elite persuasion, the stronger the political institutions are the harder it is for the elite to succeed[41]. It is vital not to downplay the immense importance of political stability or strength of political institutions, but since this dissertation focuses on the support of *armed conflict* in established western *states*, all with high political stability and comparatively strong political institutions, these factors are considered to be controlled for in the search for additional explanation and understanding.

Vulnerability

So in what individual context do people become more prone to be influenced by elite persuasion to support *armed conflict*? As mentioned before, elites use their ability to influence the definition of *national identities* in order to mobilise people and direct collective actions. They do so by shaping these definitions so the

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[40] These institutions can have different functions, such as administrative, democratic, media, military etc, and be formal or informal (Snyder, 2000).

[41] An interesting and related account is given by Hechter in his study of state centralisation and nationalist rebellions, in which very low as well as very high state centralisation appears to be conducive for nationalist rebellions (Hechter, 2000: 144-148).

intended mobilisation and collective action seem self-evidently in the interest of the people. Since a person's *national identity* only becomes an issue when it is in crisis (McCrone, 1998: 31), this must also be when an elite has the greatest opportunity to shape it.

There are several scholars who have identified economic crisis and scarcity of resources as major factors when it comes to the success of mythmaking and scapegoating, which ultimately may stimulate violence (Armstrong, 2001: 184-186 and Van Evera, 1994: 26-33). Gellner clarifies this in his later work (Gellner, 1997: 106):

> "People who are affluent and, above all, who believe themselves to be in a situation which will fairly soon improve and continue to do so are much less likely to be tempted into violent conduct which will disrupt their world, than people whose situation is deteriorating and looks like continuing to do so – let alone people whose situation is desperate".

Hroch agrees when he includes economic recession as a driving force for more aggressive forms of *nationalism* and he continues by stating that in "conditions of acute stress, people characteristically tend to over-value the protective comfort of their own national group" (Hroch, 1993: 90). This could perhaps help to explain why economic sanctions often trigger *nationalism* (Eland, 1995 and Losman in Gordon, 1999) and xenophobia (Kunz, 1994).

Many forms of more aggressive *nationalism* have been activated by more direct threats, often exaggerated or imaginary, from external enemies (Nairn, 1998: 118). Charles Taylor has also identified this to be a vital factor in his work on defensive *nationalism*, where a perceived physical threat mobilises people to respond to the threat (Taylor, 1998: 209-212). As a member of one of the conflicting parties you do not need to hate your opponents to engage in the conflict though, since it is enough to fear their potential hatred, or merely their threat, towards you (Hardin, 1995: 143-144). It is also argued that both sides of a conflict are likely to view their actions as defensive measures against the aggression of the others (Taylor, 1998: 209-212 and Prošić-Dvornić, 2000: 325). This may lead to an escalation of violence and a "siege mentality", where "it is always the other who

breaks faith, acts dishonestly and starts aggressive spirals" (Billig, 1995: 82). Some scholars even talk about a tipping phenomenon, when violence goes beyond some level and the mechanisms for maintaining order break down enough for it to flare out of control and fuel itself (Hardin, 1995: 155). These are all accounts from different disciplines within the social sciences that help to inform this study. However, social psychological sources are deemed particularly helpful, to enhance our understanding of the studied regularity, and thus predominate the rest of this chapter.

A psychoanalytical explanation of why populations under external threat tend to lapse into simplified stereotypes of their enemy comes from the popular Freudian idea that people under stress are inclined to regress to earlier development stages (Druckman, 1995). The same phenomenon is explained in a similar way with a social psychological perspective, where stereotypes are believed normally to be flexible, and where a sudden crisis quickly can produce sharpened stereotypes of the perceived enemy or scapegoat (Billig, 1995: 81). Prolonged conflicts have a tendency to make these sharpened stereotypes become rigid though (ibid.) and if many people have suffered from violence, the ability to sustain a constant level of resentment is likely to be high (Hearn, 2001: 25). The deeper a group of people is involved in a conflict the more focus is placed on group commitments and less on extra-group connections, which results in fewer and fewer opportunities for the individual group members to do anything other than supporting the violence, since it becomes less and less possible to stay in the group without doing so (Hardin, 1995: 23). The group thus becomes divided into "loyal members of the community" and "treacherous opponents" (quoted from Prošić-Dvornić, 2000, but also in Snyder, 2000: 52).

This form of alienation, when individuals give up significant parts of the self in order to remain loyal to the group is called engulfment[42] and plays a vital role in the support of *armed conflicts* (Scheff, 1994). The other crucial psychological

24

ingredient is isolation[43], another form of alienation in which bonds between groups break and are replaced by lack of understanding and misunderstanding (ibid: 57-58). Alienation in itself does not lead to *armed conflicts* when the alienated groups can ignore each other, but if not dealt with it may escalate and produce overwhelming emotions that lead to violence (ibid.).

Emotions are too often ignored as causes in the social sciences (ibid: 63-69), but they play an important role in how well and in what direction elites can mobilise people. Freud, for instance, usually pointed to anxiety as a cause of aggression while other scholars have identified grief, fear, shame and anger as causal (ibid: 127-130). These emotions are connected and can transform into another if the right stimuli are added.

An unusual national experiment was conducted by Carnegie Mellon scientists after the 9/11-attacks, in which the effects that anger and fear have on *risk* perception and preferred policy responses was examined in the U.S (Lerner et al., 2003). The study shows that Americans who experience anger are more optimistic about the future, less likely to take precautionary actions, and are more likely to favour aggressive and punitive policy responses, while those who experience fear are more pessimistic about the future and call for tighter security through conciliatory policies and precautionary measures. The study also shows that the way mass-media portray the attacks and threats strongly influences the emotional responses, producing anger in most instances and fear in others (ibid: 146). Hence, the more emotions of anxiety, grief and fear can be brokered into anger, the more susceptible for aggressive elite persuasion to support *armed conflicts* people are. These effects of emotions are likely to persist over some time as a result of a carryover effect of emotions to situations that have no relation to the creating event. This is explained by the idea that emotions do not only arise from specific cognitive appraisals that are tailored to help the individual respond to

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[42] Engulfment in this context means detachment from self (Scheff, 1994: 27-31).
[43] In this context, isolation means detachment from other (Scheff, 1994: 25-31).

events that evoked the emotions, but bring out appraisals that persist beyond the events and becoming implicit perceptual lenses for interpreting following situations (ibid: 144).

Social scientists generally agree that a *risk* to the life and health of people and their children are a sharp weapon to use in the struggle for domination over public discourse (Douglas, 1992: 13). A *risk* is in this context[44] a complex combination of *hazard* and *vulnerability* (Blaikie et al., 1994), where the former can be seen as unforeseen events, which ultimately can trigger uncontrollable courses of events, such as tense international relations, terrorism etc, and the latter is susceptibility to damage. People are in other words neither at *risk* if there are no *hazards* even if they are vulnerable, nor if there are plenty of *hazards* but no *vulnerability* (Becker, 2002: 4). This puts public perception of *risk* at the very core of the struggle for support of *armed conflict*. The public perception cannot be treated as if it were the aggregated response of millions of individuals though, as that would fail to recognise the interaction, advice and persuasion between them (Douglas, 1992: 40). There are, however, a number of features of *risks* that tend to make people more averse towards them (Otway and von Winterfeldt, 1982), out of which the relevant ones are[45]; involuntary exposure, lack of personal control, uncertainty regarding its probability or consequence, lack of experience of the *risk*, *risks* that stem from human action (compared to environmental *risks*) and *risks* with low probability but high consequence.

Going through this section, the individual context that seems to be conducive to aggressive elite persuasion is lack of human security[46], which translates into *vulnerability* (Becker, 2002: 5). Hence, an individual who is vulnerable, who experiences a threat towards her subsistence or life, is more likely to be persuaded

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[44] There is also a technical perspective of risk, in which *risk* represents the product of the two separate components; probability and consequence (Nilsson et al., 2000). In this perspective, political, economical and social aspects are absent, which is why it is not preferable in this study.

[45] The original dealt with technological *risks*, but the conclusions are interesting when looking at qualitative aspects of the perception of other *risks* as well.

[46] This concept of security is extended from the strictly geopolitical sense to the security of individuals from violence, lack of food and shelter etc (ul Haq, 1998).

to support an *armed conflict* in order to deal with what she perceives as causing her situation.

Theoretical summary

When trying to explain and understand the support for *armed conflict* within established *states,* five main theoretical presumptions can be found. These form the theoretical foundation on which the empirical research is constructed. The five presumptions are:

1. *Nationalism* is not at all dead in established *states*, but constantly active to shape and maintain *national identities*. This comes in different forms though, where "banal" and "hot" *nationalism* can be seen as two archetypes, but their main function in these cases are always to promote popular loyalty to the *state*.

2. *National identities* play an important role in creating that, since they have become the fundamental group identity by which people actively construct their views of the world on an everyday basis. The ability to influence the definitions of *national identities* thus grants tremendous power to its wielders.

3. Dominant elites have this ability and they mobilise people by using it to influence the definitions of *national identities* so they require the sought after mobilisation. They accomplish that by making the modified definitions seem so self-evident that they are immune to counter positions. Since mass-media is the premium interface between these elites and the public, any successful elite persuasion must come through it. The ability to influence the public is thus tightly connected to the ability to influence mass-media.

4. The constitution and function of the institutional context of the *states* are important in explaining and understanding the success of elite persuasion, but since these are relatively similar among western

established *states* compared to the much greater global variety, this context is considered controlled for in this dissertation.

5. The individual context that seems to be conducive to aggressive elite persuasion to support *armed conflict* is *vulnerability.* This *vulnerability* stem from structural restrictions[47], such as scarcity etc, as well as from exposure, real or imaginary, to direct violent actions, and it facilitates for aggressive elite persuasion by inducing emotions which can be brokered and directed as aggression. Since the perception of *risk* is not only based on the reality of the *risk* but also on how it is politicised (Douglas, 1992: 29), the support of an *armed conflict* must be connected to the *vulnerability* of the people and how well the elite can persuade them that it and the relevant *hazard* are real and stem from the actions of the adversary.

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[47] At a first glance, the former source of *vulnerability* may appear to be synonymous to poverty, which is not the entire truth since *vulnerability* in general is a combination of features of the individual or group, expressed in relation to exposure (Blaikie et al., 1994), while poverty is a primarily descriptive measure of lack of, or need for, economic resources and can be regarded as both an absolute and a relative term (Sen, 1981). This kind of *vulnerability* is thus not only connected to poverty, even if some scholars emphasize it as the principal factor (e.g. Dibben et al., 1999), but also interlocked with other factors, such as powerlessness, physical weakness and isolation (Chambers, 1983). Vulnerability is generated and sustained by lack of access or entitlement to resources (Blaikie et al., 1994 and Sen, 1981). These resources can be divided into economical-, personal-, social- and political resources (Hearn Morrow, 1999), which are all closely related to each other and lack of access to one often entails lack of access to others.

3. Operational framework

This chapter starts by dealing with philosophical issues and continues by presenting the research question, research strategy and proposed model for answering the question. It also presents the comparative methodology of the research and what kind of sources and research methods are used. The last section of the chapter presents the main limitations of the research as well as how its results may have more general implications.

Philosophical issues

Social research in itself should primarily be concerned with the pursuit of knowledge (Weber in Hammersley, 2000). To manage to focus as much as possible on the interaction with the real in the search for the meanings of social realities[48], without ignoring that the findings may be constructed without connection with them, it becomes crucial to try, <u>to the furthest possible extent</u>, to achieve value-neutrality. To become totally value-neutral is impossible according to my epistemological assumptions[49], but it is nevertheless essential to do the utmost to identify and to get beyond prejudices and biases. Value-neutrality is in other words the unreachable vision or ideal that researchers must pursue with great strength and stamina to be able to get closer to the studied social realities (Hammersley, 2000).

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[48] In a realist ontology, the social world exists no matter if the researcher is around or not (Keat and Urry, 1975). The social world is in other words full of social realities even if the researcher is unaware of most of them.

[49] Meaning in the social world can not be objectively discovered but must instead be constructed. This construction of meaning can take many forms from which two epistemological archetypes can be identified; constructivism and subjectivism (Crotty, 1998: 8-9). The difference between these two stem from what the constructions of meaning are based on. In constructivism, the construction of meaning is still believed to be derived from the interaction with something real, observable or not. In subjectivism on the other hand, the construction of meaning is instead perceived not to be connected to anything real at all, but ascribed to the object from our dreams, primordial archetypes, religious belief etc (ibid: 9). When it comes to how we know what we know in the social world, people use mixtures of both constructivism and subjectivism with different proportions of each. Consequently, a portion of how people view and understand their social world is based on social realities while another portion is not. Social forces play also a critical role in the establishment of the epistemologies themselves (Mendelsohn, 1977: 3-20).

Operational framework

What a social researcher needs to do is to be aware, or reflexive[50], of how all human beings construct meanings, and constantly try as much as possible to use that awareness to identify, and to get beyond, prejudices and biases. If the main objective of research is the pursuit of knowledge then getting beyond prejudices and biases to the furthest possible extent must be the primary vision. This idea of value-neutrality does neither require the attempt to abandon values when it comes to what is perceived to be significant in selecting the areas of enquiry (Keat, 1981: 38-58), nor does it prohibit normative values being involved in the general reflections on possible implications of the conclusions as long as it is made clear what normative values are used (e.g. Gurr, 1970).

I am a Swedish male, with no direct experience of *armed conflict*, but with a personal interest in the issues relevant for this study. This obviously provides me with a backpack full of conceptual and emotional luggage, which definitely will colour my opinions as well as my interpretation of the input given to this dissertation (Bernard, 1995). If this is true for me, the same thing is likely to apply to the creators of the sources as well. I can never fully get around this problem, but if I am constantly aware of possible biases I will hopefully be more likely to identify them and to draw plausible conclusions. However, one way of dealing with the problem of my own biases is to provide reliability to my research by facilitating for replication of it by other researchers (Yin, 1994: 36-37).

Research question

To be able to shed light on the research problem I need to integrate causal explanation with interpretive understanding[51] (Weber in Keat and Urry, 1975: 145). What is intended in this dissertation is thus to make an effort to enhance our explanation and understanding of why the 2003 *armed conflict* against Iraq

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[50] Reflexivity (or reflexive monitoring as Giddens calls it) in general deals with how social actors make their actions and their social world meaningful to themselves and others (Blaikie, 2000: 54-55 and Giddens, 1984: 5).
[51] As a continuous circular movement between the two, where explanation requires and informs understanding which in turn requires and informs explanation etc (Ricoeur, 1981).

received so different support within the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Spain. In other words, the main research question, which this dissertation attempts to answer, is:

Why did the 2003 *armed conflict* against Iraq receive such varied support within the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Spain?

Research strategy and model

The retroductive research strategy

What is under study is an already observed regularity, that the *armed conflict* received varied support within the five established *states*. This basically narrows down the number of feasible research strategies to the deductive- and the retroductive research strategy (Blaikie, 2000: 24-26). Out of these two, the retroductive research strategy is generally more appropriate when trying to locate underlying structures and mechanisms responsible for the observed regularity (ibid: 25), which is exactly what is needed to shed light on the research problem.

With the duality of causal explanation and interpretive understanding in mind, Pawson and Tilley's version of the retroductive research strategy (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) comes out as particularly suitable for the research since it constitutes an interesting mix of structuralist and constructivist versions of realism[52] (Blaikie, 2000: 112). Drawing from Giddens' structuration theory, where agency and structure are viewed to be intrinsically linked (Giddens, 1984), they argue that explanation of social regularities can be derived from an understanding of mechanisms acting in social contexts (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). They name this formula (regularity = mechanism + context) "the basic realist explanatory formula" (ibid: 56) and their argument is based on the idea that a specific mechanism only leads to a particular regularity if the context is conducive (ibid.).

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[52] Realism is the ontological position of my philosophy of science.

The retroductive strategy has had its share of criticism, even if it has been relatively spared so far. There has been some criticism against realism as a whole though, which suggests that the notion of "unobservable" cannot be applied to the mechanisms and contexts of the social world in the same way as in the natural sciences (ibid: 114). Regardless of what is done in the natural sciences, it is quite clear that the "unobservable" plays an important role in this type of research. On the structuralist side of the coin the whole definition of a structure revolves around the ideas that a structure is something that cannot be directly observed and that it "consists of given, patterned and relatively enduring relationships" (Keat and Urry, 1975: 120). Structures can thus only be observed through their effects (Blaikie, 2000: 114). On the constructivist side, the reflexive monitoring[53] by social actors cannot be directly observed either, but only accessed through communication (ibid.). Hence, I cannot see the real substance in this criticism and I consider the retroductive research strategy to be as robust as any other research strategy.

The model

Drawing on the five theoretical presumptions from before (indicated by the numbers in the marginal), it is now time to construct a researchable model. The regularity that this dissertation is intended to enhance our explanation and understanding of is the support of *armed conflict* within established *states* and it aims to do that by introducing the mechanism of elite persuasion operating in institutional and individual contexts, see *figure 1* below.

(1-3) **Elite persuasion:** Ideas to engage in *armed conflict* gain support within established *states* if the aggressive persuasion by its dominant elite becomes hegemonic in relation to other opinions. This elite group manages this by shaping and maintaining the definition of the *national identity* in such a way it not only requires the sought after mobilisation, but making *armed conflict*

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[53] Reflexive monitoring (or reflexivity as Blaikie calls it) in general deals with how social actors make their actions and their social world meaningful to themselves and others (Giddens, 1984: 5 and Blaikie, 2000: 54-55).

seem so self-evident in the interest of the people that it is immune to counter positions.

(4)   **Institutional context:** This is more easily done if the institutional context does not tolerate or accommodate difference, if it is adverse towards political stability or if it facilitates for the elite to control mass-media.

(5)   **Individual context:** This is also more easily accomplished in an individual context where the *vulnerability* of the people induces emotions which can be brokered and directed as aggression, and thus making *armed conflict* seem self-evident in dealing with their problems.
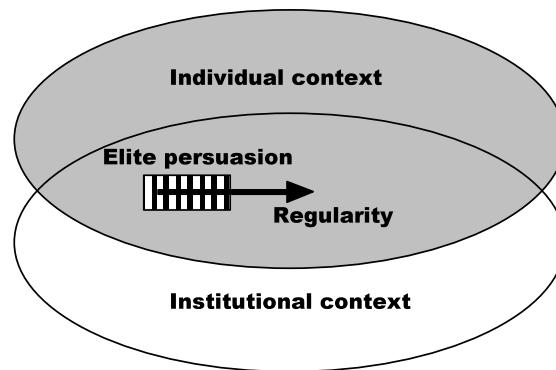
Figure 1. The model.

Presenting the model in such a straightforward way gives a false picture of simplicity though, since all four variables (regularity, elite persuasion, institutional- and individual context) are closely interconnected and impossible to fully separate. It is also important not to forget that even if the model suggests *national identities* to be constantly amendable under the supervision of elites, their fundamental building blocks as well as historical and political events do influence to what speed and extent the changes can be made.

Methodology

Considering the duality of causal explanation and interpretive understanding in the research question, it is not only needed to test the accuracy of the causal

relationships proposed in the model, but also to try to gain an understanding of the individual level processes behind these causal relationships.

Comparative case studies

There are obviously several methodologies, which could cater for these needs, but taking into consideration the outline of the research question and the contemporary context of the research, case study research stands out as particularly suitable (Yin, 1994: 4-9). This type of methodology is also especially appropriate since the regularity under study is impossible to totally disconnect from the mechanism and contexts of the model (Yin, 1993: 3). Case studies also fit the purpose in another important way, since case studies are, "in many ways, ideally suited to the needs and resources of the small-scale researcher"[54] (Blaxter et al., 2001: 71).

As any methodology, case studies in general have not only strengths but also weaknesses. The most common criticism of case studies is their anticipated lack of rigour in which researchers too often have been sloppy and allowed biased data to influence their conclusions (Yin, 1994: 9-10). This is not a weakness of the methodology in itself though, since biases must be dealt with properly[55] regardless of what methodology you use. Another major criticism is that case studies provide little basis for generalisations (ibid: 10), which are of utmost importance when testing models in order to build theory. Case studies can provide plausible analytical generalisations though, but not normally any statistical generalisations[56] (ibid.). The chosen cases are in other words not sampling units, representative to a bigger population, but more like the cases chosen for making experiments. Using several cases, in this sense, is like doing multiple experiments and if "two or more

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[54] This goes against the traditional idea that case studies take too long and end up in massive documents, which can be explained in a misunderstanding that it is the case study methodology in itself that takes time when it more often are the preferred methods of data collection that are time consuming (Yin, 1994: 10-11).

[55] By trying to minimize them or presenting them openly and acting on them depending on your philosophical framework (Hammersley, 2000).

[56] Even the best possible selection of a small number of cases would neither give us a compelling representation nor a statistical basis (Stake, 1998: 101).

cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed" and analytical generalisations made possible (ibid: 31). The purpose of the individual case studies is therefore not to represent the world, but to represent the cases themselves (Stake, 1998: 104).

In order to test if the model is plausible, it is therefore important to test it in several contexts and compare the results (Landman, 2000: 6-9). The obvious downside of a multiple case approach[57] is the increasing demand of time and resources per chosen case. Hence, what is needed is a comparative case study with enough width to be able to test the plausibility of the model, without loosing the particularities of it by looking at too many cases in relation to the time and resources available (ibid: 22-34). It is important to keep in mind though, that while fixing attention upon the few attributes being compared, other important knowledge about the cases may be obscured and forgotten[58] (Stake, 1998: 97).

Testing the model is particularly difficult since the studied regularity as well as the mechanism and contexts are all interconnected and impossible to fully separate. John Stuart Mill proposed five different archetypes of comparison in his "methods of experimental inquiry" (Mill in Llobera, 1998: 78-79), out of which his "joint method of agreement and difference" was deemed particularly powerful. This approach is difficult to strictly apply to test this model though, due to the complexity of relationships between its variables. In order to deal with that I need to mix Mill's "joint method of agreement and difference" with his "method of concomitant variations", and thus use a framework of comparison which not only deals with similarities in variations of the variables, since these can be the results of hidden causes or connections (Llobera, 1998: 79), but also with differences. Hence, in order to test if the model is plausible it is tested in a couple of cases with large domestic support for a *war* (the U.S and Australia), a couple of cases with

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[57] Or collective case study as Stake calls it in his categorisation of intrinsic-, instrumental- and collective case studies (Stake, 1998: 88-89).
[58] Comparison is sometimes viewed as competing with learning about and from a particular case, where comparative description is the opposite of Geertz's "thick description"" (Stake, 1998: 97).

strong public opinions against a *war* (France and Spain) and one case with more ambiguous public opinions (the U.K).

Due to the complexity of the model with four variables[59], to focus on all features of it would require much time and resources. Since the importance of the institutional context already is well researched, as presented in the *Theoretical background*, controlling for that makes the empirical study a lot less daunting without considerably lowering the validity of the model, only its applicability.

From variables to indicators

In order to test the model empirically while ensuring a sufficient degree of validity, I need to develop a suitably set of indicators for the variables in the model (Yin, 1994: 34-35). Since the **institutional context** is considered to be controlled for in the choice of cases, that variable is not operationalised even if possible differences may still influence the other indicators.

The regularity: The support for the 2003 *armed conflict* against Iraq is measured by using large international opinion polls. **Elite persuasion:** The model assumes that support for an *armed conflict* within an established *state* is connected to how hegemonic the aggressive elite persuasion becomes in relation to other opinions. Since mass-media is the principal interface between the public and the dominant elite it is not enough to only study the official policy of the latter without looking at how well this is mirrored in what is propagated to the public through mass-media. Hence, to measure the elite persuasion, for or against the *war* in Iraq, a combined indicator is needed. First a study of official statements of the five governments, which are the pinnacle of the dominant elites, is made to get the main trends in their official policies. The results from that are then jointly analysed with the results of a parallel study of the balance of opinions regarding the *war* as propagated in mass-media. It is not only the degree of accordance between the two that is interesting to observe to measure elite persuasion, but also what they stress

in their justifications for their stance as well as the way they do it. E.g. are they underlining the need to go to *war* to protect the public by claiming connections to terrorism or threats from weapons of mass destruction, or do they emphasise the terrible consequences a *war* would have on Iraqi civilians as well as on the peace process in the Middle East etc?

Individual context: When controlling for the institutional context the research automatically focuses on *vulnerability* as a result of physical threats, since *vulnerability* due to more structural restrictions seems to be relatively absent overall in the chosen cases. Weak political institutions on the other hand seem to correlate directly with economic malaise (Hardin, 1995: 179). How this focus on one type of *vulnerability* influences the more general implications of the empirical research is dealt with in the last section of this chapter; *Limitations and delimitations*. The external physical threat that the chosen *states* are under, which facilitates for aggressive elite persuasion, is assumed to come from international terrorism. Since it is impossible for me to measure the real threat in itself, the only way I can get indications of the *vulnerability* in the chosen *states* is to study past attacks.

Methods and sources

When looking at the indicators above it is quite clear that the methods and sources that I have in mind when designing them are primary research of documentary sources. Considering the limited time and resources available, it is preferable to rely on documentary sources of data, since they generally offer faster and cheaper access to data (Hakim, 1987: 24; Kiecolt and Nathan, 1985: 11-12), give a broad coverage and are stable and unobtrusive (Yin, 1994: 80-82). The general drawbacks are on the other hand blocked access (Yin, 1994: 80-82),

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[59] Out of which two are contextual variables, which are difficult to deal with as a result of their large number of possible variations (Pennings et al., 1999: 46-47).

Operational framework

inherent constraints, errors and biases (Hakim, 1987: 24; Kiecolt and Nathan, 1985: 56-71and Yin, 1994: 80-82).

The two large international opinion polls, which are used to indicate the support of the *war* against Iraq in the five cases, were taken before the *war* and right after the fall of the Iraqi regime. There are problems when comparing different opinion polls (e.g. Goot, 2003), which is why the main research is based solely on polls taken by Gallup International on national samples with identical phrasing of the questions, even if they were translated into the official language of the cases in question. The questions were asked, during 2-5 days between January 14-23[60] and between April 30-May 4[61], face-to-face in the U.K and France, over the telephone in the U.S and Australia, and using CATI in Spain. However, the problems of possible inherent biases in the results of the opinion polls (see Goot, 2003) are impossible to get around and may lower the validity of the research. The same is true for the study of the rest of the indicators as well.

To get the main trends in the official policy of the governments, I study official statements made by the heads of the governments as well as their foreign ministers during the last months before the *war*. Presenting only a limited number of statements might supply a biased picture, but it is nonetheless sufficient to get the main trends.

To get the balance of opinions in newspapers just before the opinion polls were taken, it would have been preferable to study all newspapers, but due to restrictions on time and resources I can only study two or three in each case. In order to get the closest picture as possible of the opinions that were propagated to the public at those times, without going through all newspapers, I focus on the ones with the biggest impact. Ranking all newspapers in the five cases after their real impact on public opinion is in itself a task too great for a dissertation like this,

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[60] Between January 15-19 in the U.S, January 17-21 in the U.K, January 22-23 in Australia, January 14-15 in France and January 17-20 in Spain.
[61] Between April 30-May 4 in the U.S, May 2-4 in the U.K, April 30-May 1 in Australia and April 24-25 in France and Spain.

which is why the following assumptions have to be made. Since readership surveys quickly can supply a ranking of the newspapers after how many copies they sell[62], this is assumed to directly translate, through how many readers they have, into their impact on public opinion. It is also not easily possible to quantify any differences in influence between tabloids and broadsheets, which is why both types are assumed to be equal. Since it is hard to obtain paper copies of newspapers that are older than a couple of months, the choices of newspapers are restricted to the ones with a digital archive open for access by non-subscribers. Most newspapers charge money per downloaded article, which is an additional explanation of the restricted material. The selected newspapers are presented in *table 1* below.

Case	Newspaper (incl. rank)	Relative size	# of articles		Type	Political affiliation
			Jan	April		
U.S.A	1. USA Today 3. New York Times 4. Los Angeles Times	1 0,52 0,47	3 7 8		Tabloid Broadsheet Broadsheet	Centre-right (Gov.) Centre-left Centre-left
U.K	1. The Sun 4. Daily Telegraph 8. Guardian	1 0,26 0,14	5 7 16	11 17 22	Tabloid Broadsheet Broadsheet	Labour (Gov.) Right Centre-left
Australia	1. Herald Sun 2. Daily Telegraph 3. Sydney Morning Herald	1 0,79 0,58	7 3 5	12 16 17	Broadsheet Broadsheet Broadsheet	Right Right (Gov.) Centre-right
France	2. Le Monde 3. Le Figaro	0,63 0,52	11 8		Broadsheet Broadsheet	Centre-left Right (Gov.)
Spain	1. El País 2. El Mundo	1 0,69	8 7		Broadsheet Broadsheet	Centre-left Centre-right

Table 1. The chosen newspapers.

To get the trends of the balance of opinions just before the opinion polls were taken, I study the newspapers the day before each opinion poll started: the

[62] For the U.S = Audit Bureau of Circulations, uspolitics.about.com/cs/circulation ; for the U.K = National Readership Survey, www.nrs.co.uk ; for Australia = Roy Morgan Readership Survey, www.fxj.com.au/readershipcirc/Dec02_mediarelease%20final.pdf ; for France = Office de Justification de la Diffusion, www.ojd.com ; for Spain = Oficina de Justificación de la Difusión, www.ojd.es , all accessed on 25-05-2003.

Operational framework

13th of January and the 23rd of April. The results of the two opinion polls only show a change in public opinion for the U.K and to some extent Australia, which together with the restriction on size of this dissertation is why the main focus of the study of the newspapers from the 23rd of April is placed on the British and Australian ones. The biggest selected newspapers in the U.K and in France did not publish any relevant articles on the 13th of January, which is why the day after is selected to get their opinions.

This way of selecting the studied newspapers have some obvious drawbacks though, since it neither take into account the differences in impact between the newspapers in each case, e.g. the Sun with over seven times the readership of the Guardian, which on the other hand published two to three times as many relevant articles, nor their political affiliation (Gov. in *table 1* signifies a close relation to the government). This second problem is of less significance though, since the selection turns out to be a rather balanced in all cases but Australia. When it is tough to fully solve these problems, they may generate biases that may lower the validity of the research. Studying only two issues of 13 newspapers is obviously not a lot to make any sure claims to have tested the model empirically, but if it supports the empirical data gathered in this study, it may be worth further testing. Similar problems arise when looking at past attacks of international terrorism as an indicator for the *vulnerability* of the people in the five established *states*. The biases of the official policy as well as of the various journalists who write in the newspapers are not considered to be a problem though, since it is their impact that is under study in the first place.

Limitations and delimitations

In order to deepen the understanding of the individual level processes responsible for the causal relationships proposed in the model it would be preferable to also conduct qualitative interviews (Bernard, 1995: 208-210 and Trost, 1997), but due to restrictions on time and resources I need to settle for

analysing documentary sources. This limitation does not only restrict the methodology, methods and sources, but also the width and depth of the ones finally used to build theory. Case studies can serve as a foundation for generalisations, but since they focus on specific cases, they must be handled with care[63] (Mikkelsen, 1995: 80). Even when theory is built through analytical generalisations, not statistical ones (Yin, 1994: 30-32), damage may occur if the commitment to create theory is "so strong that the researcher's attention is drawn away from features important for understanding the case itself" (Stake, 1998: 91). The analytical strategy is relying on theoretical propositions, which indeed help to focus the analysis (Yin, 1994: 103-104), but I need to be vigilant in order for it not to become too focused. To build theory, we thus not only need to recognise that case studies allow us to examine how particular sayings and doings are embedded in particular social contexts (Silverman, 1998: 107), but also to recognise that restricting ourselves to a detailed study of a few similar cases does not mean that the contexts of those can be ignored (Blaxter et al., 2001: 72).

This study focuses on why the 2003 *armed conflict* against Iraq received so varied support within the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Spain. These are all considered to be firmly established mature democracies, which gives them some vital similarities compared to the rest of the world, even if there obviously are many differences between them as well[64]. They have all relatively comparable institutions though, as well as similar levels of social and economic development since all are among the most developed countries in the World[65]. The four former of these differ from the rest of the established western democracies in an important way though, due to their tradition of supporting *armed*

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[63] Words of caution, when it comes to making generalisations from case studies, comes from feminists who believe generalisations may even obscure phenomena important to particular groups, and suggest instead to look for specificity and exceptions (e.g. Reinharz, 1992: 174).

[64] E.g. the U.S and Australia are huge former settler societies, 38 and 32 times larger than the U.K, but with vast internal differences in population (U.S's 14 times Australia's) and economic size (U.S's 19 times Australia's). France is more than twice the size of the U.K, but with almost the same population and economic size. Spain is almost as big as France, but with 30% smaller population and half the economic size (*World Factbook*, 2002).

[65] Australia = no 4, USA = no 7, UK (including Northern Ireland) = no 13, France = no 17 and Spain = no 19 in the world, according to UNDP's Human Development Index (*Human Development Report*, 2003).

conflicts abroad even in modern times. The model may reveal additional explanation and understanding, to why these "traditions" seem to linger in some cases while fading in another, which give a suggestion on the role of *nationalism* in the support of *armed conflict* within firmly established *states* in general.

A sharper limitation may exist when it comes to making wider generalisations though, as explanations of misfortune and blame are culturally based (Douglas, 1992: 5-6 and e.g. Becker, 2002: 27) and may influence how well an elite can persuade people that their *vulnerability* and the relevant *hazard* are real and stem from the actions of the adversary. Another possible limitation on making wider generalisations may be the tendency in the West to exaggerate *risks* as a result of the much less familiarity with pain, suffering and death there, than in the developing world (Füredi, 2002).

The focus on firmly established *states* entails an automatic focus on only one type of *vulnerability*, which makes it impossible to make direct inferences from the empirical research to contexts in which *vulnerability* as a result of structural restrictions exists. However, there are already theoretical accounts, as mentioned in the *Theoretical background*, which make a connection between these structural restrictions as well as more direct physical threats, and the support of aggression. This makes it quite possible that what is defined as *vulnerability* may facilitate for aggressive elite persuasion, even outside the context of the empirical research. If so, it would be quite commonsense considering the much greater threats and hardships people are under in many other parts of the world.

4. Empirical study

The following chapter starts of by reporting the results of the empirical study and ends with a discussion about how they relate to theory.

Results

The support for the armed conflict

In spite of the relative similarities between the chosen cases, the people of the U.S, the U.K (excluding Northern Ireland), Australia, France and Spain seemed to view the *war* against Iraq very differently, see *figure 2-5* below. The first three of the following figures are drawn from the large international opinion poll that was taken in January[66] 2003, before the *war*, while the last figure comes from the similar opinion poll that was taken in late April-early May[67] after the fall of the Iraqi regime.

When looking at *figure 2* below, it seems like it was only in the U.S where a substantial group of respondents were in favour of the more unilateral action by America and its allies, which proved to be more or less the case a couple of months later. Clear majorities of the French and the Spanish were against a *war* no matter the circumstances, while a majority of the Australian respondents were for a *war* if sanctioned by the United Nations. The British (excluding Northern Ireland) were heavily divided at this point with almost equal groups against a *war* as for a *war* if sanctioned by the United Nations.

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[66] Between January 15-19 in the U.S, January 17-21 in the U.K, January 22-23 in Australia, January 14-15 in France and January 17-20 in Spain.
[67] Between April 30-May 4 in the U.S, May 2-4 in the U.K, April 30-May 1 in Australia and April 24-25 in France and Spain.

The Empirical study

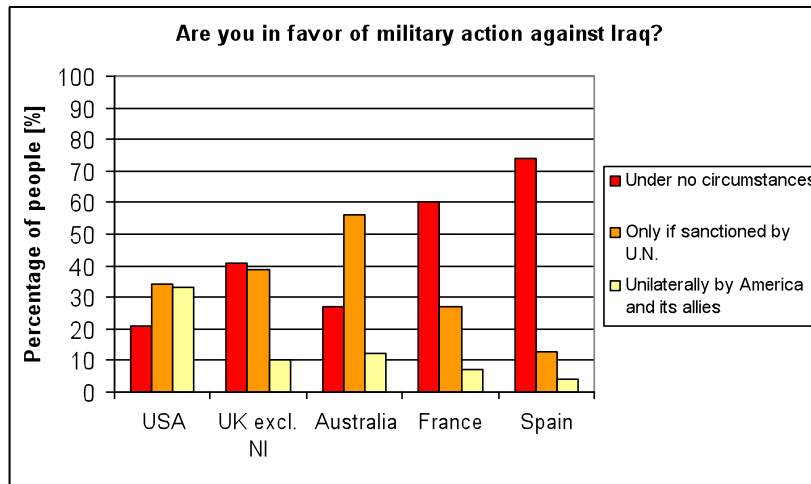**Are you in favor of military action against Iraq?**

Figure 2. In favour of military action against Iraq or not 1, don't know/no opinion answers excluded (Gallup International, 2003a).

The *war* did take place without a new U.N-resolution and was therefore only sanctioned by the U.N-resolution 1441[68]. The participating *states* held that resolution to be sufficient to sanction their actions though, which makes it difficult to see in the opinion poll what kind of support the *war* really had. To get some indication of the support, I added up the categories in which a *war* was favoured under some circumstances and I have presented the result in *figure 3* below. This may exaggerate the support for a *war* as some respondents are likely to disagree with the sufficiency of the U.N-resolution 1441, but it is still sufficient to distinguish the main trends in the five cases.

Vast majorities of the French and the Spanish were obviously still against a *war*, while it seems like similar majorities in favour of a *war* were to be found in the U.S and Australia. The British (excluding Northern Ireland) seem to have been undecided, since the slight tendency towards favouring a *war* may as well come from the overestimation in the assumption above.

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[68] Taken unanimously in the Security Council on the 8th of November, 2002.
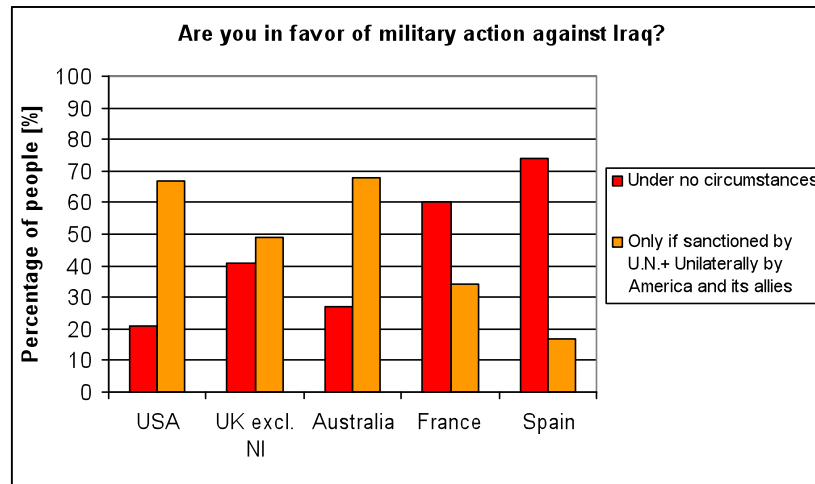
***Figure 3. In favour of military action against Iraq or not 2, don't know/no opinion
answers excluded (Gallup International, 2003a).***

This assumption seems to be quite accurate though, when looking at the
opinions regarding supporting a *war* if it did start, see *figure 4* below.

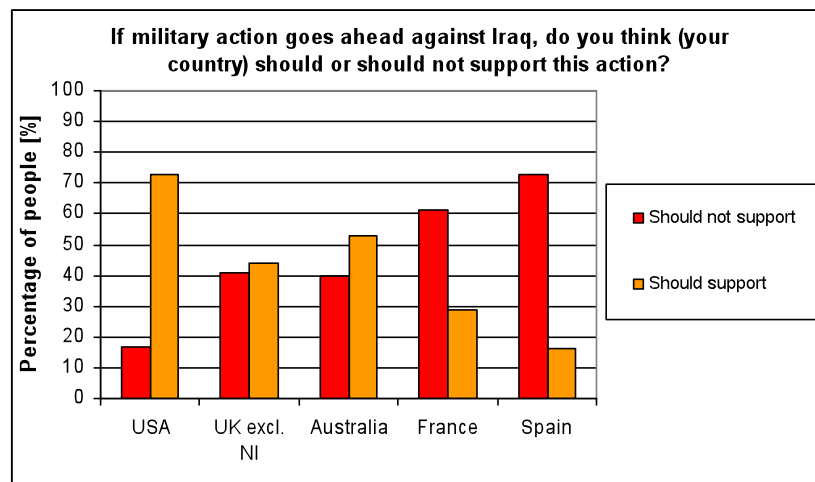***Figure 4. Support of military operation, don't know/no opinion answers excluded
(Gallup International, 2003a).***

The results of the question of support if military action did go ahead were
roughly the same as the results in *figure 3*, with only one major difference. The
Australian respondents seem to have been more reluctant to support military action

if the *war* started than to generally favour it under any circumstances. This difference may stem from the phrasing of the question, which may connote direct military support that possibly puts some respondents of as a result of the possibility of Australian casualties. There was still a majority of the Australian respondents who believed Australia should have supported military action though, if such would go ahead.

The *war* against Iraq did go ahead, and even if the U.S supplied the main bulk of deployments, the U.K did its share invading and controlling southern Iraq, as did Australia but to a lesser extent with no major ground forces in action. After the fall of the Iraqi regime, a second international opinion poll regarding the *war* was taken examining, among other things, the opinions about if the military action was justified or not, see *figure 5* below.
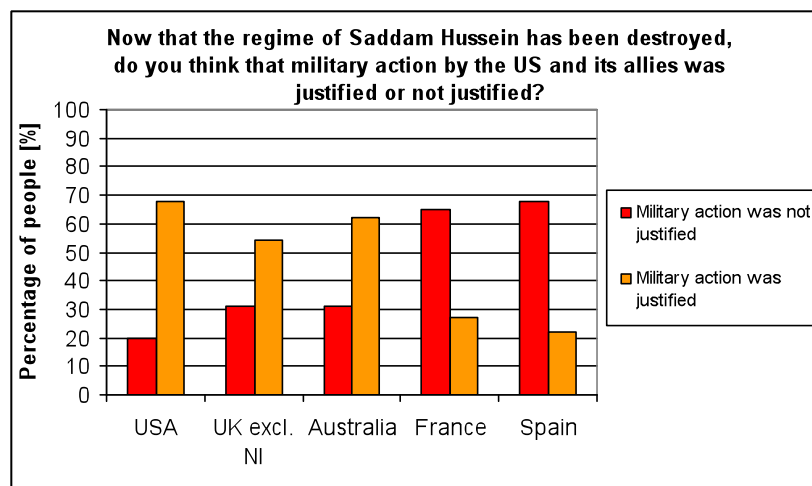
Figure 5. Justified military action or not, don't know/no opinion answers excluded (Gallup International, 2003b).

Looking at the trends in the results and comparing them with the trends in the opinions among the respondents of the earlier opinion poll in *figure 3-4*, one major change had occurred. A majority of the British respondents (excluding Northern Ireland) did this time support the view that the *war* was justified. Vast majorities of the French and the Spanish still regarded the *war* as unjustified, while

46

a similar majority of the American respondents continued to believe the opposite. The percentage of the Australian respondents who viewed the *war* as justified was back up at similar levels as in *figure 3* regarding if they generally favoured a *war* under any circumstances or not.

Political and cultural explanations

There are obviously several ways of interpreting the underlying reasons for these statistics. Some people may think that they are totally random, while others may stress the importance of cultural differences or differences in the political climate of the five *states*.

A quite commonsense explanation to the diverse results may be that strong support for a government automatically entails strong support for *armed conflict*, if that is the official governmental policy. There may be a connection between the support for a government and the support for *armed conflict*, but when looking at some of the cases, the former seems to be less causal for the latter than vice versa. In France, for instance, Jacques Chirac enjoyed very low support before the Iraqi crisis and was simplistically speaking only re-elected because his final competitor was Jean Marie Le Pen, an extreme rightwing hardliner who was even less popular among the French public. The popularity of the French president rose dramatically though, and 92% of the population seemed to be behind his stance when it was clear that France would not support the *war* (*Huge support…,* 2003).

In the U.S, on the other hand, 61% of the American public approved of George W. Bush's performance as the president while 34% disapprove at the time of the first international opinion poll[69] (*Presidential…,* 2003). This jumped dramatically to 71% vs. 25% as soon as the *war* was about to start[70] (ibid.). The American president has actually had more or less continuously falling approval ratings since he came into office, with only two major exceptions; the start of the *war* against Iraq and the 9/11-attacks with the subsequent *war* in Afghanistan when

[69] January 13-16, 2003.

the approval rating jumped from a rock bottom 51% approved and 39% disapproved, just before the attacks[71], to an all time record, since the ratings started with Franklin D. Roosevelt in office, of 90% vs. 6%[72] (ibid.). Similar, but less extreme results are found overall for the Republican Party (*Opinions of…*, 2003). In other words, the support for the French and American leaders seem to be connected to their policies, but only if they coincide with public opinion. A rather different conclusion may be drawn when looking at Spain though.

The Spanish government was quick to support a *war* against Iraq, even if the Spanish results in the opinion polls show that a vast majority of the Spanish respondents were against a *war*. The Spanish president, José María Aznar, still seemed to enjoy large support form the Spanish public in January, 2003, when 92,6% said that they valued him as a political leader, and his party had then only lost 1,2% of its support since October, 2002 (*Barómetro…*,2003).

Therefore, strong support of a government does not automatically mean strong support for *armed conflict*, even if it is governmental policy. Any connection must be more complex than that.

Another set of explanations of the different opinions regarding the *war* against Iraq stress the importance of cultural differences in the chosen cases. These explanations are rather common in everyday discussions and mass-media, and state for instance that "the American public are always keen on fighting *wars*", while "the French always act against the Americans and the British and cannot be trusted".

Cultural differences have already played a role in singling out Spain from the other four cases, since it has not the same tradition in modern times of fighting *wars* abroad. Looking at opinion polls in the end of 2001, regarding the *war* in Afghanistan, the Spanish respondents seem to show some consistency in their opposition to foreign *wars* as roughly half of the respondents disagreed with the

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[70] March 22-23, 2003.
[71] September 7-10, 2001.

military action while only a third agreed with it (Gallup International, 2002). But are cultural differences sufficient to explain the differences in opinions among all the cases?

The public opinion in the U.S did strongly support the *war* in Afghanistan, with 88% of the respondents agreeing with the military action and 6% disagreeing in the end of 2001 (ibid.), but what is interesting to note is for another major military intervention in recent years the figures were very different. In February, 1999, only 43% favoured the American involvement in the NATO-intervention in Kosovo while 45% opposed it[73] (*On the Crisis...*, 1999), which is even less support than the Spanish had with a majority of the respondents agreeing[74] with the Spanish participation in the operation (*Global Reaction...*, 1999).

The most interesting case when it comes to cultural explanations of the results in the opinion polls, regarding the *war* against Iraq, is France. The French unwillingness to support this *war* can neither be explained by a lack of tradition of supporting *wars* abroad, nor by the more common idea that the French always act against the Americans and the British. There was a vast support in France (73% vs. 20%), in the end of 2001, for the military action in Afghanistan (Gallup International, 2002) and so was it also for the NATO-intervention in Kosovo (*Global Reaction...*, 1999). Even if the French may have a tendency of wanting to do things their own way, they have certainly been "bad-weather friends" to the U.S and the U.K in the past and supported them when things were really important (Friedman, 2002). Hence, cultural differences may be important in explaining support for the *war* against Iraq, but not in as straightforward as generally believed.

Elite persuasion

Looking at the official policy of the five governments, it is quite clear that the French stands out as different from the other four since it was doing everything

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[72] September 21-22, 2001.

[73] The American support did grow though, but the majority of the American respondents still opposed sending ground troops (*On the Crisis in Kosovo*, 1999).

[74] In April 12-14.

else but advocating a *war* against Iraq. Its role on the international arena concerning the *war* was not as an unwilling bystander, but more of the leader of the opposition against it. Regardless of its motives for doing so, it propagated a view that what matters was disarmament which would have been accomplished through inspections (e.g. Ministère des Affaires étrangères, 2003a-c). When the inspectors' demand for more time to accomplish their task was denied and the *war* started, members of France's National Assembly denounced the *war* as "illegitimate" and "dangerous" (*Huge support…*, 2003). A similar view was given by President Chirac on the same day, when he stated that the *war* was initiated without United Nations backing, that the necessary disarmament could have been obtained by peaceful means and that the conflict that now was "bathing the world in blood" would have "consequences for the future" (Chirac, 2003). However, while the French did all it could to oppose the *war*, the governments of the U.S, the U.K, Australia and Spain were all so busy doing the exact opposite.

First of all, the continuous French view, that disarmament would have been accomplished through inspections, was clearly considered to be out of place by the U.S administration after the presentation by the chief inspectors' on February 14. When the American Secretary of State delivered his remarks on it to the Security Council, he made clear that the U.S considered the not fully cooperative Iraq to be in material breach of resolution 1441 and that it was time to consider serious consequences of the kind intended in the resolution (Powell, 2003). The reason for the pressing concern was a depiction of a future attack in which terrorists use weapons of mass destruction supplied by Iraq (ibid.). The official policy of the U.S, that the *war* was necessary to protect America and the world from international terrorism, is also easily found in the annual presidential State of the Union Address*,* where more than half of the speech was devoted to security issues regarding terrorism and "outlaw regimes", and half of that to Iraq (*State of the Union Address*, 2003). Connections between these regimes and terrorists are here portrayed as the gravest danger facing America and the world, and claims of

evidence that the Iraqi regime was aiding and protecting terrorists, including the al-Qaeda, were a reoccurring theme (ibid.). When focusing on Iraq, it was not only the threat posed by its regime on the outside that was a concern but also the conditions of the Iraqi people within. The use of chemical weapons on its own citizens and methods of torture used in Iraq were brought up stating that "[i]f this is not evil, then evil has no meaning" (ibid.). Americans, on the other hand, were viewed as "a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation", and that "we [Americans] sacrifice for the liberty of strangers" (ibid.).

The Australian Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs wielded very similar rhetoric against Iraq as their American counterparts, with some differences in tone though. In addition to pointing out Saddam Hussein's track record of aggression, both against his neighbours (e.g. Howard, 2003a) and the citizens of Iraq (e.g. Howard, 2003a and Downer, 2003), claiming that a new Rwanda, Bosnia or Kosovo was likely to happen if he was not disarmed (Downer, 2003), the Australian government presented a more general concern regarding weapons of mass destruction. If the world failed to deal with Iraq, it would have given a green light to the further spread of these weapons as others would have been "encouraged to flout the international conventions on arms control" and thus undermined treaties and conventions in which so much work had been invested over the last three decades or so (Howard, 2003a). It did not only express concern about the greater risk of use if more *states* possessed these weapons, but even more so about the growing likelihood of them falling into the hands of terrorists if their numbers proliferated (ibid.). The Australian government also claimed that Iraq had a long history of training and supporting regional terrorist groups (Howard, 2003a and Downer, 2003), which magnified these concerns in the light of the rise of international terrorism (Howard, 2003a). The 9/11-attacks and attack on Bali are mentioned several times in this context and it is stated that "[t]he atrocity in Bali demonstrated something Australia had never fully understood until then – that we

are truly vulnerable" – and that "[w]e understand the danger of leaving threats unaddressed" (ibid.). The special relationships with the U.S and Britain are also mentioned and implied on several occasions (ibid.).

Even if the outcome of the British policy on Iraq was the same as the American and Australian ones, the accentuation of the reasons behind it was somewhat different. The plight of the Iraqi people under Saddam's regime was mentioned in a similar manner (e.g. Blair, 2003), as was Saddam's uniquely dangerous combination of capability and intent to use weapons of mass destruction (e.g. Straw, 2003), but the main basis for the British official policy was legalistic (e.g. Blair, 2003). This legalistic line of reasoning argued that since April 3, 1991, when the Security Council passed its first resolution (687) demanding Iraq to destroy its weapons of mass destruction, until resolution 1441 was passed and beyond, the Iraqi regime was continuously defying the resolutions. It was thus soon time to implement them by force or the will of the international community would have been set at nothing (ibid.). Even if it was hard for the British to claim to have evidence for Iraqi connections with al-Qaeda, they did speculate that the most likely source of materials and know-how for such terrorists to obtain weapons of mass destruction were "rogue regimes" (Straw, 2003). The Iraqi regime was claimed to have a long history of supporting terrorist causes though, as it sheltered Abu Nidal for many years (ibid.). However, the members of the British cabinet had very strong differences in opinions about this *war*. These were presented publicly and led to the resignation of several ministers who continued to present their points of view after resignation (e.g. Tempest, 2003; Hutton and Ahmed, 2003; *Short remains…*, 2003 and *Cook calls…*, 2003).

The main trends in the Spanish official policy, as put forward by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, are strikingly similar to that of their British counterparts. The main focus was on the same legalistic argument regarding a material breach of international law (e.g. Aznar, 2003 and Vallelersundi, 2003), even if the Spanish Prime Minister dwelled on the Iraqi regime's connections with

terrorism to a greater extent than the British (Aznar, 2003). This connection was, according to him, no fantasy or science fiction and no responsible leader could after the 11th of September, 2001, ignore this reality (ibid.). Especially not since there where ties to groups like Abu Nidal, Mujahedin-e Khalq, Ansar al Islam and Abu Abbas (ibid.). Saddam Hussein was also claimed to be known to be generous when compensating the families of the suicide-bombers of Hamas (ibid.).

The main trends in the official policies of the governments are quite straightforward to study, but what about the balance of opinions in the selected newspapers? The results for the newspapers from around the first opinion poll are presented first for all five cases before dealing with the later editions.

It is rather easy to find the main trend in the French opinions, as there were 19 articles mentioning Iraq in the two selected French newspapers and none advocated or supported a *war*. These anti-*war* attitudes were even clearly visible in the articles regarding economy, where a *war* against Iraq was viewed to be a threat to the relatively strong French economy with growing unemployment as a result (e.g. *Les diplômés…*, 2003). A *war* was also held to negatively influence the peace plan between Israel and Palestine (Prier, 2003) as well as the general relations between the west and Islam (e.g. *Opposé à…*, 2003 and Darmet, 2003). A focus was also put on the resistance against the policies of the U.S (*Cinq mille…*, 2003) and the U.K (Duplouich, 2003) within those *states* themselves, but the main focus was placed on questionable reasons for a *war* and its terrible consequences (e.g. *Les pays…*, 2003). It was clearly stated that the possible *war* was without a U.N-mandate (e.g. *Cent cinquante…*, 2003), no evidence of weapons of mass destruction had been found (e.g. *Bientôt cent…*, 2003) and it was questioned if the Iraqi regime was in material breach of resolution 1441 at all (e.g. Jarreau, 2003 and Turlin, 2003). Some articles went further though, calling the U.S foreign policy imperialistic (e.g. Lang, 2003). Another focus was put on the French concern for the importance of the European Union (Bollaert, 2003) and the apparent need for a stronger union with mutual foreign policy (*La Convention…*, 2003).

The Empirical study

The main trends in the opinions in the two Spanish newspapers were similar to the French but less aggressive. There were 15 relevant articles and none supported a *war*. Setting aside the articles regarding economy, oil prices as well as North Korea, which was considered more dangerous than Iraq (*Corea del…*, 2003), two main focal points appear. One was the claimed need for a year to achieve the aims of the inspections (e.g. *Un portavoz…*, 2003 and *Aliados de…*, 2003), which make the *war* seem rushed and unnecessary. The other main Spanish focus was the terrible consequences a *war* would have on the Iraqi people (*La guerra…*, 2003). There were articles about American students protesting in Iraq against the *war*, visiting the bomb shelter were 400 Iraqi civilians were killed in the first Gulf War (*Los estudiantes…*, 2003), as well as about the condemnation of the possible *war* by the Pope who viewed it as a defeat for humanity (*El Papa…*, 2003). An extensive article discussed the possibility of a growing split between the U.S and Europe though, what consequences that could have and how that should be dealt with (Solana, 2003).

When reading through the three selected American newspapers a sharp break in opinions from the French and Spanish is apparent in the relevant articles. 18 articles mentioned Iraq on January 13, and none opposed or questioned the *war*. One article put forward the different views in the Security Council regarding the timeframe for the inspections as laid down in resolution 1441, but not taking side with any opinion (Preston, 2003). There were articles criticising proposed wartime tax cuts though (Webber, 2003 and Brownstein, 2003), as well as an article presenting concern for coming problems with the growing U.S interest in West African oil (Vieth, 2003), but the main trend in the opinions about the *war* itself was quite clear. Major foci were on the military build-up around Iraq (e.g. Squitieri, 2003 and *Four Navy Vessels Ship Out…,* 2003) and possible delays of the *war* schedule (e.g. Diamond, 2003 and Squitieri, 2003). However, the question in these articles was not if the *war* would start, but when. One article revealed terrorist threats to American troops deploying to the Persian Gulf and gave an

54

example on preventative measures taken by the armed services (Shanker, 2003). Another main focus of the selected newspapers was on the conditions for the people within Iraq. Two extensive articles described in detail the conditions of the Kurds in northern Iraq, how families were destroyed when they were gassed by Saddam Hussein in ´88, leaving not only death but a legacy of birth defects and cancer (Fleishman, 2003), and how they were now faced with another peril as well in the Islamic extremists controlling a wild and isolated hinterland (Chivers, 2003 and Fleishman, 2003). This group, Ansar al Islam, was portrayed in these articles as imposing a Taliban-like rule over the people on its territory and as having close links to al-Qaeda. Connections were also made in the articles between the rise of the Islamic movement and the appalling conditions of the Kurds under Saddam Hussein (Fleishman, 2003), foreign supported mosques (ibid.) and the supposed support of Ansar al Islam by Iran (Chivers, 2003). Freedom from Saddam Hussein and peace were not only implied as the blessing for the Kurds, but more generally, for Iraqis involved in private businesses, in another article about the devastation that *wars* and sanctions have wrought for the once so famous Iraqi date production (MacFarquhar, 2003).

Reading the Australian newspapers yet a different picture emerges. Only 15 articles mentioned Iraq, four of which were based on letters from readers and three others focused on the influence of the North Korean crisis on the Australian dollar (Noack, 2003a; Noack, 2003b and Rochfort, 2003). There were no extensive articles dealing with the *war* of the length found in the other four cases, and even if there were articles dealing in different ways with the Australian military build-up (Labi, 2003; Metherell, 2003 and *Nuclear action call*, 2003), the main focus was put on the actions of the U.S and the U.K (e.g. Burns, 2003 and Wilson, 2003). However, when dealing with the Australian involvement the articles supplied a picture that the political opposition did not question the tough policy against Iraq as such, only why North Korea did not get the same attention (*Nuclear action call,* 2003 and Metherell, 2003). There were articles dealing with the opposition against

The Empirical study

a *war* though (Labi, 2003), and one suggested that a *war* would only fuel the terrorism the government had made its new security priority (Wright-Neville, 2003). In contrast to that, another article put forward a view that demanding no strikes against Iraq and verbally condemning the U.S, as the often so young anti-*war* movement frequently did, was a way of thinking that would not bring long-term peace (Hansen, 2003). A world where the U.S did not exert any authority would be a world with far less of the qualities that these young Australians held so dear (ibid.).

This argument, for or against supporting a *war* against Iraq, was much more pronounced and heavily debated in the selected British newspapers, with a broad width of opinions in the 28 articles mentioning Iraq. Setting aside the articles on North Korea, economy and American tax cuts, the main focuses could be seen as put on three different groups of articles. One group constituted of articles putting forward the ambiguity of the situation through the need for more time for inspections (e.g. Rennie, 2003a; Helm, 2003 and *Iraq weapons inspectors…,* 2003), or the dissent within the cabinet and Labour for the possible *war* (e.g. Helm, 2003 and White, 2003). The urgency of, or reasons for a *war* were thus questioned, which rendered uncertainty to the reader. The second group of articles presented deployments and official statements without engaging with, or questioning, them and thus, willingly or unwillingly, propounded the official policy to the public (e.g. Oliver, 2003; Campbell and Norton-Taylor, 2003 and Rennie, 2003b). The third group of articles openly advocated a tough line that ultimately would lead to *war*. It tried to persuade the reader that a *war* would be justified either by ending the immeasurable Human Rights violations going on in Iraq (*Iraq pitch*, 2003), through Saddam's continuous defiance of Security Council resolutions (*Nothing like Suez*, 2003) or because Saddam Hussein was a "tyrant dictator" and a "sinister sponsor of terror" with an "arsenal of hideous weapons" (Kavanagh, 2003a). This latter type of justification was the most frequent and filled all the relevant articles published in, the by far biggest British newspaper, the

56

Sun (e.g. *Just belt up*, 2003). One article, called "Fight, or live in fear", claimed that Blair warned the world that it "must beat Saddam Hussein or face "death and destruction on a mass scale"" (Kavanagh, 2003b), while another attacked the opposition against *war* calling them "useless idiots" and to stand "with the terrorists" (Littlejohn, 2003). The latter wholeheartedly backed the American President, while going through the case for *war*, and even claimed that "Saddam's fingerprints are all over the first attempt to blow up the World Trade Center" (ibid.). However, in very sharp contrast to these last accounts there was also an article published in the Guardian that questioned the rightfulness of the West to intervene in order to bring democracy to Iraq, when the West could be seen as its real enemy in the Muslim world through western support of other autocrats (Bodi, 2003).

When reading the newspapers from the 23rd of April, very similar pictures come forward except in the U.K and Australia. Even if the biggest part of the 50 British, together with one of 45 Australian, articles mentioning Iraq was placed on George Galloway's dubious dealings in Iraq and smaller parts in both cases dealt with economy and North Korea, the new balances of opinions regarding the *war* against Iraq tilted heavily towards justifying it.

In the U.K the number of casualties so far was published, setting it to 132 U.S and 32 U.K personnel (21 and 22 non-combat deaths) and about 2320 Iraqi military (coalition estimate) and between 1252 and 2325 civilians (different Iraqi estimates) (*Casualties so far,* 2003). Even if there were a small number of articles questioning either the motives for the *war* ('*Occupation was…,* 2003) or the evidence of weapons of mass destruction (Young et al., 2003), the biggest focus was placed on two types of articles. The first tried to tap into nationalist emotions by stating that "Blair's courage put the pride back into Britain" (*Blair's courage…,* 2003), saluting St George role for the armed forces (Whitaker and Maxwell, 2003, English edition) or addressing the heroic deaths of soldiers who fought for their country (e.g. Carson, 2003; Cramb, 2003; Hogan, 2003 and Reynolds, 2003). The

second dealt with how horrible Saddam Hussein's regime had been, e.g. how the secret police assassinated political and religious opponents (Smucker, 2003), how Shiites now were free to celebrate their martyr after 30 years of repression (MacAskill, 2003 and *Thousands pay homage…,* 2003), and how warm the welcome of American officials was among Kurds (Howard, 2003b). One article suggested though, that the massive Shiite festivities not only represented feelings of liberation but an expression of political and social grievances that had begun to transform into political demands that rejected occupation (Mahdi, 2003).

These two main types of articles dominated the Australian newspapers as well, but with a slightly different content. Muslims celebrating the formerly banned ritual were mentioned though (*General sets…*, 2003), and so was the warm Kurdish welcome of the head of Iraqi reconstruction (*General Garner's…*, 2003) who was pictured as a liberator (*'Liberator' Garner…*, 2003). This idea of the liberation of Iraq was propounded in other articles (e.g. *This man…*, 2003), while a lot of focus was put on American and Australian efforts to reconstruct Iraq (e.g. *Iraq job…*, 2003 and *Hidden planes…*, 2003). The Australian newspapers also gave a vile picture of Saddam's regime as driven by violence (e.g. *Barber's tale…*, 2003) and greed (e.g. *Treasures of Saddam's…,* 2003). Australia had no casualties in the *war*, but there were still articles inspiring national feelings, bringing up welcome back parades for the troops (*Howard trumpets…*, 2003), a glorifying story about a "modern warrior" (*Our new age…*, 2003) and the prediction of record turnout for Anzac day (*Record numbers…*, 2003). The part of these latter coming festivities that was to be taken place in Gallipoli was said to be targeted by terrorists and that precautionary measures were taken (*Gallipoli a…*, 2003 and *Terrorist threat…*, 2003). There was an almost marginalised part of the articles that questioned the evidence of weapons of mass destruction (*Fake papers…*, 2003), as well as the mainstream view of life in Baghdad (*Moving insight…*, 2003).

Vulnerability

When looking at past attacks of international terrorism as an indicator for the *vulnerability* of the people in the five established *states*, one of the cases differs significantly from the others. Even if the Spanish have experience of domestic terrorists, most notably ETA's (Euskadi ta azkatasuna) separatist struggle for the Basque Country, they have not had any significant incidents of international terrorism within their territory (*Chronology of…*, 2002). There were no recorded Spanish casualties in the 9/11-attacks or in the Bali-bombings either.

These two main pre-*war* terrorist attacks did claim the lives of three French citizens (*September 11 victims*, 2002 and *Bali death toll…*, 2002) and unlike Spain, France has been directly targeted by international terrorism several times during the last decades. 170 people died in a bombing of a French plane over Niger in 1989 by Libyan terrorists (*No solution…*, 2003). In 1994, an Air France aeroplane was hijacked in Algiers by four terrorists from the GIA (Armed Islamic Group). The incident ended in a storming of the plane in Marseille by anti-terrorist police, but after the 9/11-attacks, intelligence sources explained that these hijackers had intended to use the plane as a bomb to attack Paris and that the GIA was known to have had links with al-Qaeda (Le Quesne, 2001). France was also struck, in the summer of 1995, by a terror campaign of eight bombings, which left seven dead and over 130 injured (ibid.) and also in December 1996, when a bomb exploded aboard a Paris subway train killing 4 and injuring 86 persons.

The British have been under attack by terrorists on many occasions if you count the attacks related to the domestic turmoil on Northern Ireland. The U.K has also been targeted by international terrorism, but not significantly since the bomb on Pan Am Flight 103 killed 270 people over and in Lockerbie in 1988 (*Lockerbie*, 2002). 19 people were injured in July 1994 though, when car bombs exploded outside the Israeli embassy and a Jewish organisation (*Chronology of…*, 2002). However, 67 British citizens were killed in the 9/11 attacks (*September 11 victims*, 2002) and the Bali-bombings claimed 26 British lives (*U.K. service…*, 2003). This

renders the U.K as the second hardest hit *state* in the world in terms of casualties in both incidents (*September 11 victims*, 2002 and *Bali death toll…*, 2002), even if the attacks took place far away from Britain.

Australians have not been used to be targets of international terrorism in the same way as the French, British and Americans, but that changed on the 12th of October, 2002. One Australian died in the 9/11-attacks the year before (*September 11 victims*, 2002), but that was nothing compared to the Bali-bombings with a death toll of 88 Australian citizens (*A tragic year…*, 2003). This was viewed as the single worst blow against Australia since the Japanese bombardment during World War II (*Australians want…*, 2002).

Americans have been under attack by terrorists on several occasions during the last decade, e.g. the 1994 bomb at the World Trade Center, which left six dead and some one thousand injured, and the 1998 Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 301 people and wounded thousands, mainly Kenyans and Tanzanians though (*Chronology of…*, 2002). America has also had its own domestic terrorists, such as the Oklahoma bomber, but what happened on the 11th of September, 2001, is unprecedented both in scale and in repercussions for the future. The American homeland was suddenly under attack by a foreign force again, and the parallels with the attack on Pearl Harbor were rapidly drawn (e.g. *World mourns…*, 2001). 2902 Americans died in the 9/11 attacks (*September 11 victims*, 2002), but a great many more were directly affected through the loss of family and friends. Americans suddenly felt directly targeted no matter where they lived within the borders of their own country. The spread of anthrax through mail, which soon started to be known to the public, reified these feelings. Since then, but before the *war* against Iraq, there have been terrorist attacks against U.S military abroad as well as seven American civilian deaths in the Bali-bombings (*U.S. Interests…*, 2003).

Discussion

In order to analyse the results of the empirical study I have simplified the trends in opinions regarding the *war* against Iraq to **For**, **Against** or **Ambiguous,** see *table 2* below. It is important to remember though, these are only the main trends that could be identified and there might have been substantial, but yet less significant, alternative opinions when looking at the empirical material in full. So how does the model fit the empirical material?

Case	Public opinion	Official policy	Focus in newspapers	Int. terrorist attacks
U.S.A	For	**For**, (1) connection with int. terrorism, (2) liberate Iraqis	**For**, (1) *war* schedule, (2) terrible conditions for Iraqis	**Targeted** '01, extreme consequences
U.K	Jan 13: **Ambiguous** Apr 23: **For**	**For**, (1) legalistic, (2) terrible conditions for Iraqis,(3) possible future connection with int. terrorism	Jan 13: **Ambiguous**, with heavy debate, (1) tough line, (2) questioning the *war*'s urgency or reasons, (3) not questioning official policy Apr 23: **For**, (1) nationalist feelings, (2) terrible conditions for Iraqis before	**Targeted** '88, serious consequences
Australia	For	**For**, (1) connection with int. terrorism, (2) spread of WMD, (3) terrible conditions for Iraqis	Jan 13: **Ambiguous**, weak debate, focus on U.S/U.K Apr 23: **For**, (1) liberation and reconstruction of Iraq, (2) glorifying Australian forces	**Targeted** '02, serious consequences
France	**Against**	**Against**, (1) more inspections, (2) terrible consequences	**Against**, (1) illegitimate *war*, (2) terrible consequences	**Targeted** '89, serious- and '94-96, minor consequences
Spain	**Against**	**For**, (1) legalistic, (2) connections with int. terrorism	**Against**, (1) terrible consequences for civilians, (2) more inspections	**Never targeted**

Table 2. The results of the empirical study.

The opinions of the dominant elite and the majority of the public were only coherent in three cases: the U.S, France and Australia. The latter was somewhat

different though, with a more ambiguous pre-*war* press compared to the much closer match between newspapers and official policies of the other two. The debate in the Australian newspapers was weak at that time, and it seems that the minds of the majority of the Australian people were already set on supporting a tough line. This difference evaporated in the April editions, when the ambiguity of the Australian newspapers was replaced almost exclusively by pro-*war* news. The dominant elites in the U.K and Spain both advocated the *war*, but had bigger problems to persuade the Spanish and the pre-*war* British public to support it. The British newspapers then propounded highly divided opinions, even if the balance in opinions tilted slightly in favour of the tough line heavily advocated by the Sun (tabloid, 20% of the readership in Britain) which is known to have strong bonds to Labour (*Yelland 'not given…*, 2003). The ambiguity of the British newspapers abruptly stopped at the start of the *war* though, and was transformed into a steady stream of pro-*war* opinions. British public opinion also shifted and, after the fall of the Iraqi regime, the majority of the British public supported the *war*. The public opinion in Spain remained strongly against the *war*, even though the then relatively popular Spanish government did all it could to persuade the public to support a tougher line. These more aggressive ideas were never advocated, but continuously opposed in the newspapers.

The empirical material does not clearly indicate if it was only the dominant elites who were influencing the public through the newspapers or more of an interaction. The combination of the official policy and the main trends in opinions in the newspapers seems to be connected with the public opinion regarding the *war* though.

It is very interesting to note that it is only in the U.K, and then mostly in the pre-*war* editions, where the political affiliation of the newspapers easily could be traced to their opinions regarding the *war*. The Australian pre-*war* newspapers were internally ambiguous and the newspapers of the rest of the cases tilted heavily either in favour of the *war* (U.S.A, and post-*war* Australia and U.K) or against the

war (France and Spain). A reason for this may be that it was only in the U.K where the battle over public opinion was yet to be settled. This was most likely connected to another factor that singles out the U.K as different from the others: the open display of dissent towards the official policies within the dominant elite itself in form of rebellions within Labour as well as within the cabinet.

When studying where the focus of the elite persuasion was on in the different cases, three main groups emerge: U.S.A/Australia, U.K/Spain and France. The successful efforts of elite persuasion in the U.S and Australia were both centred on two arguments. The primary one was the need to protect the public against international terrorism and the use of weapons of mass destruction. Two pieces that was viewed as coming together in Iraq, which regime was accused of having weapons of mass destruction as well as aiding international terrorists. The other main argument was the terrible conditions of Iraqis under Saddam Hussein. These two arguments were also used as secondary arguments in Spain and the U.K, while the main emphasis was put on a legalistic argument that it was time to act because the Iraqi regime had continuously defied its obligations in numerous U.N-resolutions.

The most obvious reason for this difference of focus was the recent terrorist attacks on the American East Coast and on Bali. Terrible attacks that were portrayed as directly aimed against Americans and Australians. These were targeted against places that most people could relate to since they struck within the borders of the U.S and in a place that so many ordinary Australians had spent their holidays for decades. The feelings that these attacks wrought to so many were influencing the support of the *war* against Iraq due to the carryover effect even if this *war* was vaguely related to the creating events (e.g. Lerner et al., 2003 and Hearn, 2001: 25). The politics of *vulnerability* is powerful if you want to direct public opinion (e.g. Douglas, 1992: 13 and Lerner et al., 2003) and it is clearly visible in the elite persuasion of the American and Australian public. The U.K and Spain, on the other hand, have not experienced comparable incidents that could

have been equally interpreted, which is why the emphasis of the elite persuasion there turned out to be rather different.

Although the U.K was attacked by international terrorism over Lockerbie with serious consequences, this attack could not be used to increase the British experience of *vulnerability* in the same way, since it happened 15 years ago and was not actively kept alive in public discourse. Even if the British were heavily hit by these more recent attacks as well, they were not sufficient to evoke a widely spread experience of *vulnerability* since they took place far away from most British citizens. Going to the other side of the world and "exposing" yourself to the threat is a voluntary action, which gives a sense of personal control to most Britons and thus made them relatively less averse to the *risk* of international terrorism (Otway and von Winterfeldt, 1982). On the other hand, when the public was told of the threat of attacks within the U.K, as they were quite frequently in the last months before the *war*, e.g. the discovery of a ricin factory in London (e.g. Hopkins and Branigan, 2003) or the threat of a missile attack on Heathrow (e.g. Hopkins et al., 2003), anxiety spread.

While all of the other dominant elites advocated the *war*, the French did everything they could to oppose it. The French were nevertheless attacked by international terrorism several times within France, even during the mid-90s. The impact of these attacks, as well as previous ones, did not seem to influence public opinion regarding the *war* against Iraq though, since they were, if mentioned at all, not brought up to exaggerate the *risk* of international terrorism and to connect that to Iraq. An additional explanation of the insignificance of these later attacks is that the many attacks had relatively small consequences, which is believed to make people less averse to the *risk,* compared to the greater consequences of each one-off attack on Bali and on the American east coast (Otway and von Winterfeldt, 1982).

Hence, the empirical material seems to back the model, that the success of elite persuasion to support the *war* was connected, not only to the actual agitation

of the dominant elite, but also to how it related to and cultivated the sense of *vulnerability* among the public. Another important reason for the various success of the elite persuasion in the five cases was the initial definitions and contents of *national identities*. The elite persuasion in the U.S, France and Australia were all successful in obtaining domestic support for their official policies. Past public opinion was more than likely influencing the choice of policies, but the reason for the highly mobilised support for them, compared to the British and Spanish policies, was their consistency with the *national identities* of the three *states*.

France has a long history of being a major global power, whose potency was questioned during the Second World War and the subsequent loss of most of its colonies. The French had to experience the defeat of being surpassed by growing U.S power, which was especially hard to bear when they were forced to give up the Suez Canal in 1956 in the threat of U.S confrontation (Shareef, 2003). France still sees itself a *state* worthy of power and the birthplace of democracy, and with the fourth largest economy in the world the French view themselves as the only potent western buffer against American military, economic, technological and cultural hegemony (ibid.). When the dominant French elite finally started to fully advocate a policy that was firmly endorsed by this *national identity*, the policy attracted immense support since doing so became self-evident in the eyes of most French citizens.

In the U.S, on the other hand, features of a past national identity had to be restored to grant the vast public consent to the policies of the dominant elite. Strong parallels can be drawn between that and the broad public consensus on the American foreign policies of the Cold War. Back then, the battle that justified all was the protection of America and "free people" everywhere from the dark forces of international communism, which was seen as the cause of all international problems and crises (Fousek, 2000: 187-191). It is not only the broad consensus over foreign policy that seems to be the same now, when communism has been

replaced by terrorism, but the rhetoric[75] and the policies themselves. This revitalisation of a *national identity,* in which serious threats to America is a main theme, is one reason for the lack of articles questioning the *war* in the American newspapers. Journalists have thus not only been professionally controlled by the administration or felt obliged to restrain criticisms "because of a sense of shared national purpose after September 11" (Engel, 2003), but had their whole common system of understanding the world reshaped so the aggressive policies of the administration, or at least the necessity of being united, seemed right in order to deal with the threats[76].

The American *national identity* has always been ingrained in the universal values of freedom, equality etc, which can be found in the American constitution, and which the U.S claims to stand for. After WWII, when the U.S practically saved the world, together with the USSR, from German and Japanese expansion, the newly won greatness of the U.S brought a global responsibility to advocate these values in the face of communism (Fousek, 2000: 5-8). It is thus not only the idea of a grave threat to America that seems to have been resurrected again in the aftermath of the 9/11-attacks and propounded to the American public, but also the idea of actively liberating oppressed people. When these ideas became firmly ingrained again in the American *national identity* they became so self-evident (e.g. Reicher and Hopkins, 2001: 48-49) for "loyal" Americans that questioning them would be seen as un-American and be socially punished (e.g. Hardin, 1995: 23 and Snyder, 2000: 52).

This is also true for Australia where the idea of being vulnerable to the dealings of the outside world also is deeply rooted in the *national identity.* This idea was reified and proven well founded, first by the Japanese advance to the Australian shores in 1942 and later by Indonesian confrontation and the seemingly

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[75] E.g. President Truman declared, after a trip to Europe after WWII, that God spared America from devastation (Fousek, 2000: 20) compared to President Bush's end of his annual speech: "And may God continue to bless the United States of America" (*State of the Union Address*, 2003).

[76] Another reason, which I do not focus on in this dissertation, may be the weak civil society in the U.S (Hall and Lindholm, 1999), which does not tolerate difference to the same degree as the other cases.

expanding threat of communism. These all shaped Australian foreign policy to include military action abroad[77] (e.g. Ross, 1995) and led to a long Australian tradition of seeking the protection of powerful allies, first from Britain and then from the U.S[78] (ibid.). The close alliance with the U.S has been regarded over time as such an obvious geopolitical asset for Australia in the light of its assumed *vulnerability* that it has had only minor opposition among the Australian public in the past (e.g. Tow, 2000). Today, the perceived threat of terrorism is strengthening these ideas.

The 9/11-attacks and the Bali-bombings thus supplied the necessary *vulnerability* to facilitate the restoration or revitalisation of the need for aggressive self-defence into the American and Australian *national identities*. These adjustments are examples of defensive *nationalism* at work (see Taylor, 1998: 209-212) and were essential to the majority support of policies that were much harder or even impossible to realise in the U.K and Spain. Consequently, the Spanish elite persuasion failed to mobilise support for the official policy due to lack of *vulnerability* of the Spanish public, in relation to international terrorism, and lack of traditions in Spain of supporting foreign *wars* in modern times. This made it impossible for the dominant elite to persuade the public to support the *war* since the attempt of the dominant elite to reshape the *national identity* so it endorsed the policies was done without the necessary *vulnerability*.

Britain, on the other hand, has a long tradition of being a main global power, which crumpled with the fall of the British Empire but was rehabilitated again through the Falklands War (Foster, 1999). This nationalist revival provided the moral, political and ideological framework for the British involvement in the first Gulf War (Billig, 1995: 2-3 and Foster, 1999: 155) as well as for its readiness to mobilise forces against Saddam Hussein again in 1998 (Foster, 1999: 155). This

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[77] Not only in Vietnam, but also in Malaya and on North Borneo (Ross, 1995).

[78] Australia is the only country to have fought alongside the U.S in every major conflict since WWI (*Australia - United States Relations*, 2003). Its alliance with the U.S was formalised in the ANZUS Treaty, which was concluded in 1951 and contains a commitment that both *states* will act to meet common threats (ibid.). It was invoked by Australia for the first time in response to the 9/11-attacks though (ibid.).

revitalised British *national identity* did include ideas of protecting Britain and other *states* from the aggression of others (as in the Falklands- and the first Gulf War) as well as protecting people against their obliteration (as in Kosovo), but not ideas of full scale invasion mainly because a regime was violating U.N-resolutions.

When the *war* started and the British found themselves having family, friends, or just fellow citizens in a clear line of fire at the same time as the press showed more and more evidence of celebrating Iraqis and swift coalition movements, less emphasis was put on legality and more on the moral right of liberating the oppressed and protecting your own. Another reason for the British change of heart may be the relatively low number of civilians killed in the military action, which was the main fear of the opponents against the *war*. One or two thousands civilian deaths are obviously terrible enough, but not compared to the scenarios predicted by them. There were actually between 5 and 10 times more civilian casualties per day during the Second World War[79] than during the entire *war* before April 23, and a lot more people died as a result of the already ongoing economic sanctions (e.g. *Middle East...*,1998).

In other words, the initial definitions of *national identities*, as maintained by what Billig calls "banal" *nationalism* (Billig, 1995), influence the kind of adjustments that can be done as well as how fast these can be achieved. The more *vulnerability* the public experiences though, when established *states* are under pressure, the "hotter" *nationalism*. This has a tendency to facilitate bigger, faster and more aggressive changes, even if past features of the *national identities* still tend to be important to build on to create a sense of continuity.

It seems the model may be plausible in enhancing our explanation and understanding of why the *war* against Iraq obtained such different support within the selected cases, but with an increased emphasis on the initial content of the

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[79] Around 39 million civilians died in WWII including the 13 million Chinese civilian casualties during the Japanese occupation of China from 1937 (*World War II...*, 2003). No matter if one calculates the casualties per day from January 1937 to August 1945, or from September 1939 to August 1945 without the Chinese casualties, the results settle around 12000.

national identities. These have been shaped and maintained by elites though, ever since they "invented" them in the early days of *nationalism.* If *vulnerability* appears to play a role in how *nationalism* could be used to mobilise support for the *war* against Iraq, what about the mobilisation for support of other armed post-Cold War conflicts which did not include the politicisation of a perceived direct threat, e.g. the first Gulf War and the humanitarian intervention in Kosovo?

The major mechanism of elite persuasion is present in these cases as well, since without the idea of elite persuasion it becomes hard to explain why the support only rises for involvement in some *armed conflicts* and not in others. However, the more pressing need for *vulnerability* is absent. First of all, the clear Iraqi aggression in the first Gulf War was exactly what the U.N-charter was created to prevent, which made it rather easy to mobilise support for the liberation of Kuwait since its principles were deeply embedded in the *national identities* of the established *states* that promoted its creation. The tricky thing is that these same principles, justifying the first Gulf War, prohibit humanitarian interventions if not enacting the joint will of sovereign states through Security Council resolutions. There may be other reasons for the public support of this "prohibited" intervention, such as likely future problems with refugees and mass migration etc, but it could be mobilised by the elites since their justifications were based on the revitalised principles of punishing wrongs and protecting the innocent (Nardin, 2000). These principles are firmly embedded in the *national identities* of established western *states,* as they have roots far back in history and are based in the tradition of natural law and common morality (ibid.). I cannot dwell on this massive topic for too long, but there are a number of principles embedded to different degrees in the *national identities* of established western *states* which can be used by the elites to justify the involvement in *armed conflicts.* These principles are not clear cut though, and are often connected to moral dilemmas, e.g. protecting the innocent while killing a number of them etc.

The Empirical study

      Most of these principles can be found in the advocacy for the *war* against Iraq in the selected cases, but with various results. It appears a main reason for this was the ambiguity of the situation, which brought the justifications for *war* to the brink of, or even outside, the normally endorsed legal and moral framework. Hence, *vulnerability* may play a facilitating role for aggressive elite persuasion even if clearly within a framework endorsed by the *national identity*, but it appears to become crucial when the aim is to adjust the *national identity* altogether.

5. Conclusions

In this last and concluding chapter it is time to answer the research question and thus meet the objective of this thesis. The chapter ends with ideas for future research.

An attempt to answer a complex question

So, **why did the 2003 *armed conflict* against Iraq receive such varied support within the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Spain?**

It would obviously be reckless to claim to have a clear and simple answer to that question after such a limited study, but its results do nevertheless supply an interesting framework for further research.

Looking at how the empirical material corresponds with the proposed model, it seems like the importance of the initial definitions and contents of *national identities* have to be further emphasised. However, the shaping and maintaining of *national identities*, which are the key functions of *nationalism*, do appear to be crucial to the support of *armed conflicts* within established *states*. It also seems that the dominant elites are essential to this process. These elites do not exist in a void though, and are constantly interacting with the public through the means of mass-media, which makes it difficult in some cases to affirm if it is the elite who is influencing the public or vice versa. However, if an elite wants to mobilise substantial support for, or against, an *armed conflict*, it appears to be vital to make sure that the supposed justifications are endorsed in the *national identity* of that particular *state*. If not, either the justifications or the *national identity* has to be modified. Hence, the main function of *nationalism* in these cases is shaping and maintaining the *national identity* to promote popular loyalty to the *state*.

Revitalising and sharpening past features, to get a *national identity* that sanctions the proposed *armed conflict* while creating an impression of continuity,

71

Discussion and conclusions

seem to be easier for an elite to accomplish than bigger and more abrupt changes. Any modifications of a *national identity* to endorse a specific *armed conflict* also appear to be more easily accomplished if the public can be persuaded that they are vulnerable to a threat that can be connected to the proposed adversary. How well the public experience of *vulnerability* can be politicised and controlled by the elite is thus crucial to the success of amending the *national identity*, and consequently of mobilising support for the *armed conflict*.

A recent attack by international terrorism with severe consequences, which a large part of the targeted population can relate to, appears to supply an opportunity for moulding their *national identity* at that moment, as well as in the near future. This kind of attack induces emotions that seem to be influenced by how the elite describe it through mass-media. These emotions thus facilitate the reshaping of *national identity* by being brokered into ideas of aggressive self-defence. The effects of these emotions are likely to persist over some time as a result of a carryover effect even to situations that have no clear relation to the creating event, especially if the elite continues to actively promote them to the public. Warnings to a public, without the memories of a recent attack, that threats are amongst them appear to have a similar but much less significant effect.

When a *war* starts and a considerable number of citizens put their lives at risk and some die, it appears to become even easier to promote loyalty to the *state*, not only because more people rally around the flag to support their exposed fellow citizens, but also because they can relate to them, their friends and families. Any threat or loss is therefore likely to be mutually experienced as *vulnerability*.

Finally, it appears the *war* against Iraq received such varied support within the five chosen *states*, and probably among a whole range of other things, because the initial definitions of their *national identities* endorsed the justifications for the *war* to different degrees, the dominant elites promoted different opinions and the people experienced different degrees of *vulnerability*.

72

Ideas for future research

This study leaves two major areas for future research. First of all, it would be of great interest to try to fill the gaps in this limited study to further test the plausibility of the model as well as the conclusions. One step would be to do deeper longitudinal studies, similar to this kind but in fewer cases, which would increase the explanation and understanding of elite persuasion and its importance in the shaping and maintaining of *national identities*. The influence of differences in political institutions among established western *states* would also be interesting to study, as well as if *vulnerability* has been important in the adjustment of *national identities* during history. The model would also gain a lot from a more interpretive study of the actual experiences of ordinary people, including their emotions and responses in relation to how attacks and threats are described in different cases. Finally, it would also be of great importance to empirically study how the model fits into contexts that include *vulnerability* as a result of more structural restrictions, such as poverty and deprivation etc.

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