

Official sources and 'primary definition': the case of Northern Ireland

David Miller

MEDIA UNIT, GLASGOW UNIVERSITY

Limits to the dominance of 'official sources'

This article evaluates the concept of 'primary definition' and examines the practical limits which potentially constrain official sources in their attempts to dominate news agendas.¹ Primary definition, as elaborated by Stuart Hall and his colleagues (1978) in their widely influential book *Policing the Crisis*, refers to the ability of official sources to establish the 'initial definition or *primary interpretation* of the topic in question' (1978: 58, emphasis in original). They are thus able to 'command the field' in 'all subsequent treatment'. The media in this model are said to exist in subordination to the primary definers:

The media, then, do not simply 'create' the news: nor do they simply transmit the ideology of the 'ruling class' in a conspiratorial fashion. Indeed, we have suggested that, in a critical sense, the media are frequently not the 'primary definers' of news events at all; but their structured relationship to power has the effect of making them play a crucial but secondary role in *reproducing* the definitions of those who have privileged access, as of right, to the media as 'accredited sources'. From this point of view, in the moment of news production, the media stand in a position of structured subordination to the primary definers. (Hall et al., 1978: 59)

There are a number of problems with this conception, some of which I want to draw attention to here. First, it assumes that state organizations and government departments are not internally divided. Second, there is no room for negotiation over definition prior to engagement with the media. That is, definition occurs at the centre of political power in a form unmodified by other organizations or factors. Third, the model implies that 'the structure of access *necessarily* secures strategic advantages' for official

sources and conversely that 'counter definitions can *never dislodge* the primary definition' (Schlesinger, 1990: 66, emphasis in original). Fourth, the subordination of the media to the 'primary definers' fails to account for variation within and between media. But it also assumes that there is a simple coincidence between journalistic routines, 'news values' and the interests of the state. Lastly, questions about the role of the media in contributing to the definitional battle (and to the policy process) are ruled out.²

As Martin Barker has shown, the question of exactly *who* does the defining is particularly elusive in this model (Barker, 1992). Correspondingly, at the methodological level the question of how state organizations (such as the police or the courts) plan and execute strategies is left unexamined (Schlesinger, 1990). If official sources do dominate media coverage it ought to be possible to demonstrate this empirically. This recognition has opened up the possibility of examining the strategies used by (official and non-official) source organizations variously to seek and avoid publicity (see Anderson, 1991; Cook, 1989; Ericson et al., 1989; Miller and Williams, 1993; Schlesinger et al., 1991). If it is possible to demonstrate the dominance of official sources then we are best advised to look at an area which the state itself has prioritized, at least in terms of concentrating resources. On the face of it, there can be few issues in British politics where it is more likely that 'primary definition' could be secured than the issue of the conflict in Ireland.

Over the past twenty-four years the British state has consistently focused and mobilized large-scale financial and ideological resources on the six small counties which make up the 'province' of Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland conflict costs the British exchequer over £2 billion a year (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 1990). In the 1989/90 financial year the British government spent at least £20 million on public relations and information work on Northern Ireland (Miller, 1993b). All the main British political parties share a common approach to the conflict and there has been no strong political opposition in Britain to the policy of successive governments. In contrast, debates about the National Health Service, for example, are characterized by intense political arguments between the government and others. Such arguments make it easier for journalists to cover contending views on the NHS (Miller, 1993a). But when it comes to Northern Ireland the record shows that dissenting views are subjected to close policing. The conflict has had a profound effect on the relationship between the media (particularly television) and the state, proving to be one of the rawest nerves in the British body politic (Curtis, 1984; Murdock, 1991; Rolston, 1991b; Schlesinger, 1987; Schlesinger et al., 1983).

In what follows I will identify three major potential limits to the ability of official sources to gain definitional advantage. First, there are divisions within organizations (for example, personal, professional or political);

second, the effect of different levels of competition and co-operation between organizations; and third, the impact of news values. Finally, I will discuss the case of the Ulster Workers' Council strike of 1974, where there was a major failure of government public relations.³

Divisions within organizations

The rise of public relations in Britain since the 1940s and 1950s has been accompanied by a struggle by press officers for status, power and financial reward and by attempts to 'professionalize' the occupation. Historically there have been a number of points of negotiation and contest between press officers and other personnel. Administrative civil servants have often found their relationship with press officers difficult because of the short history and low status of press officers who may, however, be able to insist on access to confidential files or top meetings to which, traditionally, only senior civil servants have been allowed (cf. Cockerell, et al., 1984; Harris, 1990; Ingham, 1991).

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO), like other government departments, consists of a variety of different professional groups (for our purposes here we can distinguish politicians, information officers and administrative civil servants) each of which have their own professional, political and personal agendas. When the Northern Ireland government started appointing press officers to the Northern Ireland departments in the 1960s this caused consternation among senior civil servants. In 1969 the first Prime Ministerial press secretary was appointed from amongst the ranks of press officers at Stormont. Ex-journalist David Gilliland accepted the new job on two conditions — that he should have immediate access to the cabinet and that he should attend cabinet meetings. The civil service were not too happy with his demands. According to Gilliland 'I think their first reaction was "What a cheek!"' (*Belfast Telegraph*, 21 May 1987). However, these demands were eventually met.

Among administrative civil servants these tensions were partly premised on a suspicion of the media as being predominantly negative. Journalists may be seen as prone to exaggeration, distortion and sensationalism, unable to resist a 'good story' and as favouring 'bad news' over good. This gives rise to an unwillingness to deal with the media and a preference for minimum disclosure. According to one NIO Information Officer: 'The civil service never believed in, it still doesn't believe, that there is the slightest need to have press chaps running about telling the public what the government is doing' (Interview, Belfast, August 1989). Many press officers come from a journalistic background, and this is often reason enough for civil servants to distrust them. John Oliver, former Permanent Secretary at Stormont put this view in his memoirs:

sources and conversely that 'counter definitions can *never dislodge* the primary definition' (Schlesinger, 1990: 66, emphasis in original). Fourth, the subordination of the media to the 'primary definers' fails to account for variation within and between media. But it also assumes that there is a simple coincidence between journalistic routines, 'news values' and the interests of the state. Lastly, questions about the role of the media in contributing to the definitional battle (and to the policy process) are ruled out.²

As Martin Barker has shown, the question of exactly *who* does the defining is particularly elusive in this model (Barker, 1992). Correspondingly, at the methodological level the question of how state organizations (such as the police or the courts) plan and execute strategies is left unexamined (Schlesinger, 1990). If official sources do dominate media coverage it ought to be possible to demonstrate this empirically. This recognition has opened up the possibility of examining the strategies used by (official and non-official) source organizations variously to seek and avoid publicity (see Anderson, 1991; Cook, 1989; Ericson et al., 1989; Miller and Williams, 1993; Schlesinger et al., 1991). If it is possible to demonstrate the dominance of official sources then we are best advised to look at an area which the state itself has prioritized, at least in terms of concentrating resources. On the face of it, there can be few issues in British politics where it is more likely that 'primary definition' could be secured than the issue of the conflict in Ireland.

Over the past twenty-four years the British state has consistently focused and mobilized large-scale financial and ideological resources on the six small counties which make up the 'province' of Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland conflict costs the British exchequer over £2 billion a year (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 1990). In the 1989/90 financial year the British government spent at least £20 million on public relations and information work on Northern Ireland (Miller, 1993b). All the main British political parties share a common approach to the conflict and there has been no strong political opposition in Britain to the policy of successive governments. In contrast, debates about the National Health Service, for example, are characterized by intense political arguments between the government and others. Such arguments make it easier for journalists to cover contending views on the NHS (Miller, 1993a). But when it comes to Northern Ireland the record shows that dissenting views are subjected to close policing. The conflict has had a profound effect on the relationship between the media (particularly television) and the state, proving to be one of the rawest nerves in the British body politic (Curtis, 1984; Murdock, 1991; Rolston, 1991b; Schlesinger, 1987; Schlesinger et al., 1983).

In what follows I will identify three major potential limits to the ability of official sources to gain definitional advantage. First, there are divisions within organizations (for example, personal, professional or political);

second, the effect of different levels of competition and co-operation between organizations; and third, the impact of news values. Finally, I will discuss the case of the Ulster Workers' Council strike of 1974, where there was a major failure of government public relations.³

Divisions within organizations

The rise of public relations in Britain since the 1940s and 1950s has been accompanied by a struggle by press officers for status, power and financial reward and by attempts to 'professionalize' the occupation. Historically there have been a number of points of negotiation and contest between press officers and other personnel. Administrative civil servants have often found their relationship with press officers difficult because of the short history and low status of press officers who may, however, be able to insist on access to confidential files or top meetings to which, traditionally, only senior civil servants have been allowed (cf. Cockerell, et al., 1984; Harris, 1990; Ingham, 1991).

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO), like other government departments, consists of a variety of different professional groups (for our purposes here we can distinguish politicians, information officers and administrative civil servants) each of which have their own professional, political and personal agendas. When the Northern Ireland government started appointing press officers to the Northern Ireland departments in the 1960s this caused consternation among senior civil servants. In 1969 the first Prime Ministerial press secretary was appointed from amongst the ranks of press officers at Stormont. Ex-journalist David Gilliland accepted the new job on two conditions — that he should have immediate access to the cabinet and that he should attend cabinet meetings. The civil service were not too happy with his demands. According to Gilliland 'I think their first reaction was "What a cheek!"' (*Belfast Telegraph*, 21 May 1987). However, these demands were eventually met.

Among administrative civil servants these tensions were partly premised on a suspicion of the media as being predominantly negative. Journalists may be seen as prone to exaggeration, distortion and sensationalism, unable to resist a 'good story' and as favouring 'bad news' over good. This gives rise to an unwillingness to deal with the media and a preference for minimum disclosure. According to one NIO Information Officer: 'The civil service never believed in, it still doesn't believe, that there is the slightest need to have press chaps running about telling the public what the government is doing' (Interview, Belfast, August 1989). Many press officers come from a journalistic background, and this is often reason enough for civil servants to distrust them. John Oliver, former Permanent Secretary at Stormont put this view in his memoirs:

It is essential, absolutely essential, that the press officer be in the confidence of the senior officers and feel free to approach them with advice. This is not so easy for the administrator to accept as may appear on the surface, because the press officer is after all a journalist, he trades in news, he mixes with working journalists and editors and he is therefore extremely vulnerable to pressure and is a possible source of leakage of confidential information. (Oliver, 1978: 149–50)

For information officers, civil servants like this are hopelessly naive. According to one Director of the Northern Ireland Information Service, it is more likely to be administrative civil servants that disclose unauthorized information:

Actually some of the mainstream civil servants are far more guilty of leaking and briefing — far, far more guilty of doing it than Information Officers, because at the end of the day, to take a purely practical, pragmatic view of it, who is the bugger that gets rung up late at night when the first editions come out? It is the poor sodding press officer. It is not some twat sitting down in the bowels of the policy division who thinks it might be fun to have lunch with the *Guardian*. Look back at the civil servants who have been prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act. Ponting and Sarah Tisdall — neither of them was an Information Officer. (Interview, Belfast, July 1990)

In this view, the role of the Information Service is to protect the department from unwanted disclosure, while maximizing positive publicity, rather than acting as a conduit channelling information to the media. Timing is a particularly important concern here.

It does happen that something comes barrelling along out of a clear blue sky and you think my God, if I had been asked about that or told about that I would certainly have advised against publication on that day, perhaps. Because I knew what else was going on. The problem is . . . when you are working in a mainstream division or a research division you get a very small overview of the whole office-wide activity. You tend to think that your particular report, your recommendations, whatever you are working on is the only thing that is vital and that matters, and you can lose sight of things which should be put in conjunction with this publication. Like, is the minister going to face questions in the House of Commons that afternoon . . . Is it judicious to put it out that very morning or the day before. Is there anything else going on in the department that you are not aware of which appears to run counter to it, which probably doesn't, but it may appear to suggest that the department is split. (Interview, Belfast, July 1990)

In short the Press Office of the Northern Ireland Office polices enclosure and disclosure and guards an image of the department as a unified organization.

These tensions between civil servants and information officers are regarded as 'old-fashioned' in some Whitehall departments. In the NIO

Information Officers speak of administrative civil servants as being 'very switched on' to the media, nevertheless tensions still exist. But, as we shall see, it is also clear that among the more 'switched on' civil servants the protective role of the Information Service may well hamper active divisional or sub-department media strategies. Let us consider an example where administrative civil servants, in an attempt to move forward a policy initiative by a carefully planned media strategy, came up against attempts at enclosure from the 'Information' Service.

Closing down the H-Blocks

During the period of protests in the H-Blocks of the Maze Prison in the late 1970s and early 1980s access for journalists was tightly controlled. The first Republican prisoner started refusing to wear prison uniform in September 1976, but it was not until March 1979 that a small group of journalists was allowed in, although they were not allowed to speak to the protesting prisoners. During the 1980/81 hunger strikes, journalists were simply not permitted to interview hunger strikers. When Bobby Sands stood for and was elected to parliament the NIO still refused access. Some journalists got in on ordinary visitors' passes. 'But if their identity as journalists was disclosed, they were required to sign a form saying they would not publish anything about the visit' (Curtis, 1984: 259). In the mid-1980s American journalist Sally Belfrage was compelled to pretend she was a relative of a prisoner in order to gain access to the prison (Belfrage, 1988).

Since the end of the prison protests and the 1981 hunger strike, journalists had periodically requested access to the prison. In the late 1980s the first newspaper correspondents were allowed access. The BBC's Paul Hamann had been trying to gain access to the Maze prison since the early 1980s (Dugdale, 1990), but it was not until May 1990 that he was finally given permission to film inside the H-Blocks. This unprecedented access was advocated by the Prison Department of the NIO with a number of objectives in mind. According to the programme's producer Steve Hewlett, there was a desire to pre-empt Sinn Féin's commemoration in the coming year of the tenth anniversary of hunger striker Bobby Sands' death (Dugdale, 1990). There was also a move from within NIO to close the prison down. A precondition for this was that the prison regime was no longer seen as a problem. BBC reporter Peter Taylor commented to me that:

Once you have lanced the boil, if you like, demythologized the place, I think if you are an administrator, it creates a climate in which you can move rather more readily, without always worrying about what the media's going to say.

But the priorities of the Prison Department ran into conflict with those of the Information Service. Andy Wood, a former deputy of Bernard Ingham

at Downing Street, was worried that the film would 'backfire' on the Northern Ireland Office. This was a particular concern since both Taylor and Hamann had made programmes which have been banned or censored. Taylor's programmes on torture of suspects in interrogation centres caused rows in the 1970s (Taylor, 1979) and Hamann had made the *Real Lives* programme *At the Edge of the Union* which resulted in one of the most serious clashes between the government and broadcasters in the 1980s. According to Hamann:

Andy Wood did everything he could to stop us getting in. He made it quite clear, in front of us, which surprised us, that this would backfire in an enormous way. . . He thought Thatcher would go bananas. This programme, like 'Edge of the Union' — he said this — would be accused of giving succour to terrorism. (Conversation with the author)

Eventually, though, the programme, *Enemies Within*, was made and broadcast in November 1990. It was an important film made by two journalists with substantial experience of investigative reporting on Northern Ireland. In many respects the film was critical of the official perspective on Northern Ireland in that it allowed Republican and Loyalist prisoners to explain their motivations and political philosophy (see Taylor, 1990). It also showed that the prison authorities unofficially recognized Republican and Loyalist military command structures in the H-Blocks which is contrary to the official position that the prisoners are simply criminals. Such coverage is a rarity on British television (Schlesinger et al., 1983). But the key point for the Prisons Department was that the prison should cease to be popularly regarded as a blot on the landscape. Two days after the transmission of *Enemies Within*, the BBC reported that the NIO intended eventually to close the prison (*Fortnight*, 1991a: 20). The NIO did not formally confirm this until 28 June the next year (*Fortnight*, 1991b: 26) by which time there was little surprise or opposition. The important point for our present purposes is to note that a conventional textual analysis of the programme would have been unlikely to suggest that the programme was of benefit to the NIO. However, as we have seen, the strategy of the Prison Department in fact overrode such considerations and allowed the programme-makers free access to the prison so that they could 'lance the boil' of the prison's image. This suggests that the need to be careful in our interpretation of television or press coverage and in particular in 'reading off' from textual characteristics the *interests* which are served by particular television programmes or news items.

Lack of control

A further serious weakness of some accounts of source activities is the assumption that all the relations between an organization and the media

are part of a deliberate information strategy. Source organizations, and in particular representatives of the 'control culture', are assumed to be so unitary that unintended disclosures are a rarity. As we have already seen there may be conflict within an organization in relation to the planning of media strategies, or information may reach the media as part of efforts to win struggles inside source organizations. It is also the case that information which may affect a source's image or credibility can reach the media in ways which are not part of any media strategy. One way this can happen is through a lack of internal control or communication within an organization. Among official sources in Northern Ireland this is a particular problem for the RUC (and to a lesser extent the Army) since these are the organizations whose operatives routinely come into contact with journalists at potential news events involving public order.

Chibnall, for example, looks at PR techniques in terms of the perceived aims of the 'control agency'. He then refers to 'harrassment and repression' as being a control agency technique (Chibnall, 1977: 182). However, while journalists and photographers are often harassed or indeed have been shot with plastic bullets by the Army or RUC,⁴ it seems clear that the role of the press office is not to co-ordinate such harassment but to deal with the fallout should the harassment be publicized. Thus in some circumstances Army or RUC treatment of journalists can work against the image presented by the press office.

Mistakes

A second way in which unintended information can be disclosed is by straightforward human error. Sometimes official secrecy is maintained in order to prevent embarrassment for a government or political party. But details are not always released deliberately even by sophisticated PR organizations.

One example is the case of British military incursions into the Republic of Ireland. Until the end of September 1988 the issue of border incursions in the air or by British forces into the Republic invariably brought protests from the government when the incidents were made public. The idea that British armed forces should set foot (or wing) on Irish soil was anathema to many of the more nationalist TDs⁵ and, of course to Sinn Féin. The Republic is also the only neutral country in the European community. In July and August 1988, for example there were three reported incursions by Lynx and Wessex helicopters. On 31 July, according to local people and one security source, a Lynx helicopter 'hovered for some time directly over Monaghan, a town some four miles inside the border, before circling the area for ten minutes' (*Guardian*, 17 August 1988). At the time the Army Press Office claimed that the helicopter had overflown the border by only

several hundred metres and that the incursion was a mistake: 'We know these have taken place. It is unfortunate, they are navigational errors. They are in no way deliberate. We would not have any clearance for that' (*Guardian*, 17 August 1988).

Border incursions had often led to public complaints from the Irish government and apologies from the British. The *Guardian*, however, alleged that pilots had been told they could fly up to five nautical miles into the Republic and that far from objecting to overflights, some of the recent sorties have been at the invitation of Irish security forces (17 August 1988). The Dublin Department of Foreign Affairs dismissed the story as malicious rubbish and according to *Fortnight* 'one normally suave Dublin official subjected one of the *Guardian* journalists to a three hour going over because of it' (McKnight, 1988a: 31).

But, unfortunately for the Department of Foreign Affairs, the new Security Minister at Stormont, Ian Stewart, let the cat out of the bag at an off-the-record lunch at Stormont. 'Of course there is an agreement on overflights, he blithely told journalists at a getting-to-know-you encounter at Stormont. . . [leaving] the mouths of his officials agape' (McKnight, 1988b: 39).⁶ As David McKittrick wrote the next day, it 'appears that both governments have for some time been engaged in something of a pantomime' (*Independent*, 28 September 1988). The Irish government was then forced into acknowledging that there had been a secret agreement on overflights.

Divisions between organizations, competition and co-operation

All organizations are more or less divided on issues of policy or practice. Debates about the direction of the organization may be conducted in private, although on occasion they may overflow into the public arena of the media, sometimes deliberately and sometimes not. Different factions may supply information to the media which embarrasses or compromises the opposing faction. Alternatively, they may allow information which shows them in a good light to appear. Similar factors explain the relationships between organizations. The relative unity of different groups or organizations will influence their access to routine media coverage and potentially to the policy agenda. Unity may improve the coverage that an organization gets, although disunity, and especially competitive media strategies, may result in more coverage and a higher profile for a contested debate.

Divisions between official sources

While it is often assumed that official sources speak with one voice in Northern Ireland, it is clear that there are important ongoing and ad hoc differences and contests between different branches of the state apparatus,

for example the RUC and the Army, and the RUC and the NIO. The rivalry and, at times, internecine warfare between the various intelligence organizations (MI5, MI6, Army Intelligence, RUC Special Branch) in Northern Ireland are a hardy perennial of Ireland watchers. There have even been allegations that people have been killed as a result of some of these tensions (see Bloch and Fitzgerald, 1983; Foot, 1990; Holroyd with Burbridge, 1989).

These are long-term rivalries for spheres of influence which are overlaid by divisions about the most appropriate strategy for combating the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Army concerns often centre on the constraints imposed on military action by politicians and civil servants, whose concerns are in turn, more related to legitimizing military action within the rule of law (see e.g. Bew and Patterson, 1985; Deacon, 1984; Dorril and Ramsay, 1991; O'Dowd et al., 1980, 1982; Verrier, 1983). Such rivalries have implications for the media strategies of official organizations. It is occasionally useful for an organization to further its aims by waging the struggle, at least partially, in the media. The activities of the 'Information Policy' unit at Army HQ in Lisburn in the early 1970s often involved issuing false information or stories which would reflect badly on other official organizations.⁷ But such activities are not confined to disinformation work, they are a regular part of the operation of official sources in Northern Ireland.

The raised public profile of MI5 towards the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992 seems also to be related to particular policy objectives. The public naming of the new head of MI5 (an organization which until then did not officially exist) was rapidly followed by the (unattributable) news that following the collapse of the Soviet Union, MI5 was looking for new areas in which to operate. Thus stories appeared suggesting that MI5 wanted to take over all 'anti-terrorist' operations in Britain from the Special Branch. Most importantly, confidential minutes of a Metropolitan Police policy committee meeting were leaked to the *Irish Times* and then printed in British papers. These allegedly showed that the Met had 'little hard intelligence' on recent IRA activities in Britain. Such manoeuvring via the press seems to be clearly aimed at governmental audiences rather than the public at large, although it does result in a more visible public profile for the secret state. Shortly after this the government decided that MI5 would take over anti-terrorist operations within Britain from the Special Branch, thus securing some measure of resource and personnel allocation for MI5.⁸

Source competition: the activities of other sources

Once we have accounted for the divisions within and between official sources which may hamper attempts to improve or maintain credibility,

there is a further major limit to the success of any source strategy: the activities of other sources. Competition for credibility and legitimacy are central and conscious objectives of the major participants in the Northern Ireland conflict. Source competition may involve second-guessing an opponent, carefully timing a disclosure, selective release of information or any of a host of PR tactics and techniques. Different organizations have varying opportunities to use the range of tactics available and these will be partly conditioned by the resources or credibility of the organization. Thus organizations which are less financially secure than the Northern Ireland Office cannot offer expenses paid trips to Northern Ireland. Source competition is by no means an occasional event. It is an ongoing, day in, day out, struggle waged symbolically in the media. The most obvious attempts to impose different understandings on the media and on public debate generally are the promotion of contending legitimations of the use of force. The use of the term 'terrorist' and the change in British government strategy in the mid-1970s to 'normalization' and 'criminalization' were *deliberate* attempts to ensure that the Republican assault on the Northern Ireland state was shorn of all possible legitimacy. Similarly, the Republican contention that the border is the root cause of the conflict in Ireland deliberately sets out to undermine British claims to sovereignty and the right to the monopoly use of legitimate force. It is the active concern of both to label the other side as the *real* 'terrorists'.

Assumptions about the potential impact of a particular presentational tactic are incorporated into the planning of media strategies as news sources try to deny inadvertent advantage to their opponents. Following bombing incidents in Northern Ireland, the RUC seal off the area and control all access to the site of the bombing. Television crews, especially, may be allowed access to the scene if it is felt that the footage will have positive results for the RUC or negative ones for the IRA. An explosion near a school, an old people's home, a hospital or a religious institution provides a particularly good photo opportunity illustrating the 'barbarity' of the IRA in threatening 'innocent'⁹ and vulnerable civilians. However, for the RUC such publicity may be, in the words of the RUC press officer, 'a double-edged sword' (interview, August 1989). While it may deliver the desired message about the evils of the IRA to the public, it may also be perceived as promoting fear. Furthermore, the graphic illustration of the damage which the IRA is able to wreak is in some ways a public illustration of the inability of the RUC to 'contain' the troubles, the result of which may be a boost to IRA morale.¹⁰ Concerns such as these lie behind calls from government Ministers for journalists to report less of the violence and more of the 'real' side of Northern Ireland. However, this is one of the major contradictions of the strategies of all organizations engaged in force (including the IRA, the Ulster Defence Association [UDA]/Ulster Freedom Fighters [UFF] and the British government).

News values

There is an important sense in which the priorities of journalists and those of the state are different. The professional imperatives of news journalism tend to make violence the main rationale for reporting Northern Ireland (Elliott, 1977; Schlesinger, 1987). Most news accounts are conflict related. A study of television news content in 1988 and 1989, for example, concluded that coverage of the Provisional Republican movement was largely about questions of violence (Henderson et al., 1990). It seems that in the early 1970s some news desks were so convinced (presumably, partly, by their own prior reporting) that Northern Ireland was synonymous with violence, that they were reluctant to print stories which gave a different view. Simon Hoggart has related his experiences on the *Guardian*:

Years ago I wrote an article about holidaying in Northern Ireland. I praised the gorgeous countryside, the friendly people, the opportunities for diving, fishing and boating and mentioned how — not surprisingly — it was wonderfully uncrowded. Sadly the *Guardian*, for which I then worked, refused to print it on the grounds that some things were so improbable that nobody would believe them even if they were endorsed by a team of notaries public headed by George Washington with his little axe. (*Observer Magazine*, 25 February 1990)

It has often been assumed by critics of the media that the concentration on violence indicated that there was a simple 'fit' between dominant definitions of the conflict and news reports. But it is clear from some official statements that the coverage of violence is disliked and, somewhat disingenuously, blamed on the media. For example, a Northern Ireland Office publicity booklet issued for the twentieth anniversary of the redeployment of British troops in Northern Ireland, emphasizes the distortion of media images of the conflict:

Spirited resolve is the real story of Northern Ireland and its people; a community that is carving out international respect for its resilience, work ethic, enterprise and hospitality. More and more there is worldwide acceptance that this, not the media image of the masked terrorist, is the true face of Northern Ireland. (NIO, 1989: 1)

However, official sources in Northern Ireland operate a dual strategy with regard to media coverage. It is not uncommon, then, for the Northern Ireland Office, the RUC or even for officials promoting the government view on employment discrimination to emphasize the dire deeds of the IRA, thereby painting a picture of Northern Ireland as a battle zone, where violence is endemic. Indeed, publicity material from the NIO prominently features such images in combination with an emphasis on the positive qualities of life in 'Ulster' (see Miller, 1993b).

The Republican movement has similar problems. In order, at least

partly, to counter 'normalization' and the 'containment' (Rolston, 1991a) of the troubles the IRA continue to plan attacks which 'expose' the inability of the state to contain their struggle. At the same time Sinn Féin spokespersons routinely complain about the fixation of journalists on the activities of the IRA. Most Sinn Féin statements, they say, are not about the actions of the IRA, yet such statements are not used by journalists (Morrison, 1989: 8-9).

Some journalists do write committed articles consciously pointing out the positive side of Northern Ireland. This is especially the case with mid-range tabloid newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* and was a feature of the coverage of *Today* under the editorship of Northern Ireland-born David Montgomery (see Odling-Smee, 1989). Nevertheless, the violence remains the main rationale of covering routine events in Northern Ireland. Indeed, it is the very predominance of news values of this type which allows the implicit and explicit contrast to be drawn between routine images of Northern Ireland and the 'other side of life', or acts as a starting point for an argument about the 'true face' of Northern Ireland. Given this approach we can find a Senior Director of the Northern Ireland Industrial Development Board writing to an American business audience under the title: 'Despite Its Bad Media Image, Northern Ireland Proves To Be A Good Place To Do Business' (Walters, 1984: 12).

But the NIO continues to promote this dual view in spite of its contradictions and the disadvantages that it brings them when journalists used to a diet of atrocity stories are less than keen on good news. One such story was the rolling out of the first of eighteen Sherpa C-23A freighter aircraft ordered by the United States Air Force from Shorts aircraft factory in Belfast on 8 August 1984. The story was announced in a press release and in co-operation with the Northern Ireland Information Service, some enthusiasm was drummed up among journalists. The BBC sent a camera crew along and filmed the impressive array of dignitaries who were present, including a Northern Ireland Minister, the US Ambassador, a clutch of US generals and the USAF band. According to Shorts, the 'largest single contract ever received by Shorts, was won in the face of extremely stiff competition' and the order 'has resulted in a substantial intake of new employees' (Press Release, 8 August 1984). This happy little item seemed destined for the evening news that night until the IRA intervened. In County Derry a busload of Irish Northern Aid supporters were on a tour when the bus was boarded by two armed and masked members of the IRA. Cameras were present and the incident made the television news that night (BBC 1, 21.00, 8 August 1984). The story from Shorts, however, was dropped, much to the annoyance of both Shorts and the Information Service, who complained to the BBC. The point of this is not that the IRA gained favourable publicity from the appearance of the news — they didn't. The BBC reporter dismissed the incident as a publicity

stunt. The issue is not the way in which the 'stunt' was covered, but simply that it was covered in preference to the 'good' news story.¹¹ It is clear that incidents like the appearance of two armed and masked IRA members contained a 'news value' that the Shorts story simply did not. It is difficult to argue from this that journalists simply recycle or transmit the 'bureaucratic propaganda' of official sources. While it is possible to show that much of British mainstream coverage (as opposed to current affairs or features) is dominated by news about 'terrorism' and the evils of the IRA, which is oriented towards the views of the powerful, at the same time, we find that those same sources are still not able to secure the prominence they would like for stories about the 'other side' of life in Northern Ireland. The 'good news' part of British strategy meets with *relatively* little success in the news media, foundering on a contradiction within the strategy of official sources and on the rock of news values.¹² We can only explain the apparent dominance or subordination of particular views by reference to the processes involved in forming media strategies and negotiating with media organizations. This requires that we investigate the production process by examining the perspectives of sources and media personnel.

So far I have considered some difficulties for official sources in dominating the media. But such difficulties may be regarded as more or less trivial if they never have a major effect on the ability of the powerful to dominate the media. The most sociologically interesting cases are surely those where official sources lose, at least temporarily, definitional advantage and where alternative and less powerful sources are able to make serious interventions in the public sphere. One of the most dramatic examples of this over the past twenty-five years in Northern Ireland was the 1974 Ulster Workers' Council strike.

*The UWC stoppage*¹³

The background to the stoppage was the government policy of restoring limited autonomy to a locally elected assembly in which power would be shared between nationalist and unionist politicians (see Bew and Patterson, 1985; O'Dowd et al., 1980, 1982; Rees, 1985). The power-sharing executive took office on 1 January 1974 following the Sunningdale agreement, and had caused severe divisions within the Unionist Party, leading to the formation of the Ulsters Workers' Council (UWC). The UWC proposed a strike to bring down the executive. The strike was dramatically successful and ushered in a change in British policy and the beginnings of the policies of Ulsterization and normalization, where the conflict was increasingly presented as a problem internal to the North of Ireland, and Republican forces were seen simply as criminals (see O'Dowd et al., 1982; Rolston, 1991a). We can look at the UWC strike as a case of

the failure of 'state agenda building' (Deacon and Golding, 1991) and rather than concentrating on the analysis of the policy process or the political manoeuvrings of the participants, I want to stress the importance of media and information management in the humiliating defeat of the Labour government.

The strike lasted just two weeks, from 14–28 May starting in the power stations, which were the key utility all through the strike. There were wide-scale power cuts almost immediately, cutting out television transmissions after a week.

Internal divisions. During the strike the Northern Ireland Office was divided in two major ways — administratively and politically. First, the Information Division of the NIO was divided into two with the creation of the power-sharing executive. One section was detailed to manage the image of the executive and the Information Service of the NIO was attached to the office of the Secretary of State. This division gave rise to several problems for journalists, because it was sometimes unclear which office to go to for authoritative information. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that the 'Ministers' of the executive came from opposing political parties with different agendas and strategies and so it was difficult to present a coherent 'view from the executive'. Additionally, the real power still lay with the Secretary of State and his Information staff. This fact did not escape the attention of astute journalists and Information Officers. The co-ordination of a media strategy in such administrative circumstances was, to some extent, problematic. The second, political, division concerned the fact that senior civil servants in the Northern Ireland Office were not supportive of the power-sharing executive (Bew and Patterson, 1985: 67).

Divisions between state sources. The Army was critical of the government's attitude to the strike and tensions within Whitehall rose as the MoD and Army dragged their feet in their response. On 18 May, according to the government's *Civil Service Record*, 'strong pressure had to be brought to bear' on MoD officials to hasten the arrangements for lifting troops to Northern Ireland (cited in Fisk, 1975: 87–8). The antipathy towards the government was also reflected in press office policy where:

Military advisers at Lisburn had told some of the more senior Press Officers at Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn, that the Army was unhappy about the adoption of a strike-breaking role, and this view was passed on, in confidential conversations to newspapermen [sic] covering the strike. (Fisk, 1975: 87)

It has since been alleged by a former MI5 agent whose job was to infiltrate the UDA, that his superiors had told him to promote the idea of a

strike inside the UDA in early 1974 as part of a plot to remove Harold Wilson as Prime Minister (Foot, 1990: 73–4; Dorril and Ramsay, 1991). On top of this the RUC were regarded with a great deal of suspicion by the Army, because of their perceived sympathy for the strikers. So much so that when loyalist paramilitaries were arrested during the strike, the RUC were told nothing about the intended operation in case they leaked it to the paramilitary organizations. Some plain-clothes detectives responded to this snub by ringing Ulster Television to allege that there was not a shred of evidence against any of the arrested men (Fisk, 1975: 204).

What this amounts to is a very serious split within the state about policy on Northern Ireland, compounded by long-running inter-organizational divisions, all of which had consequences for public relations policy.

Competition. These divisions, while serious, might have been mitigated had the government had a clear policy and corresponding media strategy. Instead, they were increasingly hesitant. The Northern Ireland Secretary, Merlyn Rees, himself was unable to decide what to do. As one of his PR advisers put it:

Merlyn sat there like a rabbit looking at a rattlesnake . . . [he] froze and didn't know what the hell to do and we were unable to give out any information because we didn't have any. (Interview, Belfast, December 1990)

Consequently, very little information came out of Stormont, although BBC Northern Ireland controller Dick Francis had 'pleaded' (Fisk, 1975: 127) on several occasions with civil servants to make spokespersons available. The lack of official information from Stormont and from the executive left a news vacuum and journalists hungry for copy were forced to turn to other sources to fill their news bulletins. Although the UWC seems not to have had much prior experience of dealing with journalists, they regularly released statements and these were reported by the BBC. The leaders of the UWC found that if they could fill the gap left by the silence of the Northern Ireland Office, they could get their views across with relative ease. According to Harry Murray, one of the leaders of the strike:

The BBC were marvellous — they were prepared to be fed any information. They fell into their own trap that 'the public must get the news'. Sometimes they were just a news service for us; we found that if the media was on our side we didn't need a gun. (Cited in Fisk, 1975: 135)

The defeat of the government and the collapse of the power-sharing executive provides an excellent example of the three limits on official sources outlined above. It is a combination of these factors rather than the unconscious (or conscious) bias of journalists or the lack of a threat to the

central state which resulted in a media victory for the strikers (cf. Curtis, 1984: 106; Butler, 1991: 112). Indeed as we have seen, Dick Francis of the BBC was constantly urging the NIO and the executive to make statements which the BBC could then carry. The result was that the strikers were allowed to foster the impression that the strike had overwhelming support in its early days and that intimidation had played no part in its success. The indecision of the Labour government in the face of a lack of enthusiasm in the top ranks of the NIO, together with the near traitorous activities of the Army and RUC resulted in the 'signal failure of the Government and executive to speak for themselves' (Fisk, 1975: 142) and allowed the UWC to dominate.

The UWC strike is important because it shows that the government of the day cannot automatically dominate news coverage. But this does not mean that such breakdowns of official public relations and, more centrally, official policy, occur regularly. Imagining that they might was one of the central failings of the 1977 Loyalist strike, which resulted in a humiliating defeat for the strikers. It should not pass unremarked that it was a Labour government which was being undermined by the secret state and senior civil servants in 1974. Divisions replicating those in 1974 are very unlikely in the current climate. More recent contests such as the Unionist opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement failed in the face of a relatively unified state. The point is that breakdowns in official policy do not occur simply, but are the result of a great many contending agendas and interests.

Conclusions

The concept of 'primary definition' contains assumptions about the 'impact' of the media in constructing 'public opinion' and in boosting the tendency towards authoritarian tendencies within the state. This line of argument was made more credible by the response to the IRA bombing campaign in Britain in the early 1970s around the time that *Policing the Crisis* was being written. The bombings at Guildford and Birmingham were followed by an outcry in the press and on television and, it is said, also among the public. This led directly to the passing of the 'draconian' Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974. It also resulted in the jailing of seventeen innocent people (including the 'Guildford Four' and the 'Birmingham Six') for their alleged involvement in the bombings. The series of events conforms quite well to a theory stressing the drift to an 'exceptional state' accomplished via 'moral panic'. However it does not easily account for the subsequent releases of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six. The Guildford and Birmingham cases are vivid examples of the structured relationship between official and non-official sources, and the media. Television current affairs programmes played a leading role in the cam-

paign to expose the convictions as unsafe by helping to 'move the counter-discourses enunciated in Republican and Left publications from the periphery to the centre of the public sphere' (Murdock, 1991: 112; cf. Miller, 1990). This was in marked contrast to the role of the media (particularly the press and television news) at the time of the trials in the 1970s, when the news supplied British society with a daily 'field dressing' (Elliott, 1977). This example points to the complexity of the role of the media, the content of which is not simply dictated by the whims of official sources (cf. Murphy, 1991), nor do these cases illustrate, as Abraham Miller would have it, the 'triumph of a free media' (Miller, 1990: 305).

The examination of source strategies raises a series of questions about the role of the media in both contributing to and challenging the way that British and other societies are structured in relation to inequalities of power and status (cf. Curran, 1991; Keane, 1991; Kellner, 1990; Raboy and Bruck, 1989). In broad terms, these are issues about the impact of the media on policy.

For example, under what circumstances does it matter (to the powerful, to pressure groups, to the public, to the well-being of democratic structures) if official sources do or don't dominate the media? We saw above that the Northern Ireland Prison Department were prepared, as a result of a kind of informational calculus, to countenance a loss of control by allowing access to journalists who could not be relied on. Indeed, it might be thought that the Prison Department *required* that the programme was seen to be independent and critical, so that it would be believed.

Furthermore, the ability to set the agenda is of little use if the audience which is being targeted is unconvinced. However, investigating the effectiveness of opinion management needs to go beyond the *formation* of public opinion to examine its impact on political decision-making.

This is especially relevant to the role of the media in the conflict in Ireland. Since the 1970s, if we are to believe the opinion polls, a majority of British public opinion has favoured the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. However, withdrawal has never been the policy of any major British political party and is hardly discussed seriously in the mainstream media. There is a disjunction here, at least at first glance, between the manifest content of media coverage and public opinion, as well as between public opinion and the policy process, which cannot be explained simply by reference to the efficient ideological management of the British state or to the 'power of the media'. Nor is it explicable by democratic models of the role of public opinion.

The present argument is that the ability of any source to gain definitional advantage is related to active negotiation and contestation. To put it in a less media-centred way, the strategies formulated by organizations to exercise power and influence often involve strategies for definitional advantage. It is important that it is recognized that the massive resources at

the disposal of the central institutions of the state give them a significant advantage in struggles for definition, but that there are limits to state attempts at agenda-building. These relate to the cohesiveness of any organization and its abilities to co-ordinate its activities with other organizations in a unified power bloc. They also relate to the ability to formulate strategies with which to compete with the opposition, which itself may be more or less divided or powerful. Finally, the routine operations of media organizations cannot be relied upon to coincide with the presentational requirements of governmental initiatives. When the state is relatively united and actively pursuing a media strategy, then it is rare indeed to find a strong media opposition. However, the relative unity of the state is not just affected by pressure from the top but also by pressure from below (Deacon and Golding, 1991). That is to say that the power to define does not only, or even pre-eminently, rest with the state.

Notes

1. The discussion is based on more than fifty interviews and conversations with news sources and journalists between 1988 and 1992. It is part of ongoing work on the production and content of media messages on the conflict in Ireland and their impact on audience beliefs (Miller, work in progress).

2. It should also be acknowledged that the catch-all term 'official sources' is problematic in that there is not always a sharp demarcation between official and non-official sources. For example, the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights is a statutory body which reports to the Secretary of State. It is partly a legitimating device for the government, but is also expected to be critical of government policy. The membership of the Committee is determined by the NIO but it has included members of groups which are decidedly non-official, such as at least one member of the Committee on the Administration of Justice, the sister body of Liberty (formerly the National Council for Civil Liberties).

3. There are obviously other factors which affect the ability of sources (particularly official sources) to manage the media. For example, the questions of PR tactics and techniques are not covered here. However, the range of tactics available to sources or those considered useful will depend in part on the aims and strategies of the source, which in turn are influenced by the factors outlined here (Miller, 1993b; cf. Tiffen, 1989). The strategies of official sources are also affected by the resources available to them (Schlesinger, 1990). Official sources can supply what Gandy (1980) has termed 'information subsidies' to news organizations. However, resource advantages can vary, partly in relation to the factors outlined below. While the unequal distribution of resources among social actors poses very real problems of access to the media for resource-poor groups, these do not of necessity make their attempts useless (Bruck, 1989; Miller and Williams, 1993).

4. On harassment of journalists by Republicans, Loyalists and British forces see Curtis (1984: 251–3), *Journalist* (July/August 1991: 6–7), Conway (1989), Hanvey (1990).

5. Teachta Dáil, member of the Dáil, the Dublin Parliament.

6. The question is when is a mistake not a mistake? I have tried to give as accurate an account of this incident as possible. However, this is not to say that all 'mistaken' disclosures of information are actual mistakes, nor should it be assumed that genuine mistakes do not on occasion have some beneficial pay-offs.

7. See Foot (1989) for some examples. See also 'Black Propaganda in Ulster Admitted', *The Times* (31 January 1990).

8. See for example, Chris Ryder, Neil Darbyshire and Ben Fenton, 'Yard Minutes on the IRA are Leaked', *Daily Telegraph* (22 April 1992), Duncan Campbell, Richard Norton-Taylor and Owen Bowcott, 'Yard Plays Down IRA Leak', *Guardian* (23 April 1992), Richard Norton-Taylor, 'MI5 and Met in Anti-terror Showdown', *Guardian* (23 April 1992), Richard Norton-Taylor and Duncan Campbell, 'MI5 Wins Fight to Take on IRA', *Guardian* (9 May 1992), David Rose, 'MI5 Will Take Over More Police Work', *Observer* (21 June 1992).

9. As opposed to those civilians who are, by implicit contrast, labelled as culpable. In particular, these include members of the Nationalist community who are shot by the 'security forces'. In the official view, the notion of a guilty civilian is further complicated by the fact that members of illegal paramilitary groups are deemed to be civilians for the purposes of official statistics, but when they are shot dead by British forces, they are 'terrorists'.

10. These worries also inform police and government information policy in combating the current IRA campaign in England. On the one hand, the government wants to emphasize the injury, destruction and disruption caused by bombings and bomb hoaxes in order to discredit the IRA and to promote public vigilance. On the other hand, they are anxious to play down the extent of the devastation and disruption in order to avoid handing the IRA a 'propaganda victory'.

11. It is this point that has so often exercised the ire of counter-insurgency writers and Northern Ireland ministers. However, they tend to conveniently ignore the other factors outlined here (see, for example, Wilkinson, 1977; Clutterbuck, 1981; Rees, 1985: 338–345).

12. It ought to be said that such contradictions of strategy and problems with the media are by no means confined to official sources.

13. This section draws heavily on Robert Fisk's excellent account of the strike (Fisk, 1975). Fisk was the Belfast Correspondent of *The Times* during the period of the strike.

References

- Anderson, Alison (1991) 'Source Strategies and the Communication of Environmental Affairs', *Media, Culture and Society*, 13 (4): 459–76.
- Barker, Martin (1992) 'Stuart Hall, *Policing the Crisis*', in Martin Barker and Anne Beezer (eds), *Reading into Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Belfrage, Sally (1988) *The Crack: A Belfast Year*. London: Grafton.
- Bew, Paul and Henry Patterson (1985) *The British State and the Ulster Crisis: From Wilson to Thatcher*. London: Verso.
- Bloch, Jonathon and Patrick Fitzgerald (1983) *British Intelligence and Covert Action*. London: Junction Books.
- Bruck, Peter (1989) 'Strategies for Peace, Strategies for News Research', *Journal of Communication*, 39 (1): 108–29.

- Butler, David (1991) 'Ulster Unionism and British Broadcasting Journalism, 1924–1989', in Bill Rolston (ed.), *The Media and Northern Ireland: Covering the Troubles*. London: Macmillan.
- Chibnall, Steve (1977) *Law-and-Order News*. London: Tavistock.
- Clutterbuck, Richard (1981) *The Media and Political Violence*. London: Macmillan.
- Cockerell, Michael, Peter Hennessy and David Walker (1984) *Sources Close to the Prime Minister*. London: Macmillan.
- Conway, John (1989) 'Orange Alert', *Edinburgh International Television Festival Programme*, pp. 16–20.
- Cook, Timothy (1989) *Making Laws and Making News: Media Strategies in the US House of Representatives*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Curran, James (1991) 'Rethinking the Media as a Public Sphere', in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds), *Communication and Citizenship*. London: Routledge.
- Curtis, Liz (1984) *Ireland: The Propaganda War*. London: Pluto.
- Deacon, David and Peter Golding (1991) 'When Ideology Fails: The Flagship of Thatcherism and the British Local and National Media', *European Journal of Communication*, 6 (3): 291–314.
- Deacon, Richard (1984) 'C': *A Biography of Sir Maurice Oldfield, Head of MI6*. London: Futura.
- Dorrl, Stephen and Robin Ramsay (1991) *Smear! Wilson and the Secret State*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Dugdale, John (1990) 'Proscribed Treatment', *The Listener*, 15 November: 9–10.
- Elliott, Philip (1977) 'Reporting Northern Ireland: A Study of News in Britain, Ulster and the Irish Republic', in *Media and Ethnicity*, Paris: UNESCO.
- Ericson, Richard, Patricia Baranek and Janet Chan (1989) *Negotiating Control: A Study of News Sources*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Fisk, Robert (1975) *The Point of No Return: The Strike which Broke the British in Ulster*. London: Times Books/André Deutsch.
- Foot, Paul (1990) *Who Framed Colin Wallace?* London: Macmillan.
- Fortnight (1991a) 'Events Diary', January: 20–2.
- Fortnight (1991b) "'Troubles" Chronology', September: 26–9.
- Gaffikin, Frank and Michael Morrissey (1990) *Northern Ireland: The Thatcher Years*. London: Zed Press.
- Gandy, Oscar (1980) 'Information in Health: Subsidised News', *Media, Culture and Society*, 2: 103–15.
- Hall, Stuart, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts (1978) *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan.
- Hanvey, Bobbie (1990) 'Is this the Defence of Ulster?' *Fortnight*, October: 35.
- Harris, Robert (1990) *Good and Faithful Servant: The Unauthorised Biography of Bernard Ingham*. London: Faber.
- Henderson, Lesley, David Miller and Jacqueline Reilly (1990) *Speak No Evil: The British Broadcasting Ban. The Media and the Conflict in Ireland*. Glasgow: Glasgow University Media Group.
- Holroyd, Fred with Nick Burbridge (1989) *War Without Honour*. Hull: Medium Publishing Co.
- Ingham, Bernard (1991) *Kill the Messenger*. London: Harper Collins.
- Keane, John (1991) *Media and Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Kellner, Douglas (1990) *Television and the Crisis of Democracy*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- McKnight, James (1988a) 'Sidelines', *Fortnight*, November: 31.
- McKnight, James (1988b) 'Sidelines', *Fortnight*, December: 39.

- Miller, Abraham H. (1990) 'Preserving Liberty in a Society under Siege: The Media and the "Guildford Four"', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2: 305–23.
- Miller, David (1993a) 'The Beeb at Bay', *British Journalism Review*, 4 (1): 20–6.
- Miller, David (1993b) 'The Northern Ireland Information Service: Aims, Strategy, Tactics', in Glasgow University Media Group (eds), *Getting the Message: News, Truth and Power*. London: Routledge.
- Miller, David (forthcoming) *Don't Mention the War: Northern Ireland, the Media and the Effectiveness of Propaganda*. London
- Miller, David and Kevin Williams (1993) 'Negotiating HIV/AIDS Information: Agendas, Media Strategies and the News', in Glasgow University Media Group (eds), *Getting the Message: News, Truth and Power*. London: Routledge.
- Morrison, Danny (1989) *Ireland: The Censored Subject*, April, Belfast: Sinn Féin Publicity Department.
- Murdock, Graham (1991) 'Patrolling the Border: British Broadcasting and the Irish Question in the 1980s', *Journal of Communication*, 41 (4): 104–15.
- Murphy, David (1991) *The Stalker Affair and the Press*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- NIO (Northern Ireland Office) (1989) *The Day of the Men and Women of Peace Must Surely Come. . .*, July, Belfast: NIO.
- Odling-Smee, James (1989) 'Making Histories', *Fortnight*, September: 14–15.
- O'Dowd, Liam, Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson (1980) *Northern Ireland: Between Civil Rights and Civil War*. London: CSE Books.
- O'Dowd, Liam, Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson (1982) 'From Labour to the Tories: The Ideology of Containment in Northern Ireland', *Capital and Class*, 18 (Winter): 72–90.
- Oliver, John (1978) *Working at Stormont*. Dublin: Institute for Public Administration.
- Raboy, Marc and Peter Bruck (eds) (1989) *Communication For and Against Democracy*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Rees, Merlyn (1985) *Northern Ireland: A Personal Perspective*. London: Methuen.
- Rolston, Bill (1991a) 'Containment and its Failure: The British State and the Control of Conflict in Northern Ireland', in Alexander George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Rolston, Bill (ed.) (1991b) *The Media and Northern Ireland: Covering the Troubles*. London: Macmillan.
- Schlesinger, Philip (1987) *Putting 'Reality' Together: BBC News* 2nd edn. London: Methuen.
- Schlesinger, Philip (1990) 'Rethinking the Sociology of Journalism: Source Strategies and the Limits of Media-Centrism', in Marjorie Ferguson (ed.), *Public Communication: The New Imperatives*. London: Sage.
- Schlesinger, Philip, Graham Murdock and Philip Elliott (1983) *Televising 'Terrorism': Political Violence in Popular Culture*. London: Comedia.
- Schlesinger, Philip, Howard Tumber and Graham Murdock (1991) 'The Media Politics of Crime and Criminal Justice', *British Journal of Sociology*, 42 (3): 397–420.
- Taylor, Peter (1979) 'Reporting Northern Ireland', pp. 21–5 in Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland, *The British Media and Ireland: Truth: The First Casualty*. London: Information on Ireland.
- Taylor, Peter (1990) 'Inside the Maze', *Observer Magazine*, 18 November: 16–24.
- Tiffen, Rodney (1989) *News and Power*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Verrier, Anthony (1983) *Through the Looking Glass: British Foreign Policy in the Age of Illusions*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Walters, Ian (1984) 'Despite Its Bad Media Image, Northern Ireland Proves To Be A Good Place To Do Business', *Business America*, 23 July: 12–14.

Wilkinson, Paul (1977) *Terrorism and the Liberal State*. London: Macmillan.