Not in our Name:

An Evaluation of the Australian Anti-War Movement, 2002-2003

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Introduction

Background

On the weekend of February 14-16, 2003, more than half a million Australians participated in protest marches around the country against Australia's involvement in the looming Iraq War. This event – the largest coordinated protest action in the nation's history – did not happen out of the blue. It was the result of months of organisation and campaigning by coalitions of anti-war organisations and a reawakening of the once-influential peace movement.

The campaign to stop the war began soon after the first signals from the US Government that it intended to wage one. In cities and towns around the world, concerned people and organisations met together to form coalitions committed to preventing war. The campaigns focussed on educating the public, refuting government arguments for war, and mobilising large numbers of people in street protests to demonstrate the breadth of public opposition to the war. In terms of shaping public opinion, the movement was very successful: by early February 2003, 90% of Australians opposed the war without UN Security Council authorisation (Spratt 2003).

For a brief moment during that weekend in February, it appeared to many as if the peace movement might in fact keep Australia out of the war. However, Prime Minister John Howard resisted the pressure and on 20 March 2003 formally invaded Iraq as part of the 'Coalition of the Willing'. This coalition included armed forces from only two other countries, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. What went wrong?

In the wake of the onset of war, peace activists became disillusioned with the failure of the movement to prevent the war , and by extension, disillusioned with the effectiveness of social movements and the democratic process in general. The anti-war[1] movement collapsed within a month of the war starting.

While a number of articles appeared in 2003 around the world reflecting on the campaign and its inadequacies, none of the anti-war coalitions in Australia conducted an evaluation of their campaign and no meaningful studies have been conducted into its effectiveness. Many of the articles that have been published make unsupported claims, exaggerate the number of people involved in the street protests, confuse outcomes with objectives, and in one case, deliberately avoid criticising the campaign strategy concerning internal tensions within the movement for diplomatic reasons. Almost all were written by the most left-wing elements of the movement. Before introducing this paper, it is worthwhile to review this literature.

[1] 'Peace' and 'anti-war' are often used interchangeably. In this study I refer to the movement as 'anti-war' as this campaign had a very narrow focus, even if that focus was for many motivated by wider concerns for world peace.

Outcomes Analysis

Among the literature there is broad agreement that despite failing in its ultimate goal of stopping the war, the antiwar movement was quite successful. That is, a number of intermediate outcomes were achieved that were important both in their own right and for what they represent for the future.

The most highlighted success story for the movement was the credit it claims for ensuring the United Nations Security Council did not cave in to pressure from the USA and vote in favour of the war. David Cortright (2004) notes that this was the first time the United States was unable to get a majority in the Security Council on a vote that mattered to it. While the White House was ultimately willing to defy the UN, the importance of international legitimacy to domestic legitimacy was underlined by both the efforts made to gain it (Chernus 2003; Kolb and Swords 2003; Spratt 2003; Swaim 2003; Cortright 2004) and the contrast in public support for the war with and without UN support (Roy Morgan Research Centre 2003; Williams 2003).

Related to this, public opposition is claimed to have ensured that the "Coalition of the Willing" was effectively limited to three nations (discounting a number of very small nations such as the Solomon Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia). It helped the French and German governments hold the line, prevented Spain and Italy from sending troops and forced the Turkish parliament to refuse a multi-billion dollar aid package linked to allowing Turkey to be a base for more than 60,000 US troops and a northern front for the war (Spratt 2003; Wood 2004).

In analysing the movement's relative success, a few authors commented on its ability to affect public opinion to such an extent that in most countries as few as 10% supported unilateral military action (Spratt 2003). Martin Shaw (2004) however points out that in the one place it really mattered to the White House (USA public opinion), opposition never got past about 50% - not nearly enough. There seems to be some confusion about the poll data, with David Cortright (2004) claiming that a "majority" of the US public opposed an invasion without Security Council approval. Neither author provides references to the poll data they rely on. Considering analysis of the numerous polls shows inconsistent results partly based on variance in questions as well as significant variance over time, this confusion is understandable. What is clear is that in the USA, unlike the UK and Australia (the other nations to fight the war), poll results indicate there was never sustained significant opposition to unilateral war (see for example a detailed list of poll results in Wikipedia 2005).

Why they won

Not much of the literature is concerned with reasons *why* the movement was as successful as it claims to have been. This is a notable gap – a core element of any helpful evaluation is noting 'what went right', whether it be a massive international campaign or a simple training workshop (Coover, Deacon et al. 1985). Considering this was the most successful pre-emptive mass protest against war in history, one might think it would be helpful to record what the movement did that made this possible, so as to ensure it remains part of the strategic planning for future action.

One reason for success that was offered by a number of authors was that the movement managed to reach a broad spectrum of society – "beyond the usual 'lefty' suspects", as one put it (Swaim 2003). This

breadth, and in particular the active involvement and participation of almost all the churches, gave the movement unprecedented legitimacy in the eyes of mainstream society and mass media (Epstein 2003; Wood 2004). Absent from this is any detail as to why these coalitions had such broad representation from the beginning, or precisely how they attracted support from other mainstream institutions. Nor is evidence given to support the idea that these institutions followed, rather than lead, the movement mobilisation.

Another reason offered was that the peace movement was very successful in using new technologies, and internet communications in particular, in mobilising its members, coordinating protests (to the extent of managing a global protest on the same weekend), and providing easily accessible information on both reasons and methods of opposing the war (Kolb and Swords 2003; Spratt 2003). One theorised that the successful globalisation of protest would not have been possible without this new technology, to which activists have responded very effectively (Shaw 2004).

Why they lost

Much of the critique within the movement centres on the weakness entailed by the very broadness of the movement, coupled with its lack of ongoing organisational work and thus structures for efficient decision-making. One of the key outcomes of these circumstances was that, in searching for a unified position, the movement was reduced to a 'lowest common denominator' message that simply read: "No War".

There is some agreement among the literature that the peace movement would have been more successful if it had added a positive, alternative message about how to deal with the Iraqi regime (Kolb and Swords 2003; LeVine 2003; Newman 2003; Swaim 2003; Shaw 2004). Thus while the movement expressed itself in terms of solidarity with the ordinary citizens of Iraq, it provided no details about how it was already acting, and would like others to act, in solidarity with oppressed Iraqis (Newman 2003). This allowed governments to paint the movement as doing nothing more than "giving comfort to Saddam", as Australian Prime Minister John Howard declared after the February 2003 demonstrations (Riley 2003), while the movement also often found itself estranged from many Iraqi exiles who reluctantly supported the war in the hopes of winning democracy (Shaw 2004).

Why was the movement unable to come up with this peaceful alternative? Barbara Epstein (2003) and Nathan Newman (2003) suggest that the answer lies in the "myriad groups and endless divisions of the Left", which hamper activism by preventing agreement on often minor details and impede effective long-term organisation.

> With no long-term alliances to develop a coherent strategy and no groups with a mass of members, we end up at any moment of crisis depending on the usual list of famous names and obscure grouplets to legitimise and organise our efforts. This ad hoc method of operating leads to little more than agreeing on NO as the only message. And that's not enough .

Martin Shaw (2004) goes further, arguing that this organisational weakness and ideological incoherence is a built-in weakness of mass demonstration movements. He suggests that these movements are a "blunt instrument" which are able to provide answers to simple questions and mobilise large numbers

of people quickly to press home that answer, but become irrelevant when issues become complex. Shaw refers to this as a "functional specialisation" (2004: 49) of mass movements and contends that the changed political nature of military conflict in the post-Cold War era "has created political and organisational dilemmas that movements have not and may not overcome" (2004: 51).

Some authors were happy to blame outside actors for failing to take up the cause. David Spratt, for example, lays the blame for the movement's failure in Australia squarely at the feet of the Australian Labor Party, who "simply went missing" (2003: 19). Kolb & Swords (2003) similarly note that there was almost no Democratic Party opposition to the war in the United States. A number of writers also complained about mass media bias making it difficult for the movement to counteract the "lies" and propaganda of the White House (Kolb and Swords 2003; Wood 2004). Considering studies have shown a strong positive correlation between consumption of Fox News and misconceptions about the war (Kull, Ramsay et al. 2003), this concern is not misplaced. If activists wish to be successful in the future, it will be essential for them to find strategies for dealing with this bias better than the peace movement did in this case.

Notable by its absence is any literature analysing the strategy and tactics of the peace movement, noting the planning successes and failures, or probing the strategic assumptions against the lessons learned by past activism and the strategic theory that has arisen out of them. Did the movement make the mistake of assuming it could convince governments simply by mobilising sufficient public opinion at the level of opinion polls? As a result, the peace movement has not attempted to learn the lessons from one of its most significant campaigns, and thus is not necessarily better placed to campaign against the next war.

Introduction to this study

This paper was inspired by a concern that the peace/anti-war movement has not given enough attention to critical evaluation of the mobilisation of 2002-03. It also arose out of a concern that much academic study of social movements is so disconnected from the needs and realities of movement activists as to have created a yawning chasm between the two.

Social movement theory in particular has been criticised from within for its complete lack of relevance to movement activists themselves (Bevington and Dixon 2005). Noting that activists generally do not read social movement theory literature, and the few who do have not found it useful, some scholars ask: "What does it say about the state of social movement theory that these activists are reading the work of RAND researchers more than PPT produced by ostensibly more progressive scholars?" (Bevington and Dixon 2005: 193)

Working from an assumption that social movement theory should, at least indirectly, be able to assist activists pursuing social change, they argue for the development of *movement-relevant theory.* Such theory, they suggest, puts the needs of social movements at its centre by providing "useable knowledge for those seeking social change" (Flacks, cited in Bevington and Dixon 2005: 189). It would be concerned with producing more than just good case studies and histories of social movements. Instead, it should

"draw out useful information from a variety of contexts and translate it into a form that is more readily applicable by movements to new situations – i.e. theory" (189).

At the same time, activists often neglect theory when developing or evaluating campaign plans, and therefore miss out on important insights that could guide them to more successful action.

This paper is an attempt to reconcile activists and academics. It would be overly optimistic to hope it does so to any great extent. Rather my hope is that my demonstrating the relevance of social movement and nonviolent action theory to activists, and a way for academics to apply their theoretical knowledge to service of social movement actors, others might be inspired to do likewise.

Boundaries

For the purposes of this research, some limits have to be set concerning the scope of study. Therefore I will restrict myself to looking at the anti-war campaign in Australia (although international events will provide necessary context), and further limit the study to the campaign before the war began. This is necessary because a number of elements have made the campaign since that time very different, not least the split within the peace movement itself about ultimate goals. Details about the movement and events have been mostly limited to Sydney and Melbourne, as these were the two largest and most influential anti-war coalitions, and this is where the struggle to stop the war was largely won and lost.

Theory

A number of theoretical frameworks can potentially be used as a basis for the study of the anti-war movement. These include social movement theory, nonviolent action theory and strategic theory developed by activists themselves. This chapter introduces each of these and considers the insights they bring to the study of social movements, along with attempts at synthesis of the key strengths of each. From this literature, four factors influencing movement outcomes emerge: political opportunity structures, resource mobilisation, framing, and movement strategy and tactics. These are discussed in turn, with a view to harnessing insights for studying the anti-war movement.

The Campaign

The next section will essentially be a political history of the campaign, focussing on movement and government actions and events, structured under the four factors introduced in the theory chapter.

The political context will be examined, noting both domestic and international influences on the amount of 'political space' available to the movement. Next I detail the organisational structure and resource mobilisation of the anti-war coalitions in Sydney and Melbourne, and the collective action frames that were invoked to inspire mass participation in protest events.

The anti-war movement's campaign against Australian involvement in the Iraq War involved a wide variety of activities in multiple settings. I will use Sharp's 198 methods of nonviolent action as categories for understanding the relative use of protest & persuasion, non-cooperation and nonviolent intervention. This will help determine the level of risk and commitment of the campaign. From this documentary history, I will induce the strategic theory and assumptions of the anti-war campaign.

Analysis

Chapter 4 will be an integration of the lessons from the theory and the history of the campaign. To put this another way, I will analyse the campaign in the light of strategic theory.

This section will make conclusions on the internal and external factors leading to the degree of success of the campaign. In this context, 'internal' refers to things ostensibly within the control of the movement, such as its strategic coherence, organisational capacity, internal cohesiveness and application of strategy, tactics and public communication. 'External' refers to such things as the commitment of the government to its course, resistance to change and international pressure.

Conclusions

Finally, I will look at the lessons of the campaign for future peace movement activity. The underlying inspiration for this research is a desire to learn from the lessons of history and the insights of leading strategic theorists in order to develop strategic tools of relevance to the peace movement. The hope is that in doing so, the next anti-war campaign is more successful than the last one.

Theory

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Theoretical Schools

Social movement theory

The study of social movements has flourished in the wake of the rise of such movements in the 1960s and '70s. These studies have sought to understand the rise and fall of social movement activity, in particular the circumstances that promote or inhibit movement mobilisation.

Social movement theorists have tended to focus on three factors that are considered vital to the understanding of any social movement. These are *political opportunity structures* – the political context the movement operates within, especially the expansion or contraction of political space; *resource mobilisation* – the organisational forms of movements and their capacity to mobilise effective resources; and *framing* – the way in which movements articulate their concerns and demands, and the effectiveness of this communication in spurring mobilisation. Collectively, it is argued these concepts can account for "movement origins, the power generated by movements, the energising content of movements, and movement outcomes" (Morris 2000: 446).

These three strands of social movement theory have been integrated into a single framework called *political process theory* (PPT). David Meyer sums up the PPT thesis succinctly:

> The primary point of the political process approach was that activists do not choose goals, strategies, and tactics in a vacuum. Rather, the political context, conceptualised fairly broadly, sets the grievances around which activists mobilize, advantaging some claims and disadvantaging others. Further, the organization of the polity and the positioning of various actors within it makes some strategies of influence more attractive, and potentially efficacious, than others. The wisdom, creativity, and outcomes of activists' choices - their agency - can only be understood and evaluated by looking at the political context and the rules of the games in which those choices are made - that is, structure. (Meyer 2004: 127-128)

The strength of the structural approach to social movement theory is such that leading theorists of political opportunity structures place movement timing, organisation and outcomes largely outside the control of movement actors themselves (McAdam 1996; McAdam, McCarthy et al. 1996; Tarrow 1996).

Social movement theorists have greatly enhanced our understanding of many of the dynamics of collective action. Through detailed case studies and international comparative studies, they have helped explain the phenomenon of mobilisation in terms of timing, shape, cultural framing and movement outcomes. They have identified three key factors influencing these dynamics and delved into each to create models and common definitions to guide further research. Most importantly, they have contributed academic rigour to discussion of social movements, something that is often lacking in activists' own reflections.

Criticism

Political process theory has been criticised for being overly structuralist, conceptually confused and guilty of trying to elucidate a general theory when none is possible, especially concerning casual variables ('invariant models'). Goodwin and Jasper, in a very influential article, argued that it is not theoretically possible to develop an invariant general theory or model of social movements capable of covering every social and political scenario. In particular, they take aim at the study of political opportunity structures: "the political opportunity thesis is not simply tautological, trivial, insignificant, or ambiguous; it is, as an invariant causal hypothesis, just plain wrong" (Goodwin and Jasper 1999: 39).

The authors' main concern is the absence of any notion of movement agency in the political process model, despite its name (in another article Jasper (2004: 2) writes that "participants in social movements make many choices, but you would never know this from the scholarly literature"). They argue that political opportunities, mobilising structures and collective action frames are all heavily shaped by strategic considerations and choices movement leaders and activists make on a daily basis. They also depend on psychology, luck, and timing.

In a similar vein, Morris (2000: 447) argues that

> The political process model has largely ignored the central role that a challenging group's agency-laden institutions and frame lifting, leadership configurations, tactical solutions, protest histories, and transformative events play in producing and sustaining collective action.

This structural bias is so strong, he argues, that even the tactics used by movements are treated structurally, as a dynamic rather than a causal factor of movement outcomes. In the process, the possibility of movement agency influencing outcomes is, *a priori,* denied (449).

Nonviolent Action Theory

Nonviolent action theory is the study of the politics and dynamics of nonviolent action. The seminal text in this field is the ground-breaking 3-volume *Politics of Nonviolent Action* by American political scientist Gene Sharp in 1973. Sharp developed an entire framework for studying nonviolent protest movements incorporating a theory of power, analysing the methods of protest and explaining the dynamics behind the success of nonviolent social movements even in the face of violent repression. Although subject to

substantial criticism concerning its voluntaristic and individualistic assumptions and ignorance of important insights of structuralist sociological theory, Sharp's research remains highly popular with movement activists around the world because it provides answers to the only important question: how to win (Martin 1989). Indeed, democracy activists in Serbia engaged in extensive training in Sharp's theories and widely disseminated one of his texts as part of their capacity building strategy (York 2001).

Early studies of nonviolence centred on the philosophy and strategy of Mohandas Gandhi in South Africa and India. Sharp's book was helpful in part because he distinguished between such 'principled' nonviolent action and a more 'pragmatic' approach, in which nonviolent methods are employed by regular people as a 'technique of struggle', or a repertoire of strategically effective methods of achieving social change.

Power

Sharp's politics of nonviolent action centres on a 'relational'[2] theory of power in which governments of all forms are reliant on the obedience and cooperation of their subjects. This contrasts with a monolithic theory of power that assumes power is imposed by the state from above by its capacity for repression.

Sharp contends that governments have six sources of power: an acceptance of the legitimate authority of the government, the human resources available in the form of actively supportive people and groups, the skills and knowledge needed by the regime to function, intangible factors such as cultural and psychological inducements to obey, access to material resources and availability of sanctions. However, all of these rely on constantly replenishing supplies of cooperation from individuals leading their daily lives and are potentially contestable by social movements (Sharp 2002: 16-17).

Other theorists

Sharp's theory has been built on, refined and used to study a wide range of social movements over the last thirty years. In particular, Ackerman and DuVall (2000) and Zunes, Kurtz and Asher (1999) used Sharp's insights to help explain the power of nonviolent tactics in detailed studies of 20th century nonviolent conflict; Ackerman and Kruegler (1994) developed twelve strategic principles arising from study of numerous 20th century nonviolent movements; and Martin (Martin 2004; 2005) has refined Sharp's study of resisting repression with his 'backfire framework'. On the strategic front, Burrowes (1996) refined a range of Sharp's strategic insights in developing a comprehensive 'strategic framework of nonviolent defence'; while retired Army colonel Robert Helvey (2004) has combined Sharp's work with principles of military strategy to advance certain key concepts such as the strategic assessment, planning and psychological operations.

Criticism

While Sharp's analysis has received fairly little attention in social movement theory, it has been criticised by sympathetic scholars of nonviolent action, with the claim that Sharp's theory is overly individualistic

[2] Sharp originally used the term 'consent theory of power' but after significant feminist critique has adopted the term 'pluralist'. This is itself unfortunate, as Shock notes, because Sharp is here using 'pluralist' in a different way to most scholars, for whom it refers to the relationship of competing interest groups in democratic public policy decision-making processes. Schock links Sharp's theory to Galtung's 'reciprocal relations' and Foucault's analysis of the multiple loci of power even in oppressive systems. See Schock (2005: 178-179), footnote 21.

and voluntaristic. In particular, many argue that he pays inadequate attention to what he calls the 'intangible factors' underlying cooperation and obedience, to systemic relations such as patriarchy, to the role of third parties in supporting or undermining movement goals, and to factors beyond the control of the movement (Martin 1989; Burrowes 1996: 83-86; Schock 2005: 44-46).

Nevertheless, unlike social movement theory, Sharp's model does function extremely well as an empowering basis for analysis by social movement organisers, a suggestion that has been borne out by experience in recent Eastern European democratic revolutions (Martin 1989).

Activist Strategic Theory

The Movement Action Plan

Some activists have spent considerable time reflecting on their experiences and developing 'grounded theory' (Finley and Soifer 2001: 101) from them. Many of these explicitly or implicitly harness the insights of social movement and nonviolent action theory. One influential example is Bill Moyer, a veteran of many social movement campaigns from the 1960s to the 1990s, who developed the *Movement Action Plan* in response to what he saw as activist misunderstanding of the politics of social movement activism and governmental response (Moyer 2001).

Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan offers strategic insights for social movements engaged in public activity for social change in democratic contexts. MAP is a strategic framework that explains the process of struggle between powerholders and the movement to define the issue at hand and build public opinion and activity, and thus political strength. MAP can be used for both progressive and defensive campaigns.

MAP is based on seven 'strategic assumptions', which are in reality strategic insights that Moyer discerned from his own experience as a life-long activist. They are: social movements are proven to be powerful; movements are at the centre of society; the real issue is social justice vs. vested interest; the grand strategy is to promote participatory democracy; the target constituency is the ordinary citizen; success is a long-term process, not an event; and social movements must be nonviolent to succeed (Moyer 1990).

Together, these principles should drive organisations and movements seeking paradigm-shifting social change, assisting them to evaluate their situations and determine appropriate tactics to build sufficient power to generate success. In essence, his strategic theory can be summarised as this: a disciplined and persistent movement can win a campaign against determined powerholders including the state with good strategic planning and nonviolent tactics, including successfully framing the campaign in the minds of the general public as a conflict about the core values of society.

MAP incorporates a model called the "Eight Stages of Movement Success", which attempts to explain the dynamics of political struggle between the movement and the powerholders in terms of relative power and the types of strategy and tactics each side will be using at any given time ('stage'). One of the key insights of this model is the appreciation of the difference between a 'take-off' moment (stage four)

and the final success (stage seven) – and the stages in between that are often characterised by belief in movement failure as the dynamism and participant numbers drop off (Moyer 2001: 42-86).

Moyer's work shares common elements with political process theory and nonviolent action theory. A number of his strategic principles are a way of framing political opportunity (per Gamson and Meyer 1996, below), while his belief in movement power and the strategic necessity of nonviolent (but disruptive) tactics is taken directly from Sharp. Moreover, MAP helps fill in some key gaps in social movement literature, such as why movement outcomes are often achieved after movement demobilisation, itself based on a misunderstanding of when a movement 'ends'. In light of MAP, we can see that most social movement literature looks only at the 'take-off' stage (four) of a movement. Like nonviolent action theory, MAP also focuses on movement agency in *creating* and exploiting political opportunities, and provides an analysis of what is needed to sustain morale and commitment through the difficult times (Finley and Soifer 2001).

Attempts at Synthesis

Kurt Schock

Recently, Kurt Schock has attempted to develop a synthesis of political process theory and nonviolent action theory. Noting that the former includes a structural bias and lack of consideration of agency, while the latter emphasises agency at the expense of serious structural analysis, Schock argues

> The strength of each theoretical perspective addresses the weakness of the other. Political process scholarship is strong on explaining the emergence of social movements, but less so on explaining their trajectories and outcomes. Political process scholarship is strong on identifying aspects of the political context that facilitate or constrain social movements, but less so on identifying movement strategies and tactics that contribute to a recasting of the political context. On the other hand, the nonviolent action scholarship has focused on the trajectories of social movements rather than their origins, and has emphasized the role of agency, especially strategy, in promoting political change (Schock 2005: xviii)

Although his synthetic framework is constructed in relation to non-democracies, Schock's insights are relevant here. Simply put, he argues that political structures and movement agency are engaged with each other dynamically, and that bringing an understanding of both to the study of specific movements will do much to aid understanding of both movement choices and outcomes. Thus for Schock the capacity for state repression to a movement is an external variable that has to be taken into account in understanding a case study, but equally important is what the movement itself does to promote resilience and attract third-party support in response (Schock 2005: 49). Put another way, a movement can do everything right and still lose, another may win despite making mistakes, but successful movements don't just happen – they need effective strategies and tactics.

Four Factors that Influence Outcomes

Emerging out of these schools of thought we have four factors that influence outcomes to consider. As Schock notes, it is important to study factors internal and external to the movement in order to achieve

a full understanding of the outcomes of movement mobilisation. These four factors are political opportunity structures, resource mobilisation, framing and movement strategy and tactics. Most academic research on the first three factors has suffered from the structural bias mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, important insights can be gleaned which will aid in understanding movement outcomes.

Political opportunity structures

Political opportunity structures are used to explain both the timing and outcomes of collective action, as well as how radical a movement's goals are. For Doug McAdam (1996), the timing and fate of social movements are largely dependent upon the opportunities afforded by changing political alignments and power structures external to the movement. He defines political opportunity as consisting of four dimensions: the relative openness or closure of the institutionalised political system; the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; the presence or absence of elite allies; and the state's capacity and propensity for repression.

Piven and Cloward (1979: 31-32) have found that while democracies are naturally more open spaces than non-democracies, the natural flow of election cycles serves to open and close space for successful movement outcomes. As a general rule, the closer to an election, the more potential a movement has to pressure the government into accommodating at least some of its demands.

Another consideration is third party support and constraints, such as international alliances between governments that bolster their capacity to withstand domestic pressure, or alternately foreign influences that inspire movements and constrain government responses (McAdam 1996: 34-35; Schock 2005: 33-34). For example, it is commonly accepted that Burma is highly reliant on support from the Chinese government, which lessons its reliance on its own people and on positive relations with the rest of the world.

Resource mobilisation

Resource mobilisation theory arose out of a concern to combat the earlier social psychological study of social movements that saw mobilisation as irrational, disruptive behaviour. It argued instead that movements were rational actors that gathered and spent resources like everyone else. Social conflict is thus conceived as the struggle for the appropriation of existing resources and the creation of new ones. The study of resource mobilisation has focused on forms of movement structure, the way in which people are recruited into movements, the development of social movement organisations and the nature of relationships between social movement organisations in coalitions and networks (McCarthy and Zald 1977; McCarthy 1996).

Resources can be either material (eg. money, people, infrastructure, etc) or non-material (eg. legitimacy, loyalty, commitment, etc). Mobilisation is the process by which a group assembles these material and non-material resources and places them under collective control for the explicit purpose of pursuing the group's interests through collective action. But mobilization is more than resource accumulation; for mobilization to take place, these resources must be placed under collective control and must be employed for the purpose of pursuing group goals (Canel 1997).

Studies in this field have shown that different tasks demand different types of organisational structures. For example, centralised, hierarchical structures can be more effective for institutional and short-term changes, but have more difficulty in promoting grassroots participation. Decentralised structures can obtain more membership involvement, greater satisfaction and group maintenance, but will tend to be less effective in strategic-goal attainment. (Canel 1997).

Framing

The study of framing was spurred by a concern that cultural factors were absent from the resource mobilisation approach. Framing refers to the way in which movements fashion shared understandings of the world and themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action (McAdam, McCarthy et al. 1996: 6). As Schock (Schock 2005: 27) writes,

> To motivate collective action, collective action frames must successfully critique the dominant belief system that legitimizes the status quo and provide alternative belief systems that legitimate noninstitutional political action.

According to Benford and Snow (2000: 615-618), there are three types of 'collective action frames': diagnostic, prognostic and motivational; together these act to build consensus and encourage action.

Diagnostic frames generally emphasise the injustice of the present situation or policy being opposed in an effort to raise awareness and concern among the general population in a process referred to as 'cognitive liberation' (Benford and Snow 2000: 615). This involves communicating in emotive language that cuts through the general apathy and ignorance of much of the population to various injustices, emphasising the awfulness of what is happening (or proposed) in what one strategist refers to as 'scandal maximisation' (Rose 2005).

Prognostic frames emphasise the realistic possibility and moral superiority of an alternative solution. This includes the movement's answer to the question of what is to be done. This is often a critical part of the 'framing contest' between the movement and its opponent, especially (as in this case) when it is proposed actions by the opponent that are being condemned by the movement (Benford and Snow 2000: 616-617).

Motivational frames attempt to move people from outrage to action, including a 'call to arms' and rationale for action. This necessarily means selling the prospects of successful action (Benford and Snow 2000: 617).

While this is generally thought to be something the movement must successfully frame in the public sphere, it is also a problem *within* movements themselves. Indeed, a large concern of Moyer in developing the MAP framework was an analysis of what he calls activists' "belief in movement failure" (Moyer 2001: 87-93). Similarly, Sharp writes that

> Sometimes, too, it must be admitted, people do not attempt to chart a strategy to achieve their goal, because deep down they do not really believe that achieving their goal is possible. They see themselves as weak, as helpless victims of overpowering forces, so the best they can do, they believe, is to assert and witness, or even die, in the faith that they are right (Sharp 2003: 18).

These collective action frames will succeed or fail to mobilise action depending on their *resonance* with the rest of society, itself a function of credibility of the frames and their proponents, and the salience of the frames to the target audience (Benford and Snow 2000: 619-622). For Moyer, the key to resonant framing is to demonstrate that the policy or action being opposed is a threat to the 'core social values' of the population. Social movements "will be successful only to the extent that they can convince the great majority of people that the movement, and not the powerholders, truly represent society's values and sensibilities" (Moyer 1990: 6; see also Benford and Snow 2000: 616, on 'adversarial framing').

Of course, these frames are contested within society. Movement actors, if they are doing their job properly, will consistently overemphasise the imminent danger of the status quo and the likelihood of successful action (i.e. the political opportunity). Governments are meanwhile doing the exact opposite. Moreover, frames are regularly contested *within* movements, with different participants often having different goals and motivations, theories about how change happens and theories about what rhetoric will be most effective at any given moment (Gamson and Meyer 1996; Benford and Snow 2000). Finally, the media plays an important role in filtering various frames and thus shaping the success of some tactics and language. For example, mainstream media will always give much greater attention to extra-institutional action (eg. civil disobedience or riots), but generally do so in a pejorative way. Thus a tension can arise between being noticed and being seen to be reasonable by a mainstream audience (Gamson and Meyer 1996: 287-289).

Strategy and Tactics

The Importance of Strategic Planning

Sharp argues that careful strategic planning, based on the insights of strategic theory, is essential for any social movement to succeed. He suggests that many activists appear to rely on the righteousness of their cause alone, as if mere assertion of good arguments alone can force vested interests to concede power. Or alternately they act within their comfort zone, hoping the tactics used unsuccessfully last time will somehow magically work now (Sharp 2003: 18).

Sharp suggests that movement success is much more likely if its leaders spend the time and effort on planning strategy from the beginning, and refine as they progress. This should include consideration of goal setting, the grand strategy (including a 'strategic assessment' of the current situation and a decision about whether the movement is seeking to *convert* or *coerce* the opponent), specific strategies for achieving specific movement goals, and appropriate tactics within each strategy (Sharp 2003: 17-23). This theme and language is echoed throughout nonviolence and activist literature (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Burrowes 1996; Moyer 2001; Helvey 2004; Lakey 2004; Schock 2005; Whelan and La Rocca 2005).

Will and Power

In his strategic framework, Burrowes argues that nonviolent strategy has both defensive and offensive elements. Defensively, the underlying aim is to maximise the movement's will to struggle and power to do so. Offensively, it is to alter the opponent's will to fight and to undermine their power to do so.

The process of maximising the movement's will and power involves mobilising key social groups to actively resist the opponent. This involves the processes mentioned in the discussion above about framing and resource mobilisation.

The opponent's will to fight might be altered by satisfying their unmet needs or by converting them to the movement's view, depending on why the opponent is acting in the first place. Their power to fight may be attacked by strategically selected tactics aimed at undermining their 'centre of gravity', which is the social resources that supports them (known as 'pillars of support'). That is, by undermining the will of those who support the opponent to continue doing so, the opponent's power to continue is weakened (Burrowes 1996: 30-31). For example, a campaign of economic sanctions against certain businesses propping up an unjust government could cause those businesses to withdraw support for the regime's unjust activities. This is precisely what happened in South Africa with the Port Elizabeth boycott campaign (Ackerman and Duvall 2000: 355-358).

In the context of activists opposing the state, activists thus focus their attention not on the state itself, but on the 'pillars of support' that hold it up: the obedience of the population, the willingness of the military and police to use violence against protestors, the judiciary, supportive media, the bureaucracy, and other elite allies of the government (including international governments and corporations). If enough people withdraw their cooperation and obedience from the state, it can be forced to respond to the movement's demands, despite never losing a monopoly on repressive capacity (Helvey 2004: 9-18).

This process of pulling away the support structures of the opponent and, where possible, even moving them into the movement's own camp is described in some activist strategy literature as analysing and then shifting the 'spectrum of allies' (Figure 1). The idea is that in any struggle, people and organisations will sit along a continuum or spectrum of possible positions, from active support for the movement, through shades of neutrality to active opposition. According to the 'spectrum of allies' thesis, the movement must shift each group of people one place towards the movement, such that supporters become participants, neutrals become supporters, antagonists become neutral, and opponents are reduced to antagonists or else isolated. The movement does not need to convert opponents and antagonists into supporters and participants (Irwin and Faison 1984).

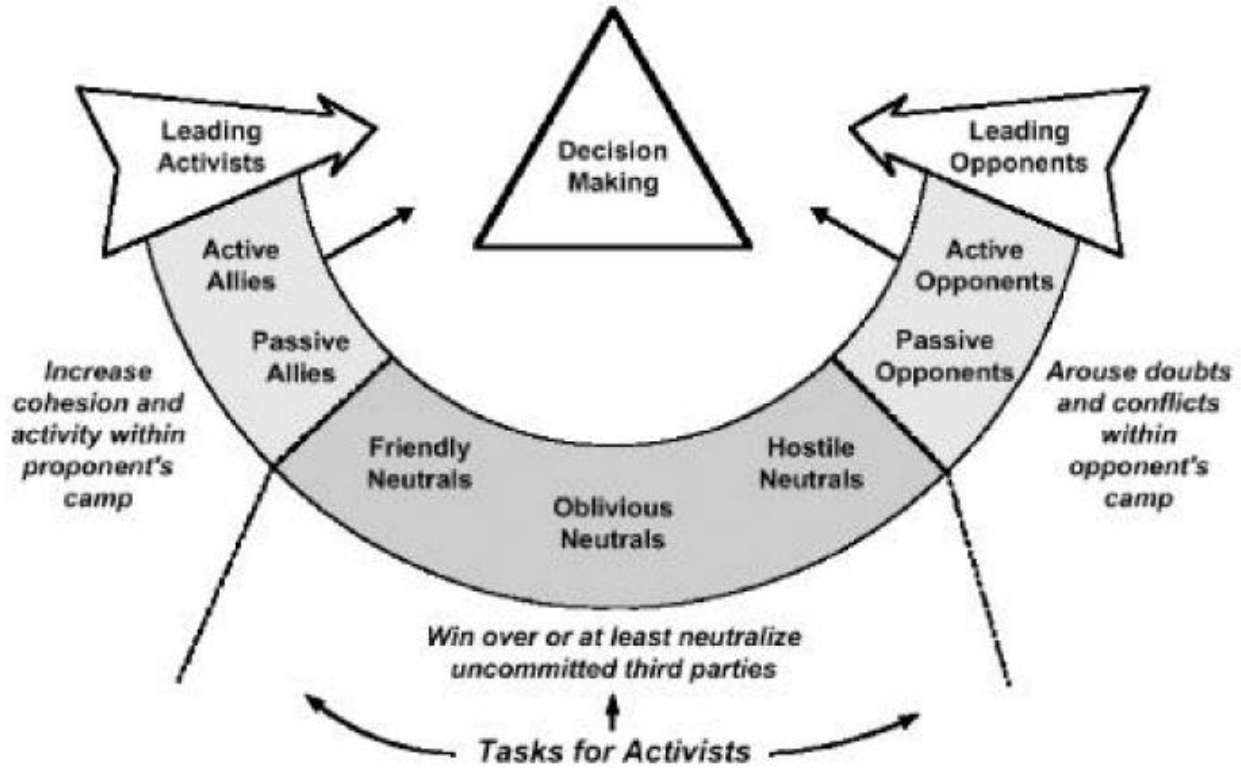

Figure 1: The Spectrum of Allies (source: Irwin and Faison 1984)

Effective Strategy

A number of researchers have developed sets of principles of effective strategy from case studies of 20th century social movements and the relational analysis of power. These principles have much in common. While many of them were developed from nonviolent struggles in non-democratic contexts, most remain applicable for contentious struggles in democracies as well, especially where the opponent is the government and it is ideologically committed to its position.

These principles include the importance of clear and limited goals, capacity building to gear up for possible success, a strategic plan understood across the movement leadership, multiple channels and categories of tactics that are clearly connected to the strategy, mobilisation of grassroots support, effective communications within the movement, undermining the opponent's bases ('pillars') of support, undermining the opponent's capacity to maintain control of the situation through strategically chosen disruptive tactics, exertion of constant pressure in the final stages, and the maintenance of nonviolent discipline. The ability of movements to adhere to these principles has been demonstrated to affect their chances of success (Moyer 1990; Ackerman and Kruegler 1994: 21-53; Burrowes 1996; Schock 2005: 163-170).

Categories of Tactics

Sharp categorised nonviolent action into three categories: methods of protest and persuasion, non-cooperation, and nonviolent intervention (1973, Part Two).

Methods of protest and persuasion are mostly symbolic, public, influencing tactics, designed to communicate to the state and the populace the injustice of the status quo and a list of demands for change. Examples include protest rallies, street marches, symbolic acts and pubic meetings. Depending on the level of political openness, these actions may be quasi-institutionalised (as in Australia), or highly challenging to the state (as in a dictatorship).

Methods of non-cooperation involve the withdrawal of participation or cooperation. These may be social, economic or political, and are designed to undermine the power, capacity and legitimacy of the government. These tactics include boycotts, refusal to pay rent or taxes, strikes, civil disobedience, and conscientious objection. They are generally more risky and costly for the participants, but potentially more powerful means of confronting the government.

Methods of nonviolent intervention are high-risk actions designed to interrupt or disrupt normal operations that support the status quo, or the development of creative alternatives. Examples include sit-ins, obstruction, hunger strikes, creation of alternative communities and parallel/exile governments.

Looking back at successful nonviolent social movements, a number of nonviolent action researchers have identified 'disruptive' tactics such as widespread actions of non-cooperation or intervention as crucial to that success, even in democratic contexts. Indeed it is generally felt that on matters of significance, in which the government acts against the wishes of the majority of people or in an unjust capacity, protest and persuasion-based tactics will be insufficient to undermine the government's pillars of support, and thus win movement demands (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Burrowes 1996; Moyer 2001; Sharp 2005).

Radical Flank Effects

As mentioned earlier, social movement theorists have generally failed to appreciate the role of movement strategy. One field of inquiry that is relevant is the study of the 'radical flank effect'. Studies have found this effect to have mixed results. A positive effect can occur when the leverage of moderates is strengthened by both increasing the level of crisis and making the moderates seem more 'reasonable'. A negative effect occurs when the activities of the radical wing undermine the legitimacy of the whole movement or lead to violent repression by the state supported by neutral observers, including the general public (Schock 2005: 47-48).

Several researchers have found that, contrary to the pluralist claim that moderation in politics is more effective than disruption, the use of force by social movements increases the chances that they reach their goals. For example, Gamson (1990) found in his study of early 20th century American protests that the use of violence and, more generally, disruptive tactics by challenging groups, was positively correlated to his two measures of success: the acceptance of challengers as legitimate claimants and the obtaining of new advantages for constituents. However the data is mixed, with many studies finding no correlation between violence and policy change (Giugni 1998: 376-379)

One problem with the existing literature on this topic is that it tends to conflate 'disruption' with 'violence' . Schock suggests the potential effectiveness of violence is directly due to its disruptiveness, and thus disruptive nonviolent tactics can (and do) provide a functional equivalent to violence; however this has not been adequately tested by the existing social movement literature (Schock 2005: 48-49).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to summarise the key theoretical literature on social movements. The mainstream academic study of social movements provides useful insights into the external constraints on movement activity, the importance of effective movement structures and the contest between movements and the state in framing a struggle. But social movement theory is starting to wake up to a key weakness, which is the role of movement agency in creating and exploiting political opportunities through effective strategy and tactics.

Nonviolent action theory has proven itself very useful to a wide range of social movements over the last three decades as an analysis of power, the dynamics of movement struggle, and a guide to effective strategy. However, this theory is weak on structural analysis.

Thus a synthesis of these two fields is likely to provide a much greater understanding of movement struggles. What we can see from these efforts is that movements have a wide variety of strategic options open to them, and success depends on wise thinking. However these options are themselves somewhat constrained by the political system the movement finds itself in, such that strategies that might work in some contexts will fail in others. At the same time, effective strategic and tactics can actually create new political opportunities for movements.

In this chapter, four factors were introduced as bearing on the success or failure of social movements. These include the political opportunity structures the movement operates in, the effectiveness of the movement in mobilising and organising resources, the ability of the movement to develop collective action frames which resonate in the community, and the movement's strategy and tactics.

By taking in account these internal and external factors, it should be possible to evaluate the anti-war movement's campaign to prevent Australia's involvement in the Iraq War. This will help understand why the movement achieved the level of success it did, without managing to avert the war. But first we need to understand what actually happened and what the movement strategy and tactics were, which is the topic of the next chapter.

The Anti-War Campaign

In the last chapter I outlined the insights from a variety of frameworks that give insight into the factors affecting social movement success. These were: political opportunity structures, resource mobilisation, cultural framing and movement strategy and tactics. This chapter examines the Australian anti-war movement in 2002-03 in relation to each of these four factors. For space and research boundary reasons, much of the material presented here on the Australian anti-war movement is restricted to the two large coalitions operating in Sydney and Melbourne. It is assumed that the general dynamics of these coalitions were present in coalitions in other large cities.

The Political Context

Internationally, the war effort was suffering from significant opposition at all levels. The US Government insisted throughout that it was prepared to attack Iraq unilaterally while simultaneously trying to win support in the UN Security Council. Ultimately, despite the efforts of one of the USA's few internationally credible figures, the US Secretary of State Colin Powell, the Bush Administration was unable to gain the support of even a bare majority of the UN Security Council, forcing it into an embarrassing back-down from seeking a formal vote.

On the other hand, the war came shortly after the terrorist attacks in USA of September 11, 2001 and Bali on October 12, 2002. In the wake of these attacks, western democracies all joined a 'global war on terror' that included military strikes inducing regime change in Afghanistan (which met with only very muted Australian opposition), various other international military initiatives, and vastly increased domestic authoritarianism amid heightened fears of further terrorist attacks.

The Bali Bombing in 2002 had a profound effect on Australian political culture, with enormous public support for authoritarian government legislation introduced to prevent an attack here. The effects of such legislation on protest activity was demonstrated in Sydney in November 2002, when anti-WTO protesters were met with significant police brutality, with the full support of the state government (Kingston 2002).

The Iraq War was sold as another front in this 'war on terror', with concerns raised about the Iraqi government possessing weapons of mass destruction that might be passed to terrorists. Despite a lack of hard evidence of this, some governments including Australia thought a pre-emptive war was necessary just in case. As US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said, "we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud" (Blitzer 2003).

Domestically, the mobilisation came in the middle of the federal election cycle, at a time when the Liberal-National Coalition was dominating the political scene. The Labor Party was caught in the middle, arguing for the primacy of the UN and thus, in a context of uncertainty over whether the UN would

eventually authorise war, was slow and muted in its opposition (although many individual Labor MPs took strident anti-war stands). The two main minor parties, the Greens and Democrats, both strongly opposed the war with or without UN authorisation and actively participated in the two coalitions.

A large number of influential public figures also opposed the war, creating cracks in the institutional wall facing the anti-war movement. Most notable was Andrew Wilkie's resignation from the Office of National Assessments over his concern about intelligence manipulation (AAP 2003). Former Liberal and Labor Prime Ministers also opposed the war from the outset, as did many former senior military figures, the President of the RSL, and the heads of all the major Christian denominations. Indeed, the government had almost no elite allies speaking up in its defence at all (Brennan 2003; Spratt 2003).

Movement Organisation and Structure

The anti-war movement was made up of innumerable civil society groups and individuals. In all the large cities, these came together in coalitions in late 2002 specifically for the purpose of stopping the war.

The Victorian Peace Network (VPN) formed on 11 September 2002 and built a coalition of over 40 local groups and 50 affiliates, some of whom were themselves umbrella bodies such as the Victorian Trades Hall Council, Council of Churches, Islamic Council, and Council of Social Services. The VPN flourished as a coalition because it was based on an agreed set of principles, rather than ad hoc political cooperation. It operated on a broad consensus model to accommodate the variety of its members - some large, conservative institutions with mass memberships, others more specialist or activist-based (Spratt 2003).

In Sydney, the Walk against the War Coalition also formed in September 2002. Comprising about 90 affiliates at its peak, including representatives of minor non-government political parties, churches, unions, activist organisations and community groups, it came together with the aim of attracting the broadest possible community opposition to war against Iraq (Tattersall 2004: 12). The structure built on the recent success of the 2002 Palm Sunday rally, in which peace, justice and refugee groups came together more effectively than they had for some time (Murphy 2007).

According to Tattersall, in Sydney the union movement was more than just a regular participant. There was significant 'buy in' from the Labor Council, which provided office resources such as photocopying, office, money for advertising and printing; human resources, including dedicating several staff to organise for the campaign full time in early 2003; and political influence to assist in organising rallies and negotiating with council, police and the government (Tattersall 2004: 12). However according to Spratt (2003), the union movement in Victoria was "noticeable by its absence". This difference may partly reflect differences of perspective: Tattersall worked for the NSW Labor Council at the time, while Spratt comes from the non-union socialist left. Alternately it could be a contrast between a relative comparison (the unions gave more resources than they have since at least the Vietnam War) and an absolute comparison (the unions gave very few resources in an absolute sense).

Many of the key leaders of the coalition were experienced activists in their late '50s and '60s, who had cut their teeth on numerous peace and justice campaigns in the preceding decades. These included the large anti-nuclear marches in the early 1980s and in some cases the Moratorium marches in the 1970s.

A smaller but highly active contingent was from a younger, more radical wing coming from anti-global capitalist demonstrations (Seccombe 2003). The movement was not characterised by a clearly defined leaders, but rather both coalitions had a number of co-convenors who acted as spokespersons. Greens MP Bob Brown and Labor MP Carmen Lawrence provided some national political leadership but neither represented the anti-war coalitions, a deliberate distinction made to keep the movement non-partisan.

The anti-war movement suffered from three key resource constraints. First, it was re-forming after many years' hibernation. This is a common feature of the peace/anti-war movement, which has always been characterised by dramatic mobilisations around controversial conflicts followed by swift collapse (Epstein 2003: 115). Secondly, very few member organisations (and none with a significant member base) were specialist peace groups, for whom this was a full-time focus. Lastly, the coalitions were unable to raise significant funds from their member organisations. Thus, even at the height of anti-war mobilisation, the movement was being run with far fewer staff or financial resources than the environment, refugee, anti-poverty, human rights or labour movements have available every day, year in and year out. Its capacity to develop and implement sophisticated strategic plans was therefore very limited.

Collective Action Frames

Both coalitions adopted the same slogan as their primary collective action frame: "No War, No Australian Involvement". This simple message made it easy for movement leaders to convey the demands of the movement to the media, public and government.

Behind this, a number of 'injustice frames' (Benford and Snow 2000: 615) were employed to convey why the movement opposed the war. At the broad level, these emphasised that the war was illegal, immoral and unjust (in the sense of 'just war theory'); more specifically they claimed that that Iraq posed no threat to the West, that intelligence reports on Iraq WMD programs were "sexed up", and that the war would result in massive Iraqi civilian casualties.

The last of these frames, concerning Iraqi casualties, deserves some attention. A notable feature of this campaign was the prominence given to concern about Iraqi civilians, especially children. In Sydney, both the November 30 and February 16 rally posters featured images of Iraqi children as a key diagnostic and motivational message.

Iraqi civilian casualties were a constant theme in all the speeches in Sydney on February 16, while almost no mention was made of potential Australian military casualties. In fact, the only parochial interests presented in the speeches concerned Australian prestige and morality, and the increased threat of future terrorist retaliation (Sydney Morning Herald 2003).

The movement tended to avoid discussion of what Australia *should do* about Iraq, a topic of controversy within the movement. In response, the Prime Minister declared that protestors were "giving comfort to Saddam Hussein" and failing to sufficiently oppose terrorism (Riley 2003). While Australians were not fooled into believing White House rhetoric linking Saddam Hussein to the September 11 attacks, most

pro-war commentary here did connect him to terrorism more generally, and thus framed their opponents as 'soft on terror', which was another way of saying 'unpatriotic'.

The movement did spend considerable energy motivating people to participate, by emphasising the power of people to pressure the government. The key slogan in this context came from the New York Times reporting of the massive 14-16 February 2003 global protests, declaring world opinion to be "the other superpower" (Tyler 2003) – a phrase quickly adopted by the movement around the world for its power to motivate people with a belief in the possibility of movement success.

This framing of movement power was inevitably contested. At the Sydney rally that weekend, John Pilger said to the crowd "our movement is too big to be defeated ... its moral power, political power, your power, is greater than theirs ... we are the majority" (Macdonald 2003). John Howard's response was to downplay the significance of the movement, calling protestors a "mob" and declaring "I don't know that you can measure public opinion just by the number of people that turn up at demonstrations" (Chrisafis, Fickling et al. 2003).

Related to this was the process of contestation over protestor numbers at the larger demonstrations. The purpose of overstating or understating numbers is to maximise or minimise the public's belief in the movement's breadth of support and possibility of victory. The global weekend of protest, for example, was described by some media outlets as featuring six to ten million people, while more friendly media quoted protest organisers' figures of up to 30 million people (BBC News 2003; Chrisafis, Fickling et al. 2003). More locally, estimates of numbers in Sydney ranged from 200,000 (BBC News 2003) to 500,000 (Macdonald 2003). This is a feature of all demonstrations, with protest organisers and police generally offering wildly different estimates of protestor numbers.[3]

Movement Strategy and Tactics

As the strategy of the anti-war movement was never spelled out in writing or even openly discussed in coalition organising meetings, it can only be inferred from the tactics and framing employed in the campaign. Thus this section outlines the tactics and then, from that, retrospectively suggests the movement's strategy for stopping Australian involvement in the war.

Tactics

The two coalitions took slightly different approaches to tactical organisation. In Sydney, the Walk against the War Coalition agreed to organise a small number of mass participation events, and support but not organise a wide range of smaller actions and events by its member organisations and others. The Victorian Peace Network took a more proactive approach, endorsing and/or organising a much wider range of actions as well as the mass demonstrations. Both supported the formation of local peace groups and maintained several large email lists and a website to facilitate communication (Tattersall 2004: 12).

[3] I have been unable to find any literature on this topic, which is somewhat surprising given the way this framing contest features in every major demonstration.

The primary tactic was mass street demonstrations featuring prominent speakers and a march through parts of the CBD of the capital cities. The two major demonstrations deliberately coincided with global weekends of protest to maximise the sense of international solidarity and amplify pressure on the pro-war governments. Some of the key events included:

- On 13 October 2002, just four weeks after the VPN formed and the day after the Bali bombing, a rally on the theme "No war on Iraq - No Australian involvement" drew 45,000[4] people to central Melbourne, setting the tone for the next five months (Dellit 2002).
- On 30 November, 25,000 people attended a protest in Sydney. 10,000 joined a rally the next day in Melbourne, just 24 hours after a state election. Marches and rallies occur across Australia.
- On the weekend of 14-16 February 2003, street marches and rallies attracted approximately 150,000 people in Melbourne and at least 250,000 people in Sydney – the largest protest in the city's history. Across Australia, between half a million and one million people joined hundreds of demonstrations, easily the biggest protest event ever seen in the country.
- On the evening of the start of the war, pre-planned emergency protests drew 15,000 in Sydney and 20,000 in Melbourne, with tens of thousands more in cities and towns across the country.

A myriad of smaller events took place all over Australia between November 2002 and March 2003, demonstrating an interest in a diverse array of tactics. In general these events were organised by one or a few organisations or local peace groups. While the large coalitions endorsed and advertised these tactics, they did not actively work on them or take responsibility for them. They included:

- veterans and women's marches and vigils;
- students' marches (Books not Bombs);
- candlelight vigils;
- community peace events;
- public forums; conferences;
- body bag installations;
- organising public statements by key figures;
- petitions;
- letter writing campaigns;
- merchandising; and
- projecting images onto CBD buildings at night (Spratt 2003; Tattersall 2004).

Despite the unpopularity of the war, there were no concerted attempts at large-scale strikes or civil disobedience. A small number of senior union leaders, mostly in Western Australia, did call for strikes to blockade supplies for the armed forces or other acts of civil disobedience, but were quickly silenced by the ACTU leadership and possibly Labor MPs (Hockey 2003).

[4] The number of people attending protests is a significantly contested framing device, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Figures quoted here are where possible the figures quoted as best estimates by major newspapers.

Before the war began, there were only two cases of nonviolent direct action across the whole country. Both came just before the start of the war. The first involved two activists climbing to the top of the roof of the Sydney Opera House to paint "No War" in huge red letters, a hugely effective symbolic action broadcast around the world (Maley 2003). The second was a Greenpeace action in which 13 activists placed John Howard under 'house arrest' in the Lodge in Canberra by chaining themselves to the front gate and to vehicles blocking the driveway for about an hour (Shaw 2003). Both actions were entirely peaceful but somewhat controversial, with opponents in particular evoking a terrorist threat in discussing the protesters' breach of security.

This combination of tactics – mass demonstrations produced by the wide coalitions, and myriad smaller events by individual organisations – provided great flexibility to the anti-war movement concerning tactical diversity. Attempting to have all events authorised and run by the coalitions would have been impossible and undesirable – impossible because of the inherently slower decision-making process of the large coalitions, and undesirable because it was in the interests of the movement to promote local, innovative responses to the looming war without necessarily being held responsible if things turned out poorly.[5]

Strategy

One way to consider the strategic thinking behind the range of tactics is to compare them with Gene Sharp's much-cited catalogue of 198 Methods of Nonviolent Action (Sharp 1973: Part Two). Sharp divided these methods into three broad categories: protest and persuasion, non-cooperation, and intervention. These categories reflect increasing levels of risk to protestors (from arrest and/or violence) but also increasing exercise of movement power and pressure.

Looking at the list of tactics in this light, it becomes immediately apparent that except for the two small acts of civil disobedience (172 and 196 in Sharp's list), all of the movement tactics fall into the first category, protest and persuasion.[6]

As was discussed in the last chapter, protest and persuasion tactics are largely symbolic acts to communicate opposition to (or support for) something, designed to persuade or influence both the target and the general public by raising awareness of the issue and demonstrating the participants' depth of feeling.

The movement's collective action frames emphasised a simple 'no war' message along with a number of slogans attempting to communicate the reasons why the government and the general public should oppose war. That is, they were all attempts to *reason* rather than *coerce.*

Thus the strategy of the movement, however unspoken, was the mobilise as many people as possible to publicly demonstrate their opposition to the war, with the assumption that the democratic imperatives of maintaining positive public opinion would convince the government to back down from plans to

[5] This of course did not help the coalition after the two ill-fated Books not Bombs rallies after the war started, which ultimately played an important part in splitting the movement in Sydney after some movement leaders openly criticised the protest organizers and refused to endorse the second event.

[6] By my count, the anti-war movement employed methods 1-16, 19, 20, 34-40, 47, 48, and 50 from Sharp's list.

participate in the war. In this light, it is perhaps noteworthy that one of the most popular slogans in the movement was a fundamental expression of this democratic principle – “Not In Our Name”.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the anti-war movement from the perspective of the four factors influencing movement success that were identified in the last chapter. It was found that the political context provided significant opportunities for successful mobilisation due to the injustice of the war and the lack of UN authorisation, but that the ‘war on terror’ acted as a disincentive for more disruptive or radical tactics. The coalition structure of the movement allowed a large number of diverse groups to become involved, while the division of coalition versus single organisation tactics helped to preserve unity while allowing tactical diversity. The primary collective action frames emphasised the injustice of the war, and the importance of ordinary people publicly demonstrating their opposition, revealing the government’s lack of democratic legitimacy in supporting it. A large number and range of tactics were employed, but essentially all fell into the category of ‘protest and persuasion’, which represents the least disruptive and powerful forms of action. The movement, which did not develop a formal strategy for stopping the war before it started, essentially relied on the power of public opinion to convince the government not to proceed.

Analysis

This chapter is an attempt to analyse the reasons for the relative success, but ultimate failure, of the anti-war movement. This is done by considering the four factors that affect movement outcomes that were introduced in the theory chapter. These factors form the headings here.

Political Opportunity Structures

The political context of the anti-war mobilisation provided a number of significant opportunities and constraints on the movement. This context included international and domestic components.

The movement definitely benefited from the overtly unjust nature of the looming war. Compared to previous conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo and especially the first Gulf War, this war suffered from far less moral ambiguity. President Bush's apparent disinterest in cultivating an international consensus, which culminated in his inability to gain even a basic majority of support in the UN Security Council, helped to clarify the morality of the war in many eyes (Meyer and Corrigall-Brown 2005: 338). In the end only three countries actively participated in the invasion as a 'Coalition of the Willing': USA, UK and Australia.

This lack of international support and legitimacy sent a clear signal around the world that this was an unjust and illegal war. The relevance of this to the successful mobilisation is partly captured by an opinion poll result in January 2003 showing 57% of Australians would have supported a UN-authorised war, but only 18% supported a unilateral one (Williams 2003: 558-559).

Also acting to open political space was the leadership role of the French and German governments in opposing the war and stressing the validity of alternative options, itself with the overwhelming support of their citizenry.

The fact that the whole world seemed to be protesting the looming war also certainly played a part. The two large demonstrations in Australia were timed to coincide with global weekends of protest originally suggested at the European Social Forum and solidified in other international activist meetings (Walgrave and Verhulst 2003: 5). The February 2003 protests saw up to 30 million people turn out in what was easily the largest global protest in history (Chrisafis, Fickling et al. 2003). Thus Australian protestors were inspired to participate and given increased belief in the possibility of movement victory by reports of mass demonstrations overseas. Collectively, these international factors led to "the most favourable transnational opportunity climate ever" (Walgrave and Verhulst 2003: 24).

That the Australian Labor Party did not support the war outright – the first instance of a breakdown in bipartisan support for a war since the latter stages of the Vietnam War – also played a major role, although it was muted in its opposition while it waited for the outcome of UN negotiations. Its careful positioning provided some space for the union movement to become actively involved in the anti-war

movement while still constraining its activities to formal channels and 'safe' options such as street marches and rallies.

In these ways, the political opportunity structures were opening up significant political space for the anti-war movement. The government suffered from fractures in elite opinion, in particular the loss of bipartisan support, outspoken opposition by former military commanders and the inability to win UN Security Council support.

On the other hand, recent terrorist attacks in the New York and Bali had led to western countries declaring a 'war on terror' that significantly closed political space for dissent and accelerated the trend towards more authoritarian government. State governments in Victoria and New South Wales had also actively promoted fear of terrorism in repressing anti-global capitalist protests involving disruptive tactics, which reduced the attraction of direct action for the anti-war movement.

The fact that the protests occurred mid-cycle also weakened the political opportunities for the movement to exert pressure. Piven and Cloward (1979: 31), in studying four American protest movements, found that the timing of protest in relation to elections has a significant impact on success. The government knew it had plenty of time to ride out the opposition to the war before the next election, especially since it could rely on an upsurge in support once the war began and people either despaired or felt the need to 'support the troops'.

Resource Mobilisation

One of the reasons for the movement's successful mobilisation of large numbers was its early organisation and use of an effective coalition structure which maximises grassroots participation and democratic representation. On the other hand, this same structure slows down decision-making and spread leadership roles, which hampers communications efforts with the media (Canel 1997; Meyer and Corrigall-Brown 2005).

As well as experienced leadership, the comparably significant participation of unions was an important contributor to successful mobilisation. In particular, it strengthened the capacity of the movement by providing extra financial, human and material resources, expertise in organising demonstrations, links to the state governments, and a very large membership base (Tattersall 2004: 12). The involvement of many of the major churches also provided both a huge membership base and aided the movement in portraying itself as 'mainstream' defenders of core social values.

The three constraints mentioned in the previous chapter – the low-energy base, lack of specialist organisations and small financial and human resource contributions from member organisations – are significant factors in explaining the limitations on the movement's outcomes. They combine to make the anti-war (or peace) movement perennially less effective than other social movements at winning hard policy outcomes. Add to this the basic constraints of time: the war began just six months after the coalitions came together. It is simply not realistic to expect the anti-war movement to succeed with such limited resources, and it is remarkable that the movement achieved the outcomes it did considering the circumstances.

Another limitation, which intersects with the framing discussion below, was that the anti-war movement was seeking to mobilise people to protest against something that had little to do with them in any direct sense. Although speaking of union participation, Tattersall's analysis is true for the public in general:

> There was a still a sense in the unions that such issues were 'peripheral' to the 'real business' of enterprise bargaining and campaigning … peace, won or lost, doesn't immediately affect the day to day lives of working people … victory in this campaign is not directly in the self-interest of union members. This limits its capacity, as an issue, to engage, mobilise and expand the political consciousness of union members (Tattersall 2004: 13)

Framing

The movement was very successful in framing the Iraq War as 'unjust', 'immoral' and even 'illegal'. The fact that various polls showed between 85-90% opposition to unilateral war bears witness to the resonance of the movement's message. The emphasis on Iraqi civilian casualties, especially children, was both credible in a way that suggestions of high Australian military casualties would not have been, and proved to be salient with the public now accustomed to thinking of themselves as 'global citizens'.

The movement was less successful in developing credible and salient prognostic frames, that is alternative suggestions for dealing with the Iraqi regime. This was an inherent weakness arising from the extremely broad coalitions, who would not have been able to agree to more nuanced foreign policy positions than 'no war'. This left the movement vulnerable to counter-attack by the government and its allies, who proclaimed the movement 'soft on terror'. If we accept Moyer's contention that the movement must win majority opinion on both its opposition to powerholder policies and its alternative solutions, this may have been a fatal weakness (Moyer 2001: 83-85. See also the literature review in the Introduction).

The quick success of the movement served as its own motivational frame. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the media itself quickly dubbed global public opinion "the other superpower" in the wake of the February protests around the world. However, it is hard to escape the suspicion that the movement leaders themselves did not honestly believe in the potential of actually stopping the war, and settled for the more limited goal of registering a protest. On one level this is fair enough – it is not like anyone has ever stopped a war like this in advance before. But the irony is that at the very moment when the potential power of the movement was revealed, the leaders failed to change that belief and shift the goalposts in their own minds from 'protest for the sake of witnessing to the truth' to 'stopping the war'.

Movement Strategy and Tactics

Strategic Planning

The most obvious problem for the anti-war movement is that neither of the two main coalitions actually developed a clear and coherent strategy for stopping the war. Such a strategy would have articulated an analysis of the political situation including likely allies and opponents, goals, assumptions, a number of key intermediate objectives, and tactics to achieve those objectives. The coalitions did create working

groups on a number of fronts (eg. media, infrastructure, etc) which each consciously or implicitly took care of a number of these things but there was no coherent gathering together of this information.

As a result, it appears that the unspoken strategy relied on mobilising large numbers to express their opposition to the war, with a consequent effect on opinion polls concerning the war, which the democratic government could not ignore and would therefore back down. The assumption was that if enough people opposed the war, the government would not risk going to war anyway. This assumption proved false.

Will and Power

Burrowes' strategic framework revolves around his thesis that a successful nonviolent campaign must maximise the will and power of the movement and erode either the will or power of the opponent.

The movement did very well at maximising the will of people to oppose the government, and demonstrated some power in being able to bring up to a million people into the streets in protest. However, it did not build its internal, institutional power sufficiently (in the form of resources), nor did it consolidate, build or demonstrate its power after February.

The will of the government to commit to war was certainly eroded by opinion polls showing up to 90% opposition to the war. However, the government stood fast in the face of this opposition, correctly judging that much of that opposition would dissipate rapidly in the wake of the war starting. Nor was the power of the government to proceed undermined in any way. The movement's inability or unwillingness to impose consequences on such an action (before or after the war started) beyond the possibility of voter backlash at the next election meant that it was not threatening enough for the government to back down.

According to the 'spectrum of allies' thesis, the movement must convert neutrals into participants and antagonists into neutrals, while fracturing or isolating the opponents (Irwin and Faison 1984). The key relevance of this thesis for this campaign concerns the Australian Labor Party. In short, the movement was unable to move the ALP from a position of hesitant support (for the movement) to one of active participation. It is not clear if the movement ever pursued a deliberate strategy of courting or pressuring the ALP as distinct from the government.[7] While they did ultimately oppose the war on the grounds that the UN did not authorise it, their position only became clear late on, and the party machine never committed any of its considerable weight and resources to helping the movement.

On the other hand, the strong mobilisation and active internal campaigning almost certainly helped ensure that almost all church leaders in the country voiced opposition to the war. Indeed, many took very active steps to participate in various events, which in turn enabled church justice staff (who were already actively involved) more licence to commit further resources to the campaign. In the end, only one prominent church leader (Bishop Tom Frame, head of the Anglican chaplaincy to the armed services) supported the war as 'just', although Cardinal Pell also did little to clarify his opposition in the

[7] The war did play a significant role in the NSW state election, held just days after the war began. The Greens emphasised their own opposition to the war, elevating it to one of their primary messages (even though the war was a federal, not state, responsibility), and criticising the ALP for its failure to oppose the war outright (Ash 2007).

wake of Howard's claim of implicit support (Brennan 2003). Overall, church opposition was very clear, with church leaders speaking out in the media, in their churches and at the major rallies in all capital cities, and leading the street marches – the first time in Australian history that a war was so clearly declared to not be a 'just war' (Porter 2006).

Effective Strategy and Categories of Tactics

Strategic theory developed by activists and nonviolent action researchers indicates that movements can potentially win change from the government through either conversion, accommodation, coercion or disintegration. Movements should choose their preferred mechanism and adjust their strategy accordingly (eg. Helvey 2004: 25-34). The anti-war strategy was not really aimed at converting the prime minister – he was from the start seen as intractable on this issue. Accommodation was also impossible as this was not an issue on which the government could give the movement just a part of what it wanted. But neither was the campaign attempting to lead to disintegration of the government. The movement strategy was coercive, in that they aimed at forcing the government to back down against its will, but as discussed below, this was not borne out by the choice of tactics.

Tactics were chosen on the basis of familiarity and individual group preference rather than as part of a strategic plan. Furthermore, either by design or default, no disruptive or coercive tactics were attempted on a large scale. Certainly the coalitions never called for mass direct action or strike or boycott activity, as happened in one city in USA (Solnit 2005).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, almost all of the movement tactics fall into the first category detailed by Sharp, protest and persuasion. As was discussed in the theory chapter, protest and persuasion tactics are largely symbolic acts to communicate opposition to (or support for) something, designed to persuade or influence both the target and the general public by raising awareness of the issue and demonstrating the participants' depth of feeling. It relies on the desire to convince people to agree with the protestors, rather than pressure or coerce them into accepting the movement's demands (Sharp 1973: 117-118). They neither demonstrate the power of the movement nor attack the power of the opponent (Helvey 2004: 35), except insofar as governments in democratic societies must be careful about maintaining the support of the electorate.

A key strategic failure was that the movement did little to build on the unexpected, extraordinary success of the mass rallies on the weekend of 14-16 February 2003. In neither Sydney nor Melbourne did the coalitions organise a single mass participation event between that weekend and the start of the war on March 20, a period of six weeks. As such, they did little to carry the momentum from that weekend forward in an effort to continue increasing the pressure on the government.

Good strategy involves anticipating the next move of your opponent and preparing your own response to it. Once it became apparent that the government would try to ignore the mass protests of February, which was entirely predictable, the movement had to take further action if it was to advance a coercive strategy.

This could potentially have included further mass protests, on a rolling basis, sending a clear message that the movement would not be ignored so easily. Such a tactic, with a clearly articulated message that

the rallies would keep happening until the government backed down, might have progressively increased pressure on the government. This 'wave upon wave of protest events' approach was, for example, very effective in the US Civil Rights campaign (Piven and Cloward 1979: 181-263; Ackerman and Duvall 2000: 305-334).

Alternately it could have included tactics of non-cooperation (such as strikes or boycotts) or nonviolent intervention (such as sit-ins or blockades). This option in particular would have been risky. It would have had the potential to split the movement and to alienate the general public, especially in the context of the narrative power of the 'war on terror' and its concomitant legitimation of state repression of disruptive protest. But it would have expressed a depth of feeling on the issue that rallies could not, it would have demonstrated the power of the movement, and it would have taken away the government's ability to keep control of the situation. Most seasoned activists agreed at the time that the war was possibly the most egregious act of the government in recent time, and the overwhelming tide of public opinion suggests that high levels of participation and low levels of alienation might have resulted.[8]

Although social movement theorists have not found consensus on definitive relationships between disruption and success, many studies have found it to be a necessary component of successful social movements, even in democratic contexts. This is because nonviolent coercion of the state requires a high degree of non-cooperation and nonviolent direct action (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Burrowes 1996; Moyer 2001; Sharp 2005).

While it is impossible to know whether other measures would have changed the result, the movement strategy was bound to fail. As Margaret Lumsdaine, a Lutheran pastor and coordinator of the Military Globalization Project said, "how can we think we are actually going to overtake a mind-set of war by just waving some signs around?" (quoted in Tyrangiel 2003).

Conclusion

The anti-war movement benefited greatly from a political context which opened up significant political space for mobilisation. In particular, the isolated position of the 'Coalition of the Willing' which proceeded without UN support, was an external factor that had a huge impact on the progress of the campaign. The fractures within elite opinion and the lack of bipartisan support, which occurred for the first time since the end of the Vietnam War, also contributed to the successful mobilisation of large numbers of people.

The movement benefited from a fairly flexible coalition structure that created opportunities for diverse tactics as well as a smaller number of mass participant events, despite constraints on resources due to time, finances and human resources. It successfully framed the war before it started as 'unjust' in the minds of the overwhelming majority of the public for the first time in Australian political history.

[8] Although outside the scope of this study, the steady growth of nonviolent direct action, much of it lead by Christian churches, against the war in the United States appears to be a key factor in the increasing pressure on the government there over continued occupation of Iraq.

The movement itself engaged in an effective, if implicit, strategy of creating opportunities for the public to register their opposition to the looming war through a wide variety of tactics. These culminated in the mass demonstrations of February, the largest in Australia's history by a wide margin. This in turn helped pull the Labor Party slowly (but insufficiently) towards outright opposition and led to an unprecedented level of public opposition to the war. For the first time in Australia's history, the overwhelming majority of the public declared a war to be wrong before it even began.

However the movement did not effectively capitalise on this success by ramping up either the quantity or disruptiveness of its tactics. Quite the opposite – the coalitions in the two major capitals did not organise a single mass participation or direct action event between them for the next six weeks. This allowed the pressure on the government to subside, and created a sense that the movement had given up hope in stopping the war in the wake of an entirely predictable intransigent response from the government.

By not applying the lessons of strategic theory developed by activists and nonviolent action researchers, the movement leaders did not maximise their chances of success. In the end, the movement was extraordinarily successful and yet unable to prevent a war that was the least ambiguously wrong in the nation's history.

Conclusion

This paper was inspired by an awareness of two problems. On one hand, activists have a tendency to jump from campaign to campaign without ever conducting a rigorous evaluation of their efforts. As a result, they fail to learn the correct lessons and in turn run the risk of repeating the mistakes of the past. Often, in the wake of policy defeat, they wallow briefly in the injustice of the world before picking themselves up for the next fight. At best they carry out perfunctory debriefing sessions and write hasty reflections, in which many unsubstantiated claims are made and the wrong lessons are learned. Very few such reflections make any attempt to connect their campaigns to theoretical literature and research on social movement activism in order to provide a serious platform for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of their efforts.

On the other hand, much academic social movement theory is so disconnected from the needs and realities of activists that it contains no value to them. In seeking academic legitimacy, social movement theory has lost relevance to campaign organizers, despite their tendency to be avid consumers of political and sociological literature. Despite many researchers themselves being sympathetic to social movement goals, they have become trapped in the academic world, talking to each other rather than with activists. The latter are not interested in social movements as some sort of 'phenomenon'. They want help to change the world.

My aim in this paper was to tackle both these problems, through a case study of a recent high-profile social movement mobilisation, the campaign to prevent Australian involvement in the Iraq War. The hope is that this paper can demonstrate that theory can be relevant to activists, and that activists can benefit by using theory to plan and evaluate their campaigns.

At the beginning of the paper, a literature review of reflections and evaluations of the Iraq campaign showed some common themes, but also divergent opinions, concerning how successful the movement was and why it achieved the outcomes it did. The literature did find that the movement had significant success, despite ultimately being unable to prevent the war. For example, it was thought that movement action ensured the USA was unable to win UN authorisation for war, shaped the conduct of Coalition military forces regarding civilian casualties and shifted the entire discussion to a place where the very possibility of 'just wars' was being questioned.

It also uncovered some arguments for the reasons why the movement achieved these outcomes (but not total victory). However, very few of these made any reference to published research on social movements, strategic theory or even past activist literature on running successful campaigns.

Literature from social movement theory, nonviolent action theory and activist strategic theory was introduced and examined for insights into social movement outcomes. A synthesis of these frameworks,

which address the shortcomings in each other, provided a clearer picture of the internal and external factors that influence the shape and outcomes of social movement action.

These four factors were studied for insights that could guide an analysis of the anti-war campaign. It was found that the nature of the political system, the unity of elite opinion, the influence of allies and the willingness and capacity of the state to repress protest were important external factors. Internally, the ability of the movement to marshal resources and apply them effectively, including through effective organisation, were found to increase chances of success. So too was articulation of collective action frames that resonate with the public about the injustice of the situation at hand, the prospects of a better solution, and the value and importance of participation in protest. Lastly but crucially, the movement needs to create and apply effective strategic plans, including choice and timing of appropriate tactics to build and maintain pressure on the government, in order to either alter its will or undermine its power to continue with the policy or action the movement opposes.

By analysing the anti-war campaign in light of these factors, we can build understanding of why the movement achieved such a remarkable level of mobilisation, but at the same time was unable to prevent Australian involvement in the war.

It was found that the international context, especially the lack of UN authorisation of the war, provided excellent transnational opportunities for protest, as did the global wave of protest. At the same time, the bulk of elite opinion opposed the war, giving significant legitimacy to the movement. However, the build up to war also came in the wake of the terrorist attacks in USA on September 11 and in Bali in October 2002, creating significant fear in the Australian community and an acceptance of authoritarian measures, including decreased tolerance of dissent outside formal channels. Domestically, the war came midway through the federal election cycle, giving the government more capacity to resist negative public opinion. There were thus a number of opportunities and constraints on the movement, which help to understand the rapid mobilisation of popular protest but also suggest why it might have been limited to institutionalised tactics.

The movement suffered from significant resource constraints that hampered effective organisation. These included a basic lack of time, a baseline of almost zero activity, few professional activists specialising in peace movement activity, and a lack of financial input by the large member organisations. On a more positive front, the union movement, especially in Sydney, did provide some resources that made organising the massive protests of February 2003 possible. Despite these constraints, the movement organised itself into effective coalitions in each major city that allowed for a diversity of tactical responses culminating in a few mass participation events.

The success of these efforts is underlined by the fact that the demonstrations of February 14-16 were by far the largest in Australia's history. Indeed the success of these events seemed to catch everyone by surprise, including veteran activists.

The movement was extraordinarily successful in framing the war as 'unjust'. Indeed it is hard to think of another time when public opinion was so completely one-sided on a controversial, news-dominating subject. That the government did not buckle under the pressure of public opinion here is an important

research finding, as it clearly demonstrates that successful diagnostic frames are insufficient on their own when a government is ideologically committed to action, even in democratic contexts.

Rather, the movement must effectively plan and apply a strategy that builds awareness and pressure on the government. If it cannot be converted by rational argument (which is generally the case), the only way the social movement can achieve its goals is apply nonviolently coercion, by eroding its power to continue its course of action. This can be done by undermining the 'pillars of support' that provide social resources for the state, through the strategic application of tactics of non-cooperation and intervention. The anti-war movement did not attempt these more risky and disruptive tactics, and thus was not able to force the government to back down.

It is of course impossible to know if such tactics would have made a difference. Given the breadth and depth of feeling in the community on this issue, it is possible that they could have been successful, with high levels of participation and little public alienation. Australia does have a history of successful direct action campaigns on a wide range of causes, and many of the movement organisers were themselves veterans of these campaigns. On the other hand, the 'war on terror' and resulting legitimacy for suppressing disruptive dissent may have caused such efforts to backfire on the movement.

What can be said in the light of the theoretical literature is that the strategy pursued by the anti-war movement was almost guaranteed not to succeed. By not engaging in either additional mass participation events nor tactics of non-cooperation or intervention in the six weeks between the huge rallies on February 14-16 and the start of the war on March 20, the movement missed an opportunity to build more pressure on the government until it gave in.

Is it possible to stop democratic countries from going to war? Governments learn from these events too, and would be ready for the next campaign, so innovation would be necessary. Risks would have to be taken, and despite everything people do not seem prepared to risk their livelihoods for peace. As Berrigan writes, "war continues, because the waging of war, by its nature, is total – but the waging of peace, by our own cowardice, is partial" (quoted in Myers 2006).

But the success of the global protest movement, including in Australia, points to a note of optimism about preventing democratic countries from going to war other than in self-defence. Slowly but surely, wars are losing public legitimacy. Until about two thousand years ago, almost nobody in history considered the possibility that war might not be just. Even since the advent of 'just war criteria', with its theoretical presumption against violence, wars have continued to be justified all to easily.

Only in the last thirty years have mass movements risen to oppose wars, playing an important part in ending the disastrous intervention in Vietnam. Now, for the first time in human history, a large number of people have been mobilised in opposition to a war before it has even started, and done so almost entirely motivated by concern for people in the other country. Churches have finally found their voice as peacemakers, refusing for the first time to bless a war. Whole new conversations are opening up about the very possibility of 'just wars' in the modern era. As a former assistant secretary-general to the UN wrote, "No matter what happens, history will record that this is a new era … the world community is waging peace" (Muller 2003).

We did not stop this war, but its results have confirmed that the people, and not the governments, were right about Iraq, right about weapons of mass destruction, and sadly, right about the devastating civilian costs of war. If peace activists can learn from the successes and mistakes of the past, including this most recent dramatic campaign, they can build on these achievements and create an even more powerful campaign the next time the government wants to invade another country.

We might not stop the next war, but the one after that?

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