

Support is the New Service:

Gendered Political Obligation, the Military, and Collective Subject Formation in
International Relations



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*For my family,
Past, present, and future;
Over and over,
Again and again.*

Abstract

Military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq highlighted a key characteristic of contemporary Western civil-military relations. Today, a small group of volunteers fights a distant conflict while popular familiarity with military service and war declines. There is a disconnect between this way of war and enduring cultural understandings of the appropriate normative relationship between gender (particularly masculinity), military service, and citizenship. This study examines “support the troops” (StT) discourses in the United States and United Kingdom during the “global war on terror” (2001-2010) as a representation of this on-going transformation in gendered/ing civil-military relations. Methodologically, the study employs structured discourse analysis to map an original data set of previously unexamined documents produced by UK and US state and military officials, pro-military non-governmental organizations, peace and anti-war movements, and media. It is the first systematic social scientific study of the “support the troops” phenomenon. The patterns inductively generated within the mapping are interpreted using a poststructural (re)conceptualisation of the military as a discursive structural effect, as well a formal institution and social relation. The study argues that StT is a means of addressing the gendered civilian anxiety that accompanies non-service in wartime. It finds that StT is a political contestation over the appropriate normative structure of gendered civil-military relations. Through the articulation of three ideal-typical, intertwined logics of gendered political obligation, StT discourse reconstitutes military support, rather than military service, as the *sine qua non* of contemporary normative citizenship. Via a series of gendered associations and contrasts with “the troops”, support is further produced as a means of military participation. Correspondingly, ostensibly separate “civil” society is (re)masculinised. Together, the underlying logics of gendered political obligation work to discursively instantiate and (re)produce an idealised vision of the political community, extending and legitimating the transnational liberal social order.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*"People call it a parade but it is not a parade. It's not organised, it just happens. I ring all these people and it's up to them if they turn up. That's the beauty of it; because it's unorganised, people feel at ease," Bevis says. "It's a gathering to pay tribute with a few moments of our lives – a few moments of our lives is nothing compared with what they have given."*¹ – Citizen of Royal Wootton Bassett, UK

*"Gathering soldiers and delivering them to parades, picnics, and dinners, getting them to show up to be thanked, is one of the curious responsibilities of volunteer soldier advocates...The Foundation depends on being helped by people who want to help soldiers, and so it tries to fulfil that desire for those who give time, attention, money, baked goods, sheets and towels, toiletries and holiday cards..."*² – Description of "thank the troops" barbecue at Fort Hood, Texas, USA

At time of writing, 6885 American military personnel have been killed in the primary theatres connected with the "global war on terror" (2001 to the present); 4503 in Iraq, 2382 in Afghanistan. 634 UK military personnel were killed over the same time period, 179 in Iraq, 455 in Afghanistan.³ In the United States, less than 0.5 per cent of the population serves in the armed forces.⁴ In the United Kingdom, the percentage of serving military personnel as a proportion of the overall population is even lower – approximately 0.25 per cent.⁵ This is in line with a trend evidenced in many Western liberal democracies, where in an era of professional militaries and geographically-distant conflicts, the vast majority of citizens only indirectly interact with the military. Military sociologists and policymakers refer to this situation, with concern, as evidence of a growing "civil-military gap".⁶ Most citizens do not have first-hand knowledge of war. At the same time, however – and despite disapproval of many military operations and practices associated with the global war on terror – military symbolism diffuses throughout the civic life of many liberal democracies.

In the US, for example, at the end of 2011, surveys found that though only 36 per cent of Americans approved of the war in Iraq, and 41 percent approved of Afghanistan, 76 percent of Americans reported thanking military personnel for their service.⁷ As noted by one analyst, "up to about a third of Americans thanked members of the military [specifically] for volunteering to fight wars that they opposed".⁸ During the same period, professional sporting events included tributes to military personnel,⁹ uniformed military personnel

¹ Royal Wootton Bassett is the UK town closest to RAF Lyneham, the airfield to which deceased military personnel were repatriated from 2007-2011. It gained (inter)national prominence and recognition for the spontaneous and solemn practice(s) of paying respect to the processions of the fallen. Gillan 2010.

² Quotation excerpted from Kenneth MacLeish's 2013 (182) ethnography of the US Fort Hood military base.

³ iCasualties.org, 2016.

⁴ Eikenberry and Kennedy 2013.

⁵ Office for National Statistics 2014; Library of the House of Commons 2014.

⁶ See, for instance, Rahbek-Clemmenson 2012; Cornish 2012.

⁷ Peter 2016

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Fischer 2014.

were applauded on airplanes,¹⁰ and “support the troops” (StT) yellow ribbons adorned everything from neighbourhood trees to automobile license plates to domestic consumer goods.¹¹

What is often perceived as a primarily American phenomenon is also evident in Canada,¹² Australia,¹³ and, most relevant to this study, the United Kingdom. StT constitutes a routinized component of British public discussions of Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁴ Many pro-military popular practices – such as “Armed Forces Day”, an annual Military Awards, and the honouring of military personnel at sporting events – are now apparent.¹⁵ Even international non-governmental peace organizations, activist networks, and social movements, such as Pax Christi and the Stop the War Coalition, have adopted the language of “supporting the troops” as a means of communicating their broader opposition to war. State officials frequently reference the phrase in public statements and policy launches. Militaries have developed “partnerships” with non-governmental “support the troops” organizations, and engaged in active public relations campaigns encouraging communities to support “their military”.¹⁶ Since its initial mass popularization in the United States during the First Gulf War, “supporting the troops” has become increasingly transnationalized and socially prevalent.

This political support for, and popular celebration of, the military in a context where a small minority actively serves stands in contrast to the “mythical” past wars of Western liberal democracies¹⁷ – the First and Second World Wars and, to an extent, Vietnam. In these conflicts, according to the canonical account, the large-scale commitment of societal resources and volunteerism (and eventually conscription), made war a mass experience. Today, those celebrating the armed forces, including policymakers, are unlikely to have direct military or conflict experience. These public demonstrations of respect and appreciation for the armed forces are not necessarily grounded in an understanding of actual military practice and/or the nature of modern warfare.¹⁸ The surge in the social visibility and general popularity of the military – recent surveys found 83 per cent of Brits to have a “very high opinion of the armed forces”, while the US military has reliably topped ranks of trusted institutions¹⁹ – comes at a time when distant “wars of choice” have reduced the collective experience of conflict.

¹⁰ Bacevich 2005, 30.

¹¹ Stahl 2009.

¹² See, for instance, Mirlees 2015; Richler 2012.

¹³ For examples, see, SoldieringOn, Nd.; News.com.au 2015.

¹⁴ Basham 2013, 23-7; Dixon 2012, 91.

¹⁵ Dixon 2012, 131-2; Kelly 2012, 728.

¹⁶ See Whitehouse.gov 2012a; UK MoD 2012b.

¹⁷ See Chapter 3

¹⁸ McCartney 2010, 420.

¹⁹ Gribble et. al. 2011; Gallup Polling 2015.

Why does this matter? There is a growing disconnect between “our” (Western, liberal) cultural understandings of war and military service – as well as our social scientific analytic approaches – and the structure and experience of civil-military relations today. We lack both an academic understanding and cultural narrative for interpreting what I argue is an on-going transformation in the normative structure of civil-military relations. Though it is hardly historically unprecedented, the notion of a small portion of citizens taking on the risk of military service during conflict fits uneasily in the Western political imaginary. Liberal democratic political thought – and particularly classical liberal thought – has seldom directly engaged with the question of military service.²⁰ As “liberalism” is a vast and diverse political tradition with unclear boundaries, the use of the term “liberalism” in this dissertation reflects its contemporary interpretation both popularly, and within international relations scholarship, rather than the specific details of any particular theorist.²¹ Within much of liberal thought, either the threat of physical harm or the desire to preserve property (or both) spur the creation of political community.²² Citizens give up (some of) their autonomy – or sovereignty – to the state in return for its protection from predatory internal violence and the anarchic international. They accept the political obligation – to either the state or their fellow citizens²³ – that comes with being in community, notably the duty to follow the law²⁴ (and the implicit renunciation of the independent recourse to force). As critical scholars have observed, however, in practice, whatever the form of hypothetical “social contract” at hand – Hobbesian, Lockean, or even Rousseauian²⁵ – this is not the whole story. The realization of the state’s monopoly on force requires that “citizen soldiers be prepared to kill and die” for the state.²⁶ The metaphorical social contract underpinning the community is underwritten by a corollary bargain wherein individuals accept that “to be protected from violence by the nation-state is to be exposed to the violence wielded by the nation-state”.²⁷ Membership is also premised upon a metaphorical, or “mythical”, “military contract”, which makes potential involvement in collective violence a condition – or political obligation – of belonging.

Crucially, the universalized subject produced by this contract does not describe any given member of the polity. According to Goldstein, in order to overcome psychological resistance to the perpetration of violence

²⁰ This is a generalization, and is not meant to suggest that no liberal theorists actively concern themselves with military service, nor that the military never appears in liberal thought. Instead, I mean to note that liberal democratic political thought – both recent and classical – has typically not taken on the military as a major subject of theory. Carter 1998, 68-70.

²¹ On the diversity and fragmentation of liberal thought, see Jahn 2013, 1-12.

²² See Hobbes 1985; Locke 1980.

²³ Pateman 2007, 8.

²⁴ Simmons 1981, 5.

²⁵ For an overview of the form of political obligation underlying each form of social contract theory, see Pateman 2007.

²⁶ Asad 2007, 60-1.

²⁷ Butler 2006, 26.

– either in the form of moral objection or simple fear – “cultures develop gender roles that equate ‘manhood’ with toughness under fire”, resulting in a gendered division of labour wherein men are understood as “protectors” and women as “weak innocents”.²⁸ Over the course of modernity, this gendered division of labour was solidified as a social institution by the development of the mass army, which conscripted all able-bodied men, ensuring that the majority of the male population engaged in state-sanctioned violence (see Ch. 3). The ability and willingness to perpetrate violence became a requirement of masculine citizenship, wherein “the ultimate test of men’s political obligation is his willingness to give up his life in defense of the state”.²⁹ Women, in contrast, were assigned “support” roles, such as caretaking, reproduction of “the nation”, symbolic potential victimhood etc., which constitute a feminine “other” to militarized masculinity. These historical empirical regularities have been transformed into stereotypical cultural narratives. This paternalistic conceptual relationship is captured by Jean Elshtain’s heuristic imagines of “the ‘Just Warrior’, the male protector of home and hearth, and the ‘Beautiful Soul’, the female innocent whose purity is to be defended”.³⁰ Just as modern liberal states presume a gendered distinction between masculine public, and feminine private spheres, they also rest upon a gendered/ing civil-military divide, between a protective, masculine military and dependent, feminine civil society.³¹

There is nothing particularly liberal, nor necessarily democratic, about the arrangement sketched above. The existence of a “military contract” is awkward, as it exists in tension with liberal ideals of rationality, non-violent conflict resolution, and, particularly, individual autonomy.³² In fact, the outline of the contract described above, in the US and to a degree the UK, is much more in line with republican political traditions.³³ Though the turn towards professional militaries in Western liberal democracies somewhat alleviated the immediate problem of state coercion of individuals, it did not address the underlying normative obligation of service. Rather, the duty of military service – owed to the political community – is taken on by a small group of volunteers. In fact, with the increasing inclusion of women in combat roles,³⁴ we can actually see this gendered, masculinized normative obligation of service further universalized and extended – now

²⁸ Goldstein 2001.

²⁹ Sasson-Levy 2003, 322.

³⁰ Cited in Kinsella 2005, 253-4. Original: Elshtain 1987.

³¹ This gendered division of violent labour is a structural relationship, and useful analytic heuristic that is (re)produced by historically-contingent discourses and social practices. It is, in other words, both an empirical regularity (Goldstein) and frequent conceptual assumption of feminist security analyses (Elshtain), but it is not deterministic, nor universally true in all times and places. The contingent (re)production of both binary gender and the civil-military divide is assessed empirically, in context, throughout the study.

³² This is not to say that no strain of liberal thought could ever account for military service – particularly voluntary service. Rather, I observe that if we accept this reading of the normative obligation of military service, it is difficult to reconcile with the “liberal” ideological commitments of those states, such as the UK and US, generally considered to be practicing, if imperfect, liberal democracies. Jahn 2013.

³³ Snyder 2003, 186-7.

³⁴ Women were eligible to serve in combat roles in the US military in 2015; in the UK military starting in 2016. See Bradner 2015; BBC News 2016.

potentially implicating anyone who would seek to be identified as a “good [masculine] citizen”. This differential distribution of risk and obligation (which, as we know, is gendered, classed, and racialized)³⁵ violates the corollary democratic principle of equality³⁶ without extinguishing the obligation(s) of all citizens to defend the whole. This brief sketch highlights the potential political contradiction, and normative discomfort regarding the ways the West fights contemporary wars. Canonical Western “good wars” and cultural myths teach us that war is the preserve of all (masculine) citizens,³⁷ and everyone ought to serve. But in the global war on terror, we don’t.

This (liberal) “military contract”, of course, does not “exist” any more than does the social contract. I adopt the term throughout this project as a shorthand means of representing the complex and often contradictory normative cultural understandings regarding military service in the West. Recent political speech in both the US and UK has invoked this understanding of a normative relationship between the military and non-military members of the collectivity. In the UK, this is frequently expressed in the idea of a “covenant” between the armed forces and society.³⁸ Throughout the dissertation, I use it as an archetype designed to indicate the particular, idealized structure of normative political obligations between members of the liberal political community and their collective use of force described above. This “contractual” understanding, as will be subsequently demonstrated, is not the only possible way of understanding such obligations,³⁹ but it is a governing idiom within the contemporary West. This contract, in turn, is the normative underpinning of the civil-military relationship.

“Supporting the troops” (StT), I argue, is crucial to understanding the disconnect between the idealized, mass-participatory liberal democratic military contract, and the contemporary experience of volunteer service, distant wars, and the continuation of quotidian normality on the “home front”. The impulse to StT, I argue, reflects a generalized, gendered “civilian anxiety”⁴⁰ of non-service in wartime – and the failure to live up to our cultural myths. Supporting the troops is therefore important in its own right as a political discourse relating to the collective violence of a particular time and place. The discursive military, reflected and reproduced by StT, has in many ways superseded “war” as a cultural interpretive frame for the collective

³⁵ For the US, see: Kelly, et. al. 2010; for UK, see UK MoD 2014.

³⁶ Pateman 2007, 9.

³⁷ The liberal democratic “citizen” here, though ostensibly universal, is predicated upon a male, (white, cisgendered, heterosexual, Christian) subjectivity. It is now (re)produced as a masculine, though not necessarily male, subject-position that may be inhabited by male or female identified/identifying bodies. See Thornton 2011 38-40; Pateman 1988; Frazer and Lacey 1994, 70-2.

³⁸ In 2010, the UK government “formalized” the previously unstated understanding that the nation has a moral obligation to the military in the form of the “Armed Forces Covenant”. See UK MoD 2015.

³⁹ See Chapter 6

⁴⁰ The anxiety of those who understand themselves to be civilians in wartime, as well as the anxiety pertaining to what it means to be a civilian in wartime, and the ethics of that subject-position.

use of force. Most importantly, however, StT is a reflection and reproduction of the underlying normative structure(s) of the gendered/ing civil-military relationship. It enables us to interrogate the modern liberal constitution of civil and military as different social “spheres”, the (seeming) structural inertia of this relationship, and, crucially, its potential transformation.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEMATIC

In this thesis, I therefore interpret the “the troops” as representing the normative relationship(s) between society and the armed forces (civil-military relations) – and the discursive negotiation, contestation, and (re)production of the liberal military contract. To “see” these relationships empirically, I map the multiple “support the troops” and military-related discourses in two country-cases, the United States and the United Kingdom, across the initial phases of the global war on terror (GWOt) in Iraq and Afghanistan (2001-2010). My textual corpus is a systematically sourced and (where necessary) sampled corpus of the public statements of pro-military charities, peace/anti-war groups; news articles; and the public statements of government, state, and military officials. In my analysis, I identify patterns of convergence and divergence between the various sources, and pay particular attention to the contestation (or lack thereof) of the logics and assumptions underlying the constitution of the civil-military relationship(s). To do this, I address several concrete, empirical questions: *How is the theme of “support the troops” articulated? Who are the troops to be supported, and by whom, when, where, and how? Between political actors (i.e. anti-war groups, the state, etc.) and the country-cases, do we see differences in the form, content, or expression of these discourses?*

I unpack the primary interpretive themes identified in the empirical mapping of StT discourse to critically examine how the troops (and, through them, the use of force) are made meaningful in the context of contemporary conflict. I am particularly interested in the ways these representations reflect and inform processes of collective subject formation, via articulations of (a)political obligation, and the conditions of (potential) dissent. Theoretically, then, I address the interrelated questions: *What “work” do these representations of the troops do in mediating the political community’s use of force internationally? What forms of (particularly collective) subjectivity, social relations, and politics do StT discourse(s) constitute and facilitate, and which do they foreclose? What are the implications of these representations of the military-society relationship for the use of force by liberal democracies,⁴¹ and the corresponding possibilities for contestation and dissent?*

⁴¹ I recognize that the terms “liberal” and “democracy” are contested and that by the standards of much of liberal (and democratic) political thought, a “truly” liberal society does not currently exist. For the purposes of this project, I use the term “liberal democracy” as is typical in international relations, to refer to states which have democratic elections, the rule of law, and respect for individual human rights. The critiques made herein therefore apply to these societies – the US and UK – as they are, rather than an ideally liberal society as it may be.

To answer these questions, I draw upon and contribute to recent developments in critical international relations theory – particularly feminist security, critical security, war, and military studies. These sub-fields assert the relevance of quotidian, banal practices and discourses – such as supporting the troops – to understanding violence, war, and, ultimately, international relations. As Victoria Basham puts it, “violence is reliant on cultural practices and ideas, discourses, objects, and materialities that shape the conditions of possibility in which violence takes place, but it is also animated by performances of war”.⁴² In my analysis of StT, I therefore problematize a number of naturalized conceptual binaries – soldier/citizen, battlefield/home front, civil/military, and violence/politics⁴³ – that are central to both liberal democratic theory/ies and our discursive(re)production of contemporary Western states as “actual” liberal democracies. In challenging the naturalized distinction between politics and violence in ostensibly liberal societies, I respond to critical war studies’ provocation to take seriously the “socially generative” nature of warfare.⁴⁴

Overall, I argue that the gendered/ing normative structure of civil-military relations in the US and UK (and, potentially, Western liberal democracies generally) are undergoing a process of transformation. StT may be read as an attempt, via the construction of several intertwined logics of gendered political obligation, to cope with the disconnect between the mythical liberal “military contract” and contemporary experience of conflict. StT serves to “re-draft” the terms of this contract through the articulation of several multi-layered, ostensibly apolitical representations of society’s implication in the collective use of force. In doing so, the “amended” liberal contract within StT discourse both furthers and reflects this shift in civil-military relations wherein military support – rather than military service – is naturalised the new *sine qua non* of political membership. StT implicitly, if imperfectly, works to “rescue” and realize an idealised form of political community – a collective subject produced by the contingent logics, and spatialized bounding, of political obligation in relation to force. This constitution of military support as the premise of political community also serves to limit dissent to the contestation of particular wars, rather than the necessity of military support, further naturalising the violence of the liberal state and transnational liberal order.

I make several contributions to international relations and critical social scientific analyses of civil-military relations and the corresponding connection between collective violence and the production of political community. First, similar to the postmodern deconstruction of the state, I conceptualize the military as a discursive structural effect, rather than a static institution. In doing so, I am able to demonstrate the ways in which the military, as the symbolic cultural “container” of violence pervades society and exists as a cultural resource interpellating and available to all. In other words, though the military is constructed as the barrier

⁴² Basham 2013, 141.

⁴³ Barkawi and Brighton 2011, 127.

⁴⁴ Barkawi 2011, 713.

between society and the (potentially) violent international, it also, through gendered associations between masculinity, normative citizenship, and military service, acts as vector for war in the purportedly “domestic” sphere. This analysis is indebted to, but distinguished from, the concept of “militarization” through my specific emphasis on positive obligation and the normality of the discursive military to liberal politics/polities.

This account of the relationship between the military, political obligation, and collective violence as a process of collective subject formation is my second contribution to international relations. I identify three differing, archetypal understandings of political obligation in relation to force, highlighting the contingency of the structure, gendering, and normativity of the civil-military relationship. I therefore demonstrate the analytic pitfalls inherent to considering the liberal civil-military spheres to be static, found, or even uniform, functional responses to the anarchic international. Instead, I identify the positive articulation of political obligation – to the state, to fellow citizens, to “the troops” – in relation to collective violence as a key axis for identifying the contingent (re)production of not only the constituent “substate” groups, such as society, but also the bounds of the political community itself. As a result, I argue that tracking the (re)production of political community through gendered political obligation in relation to force is a key means of understanding collective subject formation in international relations. This “positive”, solidaristic understanding of collective subject formation thus further specifies our understanding of the relationship between war and the production of the political community, complementing past IR scholarship focussing on the oppositional (re)production of Self/Other.

Thirdly, I add “the troops” to the cultural interpretive canon of war. I supplement existing understandings of the cultural figures of the hegemonic masculine “soldier” and the potentially betrayed “veteran” as symbolic interlocutors of the use of force by emphasizing the unique politics enabled by the representation of, and social identification with, inherently collective subjects. By emphasizing the “the troops” contingent production within social relations, I ameliorate the individualism and status-quo structural bent, that derives from the analysis of the frequently- decontextualized, singular soldier/veteran. Finally, throughout my work, my meso-level discourse analysis of common cultural interpretive frames and discursive resources provides a means – by tracing the gendering of individual practices and statements as well as broader social structures – of linking individual experience with macro international conflict. I therefore contribute to the growing literature asserting the relevance of the military, as a social relation and discourse, to the conduct of international politics.

1.2 SITUATION IN THE LITERATURE

Thus far, I have argued that there is a problem, reflected in StT discourse, in how we think about the military, gender, and the political obligation of violence in the contemporary West. Conventional international

relations scholarship, due to its consideration of the military as a unitary, functional instrument of the state, is largely unable to account for either the potential transformation in Western liberal civil-military relations or, in turn, analytically “see” its implications for the use of force internationally. This is, in part, due to legitimate differences in research interests and agendas, but, as the review will demonstrate, also leaves substantial scope for insight and innovation on the table. The following literature review situates my social conceptualisation of war and the military within international relations theory more generally. In doing so, I consider the understanding of the civil-military relationship within IR scholarship. The purpose of the review is not to criticize existing work, but to demonstrate the various theoretical influences upon this project, and highlight intersections of research interest. (My discussion of the small literature relating to StT itself, as it does not pertain to this discussion of the contingent production of normative civil-military relations, is found in Chapter Four).

1.2.1 International Relations Theory

The general understanding of the civil-military in international relations is largely influenced by its conceptualisation within (neo)realism. Kenneth Waltz’s defining theory of structural realism, military strength is one among many material capabilities that, together, when assessed across the international system, comprise a measure of state power.⁴⁵ For (neo)realists, the military is understood instrumentally, as a means of achieving security functionally similar to resource endowment and size of territory.⁴⁶ It is considered to be the legitimate instrument of external force and the legitimate (as an appendage of the state) object of exposure to risk and violence. The military’s sole international relevance derives from its presumed utility in securing the state. This conceptualisation of the military follows from neorealism (and neoliberalism’s) methodologically individualist approach to international relations, which, in examining the dynamics of the international system as a whole, considers states to be unitary, functionally equivalent actors.

Though this conceptualisation aligns well with the “neos” explanatory goals, it also renders the sub-state civil-military relationship(s) expressed in StT discourse, and their implications for the use of force/defence, analytically invisible. The neos, for instance, fail to account for the intuitive difference between the military and territory as “expendable” defensive resources. To make an obvious point, the institutional military is made up of people who have their own claims to life and protection from harm. Military personnel exist in social relationships with the rest of society, which takes an interest in their fortunes. The military’s dual status as a naturalised instrument of force and group of socially-embedded individuals – what is, essentially,

⁴⁵ Waltz 1979, 131 and 192.

⁴⁶ Ibid 131

the core tension of the military contract – despite its centrality to the war-making of the state, is unaddressed by most conventional international relations theory. In treating, by assumption, the military as a functional resource of the unitary state, realism and the neos actually theoretically rely upon, and analytically further, the elision of the military contract.

Mainstream IR theory does, however, contain an exception to this trend: liberal democratic peace theory (DPT). As paradigmatically outlined by Kant, DPT suggests that in a republic where citizens may be conscripted into the military, rational individuals will constrain their leaders from undertaking unnecessary wars. Though various iterations of DPT place differing explanatory emphasis on either liberal norms or democratic institutions, all proceed from the premise that citizens have an interest in avoiding military service and the economic burden of conflict.⁴⁷ While the empirical validity of conscription/military service as a causal mechanism within DPT is a matter of dispute,⁴⁸ the conceptualisation of all citizens as potential soldiers (or their family members) recognises the potential socio-political implications of civil-military relations. Despite this useful distinction between society, the military and the government, however, DPT's consideration of the civil-military dynamic drops away once the military has been assembled from the citizenry. Instead, the military's naturalised role as the instrument of defence (and object of risk) is normatively elevated through its connection to the citizens. The potential affective and social ramifications of military service – beyond self-interest in the preservation of one's own or child's life – are not addressed. DPT implicitly reifies and naturalises the liberal military contract by casting it as ballast against conflict without interrogating the stability or logics of the civil-military divide.

This functional conceptualisation of the military, and subtle elision of the civil-military relationship(s) is, to a large degree, carried through to the IR subfield most concerned with the military per se – strategic and security studies. This literature examines “the threat, use, and control of military force... [and] the ways that the use of force affects individuals, states, and societies...”.⁴⁹ As above, however, due to its importation of neo-realism's emphasis on purportedly objective rational-actor theory, conventional security studies is unable to cope with the social aspects of security, such as beliefs, values, and, crucially, normative social relationships.⁵⁰ Barkawi argues that while security and strategic studies claim to study war, they instead study the state practices surrounding war – i.e. “the incidence of war in the international system, the causes of war, crisis decision-making, the dynamics of alliances and so on...”.⁵¹ This state-centric approach prevents

⁴⁷ Kant 1971, 120-122. See, for instance, Choi and James 2003.

⁴⁸ Owen 1994.

⁴⁹ Walt 1991, 212.

⁵⁰ For the critical security studies critique of strategic/security studies, see Krause and Williams 1997a and Booth 1997.

⁵¹ Barkawi 2011, 704.

effective consideration of “war as a set of social relations and processes”, including the articulation and contestation of civil-military relations.⁵² Strategic studies compounds the instrumentalization of the military (and elision of the military contract) through the analytical neglect of violence as a potentially productive practice rather than a destructive outcome. As a result, despite its substantive relevance, strategic studies, like conventional IR, is unable to analytically cope with the contestation of normative civil-military relations, or grapple with the implications of their expression in StT for practices of contemporary warfare.

1.2.2 Critical Security Studies

My analysis of the importance of civil-military relations to the constitution of political community and practice of war, instead, draws upon the insights of several inter-related branches of critical international relations scholarship, including critical security studies (css). Critical security scholars consider security not to be a particular realm of policy (e.g. military or police strategy) or status to be achieved (i.e. safety), but rather an iterated, contested, and inherently political discourse. As a discourse, “security” facilitates and legitimates some practices (e.g. the suspension of the rule of law) while foreclosing others (e.g. open border policies). Significantly, this understanding of security also enables css scholars to challenge the static ontology of the state. Instead, they consider the state to be (re)produced through discursive practice, decentring it from IR analysis.⁵³ Questioning neo-realist security studies’ state-centrism, which Barkawi’s previous critique builds upon, is a major innovation of this approach. Following from this deconstruction, css has the explicitly normative goal of exposing the power relations underlying security practices, and opening space for a re-politicization of actions undertaken in its name.⁵⁴ This decentring of the state also enables css to consider non-state actors, such as pro-military StT charities, anti-war movements, and banal social practices, to be understood as participating in “security”.

Css has therefore developed many of the critical tools – namely the deconstruction of the state, the problematisation of naturalised concepts, and a normative commitment to re-politicisation – required to assess the implications of the civil-military relationship(s) to the production of political community. Paradoxically, however, css does not extend its critical logic of deconstruction to the military itself. The literature challenges the common response to “security threats” with the military, and/or violence. In doing so, it pathologises (neo)realism’s functional construction of the military without challenging its instrumental conceptualisation. Though Krause and Williams explicitly state that “the question of military power and the instruments of violence is crucially under-theorized in interpretive (or alternative) approaches”,⁵⁵ the school

⁵² Ibid, 704.

⁵³ Campbell 1992; Walker 1993; Huysmans 2006.

⁵⁴ For further explication of critical security studies, see Krause and Williams 1997b, xvii-xxi and Sheehan 2005, 151-168.

⁵⁵ Krause and Williams 1997a, 51.

is characterized by an anxiety that the critical project and methodology not be “colonized” by the “military dimension of security”.⁵⁶ Ciss exhibits, as a result, with few exceptions,⁵⁷ a general lack of critical theorizing regarding war (and the military).⁵⁸ Despite its critical theoretical innovations, Ciss leaves civil-military relations, and the tensions of the (liberal) military contract, “on the table”.⁵⁹

As a result, the Ciss literature is unable to address the implications of Bigo’s observation that in addition to defence and risk management, security is “also, and mainly, about sacrifice”⁶⁰ – of particular, gendered bodies on behalf of a group. This insight is of crucial importance to studies of the military and its relationship to society. The under-theorization of the consequences of this observation, particularly in relation to civil-military relations, further reflects the successful collapse of the civil-military relationship into the functional military. Differential sacrifice, in other words, is so naturalised it is analytically assumed.

Critical IR theory furthers this elision of the tensions of the contract through its focus on the negative definition of national identity against an external Other through the practice of foreign policy.⁶¹ This literature follows Schmitt’s understanding of identity, and the practice of politics, as deriving from the distinction between “friend” and “enemy”.⁶² Huymans, in contrast, has argued that this connection between identity and threat is largely over-determined.⁶³ Following Huymans, I suggest that though this literature has generated crucial insights and critical theoretical innovations, it also neglects what Burke refers to as the “‘positive’, enabling and seductive forms of power” associated with security and the formation of political community.⁶⁴ Correspondingly, while the role of security practice and foreign policy in constructing identity and bolstering state legitimacy have been well-established by scholars such as Walker and Campbell,⁶⁵ the role of the military, and collective involvement in the use of force in producing the polity has yet to be outlined.

We lack, in other words, a means of connecting the normative structure(s) of civil-military relations to the (re)production of the political community – of understanding the polity as constituted by “war” as much as

⁵⁶ Sheehan 2005, 58.

⁵⁷ See, for instance, Richard Wyn-Jones’ 1999 work, which calls for the development of a critical theory of military strategy, and the reconceptualization of the general concept.

⁵⁸ Barkawi 2011, 702.

⁵⁹ This is not to say that no such work exists – the critical subfields of war and military studies (discussed subsequently) largely take up this challenge. Instead, I mean to state that within the large body of critical IR that deals with “security” and the production of political community, war and the military have been neglected.

⁶⁰ Bigo and Tsoukala 2008, 2.

⁶¹ Campbell 1992 or Hansen 1996.

⁶² Huysmans 1998, 239.

⁶³ Ibid 239-241.

⁶⁴ Burke 2007, 11.

⁶⁵ Campbell 1992; Walker 1997.

“security”. My study begins to address this gap in the IR literature by examining how the contingent contestation and (re)production of civil-military relations, as reflected and reproduced by StT discourse, informs the imagining and (re)production of a variety of collective subjects – the military, society, and even the polity – within international relations. In doing so, it draws on the insights of additional subfields of critical international relations – feminist security studies, critical war studies, and critical military studies. To avoid repetition, discussion of these schools is integrated into the brief theoretical overview below and expanded upon in Chapter Two.

1.3 THEORETICAL APPROACH: THE DISCURSIVE MILITARY

The question is thus raised – how *do* we analytically account for the relevance of the socially-embedded military, of civil-military relation(s) – to the production of collective subjects and possibilities for force in international relations? How can we “see” the implications of the fracture and contestation of the contemporary liberal military contract?

We should, in short, reconceptualise the military as a pervasive, diffuse social discourse,⁶⁶ contiguous with, and continuous of, other major aspects of contemporary liberal social life, such as gender, the economy, society, etc. I understand the discursive military, in other words, as a particularly powerful, yet contingent, structural effect.⁶⁷ This conceptualisation of the military is informed by css and critical IR’s deconstruction of the state as lacking an objective ontology,⁶⁸ considering it instead to be constantly (re)produced by social discourse and practice. Within this frame, “supporting the troops” is a system (or systems) of discursive representations relating to normative relationship between the military, society, and the use of collective violence.⁶⁹ As I explicate my theoretical framework in Chapter Two, this section provides a brief overview of the broad strokes.

1.3.1 *Isn’t This Just Militarism/Militarization?*

This conceptualisation of the military as a discourse draws upon and is informed by the insights of not only css and the problematization of “security”, but also its theoretical peers and successors: critical war studies, military studies, and feminist security studies. In particular, my move to challenge the “found”, static ontology of the military is deeply indebted to the work of militarism/militarization scholars, which provides a means of connecting StT discourses with the social relations of war and the production of individual and

⁶⁶ A more detailed description of “discourse” is found in both the methods section of this chapter, and Chapter 2. The use of the word “pervasive” here is informed by Foucault’s understanding of discursive, productive power as diffuse and all-encompassing. It is not an empirical claim.

⁶⁷ See Mitchell 1991, 94.

⁶⁸ Campbell 1992; Walker 1993.

⁶⁹ In other words, it is a representation of a representation.

collective subjectivity. For the sake of simplicity, following Stavrianakis and Selby, I consider militarism to be the “social and international relations of the preparation for, and conduct of, organized political violence”.⁷⁰

The central feature of militarism scholarship is an emphasis on the constitution of civil-military relations (however understood).⁷¹ This enables the concept to capture the relevance of everyday institutional, cultural, and social discourses and practices – such as supporting the troops – to the conduct of war.⁷² The investigation of war in the everyday also facilitates the identification of the (dis)continuities, connections, and “macro” effects of such practices across state boundaries, drawing attention to the transnational dimensions of superficially domestic phenomena, such as StT.⁷³ Theories of militarism, in other words, make the crucial move of positing war preparation as an inherently social activity, spanning the temporal and geographic scope of conflict. This preparation frequently exceeds, though always refers, to the military institution. As a result, militarism scholarship paves the way for considering the “military” to operate beyond the institution, as a discourse and social relation.⁷⁴

Most importantly, in working towards an understanding of the military as a discourse, is the account provided by feminist security scholars such as Enloe, Cockburn, and Sjoberg of the means through which ideas (or ideologies) of militarism relate to *processes* of militarization. “Militarization”, as described by Enloe, refers to the diffusion of “militarism” throughout society and its incorporation into the identity of individuals and communities.⁷⁵ The concept enables us to bring discursive representations of the military, political-economic relationships, networks of repression, and military-industrial dependency together to bear on processes of individual identity and subject-formation. This connection between militarism as a “real” social phenomenon and the constitution of modern, liberal subjectivities⁷⁶ is a major theoretical innovation. It serves to blur, if not erase, the distinction between the institutional military and society. The “social” military informs all aspects of social life, rather than its proscribed institutional sphere.

⁷⁰ Stavrianakis and Selby 2013, 3.

⁷¹ For an institutional perspective, see Huntington 1972; Janowitz 1977; and particularly Lasswell 1962. For a socio-cultural perspective, see Stahl 2010, 48. See also Ó Tuathail 2005; and Dalby 2008 and 2012.

⁷² See, for instance, Bernazolli and Flint 2010 and Cynthia Enloe’s (2000) canonical discussion of everyday militarism and Campbell’s soup.

⁷³ See, for instance, Mann 1987; and Luckham 1977.

⁷⁴ It must be noted that as militarism is very close to an essentially contested concept, this brief discussion cannot do justice to the wealth of conceptualisations, approaches, and research which utilize the concept. For a detailed critical overview of militarism scholarship, please refer to Millar 2016b.

⁷⁵ To clarify the relationship between the two concepts, Enloe (2004, 218-220) conceives of militarism as an ideological and ideational phenomenon, related to values, beliefs etc., while militarization is the process and practices through which militarism is disseminated into, and entrenched within broader society, and even identity. For examples, see: Enloe 2007, Enloe 2010, and Stavrianakis and Selby 2013, 14.

⁷⁶ Subjectivity here refers to modes of being, (self)understanding, and positionality vis-à-vis others.

My conceptualisation of the military as a diffuse, productive, and socially-pervasive discourse thus largely mirrors the intersection of militarism/militarization – with one key difference. Militarism scholars – be they feminist security scholars or positivist military sociologists – are typically concerned with separating the military, as the institutional container or cultural vector, of violence from “normal” liberal politics.⁷⁷ As I argue elsewhere, this “demilitarizing” of ostensibly “civil” society, though laudable, provides the concept with an implicit yet undeniably negative normative tone. Labelling discourses or practices such as StT as militaristic, as does much of the existing literature (see Ch. 4) suggests that they are somehow “wrong”, or “deviant”.⁷⁸ We are, as a result, presented with an image of liberal society as, ideally, free of militarism, rather than produced by and dependent upon the practices that make it up. Militarism/militarization, in other words, work to normalise the liberal understandings of the relationship between civil and military spheres upon which the mythical liberal military contract is based, while obscuring the foundational continuity between violence and politics.⁷⁹ Conceptualizing the military as a discourse thus enables me to draw on the militarism literature’s key connection between war, the military, and subjectivity without adopting its subtle reification of liberal civil-military relations.

1.3.2 War, the Military, and the Social Production of Collective Subjects

To ameliorate this “normalizing” tendency of militarism in my analysis of the relationship between civil-military relations, war, and collective subject formation, I combine the insights of critical war and military studies. This scholarship, though it works from the foundation laid by css and militarism literature (and includes some of the same scholars), provides a more nuanced account of the continuity of violence and politics. In particular, I am informed by Barkawi’s conceptualisation of war as a generative social relation. War, in other words, is not simply destructive or disruptive, as commonly perceived, but also constitutive of a form of social order.⁸⁰ War produces meaning and “makes real”. The implication of this, as outlined by Barkawi, is that the identities, boundaries, and social positioning of the actors – such as the citizens interpellated by the liberal military contract – are produced relationally, by the practice(s) of warfare. Within the context of liberal societies such as the United States and the United Kingdom, the apparent distinction(s) between civil/military, violence/politics, and liberal international inside/outside are structural effects, produced by relations of force.

A key aspect, then, of my theoretical approach is to challenge traditional international relations notions of space and scale. In this I follow Cowen, who argues that issues of purportedly “domestic” politics, such as

⁷⁷ Millar 2016b 183-6.

⁷⁸ Millar 2016b 186.

⁷⁹ Millar, 2016; see also Cowen, Nd.

⁸⁰ Barkawi 2011, 705 and 710.

struggles regarding identity and citizenship, are “necessarily tied to war, imperialism, and the changing nature of the nation-state”, and vice-versa.⁸¹ The social understanding of war de-centres the state and territoriality from analyses of organized violence. It necessitates, as argued by Dalby, analysing “representations of warriors and warfare” – such as the troops – their gendered positionality, and their relationship to violence when considering transformations in geopolitics.⁸² The collective subjects relevant to war, such as states, peoples, and militaries, etc. are derived from analysis rather than assumed.⁸³ The production of scalar boundaries is a key aspect of my project, rather than an *a priori*. While I use conventional terms of scale, such as state, international, etc., throughout the thesis, such objects are unstable. Tracking their political constitution by following gendered logics of political obligation is a finding, rather than an assumption, of my interpretive work.

Overall, my theoretical approach is less an explanatory framework than a statement of underlying ontology. I extend the logic of war-as-socially-generative to the military, and combine it with critical military studies,⁸⁴ understanding of the military as a social relation, cultural system of meaning, and everyday practice. In doing so, I am interested in identifying the collective subjects and “ordering effects” (re)produced by the military, as with war above, throughout and across society. The conceptualisation of the military as a discourse facilitates an analysis of the way(s) normative civil-military relations not only exceed, but constitute the boundaries of the institution without the subtle structural and normative assumptions that accompany the “metanarrative”⁸⁵ of militarism. It also resolves the differing ontologies attributed to the military both between and within the conventional and critical IR scholarship discussed thus far, flattening these potential inconsistencies into a single plane of analysis.

I am therefore able to map, problematize, and interrogate the political function of the naturalized, liberal delineations of social activity reified in the military contract. As a reflection and (re)production of the civil-military relationship StT offers leverage upon the ways the major discursive formations of society, gender, and the military (and, correspondingly, violence) are (re)produced, constituted, and contested in relation to each other at a particular historical and geopolitical moment. The theoretical approach lays the groundwork for an explanation of the way discursive representations of the “military” reflect understandings of political obligation, and (re)produce political community. More specifically, I trace the gendering of various collective

⁸¹ Cowen 2008, 24.

⁸² Dalby 2008, 440.

⁸³ Barkawi 2011, 710; Barkawi and Brighton 2011, 132; Rech et. al. 2015, 48.

⁸⁴ The boundaries between critical international relations theory, feminist security studies, critical security studies, critical war studies, and critical military studies are more heuristic than actual. Though the terms are increasingly common as a means of categorizing particular emphases in the approach to studying, essentially, political violence and the international, most individual scholars and pieces of research, including this one, could easily be considered as falling within many, if not all, such categories.

⁸⁵ Rech 2014, 50-51.

subjects within StT discourse in order to track divergences from the stereotypical gendering of the masculine military/feminine society divide.⁸⁶ This, in turn, allows me to connect the potential fracture of the mythical liberal military contract with processes of collective subject formation. The ensuing insights enable me to contribute to the literature, spearheaded by scholars such as Barkawi, Woodward, Basham, Enloe, Lisle, and Hutchings, examining the sociality of war, gendered norms of (violent) citizenship, and “the military”.

1.4 CASE SELECTION

To bring these theoretical insights to bear empirically upon the implications of the potential transformation of gendered/ing civil-military relations, I consider two country-cases. I examine the United States and the United Kingdom during the initial phases of the global war on terror, from 2001-2010. This period includes the initial invasion of Iraq and the majority of heavy operations in Afghanistan. I chose the US and UK in accordance with Hansen’s “political pregnancy” rationale. This principle holds that for critical, interpretive work, cases should be selected on the basis of their essentiality (which may be academic or political) to the project according to “questions of (discursively constituted) influence”.⁸⁷ The cases, in other words, ought to be so influential the project would make no sense without them, but also to possess substantial political/critical stakes. The US and the UK were therefore selected on the basis of their (geo)political/critical importance – the conditions of political possibility for war of these states is of global significance – and clear manifestation of the empirical phenomenon of interest, StT, from amongst several candidate societies.

Additional Anglophone liberal democracies – principally Canada, and Australia – also demonstrate pan-societal manifestations of my StT lever on the potential transformation of Western civil-military relations. This may be at least partially attributed to a shared British colonial heritage, common experience of the World Wars,⁸⁸ and the contemporary cultural and linguistic fluidity of the Anglosphere. The examination of alternative discursive representations of gendered political obligation would likely shed light on the transformation of civil-military relations in other states. France, Italy, and Germany, for instance, have even begun to manifest “StT” symbolism, though such discourse remains disparate and sporadic. Given the context-specific production of civil-military discourses such as StT, significant cultural competence is required to identify the precise linguistic phrasing and national symbolism indicative of gendered political obligation in relation to force. The US and UK are therefore analysed as “best examples” of the potential transformation of gendered, normative civil-military relations, as empirically reflected and (re)produced by

⁸⁶ Gender, in my account, is also understood from a poststructural perspective, as a discourse and practice that is embodied, iterative, and performative, but also an ordering structure that relates concepts to each other (e.g. masculinity and the military, femininity and civil life), thus providing these conceptual relationships with a seeming social facticity, and apparent stability to the liberal social order.

⁸⁷ Hansen 2006, 76.

⁸⁸ See Cowen 2008, 4.

StT. This pairing also enables me to consider the more transnational aspects of the phenomenon, particularly with respect to what McCartney calls the “transatlantic gaze” – a tendency in the United Kingdom to explicitly refer to the United States as a model for relations between society and the armed forces.⁸⁹

1.5 EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

As indicated by my interpretive and critical theoretical approach – and interest in the discursive production of subjects and social relations – I employ a poststructural epistemology and methodology throughout this project. Very broadly, this involves an understanding of the discursive production of social reality through language in practice, in a manner akin to Barnett and Duvall’s understanding of power as productive.⁹⁰ Discourse, in turn, is understood as “a system of statements in which each individual statement makes sense, produces interpretive possibilities by making it virtually impossible to think outside of it”.⁹¹ This conceptualisation rests on the theoretical understanding, influenced by Michel Foucault, that discourse is a “knowledge/power nexus”.⁹² Discourse arranges the social world through the production of identities; it “constrains what is thought at all [and] what is thought of as possible”.⁹³

In keeping with this recognition of the social and contingent production of knowledge, relations, and subjectivities within/by StT, my work is post-positivist. I analyse “what discursive practice[s] do”, as an exercise of power in the social aggregate, rather than examination of “individual motivations, perceptions, and intentions”.⁹⁴ In doing so, I am attentive to the articulation of not only (potentially) hegemonic constructions, such as the archetypical military contract, but also omissions, contestation, and dissent. The analytic emphasis falls more on discourse as “a framework and logic of reasoning that, through its penetration of social practice, systematically forms its objects” than a narrower focus on strict linguistics.⁹⁵ My project should therefore be understood as a genealogy of the present, or an investigation of the things and social relationships we take for granted. I denaturalize the liberal military contract, expose the contingent gendered/ings of normative political obligation, and examine the (re)production of idealised political community via the discursive military.

It is not my aim to make positivist causal claims. I do not address, for instance, other than through secondary literature, why StT discourse has emerged. Instead, I examine StT discourse to reveal and interpret the subjectivities it articulates, social relations it constructs, resistance it may contain, and the politics it both

⁸⁹ McCartney 2010, 426.

⁹⁰ Barnett and Duvall 2005, 48.

⁹¹ Doty 1993, 302.

⁹² Milliken 1999, 225. Also Foucault, 1984, 51-75.

⁹³ Neumann 2008, 62. For more on this understanding of discourse, please refer to Section 2.3.

⁹⁴ Doty 1993, 305.

⁹⁵ Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009, 250.

facilitates and constrains. I do not posit StT as an efficient cause of particular actions, identities, policies, or rhetoric, such as, for instance, supporting a particular piece of legislation, or endorsing a specific foreign policy decision. Rather, I consider the ways StT conditions the social intelligibility of various discourses and practices surrounding the military, political obligation, and the collective use of force in international relations. In doing so, I “acknowledge...the improbability of cataloguing, calculating and specifying ‘real causes’”, and instead “consider...the manifest political consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another”.⁹⁶

To give an example, my reading of discourse should not be taken to imply that it is materially, physically, or psychologically impossible that an individual in the contemporary US or UK might choose to walk around with a protest sign announcing “I Hate the Troops” or, conversely, that they would definitely place a “Support the Troops” bumper sticker on their car. What my analysis suggests is that, given the subjectivities, social relations, and normative claims constituted within StT discourse, these actions will be given very different social meanings. One act – displaying a bumper sticker – is seen as an apolitical gesture of solidarity and social connection, while the other is constructed as an offensive public statement (see Ch. 7). StT, like all power-imbued discourse, informs the intersubjective interpretation of the legitimately political and socially intelligible.

1.5.1 Methodological Approach

More concretely, to identify and interpret the various subjectivities, social relations, and logics of obligation that give meaning to the bumper sticker, I employ structured discourse analysis (SDA). This approach combines aspects of qualitative content analysis with the epistemological commitments of discourse analysis. In other words, in the interests of rigour and transparency, I first identified, coded, and analysed all interpreted texts (see section 1.5.3 for selection procedures) utilizing computer-supported qualitative content analysis. The aggregated empirical results of this analysis provide an important, holistic context for my interpretive claims regarding the nature of StT as a broad discursive formation.

Qualitative content analysis, for my purposes, refers to the systematic examination of a broad range of texts, via a process of categorization/coding, according to a structured set of principles. It should not be confused with quantitative content analysis (often referred to as “content analysis”), which aims to produce quantitative data amenable to statistical analysis and the determination of efficient causal relations.⁹⁷ Qualitative content analysis, in contrast, is focused on understanding the meaning of language in context.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Campbell 1992, 4.

⁹⁷ Schreier 2013, 172-3; see also Herrera and Braumoeller 2004, 15-18.

⁹⁸ See Mayring 2000.

This process requires the exercise of contextually-situated interpretation and maintains the interaction between researcher and text that informs discourse analysis more generally.⁹⁹ As a result, qualitative content analysis is capable of coping with a poststructural ontology and epistemology that understands meaning as variable and in flux, and language as reflective and reproductive of “patterns of relationship”.¹⁰⁰

On this basis, I could perhaps be considered to conduct a mixed methods analysis, combining qualitative content and discourse analysis. My approach, however, is best understood as structured discourse analysis. Hardy et. al., among others, support this characterization, noting that as content analysis “moves from simple counting to more complex interpretation, the two forms of analysis become increasingly compatible, although at the expense”¹⁰¹ of positivist claims. Structured discourse analysis offers a way of reconciling the ambition to understanding a broader discursive formation (i.e. considering large volume of texts) with the attention to nuance, marginal voices, and contingency required for meaningful interpretation.

The added benefit, then, compared to conventional discourse analysis, is structured discourse analysis’s ability to cope with large amounts of data. In total, I examined 3,258 paragraph-level units, from approximately 6,000-9,000 pages of text. As observed by Fierke, the line between “objective quantification and subjective interpretation begins to blur when the analysis covers a large number of texts, which would seem to be necessary in making any claims about an area such as international relations”.¹⁰² While the precise interpretation of particular representations, or discursive articulations may relate to the researcher, the patterns identified between the various discursive elements are unlikely to be influenced in the same way.¹⁰³ SDA therefore allowed me to combine inductive (derived from the text) and deductive (derived from existing concepts) analysis of the data within a single analytical frame.¹⁰⁴

By using a typological, though not mutually-exclusive system of classificatory thematic codes (e.g. attitudes towards dissent), I was able to give the empirics a rudimentary structure. This enabled me to identify broader discursive patterns, while also increasing the rigor of the subsequent interpretive process. As a result, my work goes beyond the valuable, though occasionally limiting, tendency of critical scholarship to consider a small portion of a social phenomenon and extrapolate to the whole. Instead, I reversed the process, beginning with a critical analysis of the overall dynamics of StT discourse, and then turning to individual, illustrative representations to shed light on the meaning of these patterns.

⁹⁹ Hardy et. al. 2004, 21.

¹⁰⁰ Fierke 2004a, 36-7.

¹⁰¹ Hardy et. al. 2004, 20.

¹⁰² Fierke 2004a, 37.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 37.

¹⁰⁴ Schreier 2013, 170.

1.5.2 Application

Following the identification and sourcing of the relevant corpus of texts (described below), I systematically categorized each paragraph mentioning “support the troops”, or an analogous phrase, in accordance with a set of guiding interpretive principles. I inductively derived the categories from the texts themselves, designing them to be as open-ended as possible.¹⁰⁵ The primary discursive themes may be understood as “interpretive description”. They map basic aspects of StT discourse – such as constructions of who supports the troops, how, and why. In accordance with the fluidity and “multi-accentual” nature of discourse,¹⁰⁶ the categories used to organize the texts and identify patterns are not mutually exclusive. It is entirely possible, for instance, that a text might suggest one should StT both to support the war and out of a sense of obligation. These layered codes provide an excellent illustration of the relationships between discursive themes. As the vast majority of the categories are not independent, the data is unsuitable for causal quantitative analysis. I am also attentive to absences and marginal/unusual iterations of the discourse and do not focus exclusively on the most frequent tropes. Less-common discourses often expose the contingency of settled assumptions and disconnects within naturalized narratives. Using structured interpretation enables me to incorporate important discursive elements that would be discounted as insignificant within conventional content analysis.¹⁰⁷

I coded iteratively, adding new codes as significant themes emerged and removing those that were analytically unhelpful. To conduct the coding, I used the qualitative analysis software program NVivo, enables users to organize large amounts of information and visualize patterns within and across texts. I should note that while the patterns identified via NVivo are presented in graph/chart form, they are illustrative and exploratory of themes within the sampled corpus. I do not claim to have identified efficient causes, or definitive statistical correlation. Rather, I demonstrate: a) the significance of the discursive formation; b) its diversity; and c) its general patterns of meaning. These themes may then, cautiously, inform our understanding of the phenomenon as a whole.

My interest in the aggregated NVivo results is what they can tell us about broad themes, rather than the frequency or absolute number of particular references (or codes). Where possible/appropriate, the patterns within the sample are triangulated against alternative data sources, such as external events, opinion polls, secondary literature, etc. This exogenous data enables me to demonstrate the validity of my overall corpus by demonstrating that the themes I find are plausibly related to extra-textual social practice and correspond with existing academic analyses. The details of this process are presented in Chapter Four, with appropriate

¹⁰⁵ Hardy et. al. 2004, 21.

¹⁰⁶ Laffey and Weldes 2004, 29.

¹⁰⁷ See Hopf 2004, 32.

caveats for understanding the graphs noted where relevant. I also breakdown the presentation of the “interpretive description” themes by source-type (i.e. newspaper, NGO press release, etc.), as not all sources possess identifiable universes, and logistical issues (discussed below) required the adoption of different sampling procedures for different source-types. This breakdown enables us to see which sources are influencing particular patterns.

Once the initial coding and aggregate analysis was concluded, I used the overall patterns to pull out particular discursive articulations – interesting relationships constructed between descriptive themes – for additional interpretation. This interpretation supports the substantive analysis that makes up the bulk of the study in Chapters Five to Eight. These articulations were flagged by the preceding structured analysis as significant for their preponderance (and thus their centrality to diagnosing StT as a whole) or their marginality (and their ability to expose assumptions and alternatives). In doing so, I make the typical critical move of “reason[ing] backward to establish structure from its empirical manifestations”.¹⁰⁸ This aspect of the analysis develops the implications of the trends identified in the empirical overview. It furthers the theoretical argument of the thesis by connecting these patterns, via interpretation, to relations of obligation, processes of collective subject formation, and the politics of dissent in the US and UK during the GWOt. I establish the validity of my analysis “performatively”, by constructing a plausible interpretation of the ways in which the patterns and meanings (re)produced by the text are “constitutive of reality in some way”.¹⁰⁹

1.5.3 Text Selection

As mentioned, the material sources of this study are documents produced for public dissemination by a range of social actors relevant to StT. I understand these documents as a form of discursive practice, in keeping with the poststructural understanding of “text” as encompassing virtually any social practice understood as communication.¹¹⁰ They were read in social context, taking the social authority of their source and form of distribution into account. The primary documents were also used to locate and consider “textual” social practices, such as The Yellow Ribbon Campaign, which encourages citizens to tie yellow ribbons on neighbourhood trees and other everyday items, which extend beyond the literal document.

This expanded notion of text enables me to consider the play of social practice and the process(es) of subject-formation reflected in and reproduced by the same “text”.¹¹¹ Meaning is not limited to the page. In this way, though I primarily use document sources, I aim to ameliorate the risk of textual reductionism in my interpretation. This expanded understanding of text also, importantly, facilitates the identification of

¹⁰⁸ Laffey and Weldes 2004, 28.

¹⁰⁹ Hardy et. al. 2004, 21.

¹¹⁰ Hansen 2003, 23; Wedeen 2004, 284-5.

¹¹¹ Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009, 259.

potential “dissent” to the mythical liberal contract and/or StT. This is key to appropriately contextualising diagnoses of “hegemonic” or “disciplining” discourses, as well as identifying their contradictions/limitations. IR scholars such as Hansen and Weldes argue that research should be broadened beyond officially “authoritative” texts likely to participate in the dominant discourse (e.g. policy documents and major newspapers). To help locate dissent, they suggest including non-traditional sources (often pejoratively referred to as “low data”) such as travel-writing, fiction, music, poetry, and various other artefacts of popular culture.¹¹² In my case, I incorporate the public “texts” of military and anti-war NGOs, including press releases, website comment forums, images, protest signs, email chains, brochures, etc., in order to track the operation of StT discourse at a remove from formal political authority.

To do this, I use a modified version of Hansen’s technique for identifying specific sources, understanding their relation to each other, and limning the realm relevant documents. In *Security as Practice*, Hansen uses Kristeva’s concept of “intertextuality” to outline several models for the conduct of discourse analysis in the study of international relations. Intertextuality means that texts are understood to exist with “a shared textual space” and constantly in reference to each other.¹¹³ These shared references – which may be literal, such as website links, or common metaphors or narrative tropes – are used to identify additional texts. Once the new references become repetitive – again, either to new texts or of the same recurring themes – the project is saturated. The basic principle holds that in following either explicit (e.g. quotations or direct references) or implicit (e.g. allusions, common symbolism, or conceptual similarity) linkages between texts, it is possible to map the various representations present in the discourse(s) and the interactions between them.¹¹⁴

I begin with societal (i.e. NGO, followed by media) discourse and use the principle of intertextuality to work back “in” to the formal institutions of the state. This approach builds upon Hansen’s third model of discourse analysis, which emphasizes cultural representations and marginal political discourses. Since I am interested in what goes unsaid in StT as well as hegemonic discourses, it is useful to work “outside in”. This decentres the state from the analysis and helps avoid false linearity in narrative construction. As a result, it is easier to “see” omissions and assumptions, particularly when considered in parallel with “official” (government and/or military) sources. By shifting the direction of analysis while continuing to incorporate conventional political authorities, I am able to include the range of actors identified by the secondary literature as relevant to StT.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Weldes 2006, 177-178 and 181-183; Hansen 2006, 55.

¹¹³ Hansen 2006, 55; Doty 1993, 302. For the original, see Kristeva 1980.

¹¹⁴ Hansen 2006, 56-64.

¹¹⁵ Dixon 2012, 370.

1.5.4 Data Sources

Since data volume, availability, and access differ between virtually every organization considered in the study, I developed detailed and organization-specific sampling and data collection procedures for each organization. Here, I outline the general principles used to select social actors for inclusion and for accessing documents. In the interests of accuracy, the implications of my pragmatic (and unavoidably asymmetric) sampling strategy for understanding particular results are flagged throughout the thesis.

In this study, I map the range of meanings of “the troops” within StT discourse. In doing so, it is neither theoretically necessary nor practically possible to exhaustively map every public use of the phrase. I selected documents to generate a sample of sufficient breadth and diversity to identify general patterns of usage, basic themes, and contestation at the margins. On this basis, I included documents produced by the state (politicians, government, and military officials), the mainstream print media, and discursively-influential non-governmental organizations. To select specific documents from these organizations, I searched for the phrase “support the troops”/“support our troops”, or a contextually-appropriate synonym (and sampled where appropriate/necessary). “Bring them home now!” and “help for heroes”, for instance, are incorporated phrases that, like StT, comment on the normative relationship between society and the military. They are a vital component – and potential source of contestation – of the overall phenomenon. All incorporated texts were publicly available at their time of production, and intended for a public audience.

For the mainstream print media, I selected relevant articles from major US and UK papers from the Factiva database. Specific papers were selected on the basis of national relevance, circulation, and balance in the left-right orientation of the paper’s editorial inclination. For the United Kingdom, I included *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *The Observer*, *The Financial Times* and, due to its identification through intertextual references in both other papers and by NGOs, *The Sun* tabloid. For the United States, as common to discourse studies of the US national media, I included the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. As the UK case study included a great number of papers, major US regional papers were considered for inclusion. My initial analysis indicated, however, that while they would dramatically add to the volume of information to be considered, they largely repeated the discursive constructions found in the three national papers. Similarly, as tabloids were not intertextually referenced in the US, and do not have the same cultural prominence, a tabloid was not included.

With respect to the state, I incorporated material from the legislative and executive branches of government, as well as the military. In the UK, the legislative documents are drawn from Hansard, the record of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. In the US, the legislature is covered by the Congressional Record, which is a transcript of the House of Representatives and the Senate. For each country, the legislative material

represents a complete universe. The sheer volume of results for the US required that the Congressional Record be sampled; I consider 20 per cent of returned results for each year. Given the disparity in populations, size of government, and production of the press – as well as differences in the use of the discourse overall – this difference between the US and UK holds across the study. Comparisons are therefore meant to be drawn between proportions and patterns in meanings, rather than absolute number of references, between the two cases. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

Executive documents were drawn from the Prime Minister’s Office in the UK and the White House in the US. Each administration from the relevant timeframe is included. Logistical issues relating to document classification, Internet archiving, and the limitations of various search engines mean that, unfortunately, it is not possible to identify the limits of the potentially relevant universe of executive texts for either office. As most of these documents were drawn from online archives, such as the George W. Bush Presidential Library archive, the UK National Public Archive, and the general public Wayback Machine Internet Archive, it is not possible to know how many, if any, documents have been lost. As internet archival practices changed dramatically from 2001-2010, it is reasonable to believe that some potentially relevant material was not recorded, and is thus excluded. As with most Internet archival material, more data is available for the more recent years. Appropriate caveats for the analysis of this information are noted throughout the thesis. Subsequent triangulation indicates it is appropriate to have confidence in the broad representativeness of the sample with respect to representations of the troops and meaning-in-use, if not absolute number of references. It should also be noted that due to disparities in the volume of data, the US portion of this information was randomly sampled to include 20 per cent of total results for each year.

Selecting civil society organizations was more complicated. Neither the US nor the UK has a unified database of all peace groups or military charities. Using the resources available, such as lists of “official” DoD charities, secondary literature, and charity monitoring registers, I created my own database of candidate-organizations for inclusion. In the UK, I narrowed the list down to 42 military charities and 23 peace groups. In the US, I began with 137 military charities. For the US peace groups, as an initial search of the only database, operated by the Internal Revenue Service, returned 1903 organizations, I drew heavily on past academic work on contemporary peace and anti-war groups to select my organizations. To select the final ten organizations for each case (five military and five anti-war), I used a combination of objective and subjective criteria. Objectively, included NGOs had to possess an annual budget of approximately \$100,000 USD. (To avoid excluding shoe-string military morale organizations and anti-war networks, donations in kind were considered in reaching this number). The NGOs also had to employ at least one staff member and have registered charitable/advocacy status.

As this left a number of candidate organizations in consideration, I applied structured, though subjective criteria to make the final selection. The governing principle in this selection was balancing importance to the overall phenomenon (i.e. most prominent organizations) with the representation of the diversity of StT discourse (i.e. including greatest range of possible perspectives). I applied a typological sampling procedure, inspired by that employed by Coy et. al. in their study of StT discourse by US peace organizations,¹¹⁶ to military charities and peace/anti-war groups, respectively. To make the final selection, I drew on intertextual references, secondary literature, and my own knowledge of the cases. While the inclusion of a different organization in any particular category would slightly alter the findings of the study, I am confident that the organizations I have selected provide a useful snapshot of the discursive formation.

I attempted to select from the same typological groups across the two country-cases. As not all types of organization are as significant/prominent in each, however, there is slight variation in the selection between the US and the UK. The NGO documents are sourced from organizations directly, archives, live websites, and, particularly, the Wayback Machine Internet archive. Though I repeatedly attempted to contact each of these organizations and request access to their materials, few organizations responded to such requests, or kept such records. (This was a particular problem relating to British organizations). There is therefore significant disparity in the amount of information available between specific NGOs. The implications of this, again, are flagged where relevant. As with the executive documents, though this has the potential to skew trends over time, it is unconnected to accurately mapping the organization's representations of the troops, or civil-military relationship.

Table 1: Summary of US and UK Military NGOs

Organization Type	United States	United Kingdom
Sports	Birdies for the Brave	N/A
"Morale-raising"/Care Packages	Operation Gratitude	Uk4uThanks!
Wounded	Disabled Veterans of America	BLESMA
Service-Specific	N/A	Army Benevolent Fund (now The Soldiers' Charity)
All-Service	Veterans of Foreign Wars	Royal British Legion
Iraq/Afghanistan-Specific	Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans	Help for Heroes

¹¹⁶ Coy et. al. 2008, 161-189.

Table 2: Summary Chart of US and UK Peace NGOs

Organization Type	United States	United Kingdom
Veteran/Military Associated	Military Families Speak Out	Veterans for Peace UK
Cyber/Mass Organizing	United for Peace and Justice	Stop the War Coalition
Pacifist	Peace Action	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
Women	CodePink	WILPF UK
Religious	Pax Christi	Peace and Social Witness UK

Overall, my methodological and data-sourcing approach allows me to demonstrate both continuities and sites of potential rupture in the (re)production and contestation of the mythical military contract between governmental, military, and civil societal sources. I am able to construct a comprehensive mapping of the various representations of the troops within the discourse reflected in the corpus. This in turn forms the basis for the substantive interpretation of the subjects and social relations these representations produce, the politics they (dis)able, and their implications for dissent.

1.6 ARGUMENT OVERVIEW

Finally, to briefly illustrate the insights generated through the application of my two-step interpretive method, I provide an initial overview of my overarching argument. In the dissertation, I develop distinct, yet inter-related arguments relating to the meaning of “the troops”, the contestation of the liberal military contract, the production of political community, and the possibilities for dissent. Each argument is anchored to the interpretive analysis of several of the discursive themes identified via the empirical mapping produced by structured qualitative discourse analysis. This section provides a synthesis of the way these thematic arguments relate to each other in an overarching “diagnosis” of the transformation of the normative structure of civil-military relations in the US and UK, as reflected and (re)produced within StT discourse. My aim is to provide a sense of “where we’re going” that will helpfully situate and contextualize the information (e.g. theoretical framework, historical background) provided in the intervening chapters.

Overall, I interpret the support the troops phenomenon in the US and UK as a means of coping with the disconnect between the normative, gendered expectations of the mythical liberal military contract, and the experience of the contemporary Western war of war, wherein few citizens serve. StT is a contestation over

political obligation, normative citizenship and, correspondingly, a means of instantiating a particular, idealized form of political community via ostensibly apolitical representations of society's implication in the collective use of force. In contrast to the common IR issues of ethics in/of warfare, and duties owed to distant strangers, StT implicitly asks: What do we owe to those who commit (and risk) violence on behalf of the group? Through the articulation of several distinct, yet compatible logics of gendered political obligation, StT "re-drafts" the liberal military contract, replacing military service with masculinised military support as the *sine qua non* of modern political membership. This "amendment" of the mythical liberal military contract also serves to instantiate a particular, idealised vision of the political community and transnational liberal social order, defined by the performance of military support and bounded by the extension of political obligation. StT thus performs important work in normalizing support for the troops as a "natural" aspect of liberal (a)politics. While the discourse is characterized by internal contestation, it articulates as immanent, rather than transcendent critique. Contemporary dissent challenges the legitimacy of particular wars, but not the supportive premise of the military contract. As a result, StT (re)produces and legitimates the normativity and stability of the liberal social order by subtly occluding its use of force, and removing collective violence from the intelligibly "political". I therefore understand the underlying normative structures of political obligation in relation to force reflected in StT as playing a key role in the facilitation of collective violence internationally.

This broad reading of the StT and the (imperfect) resolution of the fractured liberal military contract rests upon four key analytic moves. The first of these, drawing on aggregated interpretive data regarding the discursive construction of the troops, is to demonstrate that the troops are given meaning in relation to other collective subjects. This is done through the identification of a few, key characteristics – collectivity, passivity, and dependence – that pertain to the troops regardless of their contingent production. Due to the substantive indeterminacy of these features, "the troops", may rhetorically "stand in" for, and take on the characteristics of not only soldiers, veterans, or the military, but also family members, private citizens, and society as a whole. Similarly, based on this analysis of the data, the only reasonable reading of "the troops" gender (or race, class, sexual orientation, etc.) is ambiguous, and produced in context. The relative "emptiness" of the troops renders them open to multiple and layered (re)signification of meaning. This has two key implications for the transformation of the normative structure of civil-military relations. All citizens may be read into, or empathetically identify with, "the troops", as their collective nature enables "them" to be universalised to encompass all possible particularities within the political community. At the same time, the troops' passivity separates them, as the locus for identification/support, from the commission of collective violence. This helps to "vanish", and dramatically depoliticize, the sociality of violence. The separation of the troops from the soldier, the institutional military, and, oddly, war, thus lays the groundwork for considering their contingent (re)production of normative civil-military relations.

My second key analytic move, following on this reading of StT as reflecting the normative structure(s) of civil-military relations, is the identification of the gendered/ing logics of political obligations through which these structures are (re)produced. As a means of “seeing” the contestation of the liberal military contract, I examine aggregated interpretive data describing the various rationales given for StT. I use these inductively-derived rationales to generate three ideal-typical modes of political obligation – and corresponding premises for political membership – on the basis of a) the relationship between the troops and supporters; and b) the relationship between the supporters and the conflict. These logics of obligation are: a) a pseudo-contractual logic of obligation between individual members of a polity, independent of supporters’ relationship to war; b) a communitarian logic of obligation to a holistic community, wherein war participation is shared by all; and c) a moral logic of (a)political obligation amongst (at least theoretically) “private” individuals, divorced entirely from the context of conflict. In this analysis, I pay particular attention to the gendering of the collective – namely the troops, the military, the state, and society – and individual (i.e. soldier, veteran, citizen) subjects produced relationally within the StT discursive formation. This enables me to interrogate the relationship between the potential transformation in the gendering of “good” public personhood/citizenship and the blurring of conventionally-understood spatial categories of analysis, such as the gendered civil-military divide. By examining the relative gender/gendering of society and “the troops”, I am able to see the ways in which StT works to cope with and contest the potential breakdown of the liberal military contract.

The third step in my analysis is to examine the political, discursive effects of the interweaving of these three ideal-typical logics of gendered obligation. I therefore interrogate several “exemplary” quotations to show how, despite the contestation of the “terms” of the mythical liberal military contract, all logics support its central premise. The ability to subtly shift between the justificatory “grounds” for support of the three forms of obligation enables the discursive formation to refute potential objections to the naturalised valorisation of “the troops” whilst giving the appearance of reiterating a unified (a)political message. The liberal military contract is “amended” such that military participation, in the form of “support” becomes the new hallmark of political belonging, replacing the war participation assumed by cultural myths. In this way, supporters are able to flee the feminine – and structurally inferior – subject-position of civilian/society by reading themselves into the discursive military. Supporting the troops constitutes the boundaries of the political, as support, rather than service, becomes an assumed precondition of membership. As a result, I argue, the liberal polity – and transnational liberal social order – are (re)produced by StT, as the gendered logics of violent political obligation produce not only the contingent structure(s) of civil-military relations, but the premise and (blurry) boundaries of the community itself.

This interpretation of StT as bounding and (re)producing the political/polity, sets up my final analytic move: tracking the discursive formation's constitution of "politics" as a means of distinguishing between legitimate anti-war dissent and unintelligible "anti-military" resistance. Using aggregated interpretive data regarding the construction of dissent within StT and exemplary quotations, I demonstrate that supporting the troops" is represented as "apolitical", or "beyond politics". As a result, dissent/democratic debate is not only politically foreclosed, but its abstention is actively lauded as an obligation of membership. StT, in other words, transfers the soldier's obligation to refrain from politics to the supportive citizen. The realm of legitimate dissent is thus narrowed to the contestation of particular wars. Even traditional sources of dissent, such as the anti-war movement, are unable to transcend the hegemonic normative structure(s) of the military contract. Instances of meaningful resistance – performative confrontations of the naturalised assumption that one must/does support the troops – are written off as offensive instances of apolitical bad taste. Intelligible opposition to the use of force is therefore foreclosed, as the gendered logics of liberal military obligation make it possible to contest one war, on behalf of the troops, but not the practice of war itself.

1.7 OUTLINE

The thesis proceeds with the primary theoretical chapter (Ch. 2), which situates the project in relation to the research programme(s) and insights of critical war and military studies, and makes the case for understanding the military as a discourse involved in collective subject formation. Chapter Three discusses the historical genealogy of the mythical "liberal military contract" in the West, before tracing its manifestation within US and UK civil-military relations across the twentieth century. The chapter posits StT as both a continuity of and departure from earlier understandings of normative civil-military relations, and concludes with an outline of the contemporary manifestation, diffusion, and significance of the phenomenon. Chapter Four presents the aggregated results of the structured discourse analysis to provide an overview of the phenomenon, and means of directly comparing the US and UK.

The balance of the thesis is the interpretive analysis of particular discursive themes identified in Chapter Four, and the development of the above argument. Chapter Five examines the various ways "the troops" are made meaningful, parsing them from the institutional military, soldiers, and veterans to reveal their ambivalent production. This ambivalence facilitates both multi-layered identification with the troops and a distancing from violence, rendering a reading of StT as a matter of society's relationship to a parallel, dependent subject. Chapter Six extends this line of argument to examine StT as a representation and contestation of the gendered/ing normative structure of political obligation underlying the liberal military contract. Chapter Seven synthesizes the three ideal-typical modes of gendered political obligation identified in Chapter Six to outline the amendment and (re)production of the liberal military contract through a

(re)masculinisation of the “civil sphere”. It also demonstrates the ways in which the bounds of political obligation articulated within StT serve to discursively (re)produce both the polity and the transnational liberal social order. Chapter Eight analyses the deeply political implications of the “apolitical” construction of StT for the articulation of meaningful dissent to both war and the military contract itself. Finally, I conclude with some preliminary reflections as to what an alternative project, one of not support the troops, might look like, and avenues for future work.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL APPROACH

This study draws upon the insights of recent developments within critical war and military studies to provide an account of the relationship between the organization, structure, and practice of collective violence, via the military, and processes of collective subject formation in international relations. As highlighted by the previous discussion of existing IR literature, though the military is, instrumentally, central to the practice and study of international relations, it has not, in its own right, frequently been the subject of inquiry, or recognized as holding potential socio-political relevance. Much of this lacuna derives from the understanding of the military as simply a formal institution, literally and normatively removed from the conduct of politics (however understood). Correspondingly, as observed by Victoria Basham, “remarkably little attention is paid to killing and dying in the theory and practice of international relations”.¹ As the institution charged, symbolically and actually, with the collective use of force in the current international system, an examination of the military’s implication and continuity with politics is critical to furthering our understanding of what Basham refers to as the “cultural practices and ideas, discourses, objects, and materialities that shape the conditions of possibility in which violence takes place”.² Though “support the troops”, in other words, might superficially appear to be an apolitical corollary of a series of unpopular or neglected wars, it ought to be understood as vital to the contemporary experience, interpretation, and constitution of war.

This approach does not lend itself to the parsimonious and objective explanation sought by the “neos” and positivist orientations to IR. My aim is to provide a critical interpretation of the way “the troops”, as a representation of the civil-military relationship, are made politically meaningful, their implication in process(es) of collective subject formation, and the ways in which such representations inform certain aspects of dissent. My work in line with Deleuze’s “diagnostic of the present”,³ with the aim of opening space for critical reflection and dialogue and rendering the familiar unfamiliar. The theory in this chapter is an outline of the ontological and conceptual approach that informs my substantive interpretation, rather than a linear explanatory model.

As a means of demonstrating the profoundly and inherently political nature of the military, its social relations, and its activities, I propose a (re)conceptualisation of the military as a social relation and a discourse, not dissimilar to the poststructural deconstruction of the state. This reconceptualization forms the basis of my inquiry into the relationship between the military and collective subjectivity, mediated by constructions of political obligation – as expressed in “the troops”. I proceed by making the general case for

¹ Basham 2013, 141.

² Ibid.

³ Cited in Jabri 2007, 6.

understanding the continuity of politics and violence in contemporary social life through a discussion of war as a social relation. In doing so, I draw on the insights of critical war and critical military studies. This is followed by an examination of the military's centrality to the contemporary experience and interpretation of conflict across the international system, particularly within liberal democracies. I then extend this argument into an outline of the discursive understanding of the military, its relationship to gender, and the corresponding constitution of "support the troops" as a system of representation.

2.1 WAR AS A SOCIAL RELATION

Opening the "black box" of "war itself", not as an event that either causes or is caused by international relations, but as an instance of international politics,⁴ provides an important means of highlighting the continuity of violence and politics. It is an initial, implicit nod towards the centrality of the military in mediating this relationship in contemporary liberal societies. The guiding insight of critical war studies, a growing subfield of international relations concerned with the study of war in its own right, is that war is a generative social relation, and "constitutive presence in society".⁵ War, in other words, rather than being understood as an instrument of pre-given entities with fixed identities, or the breakdown/failure of political order, is instead understood as dynamically constitutive of order, identity, actors, and, ultimately, social reality. The approach has much in common with the English School of international relations, which classically considers war to be an international social institution, "giv[ing] substance and permanence" to the collaboration of states in "carrying out the political functions of international society".⁶ Though far more statist than the conceptualisation of the critical war theorists, the English School's understanding of war as purposive and potentially order-maintaining similarly troubles the common and reflexive understanding of war as distinct from politics. More recently, Christine Sylvester, emphasizing the "everyday" political milieu analysed by the militarism literature, similarly argues for a conception of war as a social institution, albeit one invoking and comprised of the experiences of people, rather than states or governing elites.⁷

In the analysis of war as a constitutive relation, much depends on the understanding and location of the "social".⁸ As observed by Cowen, "the political imaginary of international relations that dominates most work on war occludes the co-constitutive nature of struggles at different levels".⁹ The tendency to parse the study of international relations into levels of analysis, in other words, obscures the ways in which transnational

⁴ Barkawi 2011, 708-709.; see also Jabri 1996, 3 and 8.

⁵ On this point, Barkawi 2011, 705 and 710.

⁶ Bull 2002, 71.

⁷ Sylvester 2013, 4.

⁸ As Patricia Owens (2015) argues, "the social" itself, though often appearing as a "natural" category encompassing, alternatively, the totality of human interaction or else that realm of life carved out from the more explicitly-named domains (the political, the economic, etc.), is both a "mode of thought" and a "concrete historical formation".

⁹ Cowen 2008, 8.

social relations, particularly, albeit not exclusively, war, both transcend conventional analytic boundaries of scale but actively (re)produce them. The distinction between a group of individuals, a people, society, and/or the state, generally understood as the subjects (and, occasionally, objects) of war, is not independent of the phenomenon. This differentiation, moreover, plays into the previously-raised artificial bifurcation of violence and politics by suggesting, through the construction of war as the instrumental practice of states, that war “is ‘exterior’ to national politics”.¹⁰ If the social aspect of war is taken seriously, however, it follows that “we cannot take for granted the identities of the entities which engage in it, nor define its geographic and temporal scope solely in terms of sovereign territorial states and their battle casualties”.¹¹ Instead, the relevant collective subjects, and interactions between them, must be identified through an examination of the dynamics of conflict itself. The constitution of these subjectivities and boundaries comprises a key aspect of analysis (rather than a starting assumption).

As an example of how such analysis proceeds, Barkawi raises the cultural and political legacy of the Vietnam War within American society. He suggests that the experience of Vietnam may be identified in “everything from Hollywood films to electoral politics to the subjectivities or people...play[ing] out in US foreign policies...and shap[ing] US use of force”.¹² The social relations and effects of a “foreign” war extend across time and space to incorporate both the traditional “high” politics of foreign policy and the comparatively banal cultural practices of representation. These, in turn, in their conditioning of political possibility for future war, are “internationally” implicated. The experience of conflict, (albeit indirect) is divorced from military service. As I am primarily interested in how the distant conflicts of Iraq and Afghanistan are made meaningful by the popular discourse of troop-contributing societies, and the political implications thereof, my logic of inquiry parallels this formulation.

In other words, accepting the continuity of politics and violence implies a problematization of the strong domestic/international, inside/outside (or, as critical war studies might put it, war/peace or battlefield/home front)¹³ spatialization of international relations in favour of an emphasis on the politics and subjectivities constituted by war (rather than vice-versa). At a more micro-level, this idea is captured by the common expression that military veterans, or refugees, of war zones, “are still there”, in the physical conflict zone. This theoretical move is similar to that made by feminist militarism and security scholars, such as Enloe, whose analysis emphasizes seemingly-banal micro-processes and quotidian items to demonstrate the ways in which the everyday lives of purportedly civilian people(s) are implicated in global war

¹⁰ Ibid 12.

¹¹ Barkawi 2011, 710; Barkawi and Brighton 2011, 132; Rech et. al. 2015, 48.

¹² Barkawi 2011, 713.

¹³ See, for instance, Barkawi and Brighton 2011, 127.

preparation.¹⁴ The aim, as summarized by Barkawi and Brighton, is to move from the study of “war and society” towards an examination of “war *in* society”.¹⁵ War is understood as a “social continuity”.¹⁶

Having established that what might be understood as the “ordering effects” of war extends beyond the physical, kinetic encounter, the continuity of force and politics – and the stakes of their strict segregation in liberal societies – becomes clear. Just as relations of force are commonly understood as undermining existing social and normative structures (particularly, though not solely, on the side of the “losers”), they also enable and induce others. As observed by Weber, it is imperative to understand politics as a form of “power backed up by”, and dependent upon the possibility of, violence.¹⁷ Foucault goes further, suggesting that politics and war/violence are best conceptualized as different modes or articulations of power, or “force-relations”.¹⁸ From this perspective, the separation of liberal society into distinct civil/military, or society/state/military spheres – and the liberal international into the inside/outside – is itself the effect of power. This discursive power works to obscure the extent to which the narratives, ideologies, politics, and subjectivities of liberal polities rely upon the past use of, and continued potential for, violence.¹⁹

This contextualization is important for my purposes, as the experience and interpretation of war is obviously not uniform throughout or across societies. While it is accurate to suggest that “war” is present in contemporary US and UK society, it would overstretch the concept to suggest that this relation is predominantly one of direct, individually-experienced violence.²⁰ Instead, in an era of professionalized militaries and distant wars of “choice”, “the military”, as a formal institution, symbolic system of meaning, social relation and, ultimately, discourse, mediates and structures the popular interpretation of war. Indeed, awareness of the tendency of “domestic populations of junior coalition partners to see the conflict too rigidly through the experience of their own troops”,²¹ though not positively perceived from the perspective of coalition cohesion, has increasingly filtered into even strategic studies. And thus, while there are a range of valuable questions to be asked about the social relations of Iraq/Afghanistan in and between the US and UK, the popular understanding and representation of the military is vital, yet under-examined, aspect of the

¹⁴ Enloe 2007.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Barkawi and Brighton 2011, 139.

¹⁶ Jabri 1996, 22. On what Jabri terms the “war-society interface”, a version of “war in society”, please see p. 30-32.

¹⁷ Weber 1946, 119 and 121.

¹⁸ Davidson 2003, xviii; and Foucault 1976b, 123.

¹⁹ For this project, liberalism is understood as the general worldview that market democracies are the best form of social organization for manifesting individual rights and freedoms – to which the government should be subject. This modern “performative” liberalism is broadly characterised by individualism, concern for human rights, the rule of law, faith in human perfectability/progress, and the ability to resolve conflict/disagreements via reason. See Basham 2013, 5; Jahn 2007; Howard 1989.

²⁰ For more on the interconnection between “those who have spent time in [war’s] zone of killing, and those who have never been in a position to be exposed to them”, see Wool, 2014, 24.

²¹ Simpson 2013, 126.

overall narrative. The general background of war as socially generative, therefore, requires further specification and grounding to provide meaningful insight. My first step in this direction is to extend the insistence upon the political nature of violence to its modern institutional and symbolic repository – the military.

2.2 SOCIALITY OF THE MILITARY

The military occupies a peculiar place in the Western liberal social imaginary,²² considered both a monolithic, functional extension of the state and, at the same time, the expression of the highest values of patriotism, service, and heroism.²³ The first position, as articulated by Enloe, makes the analytic mistake of “imagin[ing] that any military force simply exists, ready to be deployed at will, whenever military commanders and their civilian superiors wish them to be deployed”.²⁴ In other words, a wholly-instrumental understanding of the military fails to consider the fact that it is made of people who exist in social relation(s) to each other, the state, and others in society. Indeed, the tense premise of the military contract is that the members of the military are also members of the “body politic” themselves. Their appearance otherwise – the obfuscation of this tension – in contexts of national security or frames of war, is itself a profoundly political working of power. At the same time, when the military is presented as a human institution, and, often, the embodiment of the best of the nation, the status of (individual) “violence [as] the very condition for military service” tends to fall away.²⁵ The military, as the “institution mandated to apply violence” in the preservation of Westphalian sovereignty,²⁶ is central to the broader public’s understanding and interpretation of, as well as relation to, physical conflict. As observed by Butler, “to be protected from violence by the nation-state is to be exposed to the violence wielded by the nation-state”.²⁷ This pertains directly to the military personnel and distant others against whom force is directed, but also indirectly to the non-serving public.

It is this foundational tension within liberalism – the state’s reliance upon both the use of force and its own successful elision of this reliance – that critical militarism scholarship attempts to address.²⁸ Stavrianakis and Selby, for instance, construct militarism as “either a concept or object of analysis”, affirming militarism – the pathological “leaking” of the military out of its institutional/symbolic container – as “real”.²⁹ Though this

²² It should be noted, as does Wool (2014, 34, note 1) that these constructions refer to “that particular post-enlightenment arrangement of governance, personhood, and sovereignty Charles Taylor describes as the ‘modern social imaginary’”, and are applicable to the specific contexts at hand in this study – the US and the UK – rather than all militaries. For original, see Taylor 2004.

²³ This is a recent cultural shift, occurring after WWII. See Harding and Kershner 2011, 82.

²⁴ Enloe 2015, 6.

²⁵ Basham 2013, 3.

²⁶ Ibid, 3.

²⁷ Judith Butler 2009, 26.

²⁸ Analysis here drawn from Millar 2016b, 185-6.

²⁹ Stavrianakis and Selby 2013, 5.

scholarship, however, indicates that militarism and liberalism may co-exist, or that liberalism is prone to militarism,³⁰ it does not go so far as to suggest that the violent phenomena associated with militarism are, in fact, necessary to liberalism. This is illustrated by the literature's frequent call for the "demilitarization" of certain aspects of social life, exemplified by Enloe's suggestion that it ought, hypothetically, be possible to conceive of a "less militarized" military.³¹ The notion that militarism may wax and wane, or be ameliorated through demilitarization, suggests that as its severity/intensity is subject to change, it ought, at least theoretically, be possible to excise militarism from liberalism. Though this point is somewhat semantic, it is non-trivial. Within militarism scholarship, liberalism might support, manifest, or even actively encourage militarism, but it is not necessarily militaristic or necessarily violent. As a result, this literature, though crucial in understanding the gendered and socially productive dynamics of "the military", is unable to fully account for the continuity of violence and politics within liberal societies.

This social and political embeddedness of the military, particularly within liberal societies, is the central insight of a growing body of interdisciplinary inquiry, often referred to as "critical military studies" (CMS),³² regarding "military, defence and security issues (the terms are not conflated) which prioritises an understanding of military processes and practices as the outcome of social life and political contestation".³³ CMS is an extension of, though not reducible to, the militarism literature, often utilizing the same conceptual vocabulary of militarism and militarization – though according them less primacy. Instead, CMS scholars place a great deal of emphasis on the situatedness, locality, specificity and, often, embodiment, of the discourses, practices, materiality, and social relations which comprise "militarization",³⁴ thus alleviating the analytical indeterminacy of militarism as an over-arching meta-narrative.³⁵ This move is similar to shifting from discussions of "patriarchy" or "capitalism" as totalizing systems to working out their specific operation(s) in time and place. The aim is not to dismiss feminist conceptions of militarism/militarization,³⁶ but rather to refine them.

This approach underlies a range of studies examining the ways in which the military is connected to broader forms of liberal politics, sociality, and subjectivity. These examine, to name but a few, the role of the military

³⁰ Edgerton 1991; Wood 2007.

³¹ Enloe 2007, 78-80.

³² The boundaries between militarism scholarship, feminist security studies, critical war studies, and critical military studies, if extant at all, are incredibly porous, with many of the scholars discussed herein working within all three. This categorization highlights subtle differences in conceptual vocabulary, analytical approach, and normative commitment, rather than typologizing practicing academics.

³³ Woodward 2014, 51.

³⁴ Woodward 2014, 51; Rech 2014, 244-262, particularly 258; Rech et. al. 2015.

³⁵ For a discussion of the overly-generalized nature of "militarism", please refer to Rech 2014, 246 and 253; Sylvester 2011 and Sylvester 2013, 44-45.

³⁶ For excellent overviews of feminist militarism theorizing, see Khalid 2015 and Sjoberg and Via 2010.

in underwriting post-WWII notions of social citizenship;³⁷ racialized colonial identities, military migration, and the persistence of empire;³⁸ the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality in the masculinized “Britishness” of “the soldier”;³⁹ the heteronormative conditioning of practices of public mourning;⁴⁰ and the affinity between the embodied experience of video games and the hyper-reality of combat.⁴¹ In line with this body of work, I take seriously, as lucidly phrased by Wool, the proposition that “questions of how things are in war or military life are always also questions about how things are beyond it”.⁴² This necessitates a wide-ranging analysis of the influence of war and the military within the political life of liberal democracies.

In constructing this account, I go beyond the current (though not uniform) CMS trend of focussing on the military as a formal institution. Despite the move to understand the military relationally,⁴³ many studies take direct contact with the organization itself as a starting point.⁴⁴ Common avenues of inquiry for studies considered (either explicitly by their author or so-categorized by other scholars) to constitute critical military studies focus, for instance, on military wives and families,⁴⁵ military recruitment and public relations activities,⁴⁶ the experiences of soldiers themselves,⁴⁷ etc. This is logical – why look for “militaryness” in a place where the institution is not? It also, however, risks creating studies of the “military and...” some aspect of society, similar to the “war and society” vs. “war in society” distinction raised earlier. The emphasis of these studies on individual experience, embodied practice, and affective connections, not to mention the intersectionality of class, race, gender, and sexual orientation/expression, is incredibly valuable. It highlights the micro manifestations of the social and political contestation of the military and demonstrates empathy for the many individual experiences of, and normative orientations toward, “the military”.⁴⁸ In contrast to some proponents of war studies, these situated studies, even in their encounters with soldiers – the primary subjects of war – emphasize the ways in which even direct experience is mediated “by wider relations, institutions, and processes”.⁴⁹ An observation to which I would add cultural constructs, ideology, symbols – or discourse.

³⁷ Cowen 2008.

³⁸ Ware 2014.

³⁹ Basham 2013.

⁴⁰ Millar 2015a.

⁴¹ Der Derian 2001.

⁴² Wool 2014, 24.

⁴³ Rech 2014, 258.

⁴⁴ See Rech et. al. 2015, 55-6.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, Harrison 2002, Hyde 2015, and Gray 2015.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Harding and Kershner 2011, 79-109 and Allen 2009.

⁴⁷ See, for instance, Bulmer 2013.

⁴⁸ See Sylvester 2013, 4-5.

⁴⁹ Basham 2013, 8.

The grounded, localized approach of these studies, often comprised of interviews and ethnography, is thus extremely effective in examining the connection between militaryness – or what Rech refers to as “becoming military” – and individual subjectivity(ies) for those proximate to the military.⁵⁰ I aim to develop a means of connecting this individual experience of conflict with collective subjectivity through an analysis of one key way in which “military”, and thus, war, is (re)produced and circulated in liberal society – StT discourse. Currently, studies of this nature are relatively rare, with the exception of examinations of the representation of the military in popular culture, such as film and video games.⁵¹ This gap is likely due to both legitimate differences in substantive interest and the methodological challenges inherent to attempting to discover the military-related aspects of the life-experience(s) and subjectivity(ies) of people without direct formal or interpersonal connections with the military. When considering the manifestation of war within society, however, such inquiry constitutes a vital aspect of the overall picture. Following the commitments of feminist security studies (and feminist epistemology more generally) to bring the experiences of women, and alternative, feminine subjectivities to the fore,⁵² I highlight the role and experience of “civilians” in understanding the discursive military. In this way, I contest mainstream IR’s propensity to consider only directly violent, implicitly masculine actors – namely, soldiers – as relevant to the international politics and possibilities of war.

This sense of interconnection is expressed in Karin Fierke’s observation that the experience of loss – a tragic yet significant aspect of war in society – “is inextricably linked to the political world in so far as the larger context of war is the source of individual loss. Making sense of individual loss is thus, in part, a function of the meaning of the political event”.⁵³ The cultural and discursive resources through which this loss is made meaningful – and war is experienced – are, in the contemporary US and UK, inextricably linked to the military. At the same time, the individual loss within war is also made meaningful to, by, and for the collective. This process of interpretation is similarly informed by, and reproductive of, the collective “experience” of war.⁵⁴ Correspondingly, though I problematize the relevance of traditional levels of analysis, I also position this project between “the strategic and national interest politics of war” and the social relations of individuals.⁵⁵ To fully capture the contiguity of war, the military, and liberal sociality at this admittedly fuzzy and difficult to limn realm requires a subtle, yet substantive, reconceptualization of the military. To interrogate the civil-

⁵⁰ Rech 2014, 251.

⁵¹ See, for instance, Dalby 2008, 439-455 and Stahl 2010.

⁵² Sjöberg 2009.

⁵³ Fierke 2004b, 484.

⁵⁴ See Millar 2017 (forthcoming)

⁵⁵ Christine Sylvester quoted in Rech 2014, 244.

military frame of analysis, and move towards a mode of inquiry more explicitly informed by war, I reconceptualise the military (and its relation to both war and politics) – as a structural effect and a discourse.

2.3 MILITARY AS DISCOURSE

The primary benefit to my conceptualisation of the military as a discourse is, in keeping with the logic of understanding war as a social relation, a flattening of the scope of analysis. I understand “the military” as extending to, influencing, and (re)producing banal aspects of everyday life (even those at a remove from the institution itself) and the so-called “high politics” of state, bringing both into the same frame. This reconceptualization – a radical move from the perspective of strategic studies, but one consonant with the critical innovations of feminist security, militarism, critical security, war, and military studies – challenges the ontological status of the military. It suggests that the military, as a social fact, is both a formal organization, with offices, personnel, and equipment, and a social institution, with a complex web of norms and rules extending beyond the armed forces. I argue, however, that the military – or, perhaps “military” – is also diffuse, socially-pervasive, and contiguous with the other major discursive formations of liberal modernity, such as the state, society, gender, etc.

Discourse, for the purpose of this study, is understood in the Foucauldian-informed, poststructural sense, as inextricably intertwined with knowledge, power, and the social production of reality. While it is beyond the scope of this project to review the vast literature relating to the discursive constitution of reality, a short overview of conceptual terminology is warranted. Briefly, Hall summarizes discourse as:

[A] group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment. ...Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But... since all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do – our conduct – all practices have a discursive aspect.⁵⁶

Discourse, in other words, not only provides a means of communicating knowledge and interpreting social reality but also actively *creates* it.⁵⁷ Correspondingly, discourse may be understood as an expression, manifestation and working of power – diffuse, de-centralized, and “productive of meanings, subject identities, their interrelationships, and a range of imaginable conduct”.⁵⁸ Given this understanding of the world as discursively constituted, the “substance” of power is not “found” in the material world, but is

⁵⁶ Hall 1992, 291. This conceptualisation may be supplemented by Doty (1993, 302), who considers discourse as “a system of statements in which each individual statement makes sense, produces interpretive possibilities by making it virtually impossible to think outside of it” and Milliken (1999, 231) who understands discourse as “background capacities for persons to differentiate and identify things...structures that are actualized in their regular use by people of discursively ordered relationships”.

⁵⁷ See also Edkins 1999, 41-64 and Foucault 1976a, 29-43.

⁵⁸ Doty 1993, 229

(re)produced through regularized patterns (structures) of communication. The constituent aspects of discourse, such as language, texts, symbols, etc., are therefore not independent of power, but completely implicated in it.⁵⁹ More concretely, the discursive configuration of power and knowledge works at the levels of methodology, epistemology, and ontology, constructing not only what we know, but how we know, and, ultimately, what *is*. Discourse is the realm in which truth is reproduced and enacted.

Correspondingly, and of central importance to this study, individuals and collectivities (and notions of what it means to be an individual or collectivity) do not pre-exist discourse, but are created by it as subjects and placed in a particular (social) relation to each other.⁶⁰ Within this theoretical approach, “subject” is distinguished from the thinner idea of socially-constructed “identity” by: a) an emphasis upon the limits of agency imposed by the subject’s existence within a particular discursively-constituted context at a particular historical time.; and b) the observation that different, often ambiguous or contradictory, subject-positions may be held at a given time.⁶¹ Through the delineation of subjectivities, discourse not only arranges the social world, but also “constrains what is thought at all [and] what is thought of as possible”,⁶² shaping the field of social practice. Of particular significance to this project, and my analysis of a diffuse body of intertextually linked statements produced by many societal actors, is discourse’s corollary conceptualisation as lacking a “fixed and stable centre”. It is “both intentional and non-subjective”⁶³, irreducible to a particular individual or collective “consciousness”. The collective subjects and social relations I identify, therefore, need not be the result of purposive political work by some, or any, actor. The “effects” of discourse go beyond the intentions of a particular individual, or group of individuals, who may be unaware of their contributions to, and constitution by, particular discursive formations.⁶⁴ The discursive constitution of reality is about the play of power and limning of politics in the social *aggregate*.

With this understanding in mind, the key implication of my reconceptualization of the military as a discourse is the ability to account for the contiguity of the military and society (or violence and politics), and thus violence’s relation to subjectivity. More specifically, I argue that the military ought to be understood not simply as a discourse, but rather as a “discursive formation”, which Foucault defines as “a number of statements, [exhibiting] a system of dispersion...between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices”, with a perceptible “regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings,

⁵⁹ My emphasis. Milliken 1999, 225. See also Foucault 1984, 51-75.

⁶⁰ Doty 1993, 303

⁶¹ Edkins 1999, 40-43. For the original, please see Foucault 1995 and, particularly, Foucault 2002.

⁶² Neumann 2008, 62. Or, alternatively, as observed by Henriques et. al. (1984, 106): “The production of discourses and of subjectivity and sociality is indissoluble”.

⁶³ Foucault 1980, 94.

⁶⁴ Foucault 1976a, 60.

transformations)".⁶⁵ Though lacking an identifiable centre, it is possible to identify a disparate collection of discourses that may be fairly understood as pertaining to the same "thing" or, as phrased by Hall, the same "site of social activity".⁶⁶ (Foucault gives science and ideology as examples of such formations).⁶⁷ This is not to deny the materiality of the military as a formal organization or embodied, practiced, social institution, but to suggest that the taken-for-granted permanence, inevitability, and *reality* of the military is itself the working of discursive power, in the (re)production of a structural effect.

The logic of my reading of the military as a discursive formation and structural effect is strongly informed by the deconstruction and disaggregation of the state undertaken by critical international relations (and critical security studies, particularly) scholars in the 1990s. For Mitchell, the state is the "paramount structural effect of the modern social world".⁶⁸ It is not an "actual structure", but rather the "powerful, metaphysical effect of practices that make [it] appear to exist".⁶⁹ The state seems to have an existence ontologically independent of the discursive practices and subject-positions which sustain and reproduce it. Campbell, similarly, in his examination of national security demonstrates the ways in which the constitution of state identity, and the stability of the "structural effect" of its border/boundaries are constantly negotiated through the discourse and practice of foreign policy.⁷⁰ At the systemic level, Walker has illustrated the way in which the ontology of the "international" rests on the imperative to secure (and, in doing so, construct) a particular polity – the sovereign state – against the anarchic "outside".⁷¹ The state – as both a "specific" nation (i.e. "the United States") and as a form of political community – is created and maintained through a variety of practices and discourse, from the exceptional realm of security⁷² to more everyday processes, such as the display of flags and delivery of the post.⁷³ I consider the military, like the state, to be a highly naturalized, extremely stable yet discursively produced social fact.

Crucially, as feminist scholars have demonstrated, the structural effect of the modern liberal state is not neutral, but rather depends upon an underlying division of society (and labour) into public and private spheres that is gendered/ing (as well as classed, racialized, and heteronormative).⁷⁴ Pateman observes that

⁶⁵ Foucault, 1976a, 41.

⁶⁶ Hall defines a discursive formation as a series of statements that "define what is and is not appropriate in our formulation of, and our practices in relation to, a particular subject or site of social activity; what knowledge is considered useful, relevant and 'true' in that context; and what sorts of persons or 'subjects' embody its characteristics". Hall 1997, 6.

⁶⁷ Foucault 1976a, 42.

⁶⁸ Mitchell 1991 a, 94

⁶⁹ Ibid; see also Mitchell 1991b, xii.

⁷⁰ Campbell 1992.

⁷¹ Walker 1993.

⁷² See Huysmans 2006.

⁷³ Mitchell 1991a, 95; for a non-European example, please see Gupta 1995.

⁷⁴ Connell 1990; True 1996; Frazer and Lacey 1993, 72-6.

the individual citizen-subject of the modern liberal state was male, and that his “liberation” required the subjugation of women via rigid and essentialist gender roles and corresponding social relations of exploitation and dependence.⁷⁵ Just as importantly, the individual-citizen subject of the modern liberal state was implicitly imbued with the stereotypical traits of Western masculinity – particularly rationality and autonomy.⁷⁶ Though poor women, for instance, worked outside the home, the constitution of the individual citizen as masculine furthered an overarching discursive construction of the “public”, economic and political sphere as masculine, and the private, domestic sphere as feminine.⁷⁷ Brown thus observes that while the extension of individual rights to women (and other minorities) may have decoupled citizenship from a particular male (white, cisgender, heterosexual) body, it continued to compel the performance of a universalised masculine “public” subjectivity.⁷⁸ For feminist scholars, the stability of the state as a structural effect rests upon the stability of an essentialised, binary sex/gender correspondence, and the strict performance/policing of patriarchal gender roles.

The gendered/gendering nature of the discursive liberal state is a key point of intersection with the discursive military. Feminist security and militarism scholars observe that masculine normative citizenship, and the gendered, spatialized binary between public and private upon which it rests, also typifies the structure of civil-military relations. In the context of the liberal military contract, the universalized subject liable for military service was, historically, male (see Ch. 3), and, in contemporary politics, is masculine. In a volunteer military, the masculine (though not necessarily male), heroic soldier is widely regarded as “the best of us”, risking his/her life for the protection of the whole.⁷⁹ Through the physical performance of violence and symbolic association with the state, soldiers, are constructed as protecting non-serving civilians.

This gendered structure of warfare is writ-large to the relationship between a masculinized, protective military, and feminized society (or, often, nation), vulnerable to violent harm.⁸⁰ The best known formulation of this dynamic is Jean Bethke Elshtain’s contrasting of the masculine “Just Warrior”, charged with defending “home and hearth” to the feminine (or societal) “Beautiful Soul” whose virtue and innocent domesticity require protection.⁸¹ Though Elshtain was offering a philosophical heuristic, it captures the lay construction of the gender/ing of violent labour. Correspondingly, the gendered division of “political” space underlying the social facticity of the patriarchal state both relies upon and constitutes the gendered “civil-military gap”,

⁷⁵ Pateman 1988; Frazer and Lacey 1995, 70-2.

⁷⁶ See Brown 1992.

⁷⁷ Connell 1990, 522.

⁷⁸ Brown 1995.

⁷⁹ Cowen 2008, 17.

⁸⁰ See Stachowitsch 2013, 74-80.

⁸¹ Cited Kinsella 2005, 253-4. For original see, Elshtain 1995.

separating feminised, dependent society from the protective, autonomous military.⁸² This “gendered civil-military divide”, as an historical regularity, cultural narrative, and scholastic/philosophical heuristic, underpins my parallel conceptualisation of the liberal military contract.

While this gendered division of violent labour seems stable – and, indeed, must, in order for the parallel structural effect of the separate and legitimate institutional military to hold – the gender binary upon which it rests is neither inevitable nor timeless. Contemporary feminist analysis, such as that put forward by Hutchings, understands masculinity/femininity as a structural framework relating additional concepts, values, and identities to each other, rather than possessing substantively “fixed” content (or correspondence with male and female persons).⁸³ This structure is not itself static, but rather a process that is “flexible and shifting”.⁸⁴ Put differently, I understand the binary distinction between male/female and sex/gender as a social construct,⁸⁵ that, as with the discursive state and military, is produced by and productive of reality.⁸⁶ The boundaries of the civil-military spheres and masculinity/femininity are not deterministic, but the ongoing result of mutually-constitutive and contingent processes.⁸⁷ I therefore understand gender discursively, as performative, iterated and embodied,⁸⁸ but also as an ordering principle for hierarchical social relations.⁸⁹ The gendered civil-military divide frequently referenced in feminist military analysis,⁹⁰ therefore, is a useful analytic heuristic, rather than objectively real. My empirical analysis therefore leverages the divide’s apparent stability to track violations of its structural, binary associations (i.e. masculine/military and feminine/society) – to reveal alternative configurations of gender, society, and the military. To avoid essentialism, we must determine the gendered/gendering aspects of a particular subject or concept – such as “the troops”, military, or society – through an examination of their contingent and contextual (re)production.⁹¹

Gender, as a binary “social fact” and a productive discourse, is therefore key to the shared constitutive logic of the state and the discursive military, as well their remarkable normative invisibility and naturalization. Just as the state, “the military” exists in a series of gendered/ing social relations and subject-positions that are neither timeless nor inevitable. Though its comparative historical stability in institutional form, mandate, and symbolism surpass that of the state, perhaps making the extension of the critical-political imagination

⁸² Khalid 2015, 637-8.

⁸³ Hutchings 2008.

⁸⁴ Hutchings 2008, 394.

⁸⁵ Butler 1990, 6.

⁸⁶ Shepherd cited in Khalid 2015, 635.

⁸⁷ Wilcox 2009, 227.

⁸⁸ See Butler 1990.

⁸⁹ See Sjoberg 2009, 187; and Sjoberg 2011.

⁹⁰ See, for instance, Sasson-Levy 2002 and 2003.

⁹¹ For more on this point see Hudson 2005; Stachowitsch 2013.

more challenging, the military, too, is a reflection of the intersubjective understanding and contingent (re)reproduction of modern liberal social order, not least through the gendered division of violent labour.⁹²

The military “maintains itself through a process of regulation and normalization in which certain norms and dispositions are accepted and encouraged while others are suppressed and delegitimized”⁹³ – often in support of, or as an aspect of, the discursive formation of the state. As noted by Hall, “the same discourse...will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at a number of institutional sites within society”.⁹⁴ Discourses articulating a sense of betrayal by the patriarchal welfare state’s failure to adequately provide health care and reintegration for dependent, potentially-feminised veterans, are one such example.

Gender, as I demonstrate in Chapter Five, is a key axis upon which the frequent distinction between the “troops” and the government (and, often, explicitly, the state) is drawn in StT. The military and state discursive formations are imperfectly limned, and constantly constituted with and through the gendered references incorporation/opposition of the other (and, indeed, society).⁹⁵ Overall, I suggest that due to the military’s social prominence and direct engagement in violence, its contribution to/participation in processes of collective subject formation should be qualitatively parsed from those of other, broader statist discourses. In this way, the military may be understood as a historically-specific, gendered discourse of (organized) violence.⁹⁶

Conceptualizing the military-as-discourse also follows a similar logic to that of war studies in proposing war as a social relation amongst people that spans time and space and is relevant even to individuals and groups existing at a distance from physical, kinetic battle. War constitutes and is constituted by language.⁹⁷ At the same time, understanding the military as a discourse, goes slightly further, in highlighting both the ways in which the military creates (and reflects) relationships amongst people, social practices, spaces, and institutions etc., *and* the ways in which such categories and identities are reproduced as categories and identities. I therefore understand the military-as-discursive formation as reproducing a variety of discourses and objects, including the military itself, as a formal organization, social institution, cultural system of meaning, social relation, and social fact.

⁹² See Cox 1981.

⁹³ Sheehan 2005.

⁹⁴ Hall 1997, 44.

⁹⁵ For more on the mutual production of the politicized boundaries between state and society, see Mitchell 1991a, 95.

⁹⁶ Jabri’s (1996, 98-115) conceptualisation of militarism and just war doctrine as discourses (of the legitimization of conflict) follows a similar logic of analysis, albeit drawing upon a more structurationist understanding of discourse and focusing on the constitution of self and national identity, rather than individual and collective subjectivity.

⁹⁷ Michaels 2013, 169.

2.3.1 *Support The Troops as Military Discourse*

My understanding of the military as a discursive formation enables us to understand the implication of various “support the troops” discourses and practices in processes of collective subject formation and the constitution of political possibility, belying its common dismissal as an apolitical phenomenon. “Support the troops” is most usefully considered a collection of particular, historically- and culturally-specific discourses of the military, and its relationship(s) to society. It is a reflection of the ostensibly-stable normative structure of the gendered civil-military divide, and its (re)production with the modern liberal political order. More specifically, StT discourse is a system of ambiguously gendered (see Chs. 5 and 6) representation relating to soldiers, the military, and society, generally assumed to be the same as the audience of the imperative.⁹⁸ The common alternative phrasing of StT as “support our troops” makes the relational aspect of the exhortation explicit. In doing so, StT constructs an account of related concepts (e.g. warfare), their classification (e.g. legitimate or illegitimate), implied subject-positions (e.g. feminine civilian or masculine soldier) and the complex and often contradictory relations between them. In other words, StT informs contemporary understandings of the military and its activities, as well as the grounds upon which such knowledge is evaluated.

A brief note on the nature of representation is warranted. At its most basic, representation refers to “the production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language... link[ing] between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events”.⁹⁹ It is this notion which underscores the work of so-called structural linguistic scholars, such as Saussure and (early) Barthes, who were concerned with the generation of socio-cultural meaning within the grammatical rules of a particular, fixed language system, and culture.¹⁰⁰ For Foucault, however, issues of representation and meaning – how are “the troops” made meaningful – are inextricable from the power relations of discourse.¹⁰¹ Representation, in other words, is a particularly modern phenomenon which appears to bifurcate the social world into the “real”, material, physical reality, and its reflection, or interpretation, in the abstract and conceptual realm of language and/or culture.¹⁰² It is what allows the state, institutional military, and binary conception of gender to appear, and be experienced, as objectively real. The question, then, is not simply “what is represented?”, but “how is

⁹⁸ John Kelly, in a study of the use of such pro-military discourse in and around British sporting events, adopts a similar theoretical and methodological discursive approach, with the distinction that he frames militarism, rather than the military itself, as the relevant discursive formation. Kelly 2012, 722-738.

⁹⁹ Hall 1997, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Hall 1997, 33-41. For originals, please refer to de Saussure 2011 and Barthes 2009, 131-188.

¹⁰¹ Hall 1997, 43; For original, see Foucault 1976a.

¹⁰² Mitchell 1991b, xiii-xiv.

representation possible?”,¹⁰³ and what, in turn, do these naturalized representations make possible?

Within this frame, “support the troops” is understood as both a representation of the military and its social positioning, generative of social meaning (the “what” of representation”) and, at a deeper level, constitutive of the broader discursive formation of the military (and corresponding subjectivities – the “how”). While I am interested in the particular construction and iterations of various “support the troops” discourses and practices, their meaning is interpreted broadly. I examine elisions, absences, and assumptions as much, if not more so, than strict grammatical formulations. Discursive representation, in this instance, derives from the “relations among statements”, and the ways in which they work to construct truth from an open and historically contingent (re)production of meaning (and, through it, knowledge).¹⁰⁴ My point then, is that while “support the troops” discourse(s) are “about” the “troops”, the representations therein reproduce a variety of meanings and subjectivities that exceed those of military personnel. Instead, they extend to, among others, the broader military, the (nation)-state, war, gender, and, crucially, the relationship between an idealized military and society.

2.4 THE SOCIO-MILITARY DISCURSIVE FORMATION AND COLLECTIVE SUBJECT FORMATION

This brings us to the relationship between the discursive military and collective subjectivity. This theoretical framework informs the analysis not just of large collectivities, such as society (Ch. 6) and the polity (Ch. 7), but also underpins the interpretation of the troops (Ch. 5). At the most basic level, a collective subject is a discursively constituted, intersubjectively-recognized corporate entity generally understood as made up, in turn, of some collection of individual subjects. Crucially, the collective subject is not, given its discursive nature, dependent upon *particular* individuals actively proclaiming or performing membership of such a group, just the general social acknowledgement that such groups of individuals do, or could, exist. Collective subjectivity is fairly closely related to the idea of “structural effect” (or the appearance of institutions/groups as objectively rather than socially real), but with greater weight given to their purportedly corporate, rather than monolithic, nature.¹⁰⁵ Class, for instance, is a typical example of a well-known, socio-politically intelligible collective subject.¹⁰⁶ Collective subjectivity may be distinguished, as “individual” subjectivity from identity, from group identity, by a shift in analytical emphasis from the “content”, or specificity of the group (though empirically, of course, this matters greatly) to its situation as a collective subject positioned in

¹⁰³ Weber 1995, 33.

¹⁰⁴ For more on this point, see Edkins 1999, 46-47; Foucault 1976a, 24-43; see Foucault 2002, 3-18, for an example of the analysis of the power relations inherent to representation.

¹⁰⁵ In other words, the difference in emphasis may be understood as the contrast between understanding the “state” as a pre-existing, objectively real formal organization and as comprised of either its employees (bureaucrats, politicians, the government, etc.) or its citizens/population.

¹⁰⁶ See Haarstad 2007.

relation to both corporate subjects and individuals.¹⁰⁷ Questions of collective subjectivity are concerned with “groupness”, or what it means to be a group, and the terms upon which the group is formed, as well as the potentially ambivalent construction of particular corporate entities as potentially occupying multiple (and contradictory) subject positions.

By postulating the discursive military as implicated in processes of collective subject formation, I examine the social production of not only the “military” as a collective subject, but also its positioning and interconnection (and production) of other significant collective subjects within the modern international. In doing so, the relevant collective subjects may be particular (the British military, for instance) but such particularities depend on an underlying, general notion of the class or category of collective subject itself (“military”, or “troops, in general, but also perhaps an international comprised of territorially-bounded states), which are themselves historically-contingent constructions.¹⁰⁸ My analysis of the various ways the “troops” are made meaningful is thus concerned with the contingent production of collective subjects at multiple levels, and the interplay between them. More concretely, as discussed in previous sections, due to the nature of the contemporary conflicts prosecuted by liberal democracies, the military is crucially important to the popular experience of warfare, and construction of organized violence in relation to the polity (and, as developed in Chs. 7 and 8, the political). As such, my examination of the military’s involvement in collective subject formation is concerned with the ways in which “states do not make war so much as war [or, more generally, organized violence] makes states and societies”.¹⁰⁹ In connecting StT to collective subject formation, I am interested in generating a positive and solidaristic, rather than negative and opposition, account of “groupness” in international relations (see Ch. 7). Overall, I consider the ways in which the discursive military, as the fantasized “master”, or purveyor, of violence, plays a particularly powerful political role in mediating and reproducing “war in society” but is, in turn, produced by these same power relations from which it garners its status and legitimacy.

2.5 CONCLUSION

I contribute to the growing international relations literature aimed at “writing war back into the polity”¹¹⁰ by combining the insights of critical war and military studies with a Foucauldian-informed understanding of the productive nature of discourse and processes of collective subject formation. My theoretical approach draws on the conceptualisation of war as a transnational social relation to problematize and address the bifurcation between violence and politics. Correspondingly, war is understood as extending beyond the geographic and

¹⁰⁷ See Dunst and Edwards 2011.

¹⁰⁸ See Friedland 2012, 462-3, n. 10.

¹⁰⁹ On this point, see Barkawi 2011, 714.

¹¹⁰ Barkawi and Brighton 2011, 142.

temporal scope of immediate physical engagement, as a socially generative force capable of not only eroding but constituting political order. In an era of professionalized militaries and “small”, distant conflicts, most citizens of the liberal democratic troop “sending” states experience war indirectly, as strongly mediated by an affective interpretation of the military. The ability of the mythical liberal military contract, premised upon the similarly contingent gendered civil-military divide, to account for contemporary civil-military relations is thus called into question. This chapter connects the insights of critical military studies as to the situatedness, locality, specificity (and, often, embodiment) of the military’s influence on individual subjectivity to an analysis of the way the military “circulates” in the social aggregate, produced and reproduced even by those who lack a direct connection to the formal organization itself.

As such, I argue that the military is best understood not as a formal organization, nor even a social relation, but as a socially pervasive discourse. Drawing on Foucauldian conception of discourse as implicated in social power relations, and productive of social reality, I understand the military as a structural effect – a highly stable discursive formation whose apparent permanence and facticity is itself the product of power. This is informed by the deconstruction of the state by critical international relations scholars, who highlight the ways in which “the state” is, in reality, the aggregation of seemingly-banal discourses and practices, such as displaying flags, paying taxes, and border control, which appear external to those producing them. The stability of both these structural effects, in turn, rests on the underlying reification of a binary conception of gender, which (re)produces liberal polities as characterised by a spatial division of social life into masculine/feminine, public/private, military/civil, and violence/politics. “Support the troops” discourses are both representations of “the military”, infused with socio-cultural meaning, and a discourse of the military, or “militaryness”, connecting the collective conduct of violence with the bounding of the political. StT (re)reproduces not only the military, but its contingent, gendered positioning in relation to other significant collective subjects of liberal modernity, including, crucially, society. This conceptualisation, in turn, enables me to consideration of the normalizing effects of such discourses, and their implications for resistance, dissent, and the liberal social order.

CHAPTER THREE: THE LIBERAL MILITARY CONTRACT AND “THE TROOPS” IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In this chapter, I introduce the concept, history, and theory of “the troops” in relation to normative understanding(s) of civil-military relations, with the overall goal of highlighting the continuities and divergences between “StT” and similar, past practices. I do this by first tracing the historical development of normative, gendered civil-military relations and, subsequently, “the troops”, in the US and UK. This is followed by a discussion of the contemporary manifestation of StT. Broadly, I aim to demonstrate, through the juxtaposition of these two historical periods, that StT is: a) a qualitatively-distinct “phase” of Western civil-military relations; and b) a continuation of many military-related supportive practices and affects of the past.

To that end, I begin with a broad outline of the evolution of the relationship between democracy, military service, and citizenship in the West. This section relates the historical entwining of democracy with the mass army to the development of the mythical “liberal military contract” that guides my interpretive analysis. I then move forward in time to provide a detailed discussion of the social production of “the troops” as a contemporary collective subject in the US and UK. This analysis traces the various ways StT (re)produced – and exposed fractures in – the archetypical liberal military contract from approximately the Second World War to the present. Particular attention is paid to the dissemination of “support the troops!” discourse during the First Gulf War (1990-1991), as both a jumping off point and means of contrast for the contemporary phenomenon.

I then go on to illustrate the relative ubiquity of StT discourse, practice, and symbolism in the US and UK during the global war on terror, to contextualise the empirical mapping of the selected corpus in the following chapter. Overall, the chapter provides a foundation for understanding StT as a reflection, reproduction, and manifestation of the normative structure of contemporary civil-military relations and “civilian” interaction with war. I argue that StT represents both a continuation of enduring cultural myths regarding the relationship between democracy, citizenship, and military service, as well as a qualitative shift in the normative construction of political obligation in relation to collective force.

3.1 HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE “LIBERAL MILITARY CONTRACT”

In articulating a social relationship, and shared sense of fortune between a political community and those charged with its defence – “support!” – the StT phenomenon reflects, (re)produces, and amends a normative

structure dating to the mass “nation in arms” of the French Revolution.¹ The development of the European state may be understood as the result of a centuries-long process of elite centralization of the means of force and subsequent internal pacification/organization of the state to support war-making activities.² Civil-military relations in pre-Napoleonic Europe were characterized by a dual imperative of protecting the governing aristocracy’s sovereignty against external threats and internal popular rebellion.³ While “it was assumed that the bulk of the population would serve if required and on terms that they did not influence”,⁴ in reality “it was uncommon for any country...to call up the whole of the male population theoretically liable to military service”.⁵ The limitation of military service to the aristocratic elite and foreign mercenaries changed with the French Revolution. Marked by the *Lévee en masse* (“national” conscription), the Revolution saw an important devolution of the burdens of warfare from professional long-service armies to society as a whole.⁶ This societal mobilization, moreover, was based on nationalistic ideals and membership in the *patrie*,⁷ indicating a nascent shift from regarding the state as the property of princes to the collective embodiment of abstract revolutionary, and eventually democratic, principles.⁸

Despite a reversion to elite governance following the Revolution, the institutional structure of the mass army expanded across Europe throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, bringing with it the ideology of nationalism and concessions of citizenship required to legitimise mass conscription.⁹ This process was particularly pronounced in the US, wherein despite a suspicion of standing armies akin to that of the United Kingdom,¹⁰ the experience of the Revolutionary War created the citizen (militia) soldier as a political ideal that endures to the present.¹¹ It was also this period that produced the modern gendered division of violent labour wherein men, as citizens, either serve (as in 19th c. France or US, for instance), or are liable to potentially serve in the military (as in pre-WWI UK), while women literally and symbolically reproduce the nation “at home”.¹² As summarized by former British General Fuller’s famous aphorism, there is a strong sense in which “the musket made the infantryman and the infantryman made the democrat”.¹³ This historical process solidified the figure of the soldier as the embodiment of masculine civic virtue. Military

¹ The historical discussion contained in this introduction draws on research and discussion contained in the ‘Analytical History’ component of my Masters’ dissertation (2010).

² Finer 1975; Tilly 1975

³ Finer 1975.

⁴ Black 2005, 49

⁵ Best 1998, 31.

⁶ McNeill 1984, 192.

⁷ Forrest 2005, 59-61.

⁸ Howard 2009, 75.

⁹ Posen 1993; McNeill 1984, 253-5.

¹⁰ Sondhous 2006, 54-5.

¹¹ See, for instance, Williams 1991.

¹² Goldstein 2001.

¹³ In Townshend 2005, 3; See also Sheehan 2008, 16-7.

service was the “sacred obligation” of the male citizen – and the “right to impose it was the main source and expression of the state’s legitimacy”.¹⁴

The transformation of civil-military relations towards a “citizen” military underlying this figuration culminated in the First World War, when, as argued by Howard, “the peoples did not have to be whipped up by government propaganda. It was in a spirit of simple patriotic duty that they joined the colours and went to war”.¹⁵ Across Europe, “hordes of eager young men...flocked to volunteer and ‘do their bit’ before the fighting ended”.¹⁶ By WWII, military service had been firmly entrenched as a normative obligation of democratic citizenship, while the onset of industrial-age “total war” involved all of society in the process of war, through preparation, supply, or participation in battle.¹⁷ Military service was “an experience shared by millions”.¹⁸ As entire populations engaged in warfare, “support for the troops” was, in some ways, redundant as a political statement, though prevalent as a material practice. Throughout the twentieth century, military service became a crucial means for marginalised groups, such as women, and sexual and ethnic minorities, to demonstrate belonging in the political community, and demand recognition as citizens.¹⁹

It is this process, wherein democracy, the citizen military, and mass war participation “grew up together” in the Western cultural imagination that facilitates and is captured by the enduring myth of the liberal military contract sketched in the introduction. This, to recap, is my shorthand representation of the normative understanding that (masculine) citizens are liable to serve in the military to defend the whole. My claim is not that the “liberal military contract” represents an actual moment/outcome of democratic decision-making or consolidation, nor that it was/is enacted in ideal-typical form. Instead, I understand it as a cultural “myth”, a powerful socio-cultural narrative that imbues impressionist recollections of history and normative beliefs with affective valence.²⁰ It does not rise to the level of a structural effect, akin to the gendered liberal distinction between civil and military “spheres”, but rather provides an interpretive story within which to understand the meaning, resonance, and political invisibility of this structural effect. In doing so, it is also able to account for the interesting “hangover”, or “lingering” of stereotypically republican civic virtue – crystallised in the figure of the hegemonically masculine citizen combat soldier – in the public discourse and imagination of what would now typically be considered liberal societies.

¹⁴ Sheehan 2008, 179.

¹⁵ Howard 2002, 34.

¹⁶ Bond, 1998, 96.

¹⁷ See Overy 2005.

¹⁸ Sheehan 2008, 19-20.

¹⁹ Krebs 2006.

²⁰ For more on “myth” as contingent yet enduring narrative, see Blieseman de Guevara 2016.

3.2 EVOLVING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE PRODUCTION OF THE CONTEMPORARY “TROOPS”

This section draws on the concept of the liberal military contract to contextualise and illustrate the changing role of “the troops” in mediating, representing, and constituting the civil-military relationship in the US and UK. The aim, as above, is not to provide a complete history of civil-military relations in either state. Instead, I highlight points of (dis)continuity with the “supportive” discourses and practices of the past, contextualised by key military and political events.

3.2.1 *US and Vietnam*

The mass public proclamation of support for a collectivity known as “the troops” – StT in its current form – derives from the American experience of the Vietnam War (1965-1973). As is now common knowledge, the US was deeply divided over the Vietnam War and many Americans – particularly women, African Americans, and, during the later phases of the war, college graduates – were opposed to the conflict.²¹ These attitudes towards the military and Vietnam marked a significant departure from those accompanying mass societal mobilisation in WWII. From 1940-1, for instance, survey data indicates that Americans’ approval for “helping out England” in the war hovered at around 70 per cent; the statement “every able bodied man should serve in the Armed Forces” also received slightly more than 70 per cent approval.²² Though both WWII and Vietnam involved the draft, conscription policies in WWII were widely considered to be fairer.²³ The WWII selection drew pan-societally, and resulted in an older average age of service (27 in WWII, 19 in Vietnam).²⁴ The experience of Vietnam thus existed, as it continues to in memory, in strong contrast with that of WWII – the “last good war”.²⁵

The political currency and public saliency of “support the troops!” stems from its initial invocation in a context of unpopular war, widespread social protest, and inequitable terms of military service – or fracture in the liberal military contract. To combat the increasingly effective war opposition mounted by the peace protest movement, the US government deployed an astro-turf “support the troops” campaign in 1967.²⁶ The Johnson administration, for instance, founded the “National Committee for Peace and Freedom in Vietnam, which organised demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns to ‘Support Our Boys in Vietnam’”.²⁷ A 1967

²¹ Lunch and Sperlich 1979.

²² Berinsky 2011.

²³ Adams 1994, 76.

²⁴ Ibid, 76.

²⁵ For more on the US myth of WWII, see Adams 1994; 1998.

²⁶ Coy et. al. 2008, 167-9.

²⁷ See Stahl 2009, 536.

“Support Our Boys in Vietnam” parade drew a crowd of 70,000.²⁸ At the time, concern for “the troops” was politically instrumentalised by state officials to bolster support for the overall war effort, creating a sharp distinction between the ungrateful, unpatriotic, and even potentially dangerous, protestors and their more honourable compatriots, the “brave boys” doing their duty overseas.²⁹ It was this “Silent Center” of support for the war – and the boys in the war – that later became Nixon’s “Silent Majority”.³⁰ The call to “support the troops” was bound up in the complicated construction of the Vietnam-era protestors as “anti-troop”³¹ and endangering not only the soldiers, but also the war effort. US state officials, including Reagan, made provocative assertions that the movement “‘[l]en[t] comfort and aid’ to the enemy”.³² The distinction between “our boys” and the protestors reflected the gendered civil-military divide, as the protestor was frequently represented in the figure of a civilian woman, “betraying” her feminine obligation to support the masculine soldier.³³

In framing “protesters” as a threat, the administrations constituted “our boys”, as, despite their structural positioning as the protective, violent agents of the state, dependent upon support from the public “at home” – potentially for their very survival. As observed by Small, even Nixon’s “Vietnamization policy was supported as far as that policy was understood as bringing the boys home”.³⁴ Thus, while etymologically, the term “troops” had long existed as a description of a group of soldiers, the Vietnam era marked its initial political activation as a distinct collective subject. The troops became identifiable “their” own right, imbricated in a complex web of institutional and social relationships. (The interaction of this legacy with the contemporary constitution of “the troops” is discussed in Chapter Five). Vietnam led to the professionalization of the US military in 1973, and set off a generation of “soul searching” amongst military leaders seeking to improve the organization’s image and recruiting prospects.³⁵ Though this enabled the eventual rehabilitation of the US military’s image, the professionalization of the military also exacerbated tensions between the experience of war and the mythical liberal military contract, as the vast majority of eligible citizens would no longer serve.

3.2.2 *US and First Gulf War*

The construction of the “troops” as a collective subject intensified during the 1991 Gulf War, which briefly succeeded in re-forging a consensus around the liberal military contract and collective use of force.

²⁸ Small 1988, 101.

²⁹ Stahl 2009, 552-3.

³⁰ Small 1988, 102 and 163.

³¹ Beamish et. al. 1995, 345.

³² Reagan quoted in Coy et. al. 2008, 168; Small 1988, 67 and 86.

³³ Linda Boose cited in Managhan 2011a, 449. For original, see Boose 1993, 80.

³⁴ Small 1988, 213.

³⁵ Bacevich, 2005, 36-7.

Bolstered, in part, by widespread acceptance of the idea that both peace activists and general society had “betrayed” the troops returning from Vietnam, the Gulf War was met with an unprecedented level of pro-military enthusiasm, often framed as a means of “making amends”.³⁶ Tuleja understands this process as an attempt to “bury” Vietnam and “correct” the mistakes of the past without politically examining the grounds upon which they were made.³⁷ Similar to previous administrations, then-President Bush called on the nation to “support our boys and girls”, unambiguously indicating that “support for the troops also meant support for the war”.³⁸ Public support for Bush reached 83 per cent,³⁹ while between 76 and 79 per cent of surveyed Americans indicated support for the operation.⁴⁰ The call to “support the troops” occurred in – and was likely facilitated by the cultural legacy of – a context radically different than Vietnam, characterised by a popular conflict prosecuted by a professional, volunteer military.

“Support the troops” discourse and symbolism became ubiquitous. Yellow ribbons – a symbol of vigil made popular by the wife of the captive American ambassador during the Iran hostage crisis⁴¹ – proliferated as a sign of support for the troops, adorning homes, cars, public buildings, and consumer products.⁴² The US Postal Service issued a yellow ribbon stamp; the city of Reno, Nevada was wrapped in 25 miles of yellow ribbon; and “school curricula were designed around the phenomenon”.⁴³ The slogan “support the troops” appeared “on T-shirts and bumper stickers, emblazoned on magnetic yellow ribbons, on banners at charity events, in public debates, in church sermons, on advertising billboards, and just about everywhere in between”.⁴⁴ Due to the end of national service, most Americans did not serve in the military, or personally know anyone deployed overseas. Yellow ribbons communicated a generalised affective identification with the “the troops”,⁴⁵ compounded by the unprecedented mediatisation of conflict through live television broadcast.⁴⁶ Supporting the troops thus offered an “experience” of war, at a remove, that existed in contrast with the immediate participation assumed in cultural myths of past “good” wars.

Despite this comparative remove of the general public, peace groups faced enormous pressure to publicly “support the troops”, or risk the demonization of their Vietnam-era predecessors.⁴⁷ Coy et. al.’s study of US anti-war groups finds that they consistently engaged in StT discourse during the First Gulf War, framing the

³⁶ Beamish et. al. 1995, 345; Heilbronn 1994, 151-178.

³⁷ Tuleja 1994, 28.

³⁸ In Coy et. al. 2008, 170.

³⁹ Tuleja 1994, 29.

⁴⁰ Clymer 1991.

⁴¹ Parsons, 1991; Tuleja 1994, 23-30.

⁴² Larsen 1994; Santino 1992.

⁴³ Coy et. al. 2008, 170.

⁴⁴ Stahl 2009, 534.

⁴⁵ Heilbronn 1994, 161-2.

⁴⁶ See Taylor 1992.

⁴⁷ Beamish et. al. 1995, 355; McLeod et. al. 1994.

soldiers as victims of policy.⁴⁸ This requirement to “support the troops”, in combination with the brevity of the conflict, meant that organized opposition to the war struggled to get off the ground.⁴⁹ Correspondingly, the peace groups contributed to the development of an important political expectation that anti-war dissent should, essentially, honour the military contract – opposing particular policies, but never “the troops”.⁵⁰ (The legacy of this move is detailed in Chapter Eight).

During the Gulf War, “support the troops” came to perform an actively regulative function, constructing ostensibly apolitical “support” for an abstract, yet sympathetic entity, “the troops”, as the political norm. This solidified the “troops” in the common social imaginary as a legitimate collective subject. Appeals to visibly “support the troops”, drawing upon a societal legacy of Vietnam-era guilt,⁵¹ were, correspondingly, successful in “papering over” the normative dissonance of a collective, liberal democratic deployment of a professional military to fight a distant conflict.

3.2.3 UK and Cold War Civil-Military Relations

Until the late twentieth century, though culturally sharing much in common with the United States, civil-military relations in the UK followed a different trajectory. Historically, however, the US and UK were similar in one important respect. In contrast to much of Western Europe, but like the US, the United Kingdom has a long-standing, “sturdy independent dislike of standing armies”.⁵² For much of its history, and definitively the 19th century, the UK relied on naval forces for most of its national defence.⁵³ The military’s primary activity was “to garrison a world-wide empire”⁵⁴ with (ostensibly) recruited volunteers. The absence of a domestic military presence, combined with extremely poor working conditions, rendered the social status of the average soldier quite low,⁵⁵ as ill-educated misfits and criminals.⁵⁶

This image of the military and the soldier was dramatically altered by the World Wars. Widespread volunteerism, eventually combined with conscription, rendered both war and military service a mass experience of all classes. During WWI, the practice of young women presenting young, able-bodied non-serving men with a “white feather” of cowardice furthered the normative expectation that male citizens

⁴⁸ Coy et. al. 2008, 171-3.

⁴⁹ Guigni 2007.

⁵⁰ Coy et. al. 2008, 174.

⁵¹ Marsical 2011, 107.

⁵² Summers 1976, 105.

⁵³ Best 1998, 41; Kier 1999, 112 and 116.

⁵⁴ French 2005, 72.

⁵⁵ Kier 1999, 112; Spiers 1992, 11 and 143.

⁵⁶ Sheehan 2008, 18-9.

perform military service.⁵⁷ Suddenly, soldiers were perceived to be heroes and liberators,⁵⁸ fighting for a cause,⁵⁹ rather than suspicious mercenaries motivated by money and a lack of alternatives. WWII, similarly, received overwhelming public support,⁶⁰ and, as in the US, looms large in the UK popular imagination as “the last good war”.⁶¹

This period, and WWI in particular, saw the initial rise of social discourses and practices similar to StT today. On 5 September 1915, for instance, the Bristol Red Cross held the UK’s first “Flag Day”, which sold flag lapel pins to benefit refugees displaced by the German invasion of Belgium.⁶² This represents an early instance of the fusion of capitalist consumption, charity, and patriotic symbolism that imbues much of StT discourse and practice – particularly the yellow ribbon campaign – in both the US and UK. “Our Day” of 1915, a charitable campaign that sold flag lapel pins to benefit British troops further underlines this connection, as does the WWI practice of throwing coins at Nelson’s column to, again, show support for the troops.⁶³ Similar sentiments accompanied the launch of the now-ubiquitous poppy campaign in the inter-war period by the Royal British Legion, as a way of demonstrating “gratitude to the dead by helping to support those who survived the war”.⁶⁴ The First World War led to the “birth of 18,000 charities”, including the Blind and Limbless Ex-Servicemen’s Association, St. Dunstons (now Blind Veterans UK), and the Royal British Legion, to cope with its aftermath of war and provide veterans’ care.⁶⁵ This created a social and political norm of private, charitable organizations caring for veterans in place of the state, out of a sense of obligation, gratitude and compassion. The inter- and post-war periods thus laid the foundation for the consideration of “the troops” as a social cause – a situation that continues to the present (see Chs. 6 and 7).⁶⁶

Though the United Kingdom did not undergo a “shock” akin to Vietnam, the often-controversial military operations involved in winding down the empire led to a similar lowering of the profile and prestige of the armed forces. Operations in Malaysia, Palestine, Suez, and Kenya, though often considered effective from an operational perspective (with perhaps the exception of Palestine), came to be perceived as moral and political failures.⁶⁷ As observed by Paris, in both popular culture and public opinion, war lost its appeal shortly after WWII.⁶⁸ National service was again replaced by a professional army in 1960, returning to a version of

⁵⁷ See Gullace 1997.

⁵⁸ McGarry and Walklate 2011, 904.

⁵⁹ Sheehan 2008, 83.

⁶⁰ Ibid 123

⁶¹ Paris 2000, 238-9.

⁶² Moore 2008, 44.

⁶³ Ibid, 45.

⁶⁴ Moore 2008, 48; See also Gregory 1994.

⁶⁵ See BLESMA 2016; Blind Veterans UK, nd; Royal British Legion, Nd.

⁶⁶ For more on the tradition of “charitable” support for the military in the UK, see Enloe 2000, 166-170.

⁶⁷ See French 2011 and Dixon 2012.

⁶⁸ Paris 2000, 223.

the “lighter”, externally-oriented military that characterised the imperial age. Enloe further notes that “British political culture” prior to the First Gulf War exemplified a “notably lowered profile of the citizen-as-soldier”.⁶⁹ In a 1976 survey conducted by Inglehart, only 6 per cent of Brits listed a “strong defence force” as first or second of their political priorities.⁷⁰ The valorisation of the troops during WWI and WWII receded, as did the socio-political exigency of dealing with the tensions between liberal democratic ideals, masculine citizenship, and military service that accompany the move to the use of professional militaries in “small wars”.

Enloe suggests that this “relative lack of national emotion” attached to the military is due to the diminishing of the British empire, and the “unappealing character of soldiering most visible to an ordinary British citizen watching the evening news...soldiers patrolling the streets of Belfast”.⁷¹ Indeed, the Northern Irish deployment lasted (depending on definitions of the conclusion of the conflict) from 1969 to 2007, despite opinion polls consistently demonstrating withdrawal for support since 1971.⁷² As a result of this relative disconnect, Janowitz considered the UK to be a “special case”, wherein UK soldiers actually retained their civil and political rights (in contrast to other Western militaries).⁷³ At the time, moreover, the UK civil-military tradition placed “less emphasis on the service-exchange relationship” than did the blurred liberal and republican tradition of the US.⁷⁴

This began to change with the Falklands War of 1982, which, in a precursor to the First Gulf War, was widely mediatised. The conflict was portrayed as a redemption of Suez,⁷⁵ with UK soldiers constructed as heroic and (inaccurately) outnumbered.⁷⁶ Supported by a tabloid press that disseminated chauvinistic, militaristic, and nationalist, discourse and imagery, the Thatcher administration experienced a sixteen-point gain in popular approval during the conflict.⁷⁷ Individuals displayed posters indicating their approval of the war and respect for the military, bearing slogans such as “Thank God the most professional armed forces in the world are BRITISH”, “Britain does not appease dictators” and “Congratulations to the Royal Navy”.⁷⁸ Billig further observes that “when the British troops returned victorious from the Falklands War, they were met at the harbour by crowds, singing, swaying, chanting and waving flags, as if they were celebrating a football team

⁶⁹ Enloe 2000, 25.

⁷⁰ In Sheehan 2008, 176.

⁷¹ Enloe 2000, 24.

⁷² Dixon 2012, 91.

⁷³ Cited in Basham 2013, 40. Original: Janowitz 1991.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 40-1.

⁷⁵ Paris 2000, 245.

⁷⁶ Paris 2000, 246; See also Dodds 1993.

⁷⁷ Norpoth 1987; See also Lai and Reiter 2005.

⁷⁸ Gray 1982, 10.

returning with a silver trophy”.⁷⁹ The Falklands represent a *rapprochement* between the military and society and the beginnings of a shift in the normative structure of civil-military relations that both harkens back to the popular military engagement of the two World Wars and foreshadows that of the GWoT. Significantly, in terms of the liberal military contract, Cornish observes that as the British military transitioned to increased professionalism and decreased size, “the political/moral obligation upon commanders not to expose soldiers to risk needlessly actually became more keenly felt”.⁸⁰ The twentieth century thus saw the nascent, yet increasing, constitution of soldiers – if not “the troops” per se – as in need (and deserving) of care, protection, and socio-political consideration.

3.2.4 UK and Gulf War

This “rebound” in the social and cultural prominence of military-related discourse and symbolism continued through the Gulf War, which also saw the first entry of “the troops” into UK public discourse. As in the US, the 1991 Gulf War enjoyed broad popular support. Following the invasion, the war received between 80 and 88 per cent support for “allied military actions” and between 60 and 79 per cent considered the mission to liberate Kuwait worth risking British lives.⁸¹ As noted by Shaw, each sub-group of the British population evidenced majority support for the war, and Prime Minister Major enjoyed a 74 per cent approval rating.⁸² As in the United States, the British Gulf War effort received immense media coverage, with camouflaged BBC reporters embedded with UK military units providing live updates.⁸³ Once again, the tabloid press promoted aggressive patriotism and support for the military, publishing, for instance, a front page depicting a giant Union Jack with a soldier’s head in the middle, under the banner “Support Our Boys and Put This Flag in Your Window”.⁸⁴ This became a daily header for the *Sun*, which proclaimed itself “the paper that backs our boys”; the *Star* employed a similar motif that proclaimed “go get ‘em boys”.⁸⁵ The same tabloids also published photos of scantily-clad female models displaying patriotic imagery for the “titillation” of deployed soldiers – a framing that underlined the continued gendering of the heroic, patriotic citizen soldier as male (and heterosexual).⁸⁶ In the *Star*, paralleling the US, “topless Starlets” sold “giant yellow ribbons”.⁸⁷

⁷⁹ Billig 2010, 124.

⁸⁰ Cornish 2012, 565.

⁸¹ Shaw 1996, 128.

⁸² Ibid, 128 and 34.

⁸³ Wyatt 2012, 638.

⁸⁴ Shaw 1996, 98.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 98-9.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 98-9.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 99.

Though the balance of the press demonstrated greater restraint in their coverage of the war and orientation towards the military,⁸⁸ “the troops” as a collective subject of normative concern also gained prominence amongst established social and political elites. Hansard, for instance, includes references to “support/ing our troops”, and shows evidence of initial contestation regarding the phrase’s meaning. Margaret Ewing, MP, for instance, stated:

“...[T]he motion mentions strong support for the troops in the Gulf. Some hon. Members seem to think that the only way to support the troops is to rant and rave and make pacifist speeches. That is not a line that I pursue. The best way to support our troops is to argue the case for diplomatic means to bring our men home as quickly as possible...I know about the worries of the families of service men. They ask us to send messages of support but also to do everything possible to avoid mass killings. They all want to see their families safely home, but they recognise the responsibilities of members of the armed forces”.⁸⁹

Here, the speaker contrasts a “pacifist” notion of supporting the troops with engaging in conflict, and bringing them home quickly. She clearly identifies “the troops” as a distinct corporate entity, embedded in social relations, with a claim to consideration independent of their function as “the military”. They also possess “responsibilities”, as citizen volunteers of a professional military.

This sentiment dramatically differs, for instance, to that of Labour deputy leader Denis Healey, who stated, “We all made clear, including me, that once the fighting started we’d support our troops.”⁹⁰ This framing of StT as an obvious obligation, and *fait accompli* following the onset of hostilities, foreshadowed a great deal of public discourse surrounding the 2003 invasion of Iraq (see Chapter 4 and 6). In contrast to the US, it was not the governing political elite pushing support for the troops. This was clearly evidenced, for instance, in Conservative PM Major’s rebuke to his own backbenchers for their “ritual...harangue about the BBC’s decision to refer to ‘British troops’ rather than ‘our troops’”.⁹¹ “The troops” accrued a social facticity as a collective subject with definite political stakes, but a far less-settled meaning (and elite acceptance) than in the US. It is worth noting, however, that even Major’s suppression of “jingoistic” discourse was publicly framed by Tory MPs as a form of support, observing “The public wants us to support the troops, and not get in the way. They wouldn’t want it any other way”.⁹²

As in the US, public approval for the war, combined with the conflict’s brevity and concern for “the troops”, undermined the efficacy of the anti-war movement.⁹³ Unlike their American counterparts, the UK anti-war groups primarily framed their activism in terms of a “just peace” and concerns regarding civilian casualties –

⁸⁸ The Daily Mirror, for instance, toned down its use of jingoistic rhetoric. For the mainstream press, see Shaw, 1996, 99-117.

⁸⁹ Ewing 1991.

⁹⁰ Castle 1991.

⁹¹ Observer, 21 January 1991, quoted in Shaw 1996, 34.

⁹² Pienaar 1991.

⁹³ Shaw 1996, 60 and 176.

a message which received scant media coverage.⁹⁴ The seeds of the UK anti-war movement's engagement with the "the troops", however, can be seen in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's belief that a rise in military casualties would result in greater opposition to war and participation in the peace movement.⁹⁵ Similarly, the National Executive Committee of the Campaign Against the War and CND, in a pre-war emergency resolution, expressed concern regarding the risks to British armed forces placed under US command and control.⁹⁶ The Campaign Against the War in the Gulf, conversely, referenced "the troops" in their materials – "US and British Troops out of the Gulf!"⁹⁷ – but in a manner which implied this was as an instrumental means of ending the conflict (or illegal occupation/neo-imperial military presence), rather than for "the troops'" sake.

Military-related charitable organisations, in contrast, experienced a far greater increase in donations, and "engaged a significant minority of the population".⁹⁸ Again akin to the US, spontaneous and uncoordinated StT practices also arose, as, for instance, "25,000 letters and parcels were posted simply addressed to 'a soldier in the Gulf' and blood donations increased from 9000 to 14,000 pints per day".⁹⁹ The Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Association (SSAFA) reported that more than 20,000 people "responded to national and local appeals for volunteers".¹⁰⁰

Contrary to contemporary presentism, the call to "support the troops" and associated popular practices of support for the military have a long, if discontinuous, history in Britain. By the end of the First Gulf War, the formerly reviled figure of the soldier had been replaced by the aggregate "troops" and stories of individual masculine valour. As in the US, ostensibly apolitical concern for "the troops" became a regular, if contested, component of public discourse.

3.2.5 *Synthesis*

As the balance of the dissertation will demonstrate, in the post 9/11 era, the apparent pan-societal consensus regarding "support for the troops" in both the US and UK began to show evidence of fracture. Despite substantial differences in historical trajectory, the structure of civil-military relations, and the social stature of "the soldier", by the conclusion of the Gulf War, US and UK military institutional structure and military-oriented political culture had begun to converge. Each exhibited a professionalised military, popular regard for "the troops", a mid-century experience of military disappointment, and a strong cultural

⁹⁴ Ibid, 61.

⁹⁵ Independent, 23 January 1991 in Shaw 1996, 61.

⁹⁶ National Executive Committee 1991, provided by Jeremy Corbyn, MP, from his personal files.

⁹⁷ Campaign Against the War flyer, 1990, provided by Corbyn, from personal files.

⁹⁸ Shaw 1996, 132.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 132.

¹⁰⁰ SSAFA 1990, 3, provided by Juliet Chaplin, SSAFA archivist.

mythology of “good wars”. During the global war on terror, “support the troops” rhetoric and symbolism remained as prevalent, in the US, and much more so in the UK, as that of 1991.

The controversial nature of the Bush and Blair administrations’ foreign policy, however, sparked a proliferation of differing interpretations as to what it means to “support the troops”. StT reflected, once again, the normative status of civil-military relations, as the tensions of the liberal military contract were further exacerbated by the prosecution of a controversial war. The political ambiguity inherent to the disparate, purportedly apolitical and exhortative nature of “support the troops” that, during the First Gulf War, facilitated a relatively homogenous narrative now lent itself to a “fragmented and collective discourse” of contestation, (re)appropriation, and (faltering) resistance.¹⁰¹ To illuminate this process, the following section provides a brief depiction of the contemporary (post-9/11) ubiquity of the StT phenomenon in the US and UK, highlighting, as above, points of distinction and convergence. This thread is followed through to Chapter Four, which demonstrates the diversity and heterogeneity of StT discourse.

3.3 THE UBIQUITY OF SUPPORTING THE TROOPS

This section provides an initial illustration of the ubiquity of “support the troops” discourse, practices, and symbolism in the United States and the United Kingdom during the GWoT. As an objective measure for the prevalence and/or significance of particular phrases does not exist, the substantive importance of “supporting the troops” is established through comparison to historic trends in the representation of the civil-military relationship and similar contemporary discourse commonly-understood to be of socio-political significance.

¹⁰¹ Stahl 2009, 557.

3.3.1 “Supporting the Troops” Over Time

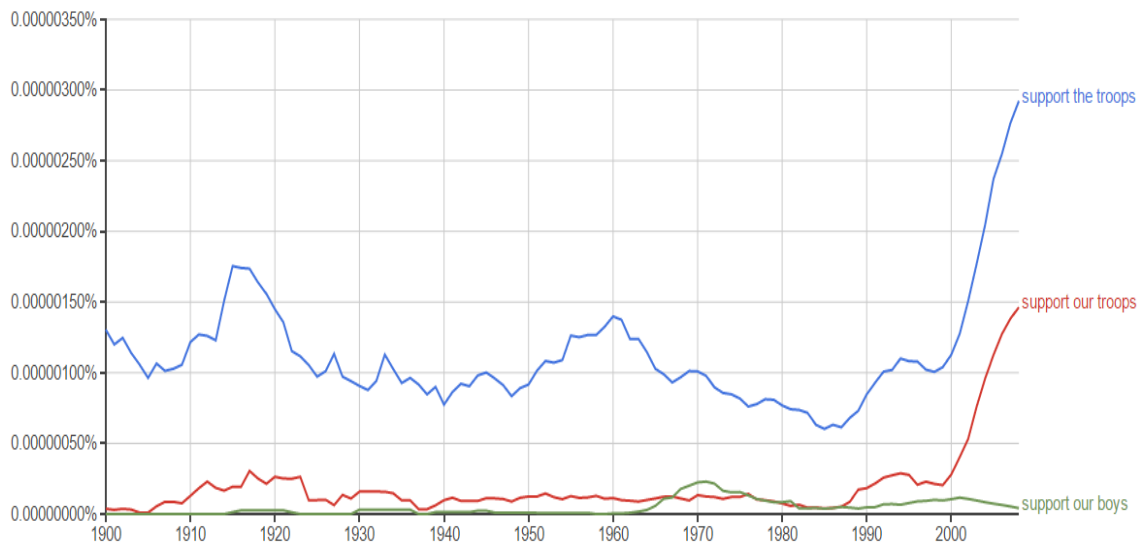


Figure 1: StT Over Time in Google NGram English Corpus

This graph demonstrates the change in the use of the phrases “support the troops”, “support our troops”, and “support our boys” as a proportion of the total Google NGram¹⁰² English corpus from 1900 to 2008 (the date to which data is currently available). The NGram corpus represents millions of volumes – approximately 12 per cent of all books ever printed – that have been scanned into the Google Books online database and made keyword searchable.¹⁰³ The y-axis therefore represents the change in the proportion of the various phrases as a percentage of the English corpus as a whole (hence the relatively small percentages). The chart indicates that a) “support the troops” is a far more common phrase than other, similar keyword phrases (“support our troops” and “support our boys”) considered within this project and that b) the frequency of the StT roughly tracks with twentieth century military history. StT first peaks in approximately 1914-5, the time of the First World War. It then declines and plateaus until approximately 1950, when it begins to slowly climb in the lead-up to the US involvement in Korea and the Vietnam War – though, interestingly, the discourse declines throughout the 1960s, despite the presence of US soldiers on the ground. The phrase next experiences a spike in 1990-1991, corresponding with the Gulf War, before dramatically climbing in 2000-01. This change supports my contention that StT represents both a continuation and substantively significant change, or qualitative shift, in the representation of civil-military relations.

Some caveats regarding this data are warranted. Figure 1 represents the entire English language corpus, rather than that attributable simply to the US and the UK. Independent searches of American and British

¹⁰² Available at <https://books.google.com/ngrams>.

¹⁰³ Michel et. al. 2011.

English, however, follow the same broad patterns with the exception that the British English corpus indicates a peak of StT in 1964 (better aligning with articulations of support for the troops in Vietnam) that the US corpus does not. It should also be noted that this represents the occurrence of the literal phrase “support the troops”, etc., and not variations such as “Support the Troops” or “supporting the troops”. It similarly does not capture the many related comments on the normative relationship between society and the military (e.g. “help for heroes”) that I consider in my subsequent discourse analysis. It is also worth noting that much of the corpus, particularly more recent materials, is comprised of scientific literature, which is unlikely to reference the civil-military relationship (and certainly not in the vernacular). The corpus also contains only one of each published piece, meaning that it does not account for how often it was read, widely it was disseminated, etc.¹⁰⁴ The implication of these qualifications – particularly the over-representation of scientific material in the corpus – suggests that the phrase “support the troops” may be more frequent, particularly in the “digitized” timeframe of the GWoT, than the graph initially suggests. It is therefore appropriate to have confidence in the Google NGram results as indicative of an increase in the prevalence of StT discourse from 2000 onwards.

Searches of the Factiva news database also support these results. A search of the US *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post*, for instance, for the period 1981-2000 (the oldest timeframe for which information is available), returns 140 references to “support our troops”, “support the troops”, or “support our boys”. The same search for September 2001 to December 2010 (the time frame of the current study) returns 688 results. A search of the included UK publications (see introduction) returns similar results – 45 for the period of 1988-2000 (the greatest range of data available) compared to 369 for the GWoT. Finally, a search of the full text of the US Congressional Record returns 277 results for the period 1913-1997,¹⁰⁵ compared to 1496 for the period of 2001-2010. In the UK, a search of Hansard reveals 32 references to “support our troops” or “support the troops” from 1907 to 2000,¹⁰⁶ compared to 210 for 2001-2010.¹⁰⁷

3.3.2 “Supporting the Troops” in the Present

These changes in the frequency of the phrase, however, though alluding to its substantive importance, do not speak directly to StT’s diffusion, uptake, or reflection in social practice. To get a sense of the ubiquity of

¹⁰⁴ Zhang 2015.

¹⁰⁵ Search terms “support the troops” OR “support our troops” for full-text included results, in ProQuest Congressional Database (1789-1997), available at <http://congressional.proquest.com/profiles/gis/search/advanced/advanced>.

¹⁰⁶ Search terms “support the troops” OR “support our troops” for full-text included results, in ProQuest UK Parliamentary Papers Database, limited to Hansard (1803-2005), available at <http://parlipapers.proquest.com/parlipapers/search/advanced/hcppadvanced?accountid=13042&groupid=99494>.

¹⁰⁷ Search terms “support the troops” OR “support our troops” for full-text included results, in UK House of Commons and House of Lords Hansard records at “They Work for You”, available at: <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/search/?adv=1>.

StT in the US and, to a lesser degree, the UK, from 2001-2010 requires placing it in broader social context, and considering extra-textual factors. As demonstrated by the graph below, the Google NGram database, for instance, indicates that “support the troops” at its peak (in 2008) is approximately seventeen times less frequent than “Al-Qaeda”, and three times less frequent than “global war on terror” at their most prevalent (also in 2007/8).¹⁰⁸

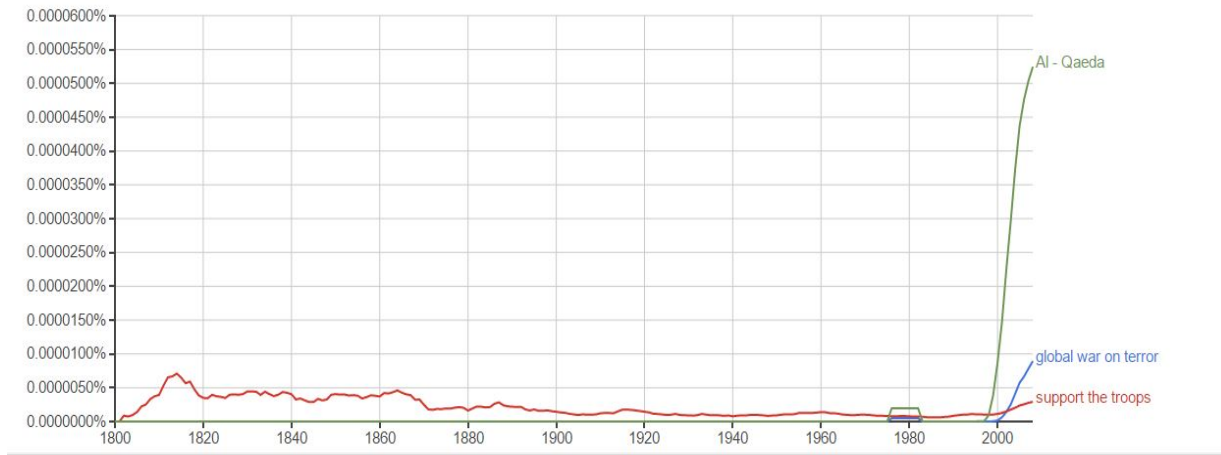


Figure 2: StT Compared to Key Phrases of Global War on Terror

Factiva indicates that “support the troops” or “support our troops” occurs 744 times within *CNN* transcripts for 2001-2010, with “global war on terror” coming in at 787.¹⁰⁹ *Fox News* transcripts contain 246 mentions of “global war on terror” for the same timeframe, and 393 references to “support the troops” or “support our troops”. These two channels represent the most US popular cable news networks for 2005-2010, with *Fox* estimated by the Pew Research Centre to post a median-viewer average of 1.6 to 2.1 million for the period, and *CNN* estimated at 0.7 to 1.1. million.¹¹⁰ These two networks were similarly dominant in the early 2001-2005 period, with *Fox* reaching from approx. 500,000 daytime viewers in 2001 to 2 million in 2004/5, and *CNN* hovering between 750,000 and 1 million.¹¹¹ Similarly, in the United Kingdom, a Factiva search of all BBC sources (which include online materials) finds 29 mentions of “support the troops” OR “support our troops”, compared to 254 for the “global war on terror”. The BBC is habitually reported, via survey data, to be the “top” news source in the UK, and the combined BBC channels were the most-viewed TV news outlets across the period.¹¹² This greater disparity in results likely reflects the number of international sources

¹⁰⁸ Recall that “peak”, here, references greatest proportion of English corpus, not absolute total.

¹⁰⁹ Search terms “support our troops” OR “support the troops” against “global war on terror” in DowJones Factiva database, searched in CNN “All sources”.

¹¹⁰ Holcomb 2015.

¹¹¹ AdWeek 2009.

¹¹² Plunkett 2013; Broadcaster’s Audience Research Board 2010. The other top-rated news networks in the UK are ITV and Sky News, for which I have been unable to find systematic data.

incorporated into the BBC search, as well as the greater number of linguistic synonyms, such as “support our armed forces” employed in reference to civil-military relations in the UK.

Sheer frequency of usage, of course, does not in of itself represent a salient political phenomenon, nor, conversely, does a less-prevalent discourse imply an unimportant one. This overview of StT usage is useful in so far as it speaks, albeit imperfectly, to the discursive context in which the phenomenon operates. Reaching a final “diagnosis” as to the substance and meaning of StT, however, requires far greater contextualization and interpretive analysis. This is a major contribution of the project.

3.3.3 Extra-Textual Manifestations of StT

StT references a range of similar discourse (e.g. “help for heroes, support our armed forces”, etc.), vernacular language use (e.g. T-shirts, protest signs, and bumper stickers), and social practice (e.g. wearing yellow ribbons and/or poppies) that is not captured by the formal textual sources represented by an NGram. When discussing the ubiquity of StT as a social phenomenon, rather than a discrete phrase, it is therefore imperative to consider the extra-textual manifestations of StT as well.

The post-9/11 period saw remarkable growth, for instance, in the military-related charitable sectors in both the US and the UK, not unlike the UK post-WWI charitable boom.¹¹³ The number of charities established to support the military in the UK tripled every year between 2005-2011.¹¹⁴ While precise statistics are not available for all military-related charitable endeavours in the US, the rapid growth of the veterans’ charitable sector since 2000 (a 77 per cent increase compared to a 43 per cent sector average) and 2008 (up 41 per cent compared with 19 per cent across charities overall) indicates the prioritization of “the troops” as a locus for charitable giving and community service.¹¹⁵ As noted by Joanna Tidy, and, independently, Sarah Moore,¹¹⁶ the consumption of charity-branded goods, ranging from issue-specific rubber bracelets to generic household items to foodstuffs, has become a normal offering of philanthropic organizations, and a key means of raising funds.¹¹⁷ This increase in military-related NGOs, charitable giving, and community service has been accompanied by a general social practice of displaying or wearing, military-related apparel and symbols, such as bumper stickers, pins, or bracelets. Help for Heroes, for instance, the most prominent of the post-9/11 UK military charities, for instance, offers items ranging from fairly conventional branded clothing and jewellery to dog coats to delivered flowers to men’s cologne to, of course, car stickers.¹¹⁸ The

¹¹³ Millar 2016a, 11.

¹¹⁴ The Telegraph 2011.

¹¹⁵ Hrywna 2013.

¹¹⁶ Tidy 2015a; Moore 2008.

¹¹⁷ Millar and Tidy 2016.

¹¹⁸ Help for Heroes (H4H) 2016.

major UK retailer Debenhams stocks Help for Heroes merchandise and has opened three associated concession stores.¹¹⁹ Perhaps most prominently, in 2008 *The Sun*, a major UK daily tabloid, became an official partner of H4H, promoting their activities and sponsoring a Help-for-Heroes plastic bracelet campaign that raised £404,000 in one year.¹²⁰

In the United States, the military-charity market is larger, and is not dominated by a few major charities such as Help for Heroes (and the Royal British Legion). The diffusion of military-related symbolism is a slightly more diffuse and, potentially, spontaneous, practice. As reported by the *Financial Times*, particularly in the first three to four years after the US invasion of Iraq, “it was difficult to drive more than a few miles through middle America without seeing a car displaying a magnetic yellow ribbon”.¹²¹ Berwick Offray, a major US ribbon wholesaler, reports that “absolutely we saw an increase in yellow ribbon demand – any type/style we carried flew off the shelves”.¹²² At the height of demand, Magnet America, that largest purveyor of car magnets in the US, sold up to 1.2million USD per month.¹²³ Local military charities and craft retailers across the US reported yellow ribbon shortages in the immediate aftermath of the invasion.¹²⁴ US corporations, such as Starbucks, Bank of America, and Ford, frequently publicize their support of the troops as a means of demonstrating patriotism, corporate citizenship, and promoting brand awareness.¹²⁵ Though initiated subsequent to the time frame of this study, the Hudson News StT campaign, which asks travellers at its ubiquitous North American airport news kiosks to purchase a calling card for troops overseas, is an excellent example of the diffusion of military-related symbolism into the day-to-day lives (and banal commercial transactions) of civilians far removed from the formal military institution.¹²⁶

Finally, it is worth touching on official state practices intended to raise the public profile (and popularity) of the military. In 2005, for instance, the United Kingdom began officially marking “Veterans Awareness Week” (with the addition of “Veterans’ Day” in 2006)¹²⁷ to honour and remember the sacrifices of UK veterans of all conflicts. In 2009, the name of the event was changed to “Armed Forces Day”, and its mandate was extended to also show appreciation/showing moral support for all serving personnel and their families. The event, marked annually, now involves coordinated, state-funded events across the UK, including parades, family activity days, commemorations, museum visits, military demonstrations, concerts, and air force fly-

¹¹⁹ H4H 2014.

¹²⁰ H4H 2009a.

¹²¹ Ward 2007.

¹²² Joanne Joaquim, Marketing Officer at Berwick Offray, Personal email communication, 11 April 2016.

¹²³ Ward 2007.

¹²⁴ Swanson 2003.

¹²⁵ See, for instance, Bank of America 2013; Starbucks Newsroom 2005; and Ford nd.

¹²⁶ PRWeb 2014.

¹²⁷ BBC News 2006a.

bys.¹²⁸ Armed Forces Day is, in many ways, the social component of the UK government's broader initiative to "renew" the relationship between UK civil society and the military. This mandate is reflected in the state's promotion (first, informally, by the Brown Labour government, and subsequently by the Cameron Conservatives) of the "Armed Forces Covenant". The covenant, originally framed in a 2000 UK MoD Army doctrine pamphlet, refers to the moral obligation of society to support and provide for those who have risked and sacrificed a great deal for the nation – soldiers and their families.¹²⁹ Aspects of this agreement have since been codified in the 2011 Armed Forces Act,¹³⁰ which is, essentially, a formalisation of the liberal military contract.

The state's promotion of the Covenant also involves the creation of a "Community Covenant", in which local politicians, voluntary sector workers, and other public officials pledge to support and implement the Armed Forces Covenant, and raise awareness of the armed forces.¹³¹ UK businesses are also asked to sign the covenant and "'promot[e] the fact that [they] are an armed forces-friendly organisation...by publicising our Armed Forces Covenant on our website and displaying the Armed Forces Covenant logo". Businesses that make the pledge are registered online in a searchable list.¹³² In this way, successive UK governments have sought to make the normative status of the civil-military relationship not only a matter of public concern, but of active, daily social practice by a range of social actors. This evidence, in conjunction with the charitable and media practices described above, illustrate the extent to which military-related symbolism and rhetoric in the UK have come to subtly pervade the ostensibly civil sphere, and become a ubiquitous aspect of public life.

State promotion of support for the military, and the normative framing of the civil-military relationship, is still more pronounced in the US. The flagship of this effort is America Supports You (ASY), a Department of Defense programme launched in 2004 "to showcase and communicate to U.S. military members defending our freedom around the globe what thousands of individual citizens, community groups, corporations, businesses, and others are doing to support them and their families".¹³³ The website listed hundreds of NGOs involved in military support activities, from the provision of care packages to soldiers abroad, to providing Christmas trees and pet-sitting for families of the deployed, to veterans' rehabilitation programs. It also encouraged citizens to write messages of support for the military, and posted responses from "the troops".

¹²⁸ Armed Forces Day 2016.

¹²⁹ Army Doctrine Publication 2000, 1-3.

¹³⁰ United Kingdom Armed Forces Act 2011.

¹³¹ UK MoD 2012a. (Interestingly, this precise language and mandate is also used by the American Legion, in promoting their voluntary "Community Covenant" program).

¹³² UK MoD 2012c.

¹³³ Inspector General US DoD 2008, 4.

¹³⁴ Articles penned by the Armed Forces Press Service publicizing America Supports You activities, such as sending cookies to the troops, appeared nearly weekly on the DoD website from 2004 to 2009.¹³⁵ Many of the activities of the public relations organization that ran ASY, particularly those actively soliciting, as opposed to simply “communicating”, sponsorship and/or support, were subsequently found by a 2008 DoD Inspectorate General audit to be ethically inappropriate and against DoD regulations.¹³⁶ The chart below, sourced from the 2008 audit,¹³⁷ gives some indication as to the scope of the ASY activities aimed at schoolchildren and, indirectly, the ubiquity of the program and corresponding discourse.

Table 3: DoD Spending Audit of American Supports You Educational Programs

Table 2. Lifetime Learning Systems Agreements		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Services</u>
1/7/2006	\$245,435	93,000 Posters, guides, and reply cards for teachers
1/11/2006	171,185	2.1 Million inserts for students
4/14/2006	12,000	Survey of 3,000 3 rd –6 th graders about ASY Program awareness
4/20/2006	99,750	16,615 Posters, brochures, response cards, and surveys for public libraries and fax blast to 100,543 principals
5/2/2007	72,350	21,548 Posters and letters to elementary and secondary schools
Total	\$600,720	

Schoolchildren were, for instance, provided with the materials required to organize a Freedom Walk commemorating 9/11 and honouring soldiers participating in the GWOt.¹³⁸ ASY also partnered with corporations such as the PGA Golf Tour and Babies ‘R’ Us, exchanging advertising and publicity in armed forces publications and websites (including the ostensibly-independent newspaper *Stars & Stripes*) in exchange for support.¹³⁹ The program also arranged for high-profile US celebrities to record messages of support for the troops (and, occasionally, paid appearance fees).¹⁴⁰ ASY also sponsored events such as the aforementioned Freedom Walk, the 2005 Memorial Day Parade in DC, and the Armed Forces Bowl to raise awareness of the troops and promote civilian support for the military.

¹³⁴ AmericaSupportsYou.mil. 2004a.

¹³⁵ See, for instance Smith 2006.

¹³⁶ Inspector General, US DoD 2008, 4.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 6.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 8.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 8-9.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 12-14.

ASY, moreover, is not the only such government program. The widespread presence of the US military institution, and military symbolism at professional sporting events during the GWoT has been the subject of a great deal of popular and academic analysis, predominantly emphasizing the connection between sport, patriotic spectacle, and the depoliticization of conflict.¹⁴¹ A 2015 oversight report found that the US Department of Defense paid over \$53 million to 50 professional sports teams to publicly recognize and promote the armed forces – and recruitment¹⁴² – during games from 2012-2015.¹⁴³ As these leagues (for basketball, American football, soccer, hockey, and baseball) represent the most popular sports in North America,¹⁴⁴ these pro-military activities, such as public re-enlistments, may be safely assumed to have reached a substantial live (and televised) audience. Though similar documentation is not available for 2001-2010, comparable pro-military events occurred at professional sporting events. The 2008 Super Bowl included a lengthy tribute to former NFL player Pat Tillman (killed in a friendly fire incident in Afghanistan) in the context of a pro-military visual meditation on patriotism and “sacrifice”;¹⁴⁵ every Super Bowl (save one) since 1967 has had an air force fly-over.¹⁴⁶ It is fair to state that during the GWoT professional sporting events acted as a major vector for the dissemination of military-related symbolism and supporting the troops.

More prosaically, the DoD presents yearly “Freedom Awards” to “to publicly recognize employers who provide exceptional support to their Guard and Reserve employees”.¹⁴⁷ Since 1996, Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards have been given to over 100 employers.¹⁴⁸ In 2011, the Obama Administration replaced ASY with the “Joining Forces” initiative, widely promoted by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, the spouse of Vice-President Joe Biden, which “call[s on] all Americans to rally around service members, veterans, and their families and support them through wellness, education, and employment opportunities”.¹⁴⁹ Though the emphasis shifted from supporting troops in the field to supporting military families at home, the overall aim of fostering “greater connections between the American public and the military”, similar to the UK Armed Forces Covenant, remains the same. These programs, in conjunction with the historical trends, social practice, and charitable expansion discussed above, speak to the prominence of military related discourse and symbolism in the United States from 2001-2010.

¹⁴¹ Butterworth and Moskal 2009, 420; see also Fischer 2014.

¹⁴² Carpenter 2015.

¹⁴³ Quandt, 2015.

¹⁴⁴ Experian Data Quality, nd.

¹⁴⁵ Butterworth 2008.

¹⁴⁶ Daily Mail 2011.

¹⁴⁷ Employer Support Freedom Award 2016.

¹⁴⁸ Employer Support Freedom Award Nd.

¹⁴⁹ Whitehouse.gov. 2012a.

Though the frequency of usage and social prevalence of StT is lesser in the UK than the US, due to both the historical differences in civil-military relations above as well as, simply, a smaller population and media complex, it is fair to state that StT discourses and everyday encounters with the military were ubiquitous in both states during the GWoT – a trend which continues to the present. While a critical understanding of discourse holds, of course, that comparative frequency/commonality is not necessarily a proxy for import – after all, some of the most radical discourse is the least uttered – this provides us with a context from which to proceed.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In both the US and UK, the contentious nature of Iraq (and, later, Afghanistan), as the dissertation will illustrate, furthered the tension between cultural myths and archetypes regarding war and its contemporary practice that developed across the twentieth century. In doing so, the GWoT threatened to expose the disparity in liberal military service discussed throughout this chapter. The “support the troops” phenomenon, then, is a qualitatively distinct iteration of Western democratic civil-military relations – yet one that still exhibits significant continuities with the past practices, discourses, and normative orientations described above. StT, reflecting an on-going evolution in the underlying normative structure of civil-military relations, may be understood as part of a long-standing (though non-teleological) historical process. There is thus reason to believe that the US and UK’s turn towards “the troops” is indicative of a subtle process of normative transformation and ideological contestation regarding war, military service, and political community that exists between and extends beyond the two country-cases.

CHAPTER FOUR: MAPPING “THE TROOPS” EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW

This chapter is an overview of the primary empirical contribution of the thesis – the systematic mapping of the “support the troops” phenomenon in the United States and the United Kingdom from 2001-2010. The primary emphasis of the chapter is the visual presentation of aggregated data relating to various aspects of “support the troops” discourse(s) in the US and UK, with the aim of generating an initial exploratory depiction of the themes, usage patterns, and omissions of the overall discursive formation, as well as facilitating (very) basic comparison both between the country-contexts and across source-types. This constitutes the most structured, directly comparative aspect of the thesis, as the subsequent substantive interpretive chapters, while attentive to differentiations in context and discursive trends, put greater emphasis on drawing out the theoretical conceptualisation and implications of the phenomenon as a whole. The aim of this chapter is to refute the perception that StT is a homogenous, apolitical, or even epiphenomenal discourse through an empirical demonstration of its heterogeneity, internal contestation, and diversity.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the impetus for this undertaking, situating it within the context of previous studies engaged in the analysis of supporting the troops. This is followed by a recap of the methodological aims and limitations of the collection, analysis, and presentation of the aggregated data, emphasizing the interpretive, illustrative, and ultimately post-positivist nature of the overall inquiry. The chapter then goes on to present the basic outline of StT discourse, beginning with usage over time (2001-2010) for each country-case, and disaggregated by actor. The analysis moves on to demonstrating the heterogeneity and diversity of StT discourse through an interrogation of the “interpretive descriptives” of supporting the troops. I map the various articulations of “who”, “how”, “why”, and “against whom/what?” – inherent to the exhortation. Subsequently, the analysis turns to recurrent discursive themes frequently identified within StT, including conflict perception and historical context. Overall, the empirical analysis demonstrates StT to be a diverse, complex, and contradictory discursive formation, giving credence to its conceptualisation as not only important in its own right, but also as a powerful lens upon the complicated societal contestation underlying naturalized constructions of the normative relationship between society and the military.

4.1 TURNING TOWARDS THE BIG PICTURE

Until recently, the majority of the academic work on StT fell within comparative politics or media studies. These studies typically analyse StT as either a form of new social movement¹ or the product of journalistic framing devices in their portrayal of the “global war on terror”.² While this literature has much to offer in

¹ See Coy et. al. 2008; Beamish et. al. 1995.

² See Famy and Kim 2008; Reese and Buckalew 1995.

terms of insights into the organizational patterns, mobilization techniques, and technological networks of global civil society,³ it remains bound in a static state-society framework. This limits its ability to “see” underlying commonalities in the discursive logics and assumptions of the various actors involved in producing StT discourse(s). Though the sociality of the military has, particularly as of (approx.) 2010-11, become an area of increasing interest for international relations scholars, particularly those within the subfield(s) of critical war/military studies, few studies pertain directly to the discourse and practice of supporting the troops. Those studies that do reference StT, while offering valuable insights, exhibit three analytical tendencies that preclude the generation of a holistic understanding of the phenomenon: a) the deductive assignment of StT to pre-existing concepts (i.e. militarism), b) the (related) construction of StT as epiphenomenal, and c) the generalization of one aspect of the discourse to the whole.

Much of the literature relevant to “supporting the troops” mentions the discourse in passing, as a shorthand for a generalized socio-cultural condition. In doing so, such studies often present the discourse as either synonymous with, or symptomatic of, broader social militarism, rather than a phenomenon of interest in its own right. In their analysis of military symbolism and US Department of Defense involvement in college football, Moskal and Butterworth argue that “support the troops” rhetoric is a manifestation and means of inculcating an American identity “rooted in the culture of militarism”.⁴ Utilizing the same vocabulary, in their investigation of military recruitment in American high schools, Harding and Kershner point expansively to the “rise of the phrase ‘support the troops’” to exemplify, again, the “culture of militarism” in the United States in the post-9/11 era.⁵ Bacevich, similarly, refers to the “appreciable boost in the status of military institutions and soldiers themselves” as an aspect of what he refers to as “new American militarism”.⁶ While StT shares much in common with the empirical phenomenon and normative debates conventionally understood as constituting “militarism” – such as the valorisation of the military, presence of military symbolism in civil society, and potential tolerance of war – the unreflective conflation of the two risks downplaying the significance of StT as a complex and potentially contradictory phenomenon in its own right, instead casting it as a superficial indicator of an underlying pathology. The broad “militarism” framing of StT – of which the above works are striking, but not singular, examples – deductively imputes a particular, hegemonic reading of “support the troops” discourse by attaching it to the normatively-loaded yet chronically under-specified concept of “militarism”, rather than inductively deriving its meaning through consideration of the discourse(s) itself.

³ See Smith et. al. 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998.

⁴ Butterworth and Moskal 2009, 420.

⁵ Harding and Kershner 2011, 81-2.

⁶ Bacevich 2005, 23; see also Johnson 2004.

This tendency to downplay or dismiss StT is also reflected in the proposition – common to popular and editorial commentary – that the surge in popular discursive representations of support for the armed forces is an epiphenomenon of unpopular wars.⁷ Though this position, at least in this blunt guise, is relatively less prevalent in the academic literature, this attribution of StT to civilian ambivalence towards the global war on terror does appear in the policy literature concerned with the so-called “civil-military gap” apparently evident in both the US and UK. In her discussion of the UK military covenant, for instance, McCartney observes a popular dissociation between the UK armed forces and the conflicts it prosecutes, thus facilitating a demonstrable increase in support for the “military as an institution” paralleled by opposition to general UK military operations and policy.⁸

There is merit to this position, which is referenced in some form in virtually all discussions of StT. As discussed in Chapter Three, StT is not an entirely new phenomenon, but rather a continuation of wartime representations of the relationship between society and the collective use of force, historically expressed in terms of support for, and participation in, the overall war effort. StT represents a qualitative shift in such discourses, spurred, in part, by the US experience of Vietnam and the decline of conscription. As such, assessments of conflict legitimacy are highly relevant to StT and incorporated into subsequent analysis. It is my contention, however, that this connection between normative assessments of particular wars and expressions of support for the troops do not abnegate the need for fine-grained inductive analysis, but rather increase it. The rise of StT discourse in the US during the First Gulf War, a generally popular conflict, after all, problematizes the easy reduction, suggested by this line of critique, of the overall phenomenon to “opposing the war, supporting the troops”. In order to capture the complexity of StT, a significant empirical contribution of this thesis is mapping the reasons people provide for StT despite a disapproval of particular wars. In doing so, this analysis opens space to challenge the fundamental assumption underlying this position – that, absent the existence of a “good” war, the default response would be to transfer support from the mission to the troops.⁹ The contemporary unthinkability of an alternative position, of not supporting the troops, is the heart of this project.

Finally, the third category of relevant work on StT is comprised of primarily postpositivist studies that examine a particular manifestation of StT discourse. This focus on a limited aspect of the overall phenomenon, while immensely valuable in generating critical theoretical propositions, highlighting its socio-political significance, and improving empirical knowledge regarding the specific practices associated with StT discourse(s), hinders scholars’ ability to contextualize their analysis as part of a wide-ranging and variegated discursive formation.

⁷ See, for instance, Salaita 2013; and Pierce 2012.

⁸ McCartney 2010, 423.

⁹ See Managhan 2011a, 441.

As a result, such analysis often generalizes the specific dynamics of one particular manifestation of StT, or one particular actor to the whole, thus producing an overly-homogenous reading of the discourse. Scholars such as Kelly, Butterworth and Moskal, and Fischer, for instance, in their analyses of the increasing prominence of pro-military symbolism and discourse at popular sporting events – European and American football, respectively – all characterize “support the troops” discourse as the result of concerted, top-down marketing initiatives of the state.¹⁰ Paul Dixon outlines a rationale for such efforts, arguing the “support the troops” discourse in the UK represents the attempt of elites to, in essence, militarise UK society and leverage support for “our boys” into support for war itself¹¹ – a connection observed elsewhere in the Bush administration’s promotion of StT during the First Gulf War.¹² Noam Chomsky goes furthest, characterizing “support the troops” discourse as sheer state propaganda.¹³

Another group of scholars, in contrast, while not entirely disputing the “propaganda” frame, examines the “appropriation” of StT by peace groups and activists, casting the discourse as an (imperfect) manifestation of dissent. Coy et. al., for instance, in a noteworthy study of a cross-section of the public discourse of US peace groups, emphasize the efforts of the peace movement to redefine StT in opposition to war, as seen in the discourse commonly characterized as “supporting the troops by bringing them home”.¹⁴ Tina Managhan, similarly, utilizes her analysis of Cindy Sheehan, the mother of a deceased American soldier who briefly became the face of the US anti-war movement, to read the StT phenomenon as a “melancholic structure of desire” characterized by a frustrated longing for an idealized (national) sense of purpose, self, and normativity.¹⁵ These two strands of StT analysis, in their focus on, respectively, the discourse of state elites and peace groups each produce a partial, though well-executed and highly insightful, depiction of the overall phenomenon. They implicitly generalize their assessment of what this study finds to be differing, archetypal discursive strains to the entire discursive formation. Studies of media coverage of the global war on terror suggest that this opposition is refracted and facilitated by the media, as “shared media-military interests in a ‘good’ war narrative for ‘our troops’ can lead to the press becoming ‘part of the PR strategy’”¹⁶, while peace groups struggle for equivalent attention.¹⁷ Taken together, one could cobble together an image of StT as a media-facilitated standoff between top-down state propaganda and peace/anti-war activists, each of which articulates a coherent message. This image, however, forestalls consideration of the

¹⁰ Kelly 2012, 728-9; Butterworth and Moskal 2009, 420; see also Fischer 2014.

¹¹ Dixon 2012, 91 and 131-2; For the same observation in the Canadian context, see Mirlees 2015, 71-93.

¹² Cheney cited in Coy et. al. 2008, 170. For more on the evolution of StT discourse during the First Gulf War, please refer to Chapter 3 section.

¹³ Chomsky 2002, 25-6.

¹⁴ Coy et. al. 2008, 161-189; see also Woehrle et. al. 2008.

¹⁵ See Managhan 2011 a, 441; see also Tidy 2015b.

¹⁶ Moorcraft and Taylor in Parry 2011, 1168. For original, see, Moorcraft and Taylor 2011, 230.

¹⁷ Hayes and Guardino 2010.

(dis)continuities of discourse within and across groups (i.e. government and NGOs), as well as the identification of shared assumptions and significant omissions.

The essence of this critique, then, is not that this existing work relating to StT is necessarily incorrect – the methods and conclusions are appropriate to the stated ambitions of each piece – but rather that due to the selection of particular analytical foci, such as sporting events or peace campaigning, the scholarship overall tends to produce opposing, yet similarly homogenous constructions of StT. There are also exceptions to this trend, as scholars such as Stahl, Tidy, and Jenkins et. al. consider fairly limited empirical cases (e.g. US popular films, military-branded charitable consumption and UK mourning practices), yet inject a greater degree of nuance into their critical analysis, recognizing the potential fluidity, diversity, and complexity of the overall phenomenon.¹⁸ My aim is not to negate or supersede this work, much of which is excellent, and drawn upon and developed in the subsequent interpretive chapters. Instead, I identify the discursive constellation in which their objects of study are positioned. This gives greater context and depth to my work and, ideally, expands existing knowledge regarding the contours of StT – as a transnational discursive formation – that further enables these studies to “speak” to each other.

The rationale for the painstaking, time-consuming, and logistically challenging empirical analysis that makes up the balance of this chapter is thus to contest the assertion that simply because StT discourse is common, it is meaningless. The chapter demonstrates, instead, that although commentary upon the discourse is frequently reduced to its lowest common denominator (i.e. an unreflective support for the troops), when examined closely, the discourse is heterogeneous, contested, and contradictory, as the troops are rendered meaningful in a multitude of ways.

4.2 DIVERSITY OF STT DISCOURSE: ANALYTICAL AIMS AND LIMITATIONS OF AGGREGATED DATA

Prior to considering my original empirical data, it is worth recapping (as detailed in Section 1.5) the ambitions and limitations of this analysis. My method, even as applied to the unusually large volume of texts considered here, is postpositivist discourse analysis. The purpose of considering the breadth of material produced by a wide range of actors is to provide an initial, exploratory empirical mapping of the basic dimensions of the StT discursive formation. In conducting systematic, though interpretive coding, I combine some aspects of qualitative content analysis – such as the use of structured codes, a large number of texts, and the

¹⁸ Stahl 2009, 53-57; Tidy, 2015a; Jenkins et. al. 2012.

presentation of aggregated findings – with the empirically-grounded hermeneutical interpretation of discourse analysis. In this way, I sought to increase the transparency, rigor, and validity of my substantive theoretical arguments by providing a strong sense of the context in which they circulate.

The empirical data presented here is *necessarily illustrative*, rather than exhaustive. Due to the limitations of digital archiving and data access, it was not possible to identify the universe of all potentially-relevant texts for each source-type (e.g. NGOs, press, etc.). Due to the practical logistical limitations stemming from the use of highly interpretive coding, moreover, while the corpus of relevant texts was considered in its entirety for the United Kingdom, the far greater volume of US data required sampling the government and NGO documents. Comparison between country-cases, where relevant, is thus conducted in terms of the *proportion* of references to the whole within each case, rather than in terms of an absolute reference count. Recall also that the coded categories are not mutually exclusive. To that end, the y-axis of each figure, unless marked otherwise, represents the absolute number of references to that particular coded theme, which need not align with the absolute total of coded paragraph-units.

The data is not of interest as definitive, quantitatively-weighted comparative content analysis, but rather as an initial means of highlighting broad patterns. Some source-types included in this study, namely the press and Hansard/Congressional Record details possess identifiably bounded universes, and have been sampled (for the US) with confidence. Others, such as executive statements and, particularly NGO documents, were more dependent on internet archiving practices and my ability to gain access to organizational records. Though all efforts were made to collect data systematically, more information is, unavoidably, available for some organizations than others, and it is not possible to identify the bounds of a potential universe. The NGO findings are therefore more tentative than those of the other sources, and are used as a means of triangulating the more mainstream sources and demonstrating the multi-accentual nature of StT. This, in turn, as does the selection of specific NGOs, has some (limited) implications for the overall findings, in so far as the inclusion of alternative organizations would, logically, slightly alter the picture. I selected the organizations on the principle of balancing influence with diversity of perspective, however, and am confident my corpus provides the best possible illustration of the overall phenomenon. In keeping with the primary empirical goal of the study – tracking the discourse across societal actors, including those at the margins, such as peace groups, frequently excluded from such analysis – I have erred on the side of including more, rather than less, information.

In the interests of transparency, the specific implications of this decision, if any, for the interpretation of particular findings are detailed in the subsequent analysis. The results for each country-case are therefore disaggregated by source-type, to demonstrate which sources (e.g. newspapers, Hansard, etc.) correspond

with particular results. The balance of the chapter: a) provides a preliminary mapping of a topic previously considered primarily at the anecdotal level; b) contextualizes the theoretical analysis that follows; and c) introduces the classificatory terminology and interpretive themes used throughout the thesis.

4.3 “SUPPORT THE TROOPS” DISCOURSE 2001-2010

The following charts indicate the usage of both the exact phrase “support the troops” and analogous references to the normative relationship between the armed forces and society across source-types in the US and the UK. While “supporting the troops” is the paradigmatic way of referencing the civil-military relationship in the US, the United Kingdom exhibits greater diversity, referring, for instance, to “our armed forces”. Incorporating discourse commenting on the normative relationship between society and the armed forces rather than the literal phrase “StT” also incorporates the texts of non-governmental organizations, as the need for consistent branding in charitable marketing and fundraising leads many groups to develop language which contributes to the discursive formation without utilizing the precise phrasing. The UK charity “Help for Heroes”, for example, rarely explicitly calls on people to “support the troops”, yet its name and slogan is an exact synonym for StT, and draws upon the same sentiment and logic.

This interpretation of StT provides the most accurate mapping of the development and contours of the broader discursive formation and, as such, constitutes the foundation of subsequent analysis.¹⁹ These are disaggregated initially by source-type (e.g. government, NGOs, etc.) to provide a map that accounts for the interventions of both conventional political authorities and traditionally “dissenting” groups at the margins. The data are then disaggregated into discrete sources (e.g. Democrats, MoD officials, etc.), to provide an illustration of the contribution of each particular actor and document-type to the overall sample, and to flag where texts were not systematically available. This by-year overview provides a background for contextualizing the thematic sections which, for the sake of expediency and analysis, are presented at the “source-type” level of detail.

The results for both the UK and US have been compared to the results produced by a strict focus on the phrase “support the troops”, and the results do not notably differ. It is fair to consider the results below a valid illustration of changes in the use of StT discourse over the time period. While it is not my intention to draw causal links between specific military operations and expressions of support for the troops, the graphs are explicated with reference to significant events occurring over the course of the timeframe. This provides

¹⁹ Throughout the chapter, analysis begins with the UK, followed by the US. The initial coding scheme was developed with reference to the UK and subsequently amended/adapted for the US. This ordering makes the explication of slight differences between the two more coherent.

context for the overall data, and triangulates the results via logical connections to historical events, thus further speaking to the utility of the sourcing, sampling, and analysis process.

4.3.1 Support the Troops Discourse in the UK 2001-2010²⁰

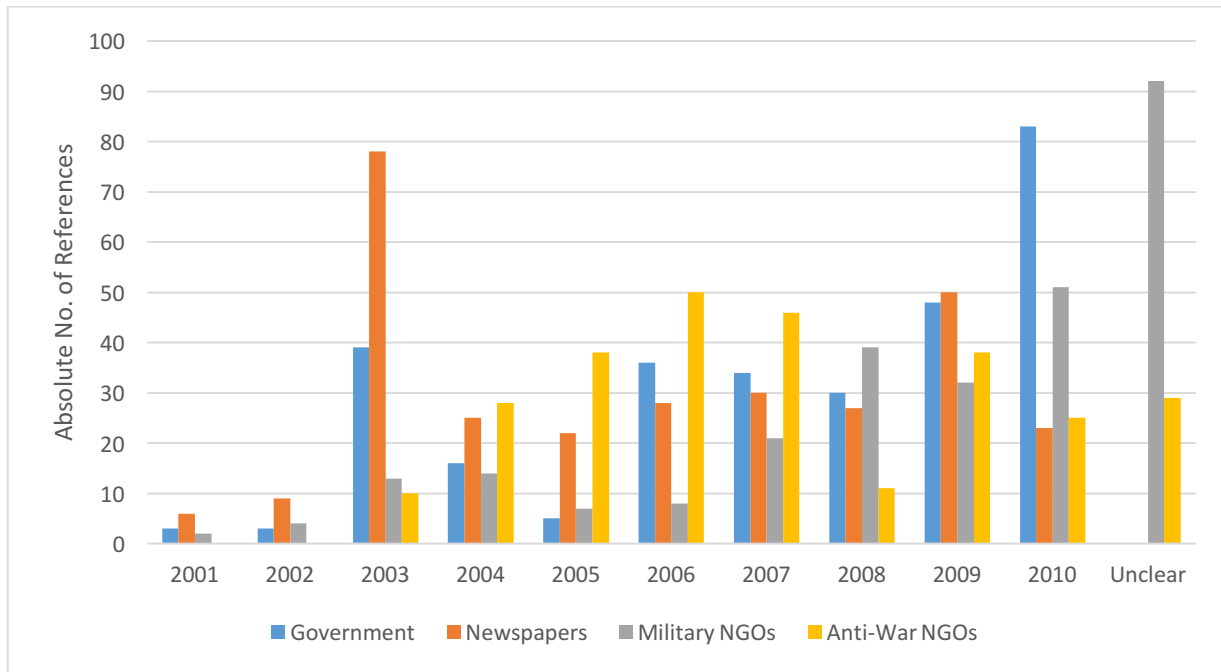


Figure 3: StT Discourse by Year and Source-Type, UK

As indicated by the above graph, StT discourse in the UK appeared infrequently in 2001 and 2002 during the inception of operations in Afghanistan before experiencing a sharp peak in 2003.²¹ This upswing is attributable to the invasion of Iraq and increased usage across all actors, particularly the press. Coverage at this time was driven by a) the British press commenting on the upsurge in “support the troops” discourse in the United States following the invasion of Iraq; and b) subsequent press commentary regarding the politics and the ethics of the media (and, occasionally, politicians) opposing UK participation in Iraq.²² There is also a comparatively high level of government engagement in StT discourse in 2003 – particularly considering that due to poor internet archiving practices in the early 2000s, this likely under-represents what occurred at the time. As operations in Iraq continued, StT discourse experienced a slight decline from approximately 2004-7 (though never returning to pre-conflict levels). During this time, anti-war groups demonstrate

²⁰ To capture all references within the included text, this graph represents each coded paragraph, rather than each specific instance of the phrase “support the troops”. Each coded paragraph, the unit of analysis, may contain more than one iteration of “support the troops”, or none at all.

²¹ The category “unclear” includes documents that could not be dated. A full discussion of this is conducted in the following sub-section disaggregating change over time by source-type. The majority of these results stem from NGO documents, and were likely generated between 2006 and 2010.

²² See, for instance, on the media ethics debate: Fletcher 2003; Independent 2003; and Freedland 2003.

substantial engagement in the discourse. This stems from the consistent “Bring Them Home!” messaging by the major anti-war group, the Stop the War Coalition and its associated network in response to Iraq.

In 2006, when sectarian violence in Iraq resulted in high numbers of civilian casualties and near-civil war, the discourse demonstrates a slight increase – and corresponding spike in government attention.²³ In 2008, StT begins to increase again, as the UK experiences the deadliest year in Afghanistan, the death of the 100th British service person, and continues to take responsibility for operations in Helmand province.²⁴ At this time, press coverage remains relatively stable, while the UK government demonstrates an uptick in StT. The 2008 increase in StT discourse by pro-military charities coincides with the late-2007 founding and 2008 rise to prominence of Iraq and Afghanistan charity Help for Heroes.²⁵

The continued prevalence of StT in 2009-10 coincides with the end of combat operations in Iraq in 2009, and a shift in focus to Afghanistan.²⁶ This increase also coincided with an increased emphasis by the UK government on civil-military relations following a much-reported shortage of military helicopters in 2009,²⁷ and the promotion of the previously-mentioned Armed Forces Covenant – the moral agreement between “the government, the nation, and the armed forces”.²⁸

²³ BBC News 2015a; Reuters 2015.

²⁴ BBC News 2011a.

²⁵ Help for Heroes, nd.

²⁶ BBC News 2009a.

²⁷ BBC News 2009b.

²⁸ Taylor-Norton 2009; UK MoD 2011.

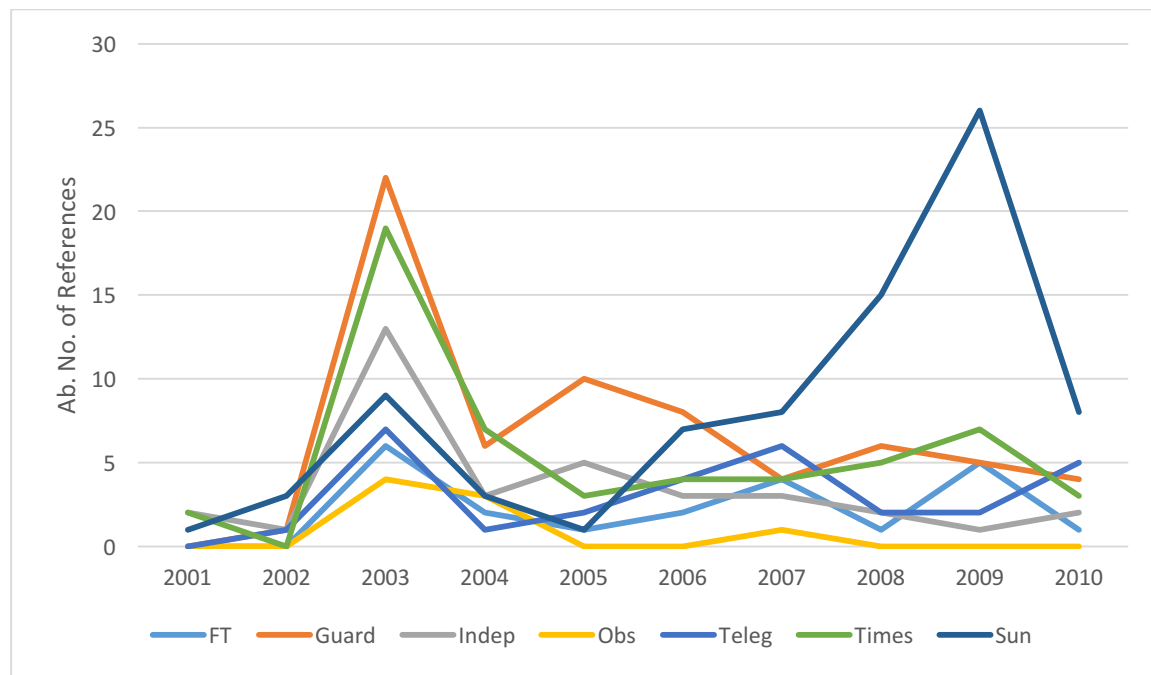


Figure 4: StT Discourse in UK Newspapers over Time²⁹

This graph outlines use of the phrases “support the troops”, “support our troops” and “support our boys” in seven UK newspapers. As it is a complete universe, the results can be taken as accurately representative of the change in StT discourse use over the time period. The newspapers demonstrate similarity in their use of the discourse in terms of relative frequency, though not absolute totals, throughout the period. This includes the large spike in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq and a relative decline (though remaining above pre-GWoT) until 2010. *The Guardian’s* greater use of StT discourse is attributable to its greater coverage of international news (including domestic affairs in the US) and an iterated debate in its opinion pages regarding the press ethics of covering war and “supporting the troops”. The significant increase in *The Sun’s* use of StT reflects its 2008-2009 official partnership with the charity Help for Heroes to promote a fundraising campaign to “Support Our Boys” – the wounded veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

²⁹As the newspaper corpus is comprehensive, it is also “best evidence” in representing changes in frequency of usage over time. Brief comparison indicates that it reflects the same trends as that indicated by overall StT discourse, with spikes in 2003, a decline in 2004/5, a slight increase in 2006/7, and a noted increase, again in 2009. The major apparent distinction is in 2010, when the press use of StT declines, but government references, and thus the aggregate sample, remain high.

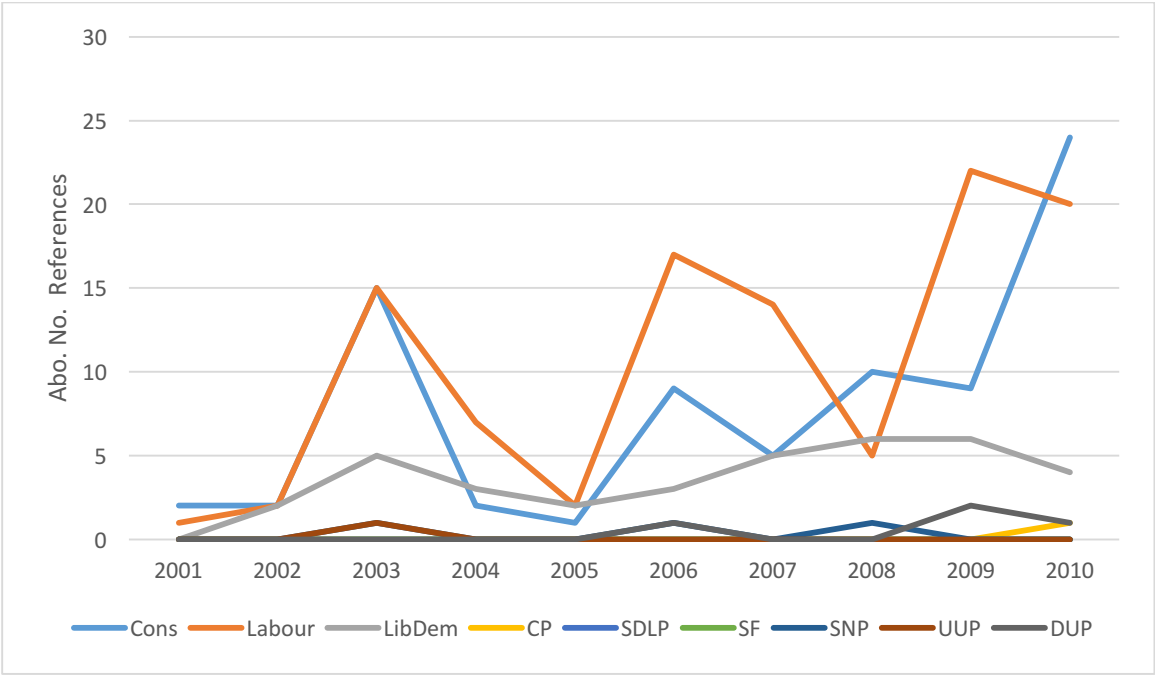


Figure 5: StT Discourse by UK Political Party over Time

The graph charts the use of the phrases “support our troops” or “support the troops” in the UK Hansard (House of Lords and House of Commons) from 2001-2010. Though it likely under-represents StT discourse generally (due to the necessity of a specific keyword search), it is also a complete universe of results. Figure 5 indicates that the governing political party typically used StT discourse more frequently across the period, beginning with Labour (2001-mid-2010), followed by the Conservatives (2010). The exception to this trend is 2008, when the Conservatives expressed reservations regarding Labour’s continuation of the UK presence in Afghanistan, as well as the fitness-for-purpose of military equipment. The traction of this line of questioning is reflected in the 2009 Labour increase in StT discourse following criticism regarding the aforementioned helicopter shortage. Otherwise, Hansard reflects the general trends of the sample overall – an increase in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq, and in 2006 with the increase in sectarian violence. The low use of StT by the third party, the Liberal Democrats, at six/year or less, is somewhat surprising. LibDem leader Charles Kennedy’s decision to oppose the war prior to invasion and subsequently support the troops proved controversial with both the balance of the party and the public.³⁰ (This controversy actually represents an interesting contrast to the United States, where this position was relatively common amongst elected politicians – most notably 2003-4 presidential contender Howard Dean).³¹ The other political parties were virtually irrelevant to this discussion.

³⁰ Hall 2005.

³¹ Nagourney 2003.

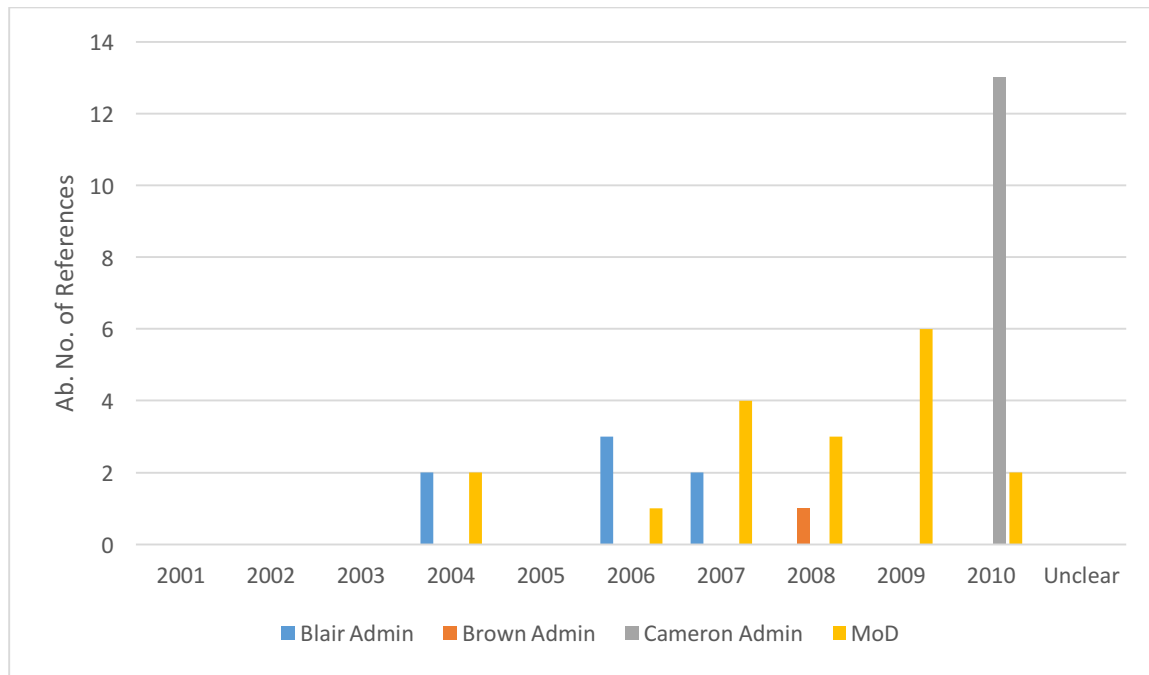


Figure 6: UK Government StT Statements by Year

This graph represents the use of StT discourse – identified by searching the word “troops” to identify statements regarding the civil-military relationship – in the public documents (primarily press releases and executive speeches) of the Prime Minister’s Office, Cabinet Office, and Ministry of Defence for 2001-2010 (disaggregated by administration). The documents analysed here are the entirety of the corpus currently available/archived, but due to the sporadic nature of early 2000s internet archiving, likely do not represent all such discourse employed at the time. While the later representation of discourse is accurate, it is not possible to know whether data is missing from earlier in the period, leading to the possibility that the increase in discourse usage is steeper than warranted. It seems unlikely that it never arose in 2005 or 2009.³² Given the Conservative government’s promotion of the Armed Forces Covenant from 2010-onwards, it is fair to cast the 2010 increase as “earned”, rather than only a result of disparity in data availability. This graph demonstrates, interestingly, the relative paucity of references to StT in official statements compared to both Hansard and the public rhetoric of the US executive (see later in this chapter).

³² That said, having triangulated this trend against UK press mentions of executive statements, it can be assessed to be broadly accurate.

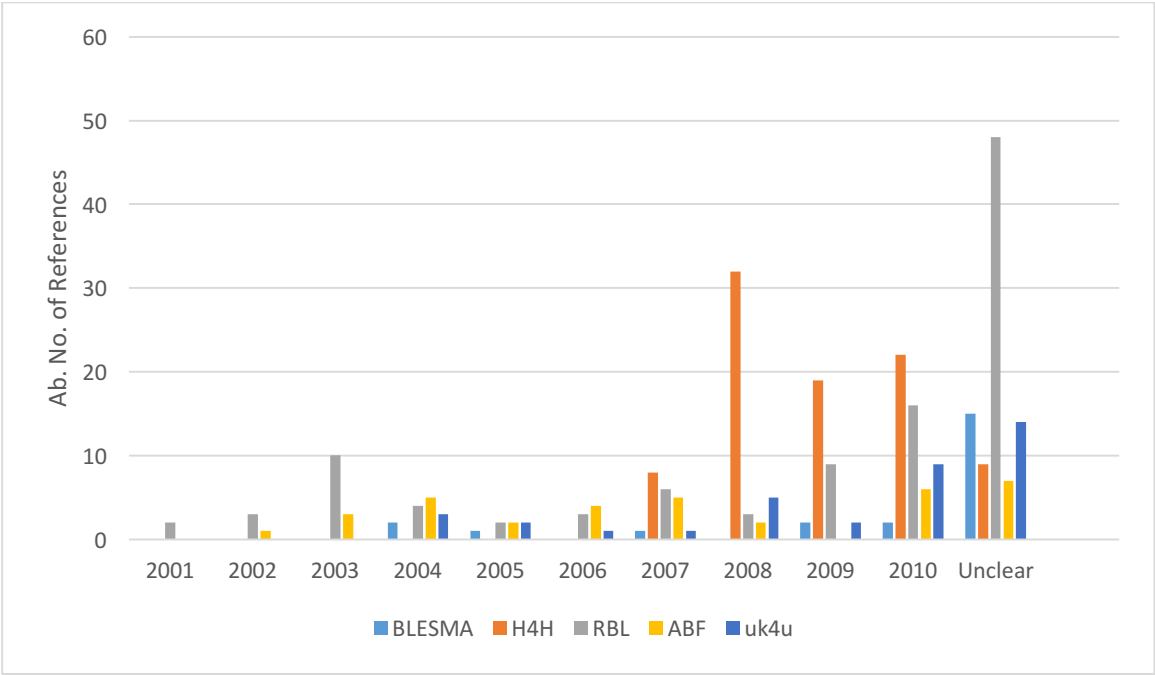


Figure 7: UK Military NGOs StT Discourse by Year

Figure 7 illustrates the use of StT discourse (understood as that broadly commenting on the normative relationship between society and the military) in the five selected UK military NGOs (Blind and Limbless Servicemen’s Association, Help for Heroes, Royal British Legion, the Army Benevolent Fund, and uk4uThanks!) from 2001-2010. While this represents a systematic analysis of all available data, due to the reliance on public internet archives, the failure of most organizations to preserve records of public statements from this time, and a lack of response from Help for Heroes, the chart is an imperfect, yet best-possible depiction of the available information.

The graph reflects a lag between the onset of conflict in Iraq in 2003 (save by the Legion) and the charitable sector’s recognition of the likely length and intensity of the conflict – not to mention a new generation of veterans requiring support services. The sea change in this orientation is visible in 2007-8, when Help for Heroes was founded, revamped the UK military charity press/branding model, and became the major NGO for the Iraq-Afghanistan generation. It can also have been seen in the 2007 increase in both the ABF and Legion’s use of StT discourse – particularly in 2010, when the ABF rebranded along the lines of H4H to become The Soldier’s Charity. For its part, uk4uThanks! actually uses StT discourse in virtually all statements and publications – with highly consistent framing across the time period – but due to its more limited mandate (it provides “square stocking” care packages to all deployed UK military personnel at Christmas), it produces fewer public materials than the other organizations. BLESMA’s profile is representative of the wounded-specific charities founded in the post-war era. Given their built-in constituency of wounded service

personnel and limited mandate of providing healthcare and living support, directly promoting awareness of the civil-military relationship and support for troops in conflict is less essential to their organizational identity/survival.

Finally, this graph includes the comparatively large number of references which, due to the nature of the text, could not be dated. This is likely due to the fact that unlike the press, government, and anti-war groups, which attend closely to the events of the day, more conventional charitable organizations use consistent materials and messaging, particularly in campaigns that span a great deal of time, thus resulting in generalized and undated materials. For clarity, these texts are dated as “unclear”, as they contribute to patterns and articulations in discourse use, and are incorporated into subsequent analysis. These texts are predominantly associated with Help for Heroes and major changes in marketing strategies by the ABF and the Legion beginning in approximately 2007, indicating they can be “read” into the latter years of the period. There is thus some correspondence, from approximately 2006, in the government and pro-military charities deployment of StT discourse.

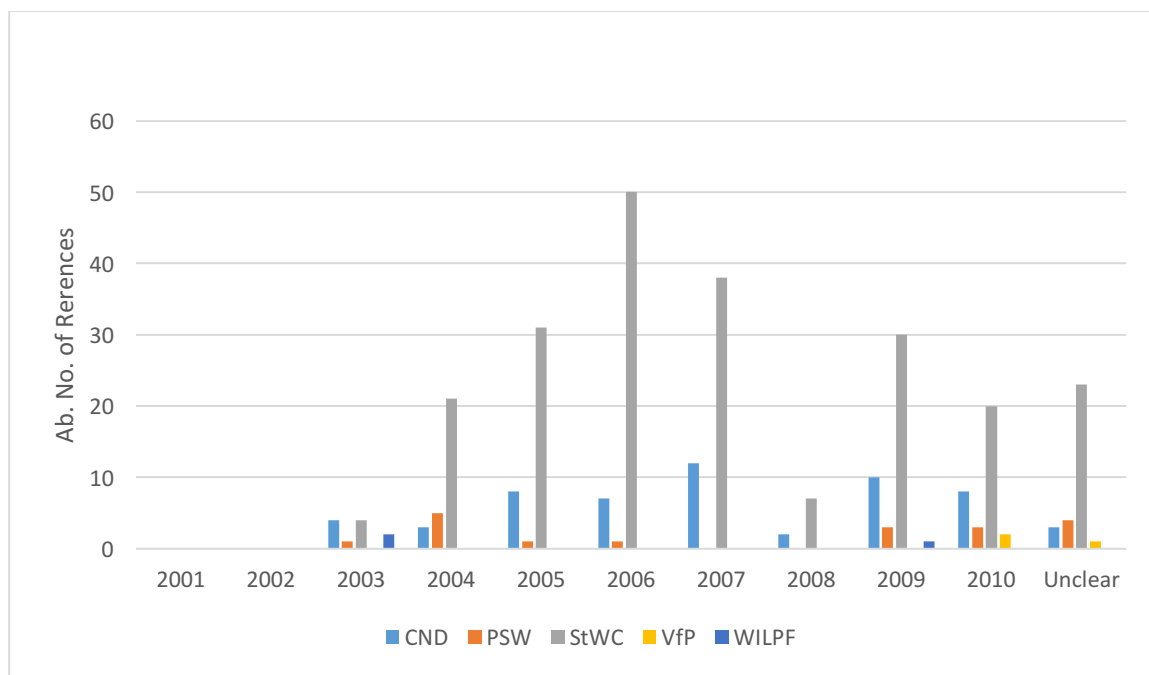


Figure 8: UK Anti-War NGOs StT Discourse by Year

Figure 8 demonstrates the use of StT discourse by the five selected UK anti-war NGOs (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Peace and Social Witness, Stop the War Coalition, Veterans for Peace, and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom). It was collected primarily from online archives (similar to the

military NGOs) and, for StWC, physical archives. The same caveats for interpretation apply as above, with the addition that though it is safe to say that StWC coalition was the major anti-war group engaged in StT discourse, my greater access to their documents likely overstates their influence. (In other words, while the StWC data here is as accurate as possible, access to physical records for the other organizations would have also resulted in an increase in their representation in the discourse).

The graph indicates that the majority of anti-war NGO engagement in StT discourse came between 2005 and 2007, when StWC and CND organized a series of major rallies opposing the war in Iraq, and advocating for withdrawal. This distinguishes them from the relative decline or plateau in StT discourse amongst other actors during this time. The small contribution of Veterans for Peace is due to its founding at the end of the time period. The comparatively lower results for Peace and Social Witness and WILPF – as well, to a degree, as CND – is likely partially attributable to the fact that as older advocacy organizations, they were slower to adapt to the 24-hour news cycle and role of social media in promoting anti-war messaging. They spent less time on awareness-raising and organizational branding than did StWC. They also primarily organized mass protest and vigil activities, which require publication, through StWC, with the overarching network conducting the promotion on their behalf. Most importantly, these three organizations, unlike StWC and many of the major US anti-war groups, predate the invasion of Iraq. As a result, the focus of their advocacy is wider, and organizational resources are split between many inter-related, yet distinct campaigns, such as CND's anti-Trident nuclear deterrent campaign. Finally, in the messaging that was conducted regarding Iraq and Afghanistan, these organizations, despite being major components of the movement, simply did not refer to the normative relationship between civil society and the military as frequently as did StWC and many US groups. The implications of this abstention for the possibility of effective dissent are discussed in Chapter Eight.

4.3.2 Support the Troops Discourse in the US 2001-2010

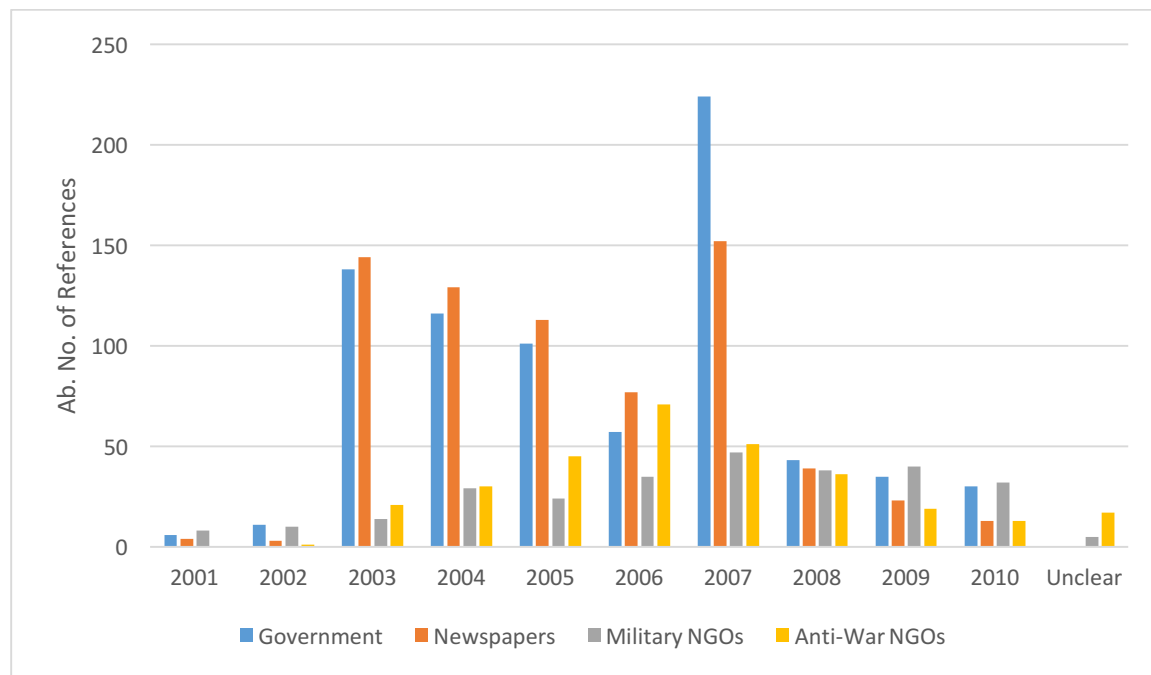


Figure 9: United States StT Discourse by Year (by Source-Type)

Figure 9 indicates, as with the UK, the US did not, as might be expected, exhibit substantial StT discourse during initial operations in Afghanistan from 2001-2002, departing from the historical precedent set by the First Gulf War. The use of StT subsequently spiked in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq and significant accompanying public controversy and debate. This is driven by the peak in US newspaper engagement in the discourse, and comparable level of government (Congressional Record and executive statements) activity.

The presence of StT discourse remained relatively high through 2005. This period includes the capture of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the heavy fighting in Fallujah in 2004, the 1000th US military casualty, and the first Iraq elections in 2005.³³ The continued press engagement in the discourse contrasts with the UK which saw a sharp drop in 2004, and is partially explicated by coverage of spontaneous, grassroots practices of “supporting the troops”, such as parades and bumper stickers. Government use of StT discourse remains high, and in 2004 coincides with the presidential election cycle, in which Iraq was a key issue. The chart also demonstrates the rise of anti-war use of StT discourse in opposition to Iraq in 2004, though such language represents a smaller proportion of the overall discourse than its UK counterpart – and never came to represent a major component of the conversation. The chart also indicates a pick-up in military NGO’s use of StT, following a similar trajectory to the voluntary sector in the UK.

³³ New York Times 2011.

2006 sees a decline in the use of StT discourse, also in contrast to the UK's trend (though still remaining higher in absolute number). In 2007, StT use jumps again, coinciding with the announcement and deployment of "the surge" of additional US military personnel to Iraq.³⁴ This is true of both press and government sources, reflecting debate over budgetary allocations for the war (which also accounts for the continuing frequency of StT discourse in government sources until this point), as well as the wisdom of the surge. The frequency StT declines sharply from 2008-2010. It returns to near-2001/Afghanistan levels for the press and government. During this period, the emphasis of US military operations shifted from Iraq to Afghanistan, as in 2009 Obama announced a withdrawal timeline for Iraq, removing troops from Iraq and deploying additional personnel to Afghanistan.³⁵ In 2010, Obama declared an end to combat operations in Iraq.³⁶ The 2008-2010 decline in StT usage is the greatest distinction between the US and UK. Military and anti-war NGOs, however, continue to engage in StT discourse at levels that exceed the 2003-4 period, which reflects ongoing advocacy efforts for veterans and opposition to conflict in Afghanistan, respectively.

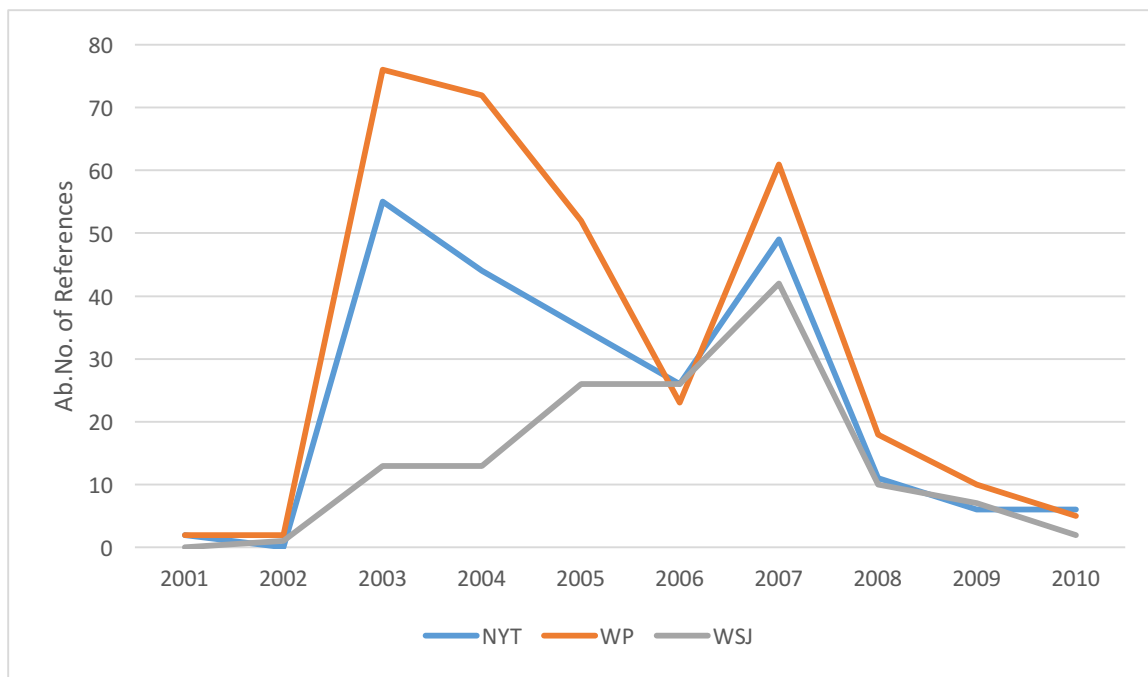


Figure 10: StT Discourse in US Newspapers by Year

This graph illustrates the use of the phrases "support the troops", "support our troops", or "support our boys" by the three major national US papers – the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal* – from 2001-2010. The data was not sampled, and therefore represents a complete universe in terms

³⁴ Abramowitz and Wright 2007.

³⁵ DeYoung 2009.

³⁶ Office of the White House Press Secretary 2010.

of absolute totals and the best illustration of change over time in the general US phenomenon. (Though, again, due to the use of key words, it under-reports the prevalence of the broader phenomenon).

The press use of StT reflects the general trend evidenced above for the US case, with a major spike in 2003 and a secondary increase in 2007 prior to a sharp decline. In contrast to the UK, there is greater homogeneity in the pattern of the papers' StT usage, indicating greater similarity in editorial strategy – and a lack of the “activist” stance seen in the UK *Sun*. The reasons behind the gradual increase, rather than sharp jump, in the WSJ's use of StT are unclear. The general content covered by the WSJ mirrors that of the NYT and WP, but is lesser in volume.

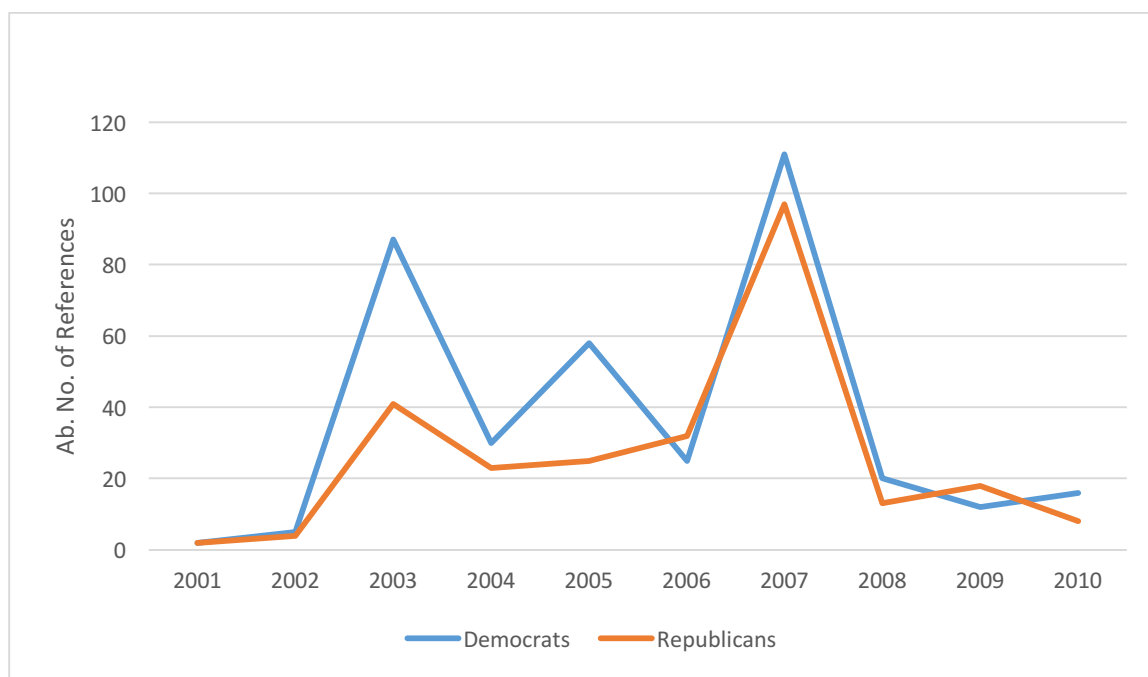


Figure 11: US Congress StT Discourse by Party over Time

This graph illustrates the change in StT discourse (sourced using the key phrase “support our troops” from the Congressional Record (House of Representatives and the Senate) from 2001-2010. Due to the immense amount of relevant data, 20 per cent of the results for each year were randomly selected for analysis using a random number generator. The trend demonstrated by this graph was triangulated against a graph of the complete universe, and found to be substantially the same.

The Congressional Record largely demonstrates the same trends as the media with, again, a sharp increase in the discourse in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq. In contrast to the UK, however, wherein government StT discourse tapered off following the onset of Iraq military operations (until 2006), the Congressional use of StT, though experiencing a slight decline from 2003-4, remained high. Much of this discourse was generated

in two fashions: a) habitual statements by individual members of Congress as to their generalized support and admiration for the troops; and b) debate regarding the best means of funding operations in Iraq/Afghanistan, with Democrats preferring to incorporate funding into the regular budget, with Republicans favouring rolling ad-hoc “emergency” appropriations.³⁷ The slight 2003/4 decline also marks a distinction from the US press StT usage.

The slight uptick in Congressional StT discourse in 2005 coincides with the first Iraq elections, and initial calls by opponents of the war (primarily House Democrats) to withdraw the troops from Iraq.³⁸ The 2007 increase coincides with debate surrounding the surge of troops for Iraq. The 2008-2010 decline in StT usage, notably occurred at approximately the same time as the election of Obama, and his administration’s shift in focus from Iraq to Afghanistan. (Similarly, the decrease in StT discourse also coincided with the peak of the late 2000s financial crisis, perhaps reflecting a broader change in public and legislative priority).

It is also worth noting that the use of StT in the Congressional record demonstrates greater homogeneity between the two parties than seen in the UK, as the Democrat and Republicans’ discourse generally rises and falls at similar points in time and moves in the same direction. For much of the timeframe, the Democrats, rather than Republicans, engage more with StT discourse (if, at times, only slightly). This is particularly interesting given the Republican’s majority in the House and Senate from 2001-2007, suggesting it cannot be attributed to a disparity in elected members.³⁹ In general, the greater use of StT discourse by the Democratic party may be speculated to result from their tendency to attach StT to criticism of the Bush administration’s foreign policy and/or military spending.

³⁷ Hulse and Shanker 2004.

³⁸ Associated Press 2005.

³⁹ See United States House of Representatives, nd.

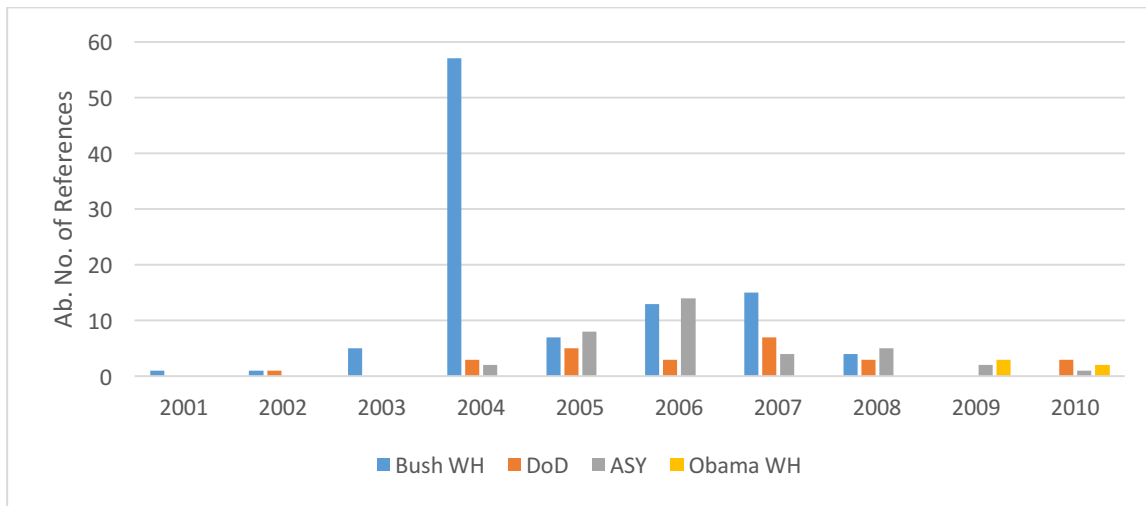


Figure 12: StT Discourse for US Govt by Year

This chart illustrates the use of StT discourse (identified by key word search) by the executive (sourced from the Bush Presidential library and the WhiteHouse.gov site), the Department of Defense, and the DoD-associated America Supports You program. The same caveats for interpretation as noted for the UK executive statements apply. Given archiving practices, it is not possible to identify a bounded universe of texts and the earlier time period may be under-represented. To manage the volume of available information, this represents a 20 per cent sample of located materials (for each year).

The dramatic rise in 2004 reflects the vast number of public statements made by George W. Bush in his campaign for president – StT was highlighted in the stump speech he often gave several times daily.⁴⁰ The rise in StT discourse by ASY aligns with the organization's inception in 2004, with a steady increase until 2007, when the program's spending was called into question prior to the 2008 audit. The DoD's press releases do not seem to follow a particular pattern (save for the 2007 increase at the time of the surge), though it's worth noting that many of these releases publicise the activities of ASY.

⁴⁰ Bush 2004a.

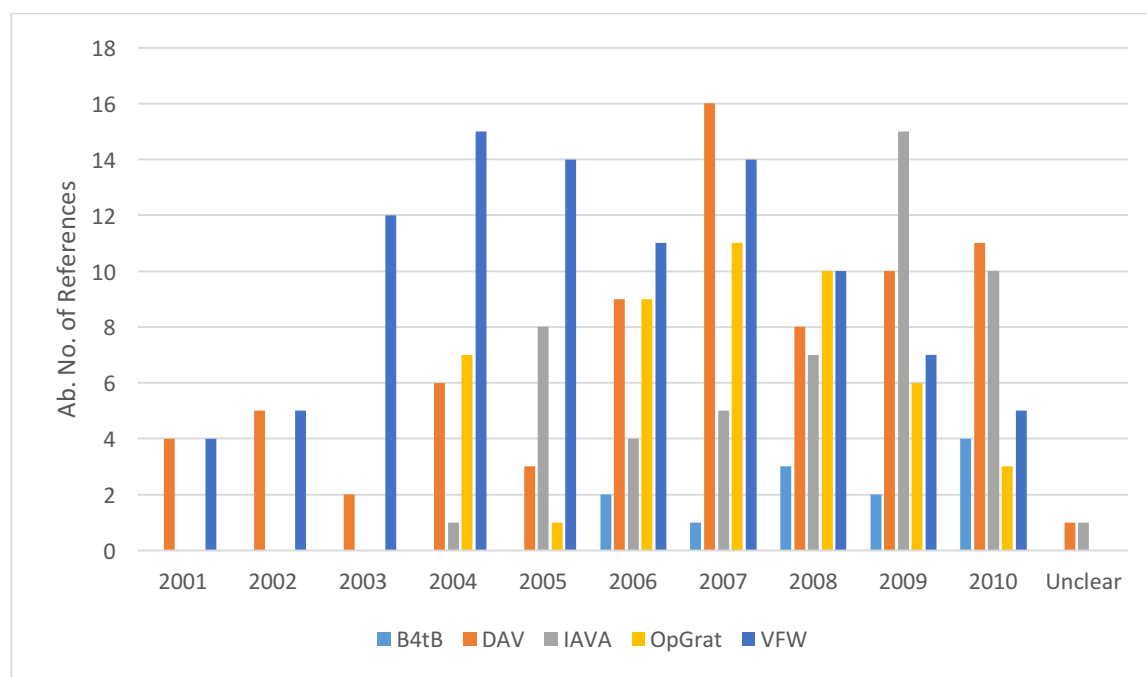


Figure 13: US Military NGOs StT Discourse by Year

This graph illustrates the use of StT discourse, broadly understood, by five representative US military NGOs (Birdies for the Brave, Disabled American Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans' Association, Operation Gratitude, and Veterans of Foreign Wars) for 2001-2010. As with the UK, these documents have been sourced from both online (all) and physical (B4tB, DAV, VFW) archives, resulting in differentiated access to information between organizations. The possibility thus exists that these organizations are over-represented compared to Operation Gratitude and IAVA, though as each of these organizations was founded during the relevant period and basically "lived" online, the risk of this is relatively low. The NGO records were, like the government documents, sampled to analyse 20 per cent of randomly-selected records for each year.

In contrast to the UK, the graph illustrates a greater engagement with StT discourse by the military charity sector across the timeframe, beginning with the immediate post-9/11 period. The results from 2001-2003 are largely driven by the major, established veterans' organizations, DAV and Veterans of Foreign Wars, each of which is more activist in responding to current affairs/contemporary politics than the established UK charities. This tendency was bolstered by the need to respond to 9/11, which established a precedent of organizational comment on the initial phases of the GWoT. These organizations have been strongly influenced by the Vietnam generation of veterans, which provides a link between contemporary veterans and those of the organizations' original WWI/II constituencies that, despite the experience of Northern Ireland and the Falklands, is less present in the UK.

The graph also indicates the divergence between NGO use of StT discourse and the overall US trend, speculatively due to intervening institutional imperatives and concerns. VFW and Operation Gratitude – founded in 2004 to provide care packages to soldiers deployed abroad, similar to u4uthanks!, – demonstrate a similar pattern of increasing StT references from 2003-2007, with a decline evident in 2008, again coinciding with the change in administration and shift towards Afghanistan. As IAVA and DAV, however, have the mandate to advocate for serving and veteran soldiers, the need for their advocacy (and public presence) increases as the conflict goes on and draws down. This is demonstrated in the graph as their use of StT discourse, against the overall US trend (but in line with that seen in the UK) remains high from 2007-2010. Birdies for the Brave, finally, which coordinates the military-related fundraising activities of the Professional Golf Association (PGA) and its corresponding program for honouring veterans, was founded in 2006.⁴¹ Its comparatively low level of engagement in StT discourse is largely due to its status – as with most professional sports charitable military endeavours – as a sponsor of additional charities, such as Homes for Our Troops.⁴² The NFL, for instance, in addition to the activities underwritten by the DoD, has sponsored the US United Service Organization (USO) since the 1960s, and sent NFL players to visit the troops abroad during the GWoT.⁴³ Such groups act as a public platform by providing visibility for the military more so at sporting events than through explicit public relations promotion (which the associated organizations generally do on their own behalf). Their contribution to StT lies in the “spectacle”, which is not captured by an analysis of documents alone.

⁴¹ Birdies for the Brave 2014a.

⁴² Birdies for the Brave 2014b.

⁴³ National Football League 2009, 14.

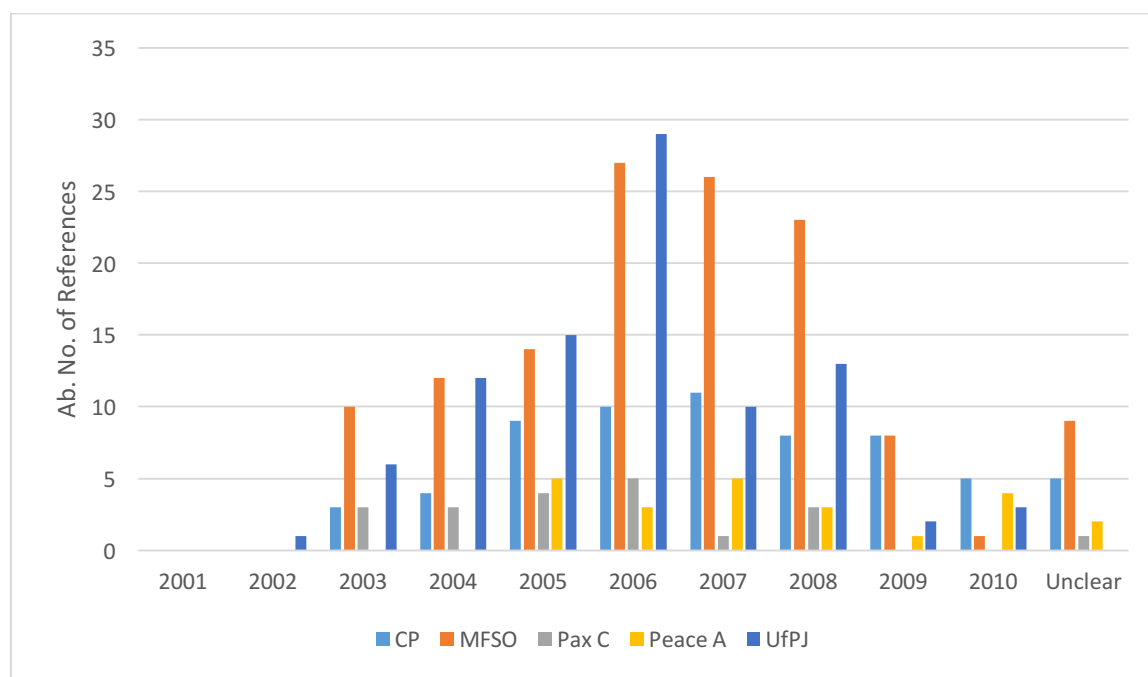


Figure 14: US Anti-War NGOs StT Discourse by Year

This chart illustrates the use of StT discourse, broadly understood, by five representative anti-war groups (CodePink, Military Families Speak out, Pax Christi, Peace Action, and United for Peace and Justice) in the US from 2001-2010. The records for these organizations were sourced from live websites, the public internet archive, and, significantly, hard copy records at the Swarthmore Peace Collection in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. Due to the sporadic nature of both the online archiving and the deposition of physical records, again, it is not possible to identify a complete universe. This chart represents the analysis of 20 per cent of the available material/year. While the records are a valid illustration of StT discourse over time – and its development of interpretive themes – the absolute number of references is likely over-represented in comparison to US military NGOs and both categories of UK NGOs, for which such access was not available.

The graph demonstrates that anti-war NGO use of StT discourse rose from 2003 to 2006/7, before declining. Save for the absence of a substantial spike in 2003, this mirrors the trend in US StT discourse overall. Pax Christi, the pacifist Catholic organization, and Peace Action, an internationalist pacifist organization established in 1957, each follow the pattern demonstrated by older, multi-issue anti-war organizations seen in the UK case. They demonstrate some low-level use of StT discourse throughout the period, with peaks in 2007 and 2006, respectively. These organizations too faced the pressures of addressing many social justice issues with few resources, and coordinated their mass actions with larger coalitions – particularly United for Peace and Justice. Much of the PC and PA discourse commenting on the normative civil-military relationship is found in press releases commenting on specific events – such as the 2003 invasion – and the promotion of coalition activities and rallies. The additional three organizations – CodePink, a women’s guerrilla activism

group; United for Peace and Justice, an overarching mass movement coalition much like the StWC in the UK; and Military Families Speak Out, a group of military families opposed to the war in Iraq – were founded between 2001-2010 to oppose the Bush administration’s foreign policy. Unsurprisingly, they follow a pattern similar to that of StWC in the UK, with rising public engagement in StT discourse from 2003-2006/7, before a decline to the end of the period. The most telling part of the graph is the lesser disparity in the relative totals of StT references between the various organizations in contrast to the UK, where the StWC dominated the anti-war discourse. This reflects the greater number of publicly-active anti-war organizations in the United States, as well as suggesting a greater homogeneity in their public discourse – at least amongst organizations founded in response to the invasion of Iraq.

4.3.3 Comparison

Both the US and UK use of StT discourse are plausibly related to significant external events (i.e. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan) and military policy, such as an increase in casualties, troop deployment, and shifts in focus between conflicts. This speaks to the validity of the sample, and indicates we may have confidence in its illustration of general themes within the discourse. The two cases – the US and UK – initially mirror each other in terms of the development of the discourse, as there is relatively low uptake in 2001-2002, with a significant increase occurring in 2003. At this juncture, however, they diverge, as StT levels in the US remain relatively high, in contrast to a noticeable decline in the UK. The cases then remain disconnected through the middle of the period, as the UK experiences an increase in 2006 coinciding with an increase in the severity of hostilities in Basra,⁴⁴ while the US’s increase comes in 2007 at the time of the Iraq surge. The most significant distinction, however, lies at the end of the period, wherein StT discourse in the UK appears to be increasing, while the US experiences a substantial decline. This is perhaps indicative of the changed policy context in the United Kingdom, wherein civil-military relations accrued a level of debate and commentary unprecedented since WWII,⁴⁵ while the US, with a larger armed forces more accustomed to foreign deployments, returned to “business as usual”.

This is also a good moment to highlight the difference in the overall use of the discourse in the US and UK. Unsurprisingly, given the legacy of Vietnam and greater number of relevant public actors, StT discourse is far more prevalent in the US than the UK (hence the requisite sampling). Even comparing a sampled US corpus to the comparatively complete UK data, the sampled US data returns 2129 references, in contrast to the UK’s 1129. This difference does not obviate the interest of either case, particularly, as will be

⁴⁴ Taylor-Norton and Alubedy 2006.

⁴⁵ Lindsey A. Hines et. al. 2015, 694.

demonstrated in later chapters, as the actual meaning imputed to the discourse appears to notably converge, but must be kept in mind when considering the two in tandem.

4.4 CONFLICT CONTEXTUALIZATION

The simultaneous conduct of war in Iraq and Afghanistan over the course of the global war on terror renders it difficult, if not impossible, to attempt to separate discourse by conflict, or attribute the development of the overall phenomenon to one or the other theatre. Instead, I emphasize the diffuse, circulating nature of discourse, which suggests that the discourses of Iraq and Afghanistan are mutually imbricated in the overall discursive formation. Hence my decision to examine “the global war on terror”, rather than impose a false independence on the two conflicts in an attempt to play them off each other.

This is not to say, however, no conflict-specific observations can be drawn. The above graphs indicate that the phrase StT was invoked far less frequently during 2001/2 and “took off” in 2003 with the build up to Iraq. As the graphs below indicate, by treating references to specific conflicts as descriptive discursive elements, rather than exogenous pseudo-causal factors, it is possible to represent instances of StT made explicitly in reference to specific conflicts.

4.4.1 Which War?

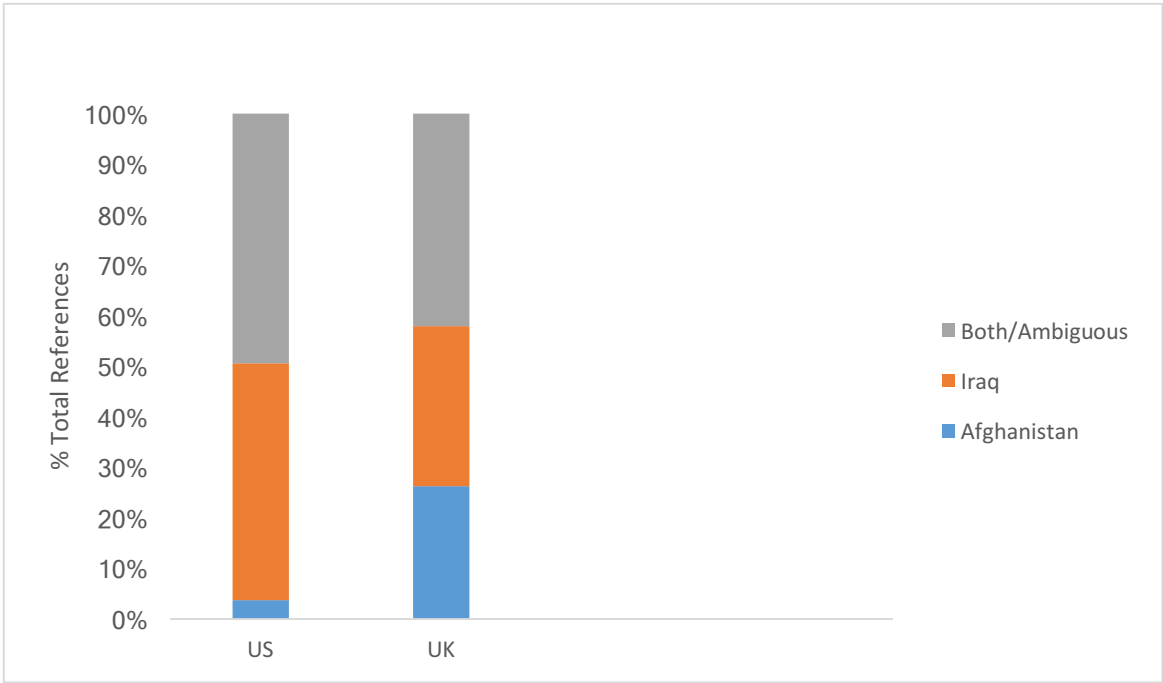


Figure 15: Which War?

This graph represents references made to: a) Iraq; b) Afghanistan; or c) both Iraq/Afghanistan or unspecified allusions to on-going conflict, as a percentage of references to StT within the sample. As illustrated by the chart, within the UK, references to StT in the context of both Iraq/Afghanistan (or where the conflict was not specified) were most common (42%), followed by specific references to Iraq (32%). References to Afghanistan were least common (26%). Results for the United States indicate a similar pattern, with “both” at 49 per cent, “Iraq” 47 per cent, and extremely few references to Afghanistan, at four per cent. This may be partially attributable to the increase in UK attention to Afghanistan following the UK’s end of combat operations in Iraq in 2009. Similarly, as the graph demonstrates, Iraq simply constituted a greater aspect of public discourse in the US than UK.

Disaggregation of the results by source-type (not depicted here for the sake of brevity) also demonstrates similarity between the two. Iraq is overwhelmingly the focus of StT discourse by anti-war groups, which is logical given their opposition, while the category “both” is most common for military NGOs. This is to be expected, as the particular theatre of conflict is irrelevant for the provision of moral support and, particularly, family and veterans’ services. In the US, newspaper results are evenly split between “both”, and “Iraq”, with only two per cent of results relating to Afghanistan. In the UK, Iraq was the most frequent conflict frame for newspapers, followed by “both”, and then Afghanistan. The greatest distinction between the two cases lies in the government StT-conflict association: in the US, the preponderance of StT discourse was split evenly between “both” and Iraq, whereas Afghanistan was the most common reference in the UK. This latter, somewhat surprising, result is likely attributable to the government’s increased use of StT discourse from 2009-2010, which coincides with the helicopter supply scandal and the Conservative Cameron administration which, as previously demonstrated, frequently invoked StT.

The charts, in sum, indicate a greater association of StT with Iraq than Afghanistan for both country-cases. The prevalence of the “both/ambiguous” category in both the US and UK, however, demonstrates the discursive intertwining of the two, reinforcing the inadvisability of separating the conflicts.

4.4.2 Perceptions of Conflict Legitimacy

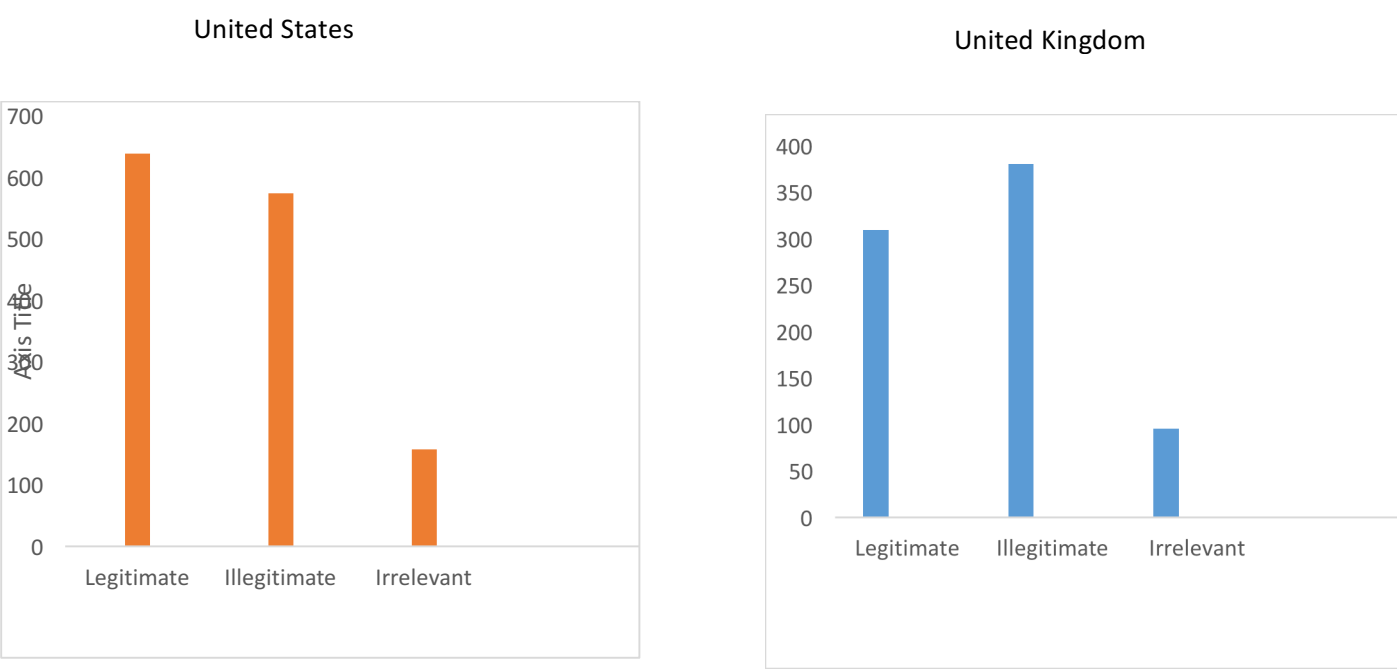


Figure 16: Perceptions of Conflict Legitimacy

The above charts represent the (implied or explicit) perception of the combined GWoT conflict noted in the analysis of the broader StT discourse.⁴⁶ The graph of the United Kingdom indicates that while representations of conflict as “illegitimate” are most common, they are followed very closely by representations of the conflict as “legitimate”. Together this supports my problematization of the linear narrative portraying StT as “simply” the product of unpopular wars. “Irrelevant”, here, captures the small amount of discourse that *explicitly* stated that assessment of the conflict’s legitimacy was irrelevant to supporting the troops. “Supporting the troops” may therefore be more fairly considered to be associated with contested, rather than “unpopular” wars. For the US, the “legitimate” frame is more common, but with a smaller margin than the distinction between the il/legitimate frames in the United Kingdom. The results for both cases disaggregated by source-type are as expected: the government predominantly frames conflict as legitimate - with approx. a third of US results dissenting as “illegitimate”, reflecting debate within the elected chambers. Anti-war groups virtually always refer to conflict as illegitimate, and military NGOs refer to legitimacy as irrelevant in the context of their broader message. Newspapers evidence the most even

⁴⁶ As it was not possible to ascertain conflict perception from each use of StT discourse, the absolute number of references here does not correspond with the broader total. These charts are illustrative of the sample, and are not exhaustive. (It is, for instance, highly unlikely but technically possible that all or most StT references that cannot be legitimately assessed for conflict perception fall into one particular category. That said, as this analysis is concerned with the constitution of StT within the discourse itself, rather than attempting to use the discourse to identify what political agents “really” think, this is not overly problematic).

distribution between the three, but indicate a greater use of “legitimate” framings in the US (by about a third of relevant references), while the UK is approx. even between legitimate and illegitimate.

In sum, while (stated) perceptions of conflict legitimacy constitute a key descriptive discursive theme within StT discourse, the general pattern that emerges is one of indeterminacy, with neither representation of conflict emerging as a dominant frame. Overall, the results suggest that rather than linearly following from particular assumptions as to the (il)legitimacy of conflicts under discussion, StT discourse is, in fact, a means of contesting these normative claims.

4.4.3 References to Historical Conflict

While Afghanistan and Iraq are the primary interpretive context of StT, the discourse also includes references to previous wars (see Ch. 3). The charts below map references to past conflicts deployed as either a) an analogy/frame for some aspect of contemporary conflicts; or, interestingly, b) referrals to past wars in and of themselves made within the contemporary StT idiom.

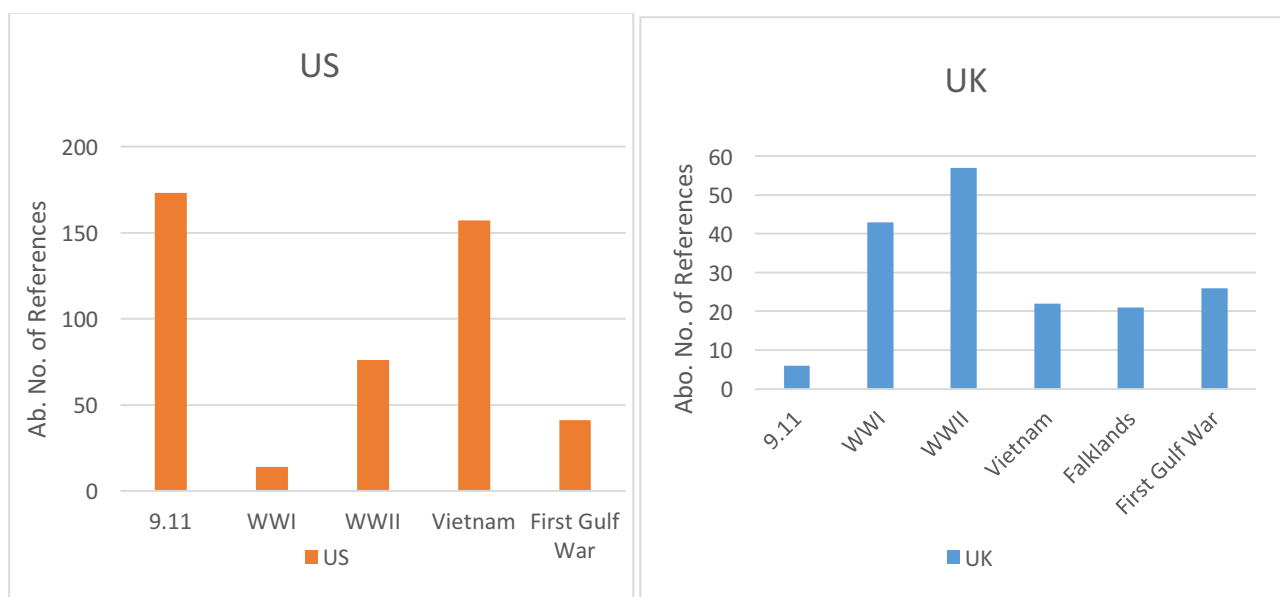


Figure 17: References to Past Conflicts

While these allusions are interesting in connecting contemporary discourse to the past, they do not constitute a substantial portion of the discourse. As we might expect, references to 11 September 2001 - the date of the al-Qaeda attack on the World Trade Centre in New York that spurred the initial NATO military action in Afghanistan - are the most common “conflict event” referenced in US discourse. It far exceeds the corresponding portion of overall references made up by 9/11 in the UK. In keeping with the legacy of Vietnam

identified by Coy et. al. discussed in Chapter Three,⁴⁷ Vietnam is the second most common historical conflict reference in the US. As might be expected, Vietnam is the most common historical reference across all source-types, with the exception of the government which, at 114 references, more typically invokes 9/11, and accounts for its general prevalence in the overall sample.

In the United Kingdom, in keeping with the long nostalgic shadow cast by WWI and, particularly, WWII upon British civil-military relations (see Ch. 3),⁴⁸ the World Wars are the primary conflict frame. The results by source-type for the UK are less homogenous – though there are so few the findings should not be over-emphasized. Vietnam is (slightly, by one and two references respectively) the most common reference for anti-war groups and newspapers, while the government refers to WWII most often. The military NGO references to historical conflicts are tied, between WWI and WWII.

The most interesting finding is the low profile of the First Gulf War, the conflict which arguably most directly pertains to the contentious 2003 invasion of Iraq, in both the US and the UK. This may reflect the fact that references to past historical conflicts are typically made with respect to the state of civil-military relations, and thus are often of an affective, sentimental, rather than evaluative or historical, nature.

4.5 DISCURSIVE DIVERSITY: KEY THEMES IN SUPPORTING THE TROOPS

The chapter now turns to the “interpretive” descriptive coding of the data, intended to provide an overarching picture of the diversity of StT discourse. It gives the contours of the discursive strands explicated and examined in great detail in the subsequent theoretical chapters. To capture the “social facts” of StT, the discourse was analysed to address the thematic questions of “who supports the troops?”, “how?”, “why?”, and “against whom?”. The specific categories/codes deployed in answering these questions were developed inductively from an analysis of the texts, and added to the project as relevant.⁴⁹

As the answer to each of these questions is not necessarily explicitly articulated in each text, a degree of subjective interpretation is required. Similarly, the various categorizations as to, for instance, who supports the troops, are not, logically, mutually-exclusive, as it is both possible and relatively common that a single text will reference, for example, both the families of military personnel and “Americans” as supporting the troops. Conversely, some texts do not provide enough information/context with which to make a reasoned judgment as to some of the interpretive themes.⁵⁰ The results of each interpretive question will now be

⁴⁷ Coy et. al. 2008, 161-189.

⁴⁸ Shaw 1991, 126-130; Tidy 2014a; Jenkins et. al. 2012.

⁴⁹ As the categorization scheme was developed in this grounded fashion, there is slight divergence between the US and the UK.

⁵⁰ The number of references contained within a single interpretive theme is unlikely to precisely correspond with the total number of references across the project.

considered in turn, before moving to the consideration of other significant themes common to the discourse. Overall, this section demonstrates the heterogeneity of StT discourse.

4.5.1 *Who Supports the Troops?*

The following charts provide an illustration of who (or what), in a given text, is either: a) constructed as supporting the troops, or b) being called upon to support the troops.

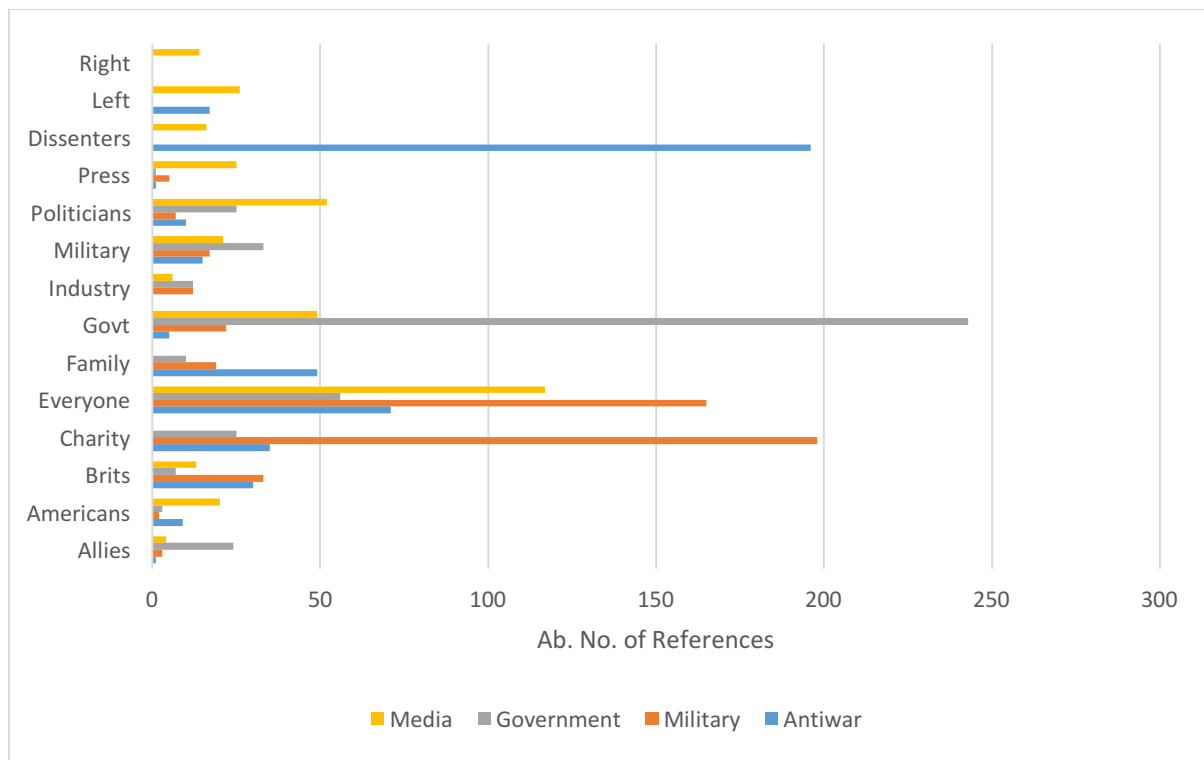


Figure 18: Supporting Collectivities by Source-Type - UK

As indicated by the chart, the group most commonly constructed as either supporting or being called upon to support the troops is “everyone”. “Everyone”, across all source-types, totals 411 references, in contrast to the 320 evidenced by the next most common – government. This includes uses of StT that either implicitly or explicitly address the collectivity as a whole, utilizing language such as “we”, “all”, “us”, or “everyone” without specifying the collectivity as British (or some other group). It also includes discourse interpellating an unnamed or unreferenced audience, as evidenced in the slogan “Support the Troops!”. Given the actors associated with the source-types encompassed within this study, it is unsurprising that the other constituencies substantially noted as supporting the troops are: a) the state/government (incorporating actors speaking, implicitly or explicitly, for/as the government, and thus the state); b) dissenters (incorporating those identified as opposing the war and/or actively engaged in protest); and c) the

charitable/philanthropic sector, in this case comprised predominantly, but not exclusively, of military charities.

This chart also indicates that though a good deal of the construction of “who supports the troops” is related to source-type selection, the construction of supportive subject and the “speaking” source do not entirely correspond. The correspondence of source-type with the supportive subject is entirely logical – after all, if the study examined primarily Halliburton press releases, Halliburton would likely be constituted as a major supporter of the troops. Examination of the specific sources shows, for instance, that Labour accounts for the vast majority of the “government supports the troops” references, while the Stop the War Coalition drives the anti-war groups’ engagement in the “dissenters support the troops” construction. In general, the specific sources do not diverge from the patterns shown by their type. The press engages in a wide variety of constructions, while results for military charities cluster around “Brits”, “everyone”, and the “charitable sector”. As the chart demonstrates, while charitable organizations are predominantly constructed as supporting the troops by the texts of pro-military NGOs, anti-war and government sources also utilize this frame – a pattern which can also be seen in the “government” and “dissenters” categories. Significantly, “everyone” is found in the discourse of all relevant social actors, demonstrating that the constitution of supportive subjects crosscuts source-types. This indicates the continuity of a significant component of the broader discursive formation across – and beyond – implied “speakers”.

Figure 18 also demonstrates the sheer *diversity* of collective and individual actors implicated in supporting the troops. Politicians, for instance, classified as elected or aspirant public officials not constructed as representing the state, also frequently appear in StT discourse, as do the military institution, private business/industry, the press, and the families of serving members. The supportive subjects constituted by StT discourse are both public and private, and span the conventional IR levels of analysis. It should be noted that the references to “right” and “left” here correspond to explicit references to positioning on the political spectrum within the discourse, rather than an external categorization of politicians, parties, or ideological positions. The right/left frame appears relatively insignificant within UK StT discourse.⁵¹

Counter-intuitively, ostensibly external actors here noted as allies (states participating alongside Britain in military operations) and Americans are also, though uncommonly, noted as having a role to play in supporting the troops. While Americans are occasionally referenced as supporting UK troops, many of these references are UK newspaper articles discussing American support for US troops, or, UK actors noting this support approvingly. This further suggests the (creeping) trans-nationalization of the discourse and,

⁵¹ As noted before, the formal partisan political actors were coded as such, by party and actor-type (e.g. Lord/Senator), and further details in this vein may be provided upon request.

interestingly, a move towards the transcendence of the typical national/territorial correspondence of military-state-society responsibility for StT. The comparative paucity of references to the British supporting the troops (via explicit reference to Brits, Britain, or the nation/country in the use of StT discourse) is also of note, as it suggests that while nationalism has a role to play in the articulation of StT, its articulation may be more nuanced than intuition might suggest, and is far from the only logic of affiliation at play. This work thus challenges the simple government vs. protestors' narrative of much of the existing literature on the subject.

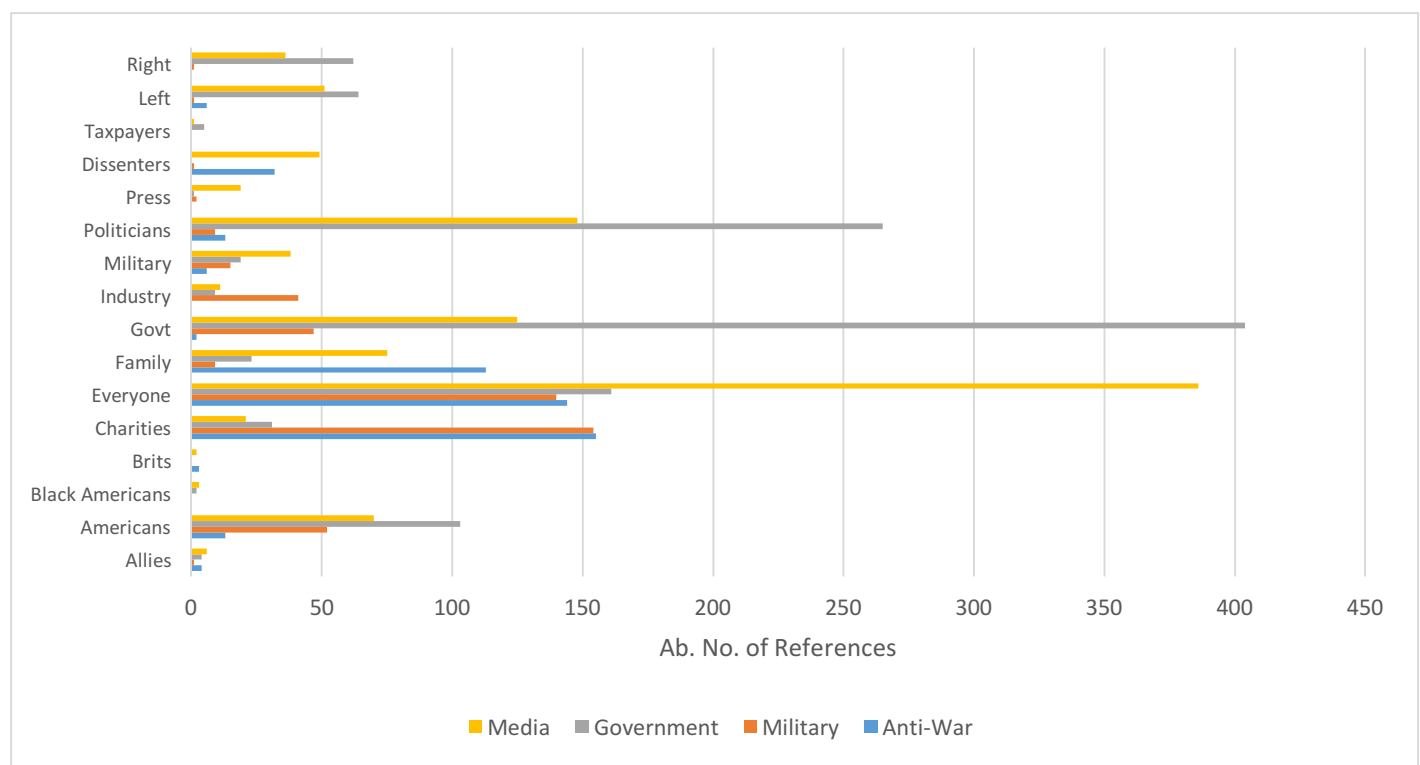


Figure 19: Supportive Collectivities by Source-Type - US

Analysis of the US data – which was coded according to parameters identical to the UK, with the exception that “Black Americans” and “taxpayers” were added as new categories – suggests a pattern comparable to the UK. “Everyone” is the most common characterization of who/what supports the troops, with a total of 874 references. Though the majority of “everyone” references derive from the media – partially attributable to the volume of reportage covering the diffuse social practices, such as rallies and displaying symbols that accompany StT linguistic discourse – like the UK, it is clear that the frame is employed by all involved actors.

This is followed by the government (588), politicians (429), the charitable sector (403), and Americans (259). Politicians are a larger proportion of the overall references in the US than the UK, which may be due to differentiations in legislative convention, wherein UK politicians, speaking in the House of Commons/Lords

are likely to frame themselves as actors of state/government regardless of political party, while US politicians frame themselves in relation to a particular administration (as supporting or opposing). It also suggests that if taken together as references to conventional political authority, politicians and government, at 1017, exceed references to “everyone”. While “politicians” does not correspond to the constitution of supportive collectivity in the same way that “everyone”, or “Americans” does, in terms of implying a particular group beyond the speaker, the preponderance of the “government” and “politicians” categories do suggest that StT discourse in the US is more statist than that of the UK.

In contrast to the UK, “dissenters” does not appear in the top four results, instead accounting for less than 100 references within the sample. This may be due to the fact that American opponents of the war were less likely to frame themselves as engaged in dissent, instead appealing to the more universal frame of “everyone”. It is also a reflection of the inclusion of Military Families Speak Out within the NGO sample, wherein the primary identity of speakers tended to be as family members of the military, rather than as anti-war protestors. It also reflects a more general distinction, illustrated in subsequent graphs, wherein UK StT discourse is more associated with war opposition than war support, in contrast to the US.

The results for each specific source/organization were also checked for relevant patterns/divergences. Generally, the individual sources correspond to the patterns within their source-type group, as evidenced above – and those seen in the UK. Military NGOs’ results cluster around “everyone”, “charitable sector”, and “government”, with a somewhat surprising number of references to “industry”, reflecting their promotion of corporate sponsors of charitable endeavours. The anti-war groups typically engage in the “everyone” and “charitable” frames – with the abovementioned exception of MFSO, which is the greatest proponent of the “family” frame. The three newspapers parallel each other in their coverage, with “everyone”, followed by “government” and politicians” as the most frequent categories. The only notable distinction is that the NYT and WP invoke the “family” frame far more often than the WSJ, reflecting their greater coverage of local interest/social practice stories, as opposed to the WSJ’s emphasis on more formally political actors in their reporting. The greatest difference between particular sources is that Republicans use the “government” frame (249 references) more often than do Democrats (148 references). Similarly, Democrats were more likely to construct the supporters (generally, themselves and their colleagues) as “politicians” (206) than Republicans (60). This reflects the greater time spent by the Republican party in government (2001-2008) during the relevant time-period.

The salient finding of this chart, much like the UK, is the diversity of groups/actors (and corresponding variation in their social scale and positioning) constructed as implicated in supporting the troops. The use of a variety of frames for StT across the relevant social actors again highlights the continuity of particular

aspects, such as “charities” and “everyone”, as particularly significant supportive subjects, but also the constitution of collective subjects, such as “allies”, that do not correspond with the sources of the empirical data. Finally, the disparity between “everyone” and “Americans”, again suggests that there is something more than “simple” nationalism underpinning the social relations of StT. As the divergence between source-type and supportive actor constitutes the hardest “test” of the diffuse nature of the various discursive constructions, this highlights the heterogeneity of the discourse.

4.5.2 Why Support the Troops?

The below charts offer a window upon what may be the most important aspect of StT as a representation of the normative relationship between society and the armed forces – the reasons, implicit or explicit, provided for supporting the troops.

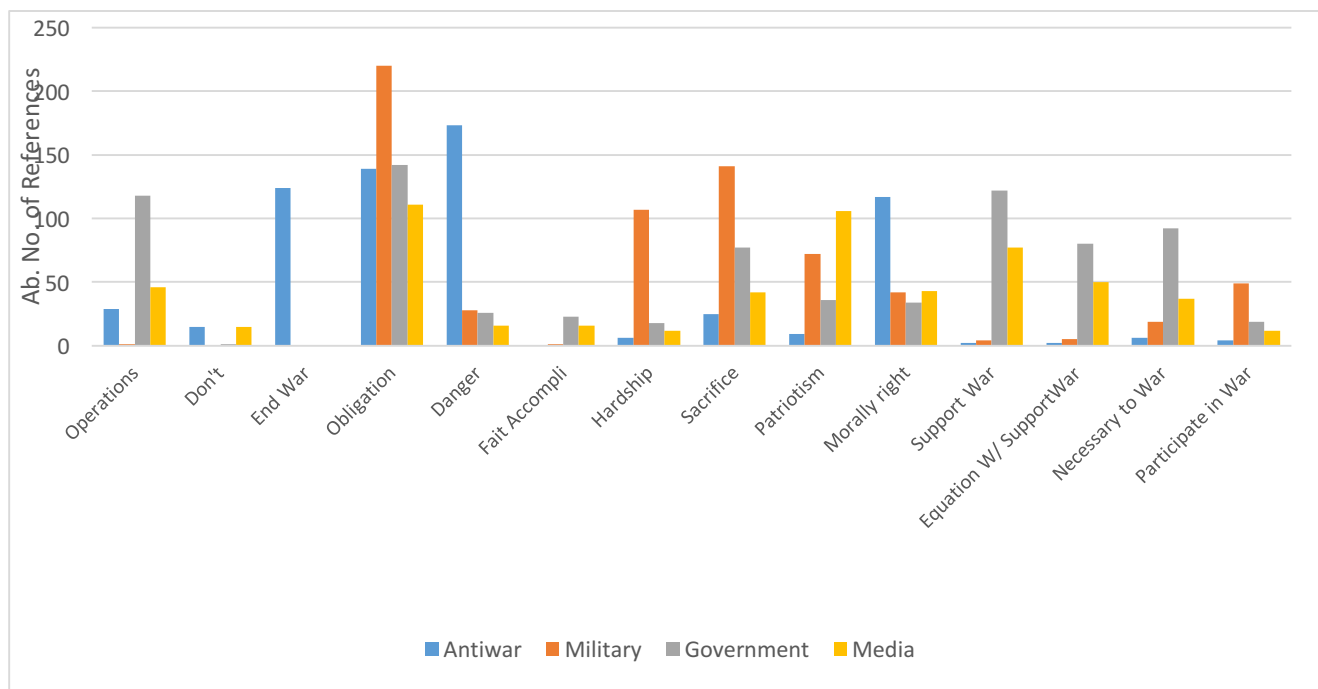


Figure 20: Supportive Rationale by Source-Type - UK

Figure 20 indicates that “obligation” is, by a wide margin at 614 references the predominant reason provided for StT in the United Kingdom. The next most common results are “sacrifice” (which is strongly related to obligation) at 286, and “morally right” at 238.

“Obligation” refers to discourses explicitly or implicitly invoking the typical (liberal) understanding of “support” as owed, in pseudo-contractual form, to those serving in the armed forces. It most closely mirrors the logic of the mythical liberal contract. This is interpreted broadly to include discourse which is simply underscored by a sense of compulsion, that one “must” support the troops. It also encapsulates unspecified

exhortations directed outwards (i.e. “support the troops!”) which imply the audience is failing to perform/conform to a social obligation. The four themes to the right of “obligation” commonly (though not exclusively) accompany a sense of (positive or negative) obligation. Hardship (associated with the physical conditions and social distance associated with war), danger (the risk of life and injury), and sacrifice (of life, time, opportunities, etc.) are frequently proposed as the *grounds* for this obligation. The obligation to provide support as a “*fait accompli*”, which encompasses material that *explicitly* references the sense that in wartime, there is no choice but to support the troops, is also included in this group of associated codes.⁵² The grouping of these categories is an inductively-derived analytic choice, rather than a one-to-one empirical correlation. The payoff of this choice in terms of our understanding of citizenship and political obligation vis-à-vis violence is demonstrated in Chapter Six.

The three themes to the right of “supporting the war” – which captures discourse that posits StT as a means of supporting the war – are thematically similar to that of supporting the troops for the war without being reducible to it.⁵³ “Equation with supporting the war”, for instance, is similar to supporting the troops to support the war, reflecting discourse that implicitly or explicitly equates supporting the troops with supporting the war, rendering the two indivisible. “Necessary” refers to StT as necessary to the war effort/operational success, while “participate” captures references to StT as a means of non-military persons contributing to the war effort.

Together, obligation and supporting the war (with associated logics) make up a substantial portion – approximately 70 per cent – of the rationales provided for supporting the troops. The two do not exhaust the supportive logics woven throughout the discursive formation. “End war”, for instance, refers to discourse which flips the logic of “support the troops, bring them home” and proposes StT as a means of ending the overall conflict – “support the troops to end the war”. “Don’t” captures the (very) few references (31) suggesting that either a) the troops ought not to be supported; b) satirizing the mass production of support for the troops; or, c) explicitly accusing a particular societal actor of not supporting the troops.

“Operational” refers to StT in the context of military operations (e.g. “the air force will support the troops on the ground”). It thus furthers the instrumental supportive rationales also at work in “support the war”

⁵² These categories associated with obligation (i.e. danger, sacrifice, hardship, and *fait accompli*), as well as those associated with supporting the war (i.e. participate, simply equating StT with supporting the war, and support as necessary) are not coded as subcategories of obligation and supporting the war, respectively, as the associated themes are neither mutually exclusive nor solely associated with the broader supportive logic. It is possible to oppose the war yet still vote to appropriate necessary military equipment (which would be recorded as “necessary to war” as well as “obligation”).

⁵³ These conceptual associations have been confirmed by cross-tabs of the relevant categories, which, for the sake of space are not presented here.

and “end the war”.⁵⁴ It is interesting to note the degree to which “civilian” support for the military is articulated in language applicable to (and, indeed, prior to Vietnam and the First Gulf War, predominantly associated with) the actual institutional execution of warfare. The applicability of the same language to both operational planning/reporting and the frequently affective civilian discourse constituting the relationship between society and the armed forces offers a compelling illustration of the way in which ostensibly “military” logics, concerns, and sentiments exceed the formal institution. (It is also perhaps the best illustration of StT as “militarism”, conventionally understood). This, as with the general heterogeneity of StT, further highlights the analytic utility of conceptualizing the military as a circulating discourse (and structural effect).

The remaining two categories also correspond to normative social relations. “Patriotism”, for instance, captures discourse that either references the nation (or state/country), or explicitly casts support as a matter of patriotism. “Morally right”, in contrast, incorporates discourse which expresses a sense that it is “good”, or “appropriate” to support the troops without suggesting a feeling of obligation, providing a specific reason, or conveying a sense of “common cause”. As demonstrated by the chart, much of this encapsulates “charitable” discourses relating to the troops. The ways in which the “reasons why” relate to each other, the other significant discursive themes identified in this chapter, and the theoretical implications for the larger understanding of StT thereof make up the heart of the theoretical chapter relating to StT, the military, and collective subject formation in international relations (Chs. 6 and 7).

Finally, it is worth briefly considering the way supportive rationales differ by source-type, as a means of further reiterating the dynamic and collective nature of the various discursive strands constituting the StT formation. (The results have also been analysed by specific source/organization, with relevant findings flagged where relevant). Though particular supportive logics are articulated more within some source-types than others – for instance, government documents, unsurprisingly, are the greatest contributor to the “support war” and “necessary for war” rationales, with no meaningful difference between the Labour and Conservative parties – virtually all rationales are evident in multiple discursive “sites”. The sole exception is the “end war” line of reasoning, which is only found in the texts of anti-war groups.

Interestingly, the government’s emphasis on “supporting the war” is not shared by the military charities. Their discourse relies more heavily on “obligation” and the associated themes of hardship and sacrifice. Given the dependence of these organizations on the general public for financial support, as well as their commitment to the military as a service constituency, this is entirely logical – though one might have

⁵⁴ This is not to say there is no normative component to the more directly instrumental logics, but rather that it is not the prevailing dynamic at work, as the support is typically a means to an (often unarticulated) normative goal, such as military success, national security, etc.

expected greater usage of the “morally right” discourse. Instead, anti-war groups account for much of this discourse. The related promotion of “danger” as a supportive logic by anti-war groups – particularly by the StWC – is indicative of the “Bring Them Home Now!” vein of anti-war protest, which frames war as threatening to military personnel. “Patriotism” is driven by press results, and partially reflects UK media coverage (and analysis) of US StT discourses. The results likely therefore slightly overstate the prevalence of explicitly British patriotic frames in StT. Most importantly, the dominant category of obligation is present in the texts of all source-types, indicating a key continuity – the liberal military contract – within the discursive formation against which other supportive logics may be positioned, played off, and circulated.

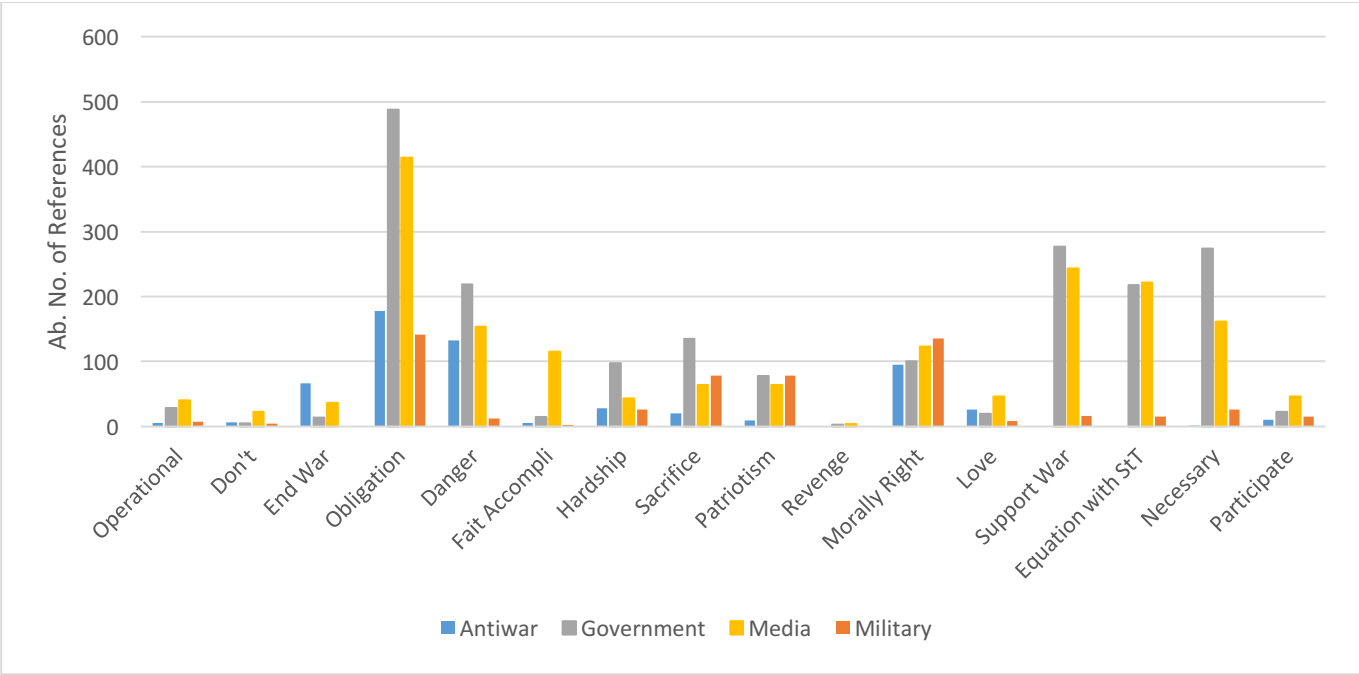


Figure 21: Supportive Rationale by Source-Type US

Analysis of the “why StT” data by source-type from the US indicates a similar diversity in rationales underlying support for the troops. It also demonstrates a similar pattern in terms of most common results, with obligation, at 1257 references, constituting the dominant supportive rationale. This is followed by “support the war” (538), “danger” (519), and “morally right” (488). The combined references to “obligation” and “support the war” (with associated categories), again, constitute approximately 75 per cent of total results. The correspondence of press and government narratives – if not their overall volume –regarding “supporting the war” and associated constructions is also similar to the UK.

The most notable divergence of US results from those of the UK is the relatively higher proportion of references to supporting the war; It overtakes both “danger” and “morally right”⁵⁵ in frequency of references. This may reflect both the greater level of public contestation regarding the war in Iraq experienced in the US vis-à-vis the UK (where public opinion turned against the war quite quickly).⁵⁶ Interestingly, despite the more explicitly nationalistic tenor of public discourse in the US writ large, the proportion of US supportive rationales made of up explicitly patriotic language (6 per cent) is slightly less than that seen in the UK (approx. 8 per cent).⁵⁷ Given the logistical difficulties inherent to the sampling described earlier, it would be a mistake to overdraw this distinction. That said, the general eschewing of explicitly patriotic frames for the more universalized notions of “obligation” does, again, suggest, that StT should be not attributed to “mere” nationalism.

It is interesting to note that the government accounts for most of the results in the categories associated with “obligation” – namely “danger”, “sacrifice”, and “hardship”. This is in contrast with the UK, where anti-war groups and military charities produced much of this discourse. It should be noted, however, that the government texts are the most frequent source-type for all categories. This reflects the heterogeneity of government StT discourse and the overall volume of government results – notably the 20 per cent sample of the Congressional record – as a proportion of the current sample.

Within these texts, Democrats account for the majority of “obligation” references (307 to 174), whereas Republicans account for most of the “support the war” discourse (223 to 51), again reflecting the Republicans’ governing position for most of the relevant time period. At the source level, the military and anti-war NGOs mirror the pattern of the source-type graph, with military NGOs uniformly engaging in frames of “obligation”, “right morally”, and “sacrifice”, in that order. Anti-war NGOs follow the pattern of the UK (using the language of “obligation”, “danger” and “morally right”) – with one exception.

In terms of the “end war” category, the empirics – particularly those of anti-war groups – suggest an interesting distinction between the US and UK (see Ch. 8). While US anti-war groups often construct “the troops” as an object of concern in their own right, UK groups are often more ambiguous. Each frequently makes reference to “obligation”, “morally right”, and “danger” as supportive logics, but references to

⁵⁵ It should be noted that as, interestingly, “love”, either explicitly stated or in references to affective ties between family members and friends, was evident as a reason for support in the US - and not at all, in this form, in the UK - it has been added to the coding categorizations for the US case. It is placed under the umbrella of “morally right”.

⁵⁶ Public opinion polls conducted in the UK indicate that in February 2003, 52% of Brits opposed the war in Iraq, whereas in the US, the first poll of a majority Americans indicating disapproval of the war was not registered until June 2005. Travis and Black 2003; and Milibank and Deane 2005.

⁵⁷ The most recent (2003/4) International Social Survey Program, which asked survey respondents in 33 countries questions related to various measures of national pride, ranked the US first in both general and domain specific national pride. Great Britain ranked 19th. Smith and Kim 2006.

“ending the war” make up a far greater proportion of UK anti-war group results than those in the US. This suggests that while in the UK there is concern for “the troops” in their own right, “bringing them home” is often (also) attractive as a means of ending the war (the primary goal) (see Ch. 8).

In conclusion, the primary take-aways of this section are: a) the existence of a dominant construction (obligation, shared by the UK); b) the articulation of several alternative, potentially contradictory rationales for troop support; and c) the degree to which these frames vary across and between source-types. This implies that while social actors/implicit speakers are important to understanding the generation and articulation of the phenomenon, they are unsatisfactory anchors for identifying particular StT discourses within the overall formation. Though some discursive aspects may be strongly associated with particular source-types, such as “necessary for war effort” and the government, “government StT” discourse cannot be analytically substituted for “necessary” StT discourse. To understand StT, it is necessary to move from consideration of the source-type/implicit-actor to examine the collective subjects constituted within the discourse itself.

4.5.3 How to Support the Troops?

This section provides an overview of the many ways noted in the discourse that one might support the troops. “How to support the troops” is generally articulated with reference to a concrete action, resulting in a wide array of identified practices – many of which are contradictory. This section presents the aggregated results of the entire sample for each country, followed by the results disaggregated by source-type. This is not to compare “apples and oranges” – it’s important to remember that the various sources are not comparable in terms of sampling method and data availability – but rather to simplify interpretation of an extensive number of categories. The purpose is to demonstrate the heterogeneity of the discourse and associated practices of the StT phenomenon.

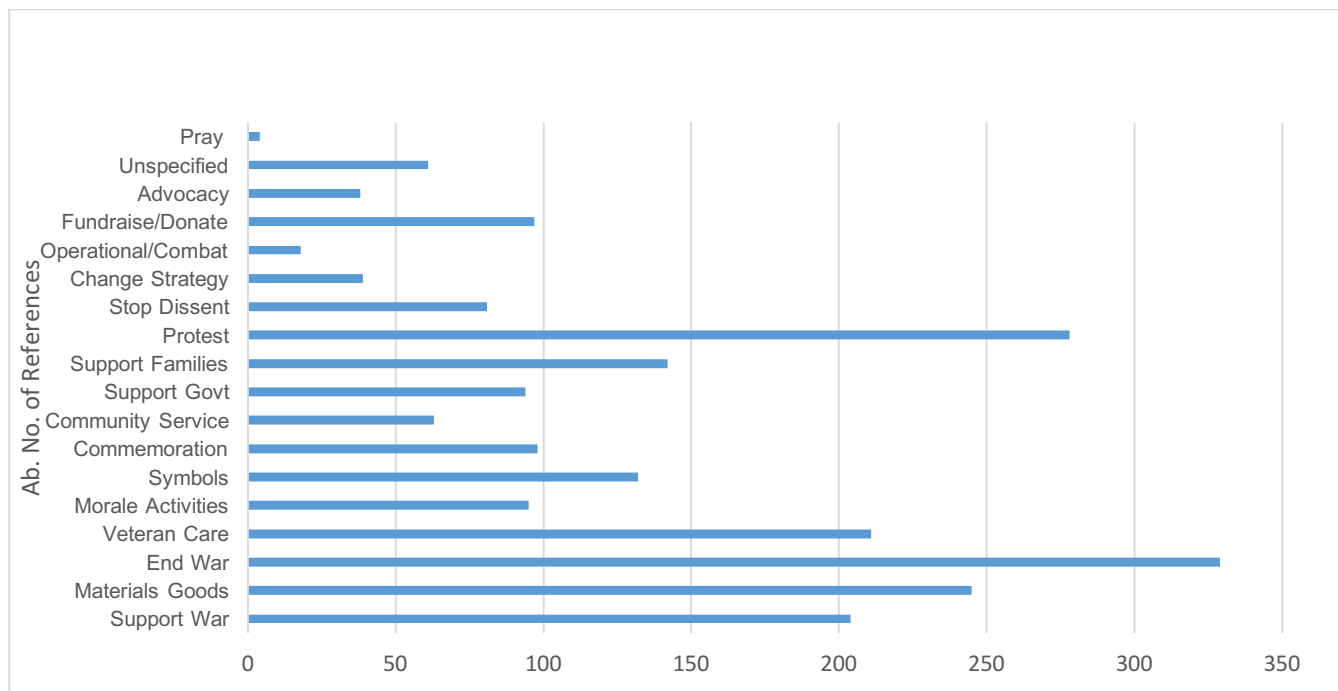


Figure 22: Supportive Practice - UK (Aggregate)

In the United Kingdom, the associated practices of “protesting” – referring to publicly expressing opposition to war (initially, Iraq, and later, Afghanistan) – and “ending the war” are the most-commonly articulated means of supporting the troops, at 329 and 278 results, respectively. This accounts for 27 per cent of total references (2229) to supportive practices. It must be noted, again, as with all the interpretive results, this does not correspond to a total of all discourse, as some texts include references to multiple practices. The fact that the top two categories – which may be plausibly understood to be connected in reflecting an anti-war preference – make up only approximately a quarter of practice references further illustrates the multi-accentual nature of the discourse, and, in this case, the lack of an identifiable “centre”.

This is followed shortly by the provision of “material goods” (245 references) – which incorporates money (either direct to military personnel or budget appropriations, at 36 references), military equipment (166), and care packages (52). The next most common practice is “supporting the war” at 204 references. This may be reflective of the extent to which British public opinion was divided on the question Iraq and, subsequently, Afghanistan.⁵⁸ The supportive practices thus, even at this aggregate level, exhibits substantially more contestation than the previously-discussed components of StT. Unlike, for instance, the rationales of

⁵⁸ YouGov polls tracking UK public opinion found that support for UK use of military force in Iraq briefly spiked to 66% immediately following the March 2003 invasion, but declined to below 50% in 2004, and never increased. Public opinion initially supported military operations in Afghanistan, with 63 % of respondents in 2001 surveys supporting the UK use of military force against terrorist organizations post-9/11, a favourable assessment that endured until 2009, when public opinion on the war split 46% in favour, and 47% opposed. YouGov 2014; Travis 2001. BBC History 2015.

obligation and war support which could be reconciled without much difficulty (and occasionally appear together), it expresses actions which actively contradict each other.

Other important supportive practices demonstrated in the UK are the call for support for veterans and support for troops' families, which ranges from somewhat ephemeral moral support to funding family vacations and children's activities to improved salary and living conditions. Such supportive practices provide an initial illustration of the multiple constructions of the "troops" as, here, veterans and family members, rather than "simply" the actively serving-military personnel alluded to by references to supporting or ending the war. The "operational" category refers to discourse related to the active practice of war (such as "supply convoys support the troops in country") and constructs "the troops" as functionally synonymous with the over-arching military itself.

Other significant supportive practices, include performing community service (discourse which suggests that either: a) StT is a form of community service, or b) that community involvement, such as volunteering, is a means of StT); acts of commemoration (references to either remembering fallen soldiers of past and present conflicts, honouring veterans, or formally noting contemporary service via, for instance, legislative motion); and conducting morale activities (e.g. "welcome home" events for service people, parades, or, in the UK, participating in Armed Forces Day. The category of "symbols" captures references to the display (as signs, apparel, adornment, etc.) of symbols associated with the military (and, frequently) the nation. In the UK, much of this discourse derives from the Royal British Legion's poppy campaign (52 references),⁵⁹ but also incorporates references to wearing charitable wristbands⁶⁰ – including the "yellow ribbon" (14 references),⁶¹ and the British flag (15 references).

⁵⁹ See Harrison 2012.

⁶⁰ On rise of "ribbon culture" and the donning of various apparel in order to display affiliation with a social cause, see Moore 2008.

⁶¹ See Tuleja 1994, 23-30.

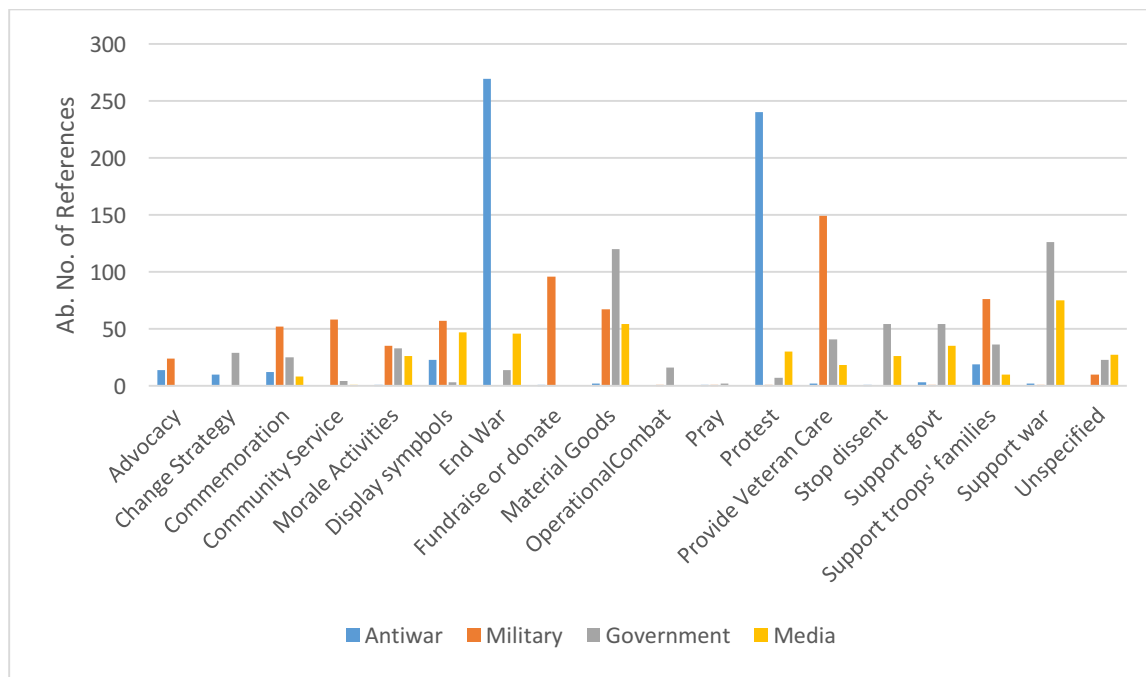


Figure 23: Supportive Practice by Source-Type - UK

This disaggregated data for supportive practices indicates that the two most frequent categories – protesting and ending the war – are almost entirely driven by anti-war NGOs. StWC accounts for the vast majority of these references (200 and 221, respectively). Those priorities are mirrored in trend (though not volume) by the other anti-war organizations. Similarly, the pro-military support activities of commemoration, community service, displaying symbols, supporting troops’ families, and, particularly the provision of veterans’ care, are largely accounted for by the discourse of military-related NGOs. Amongst these groups, the Royal British Legion promotes commemoration, veterans’ care, and the display of symbols (the poppy), while Help for Heroes demonstrates an interest in veterans’ care, fundraising, and community service (in that order). BLESMA and the Army Benevolent Fund follow the same pattern as the Legion, while uk4uThanks!, places greater emphasis on providing care packages than any other practice, in keeping with its mandate.

The government is the greatest proponent of discourse promoting the provision of material goods – driven by Hansard debates regarding budgets and military procurement. Government sources also account for the highest component of “support the war” rhetoric, as is to be expected. Within this document group, Labour and the Conservatives were, interestingly, fairly balanced in their promotion of support for the war, at 55 and 48 references respectively. (The Liberal Democrats used StT discourse most in relation to the provision of material goods, at 14 references. Support for the war accounted for only nine, which reflects the party’s official opposition to the invasion of Iraq). The provision of material goods was the second-most frequent supportive practice for both Labour (55) and the Conservatives (37).

The references to supportive practices amongst the newspapers, interestingly, also varies substantially. *The Guardian* and the *Times*, for instance, made most frequent reference to supporting the war, at 21 and 18 references respectively – but *The Guardian* also made nearly as many references to ending the war (19) and protest (14). While *The Times* evidenced the second most-frequent use of the end war frame, it accounted for only eight references, which was exceed by display symbols and the provision of material goods, at 11 references each. The results for *The Independent* and *Observer* were spread fairly evenly, while *The Telegraph* also most commonly used StT discourse with respect to material goods. *The Sun*, in contrast, reflecting its association with H4H, held the provision of veteran care as the predominant supportive practice. The diversity in papers’ references to supportive practices is attributable to the content of the opinion pages and editorial decisions in terms of coverage. The supportive practice results, therefore, more than any other, reflect the political inclinations of the various papers’ editorial boards.

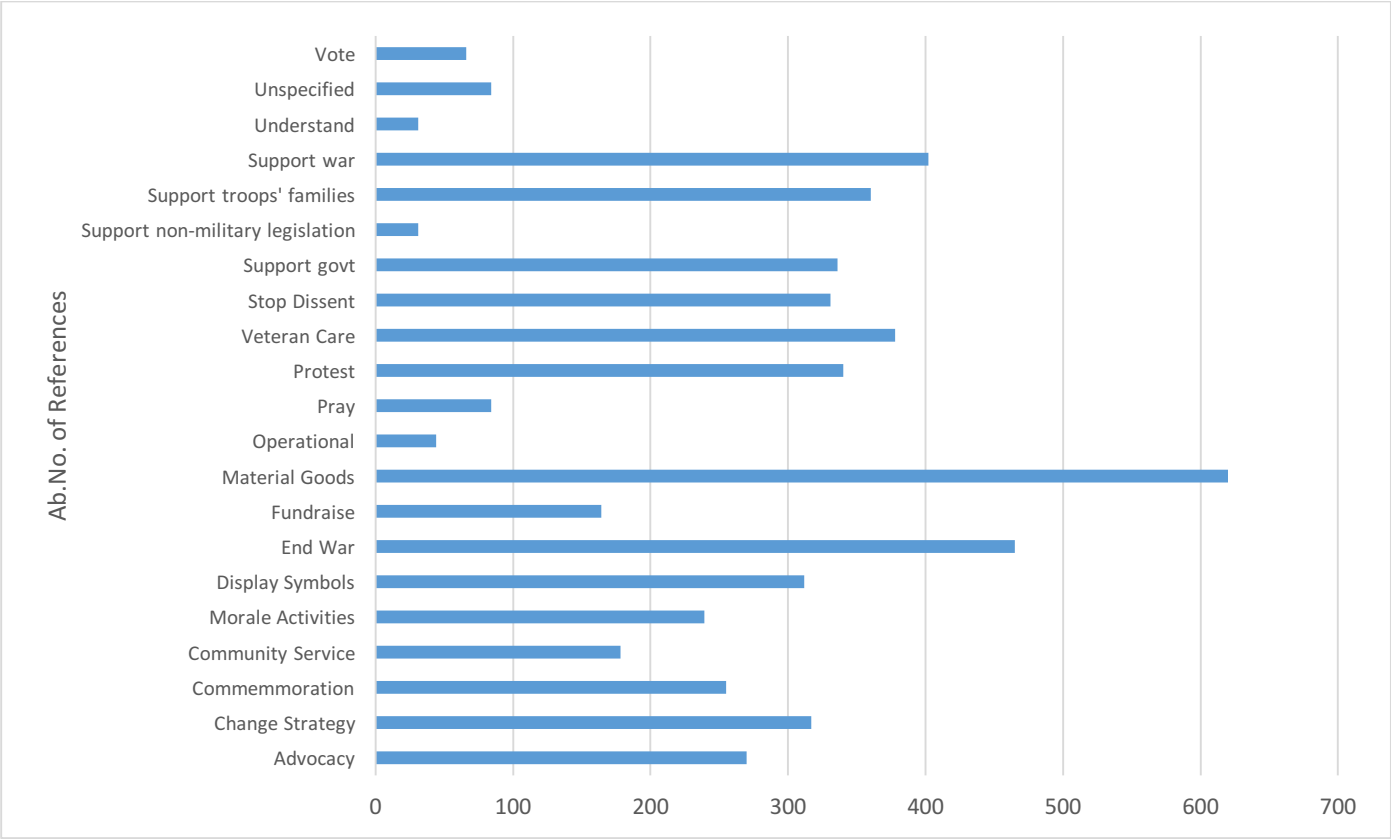


Figure 24: Supportive Practice - US (Aggregate)

Unsurprisingly, the US discourse regarding supportive practices also exhibits substantial fragmentation and contestation. In contrast to the UK, wherein “ending the war” was the predominant supportive frame, in the US, the provision of material goods (620 references, or 12 per cent of total “how” references) is most common. This provision of material goods includes 149 references to care packages, 462 to money (the vast majority of which derive from Congressional appropriations debates) and 240 to military gear. This is

followed by “end war” (465 references) and “support war” (402 references). In contrast to the UK, wherein the top two results of “end war” and “protest” were related, the commensurability of the provision of material goods and ending the war is far less clear. Here, the pairing of end war and protest accounts for 15 per cent of total references to supportive practices. The associated categories of “supporting the war”, ceasing dissent, and supporting the government, together, account for 20 per cent of “how” references – this increases to 32 per cent with the inclusion of the provision of material goods. In the UK, these combined references make up approx. 28 per cent of the total, which is tied with the end war/protest pair. It is thus fair to suggest that while both cases show a high degree of contestation regarding appropriate supportive practices, those associated with supporting the war make up a larger portion of the StT conversation in the US than do similar discourses in the UK.

Another significant difference is marked by the “symbols” category (approx. 6 per cent of how references, the same as in the UK), which, in the United States refers primarily to the display of the American flag (103 references) and the stereotypical “yellow ribbon” (112 references) – particularly as a vehicle bumper sticker. “Praying”, additionally, makes up a greater proportion of constructions of supportive practices in the US than UK.⁶² It should also be noted that in the category “veteran care”, references to the government’s responsibility (289) exceeded those to civil society’s (101) – a contrast to the UK. Finally, the categories “vote” and “support non-military legislation” were added to the analysis of US discourse to capture discursive constructions of voting (generally or for particular candidates) and supporting legislation unrelated to the military (such as environmental or education policy) as connected to StT. This may be reflective of the broader pervasiveness (and political salience) of the discourse in the US compared to the UK.

Additionally, the “change strategy” category, which (unexplicated above) refers to discursive references to changing the deployment or practice of military operations abroad (such as, for instance, the “surge”) is interesting, in both the US and UK, for what it does not contain. With a few exceptions (14) in the US sample calling for a return to national service, virtually none of the StT discourse in either country-case proposes joining the military as a means of supporting the troops. The meaning(s) of this elision, particularly striking in the context of the other, arguably more tangential practices identified as possibly StT, is further explicated in Chapter Seven. For the moment, it is sufficient to highlight it as a counterintuitive, silent continuity between the US and UK, rendered visible by critical consideration of the plethora of explicitly articulated practices.

⁶² This is in keeping with Pew Global Research Center’s finding that 50% of Americans stated that religion is very important in their life, compared to 17% in the UK. Pew Research Center 2012.

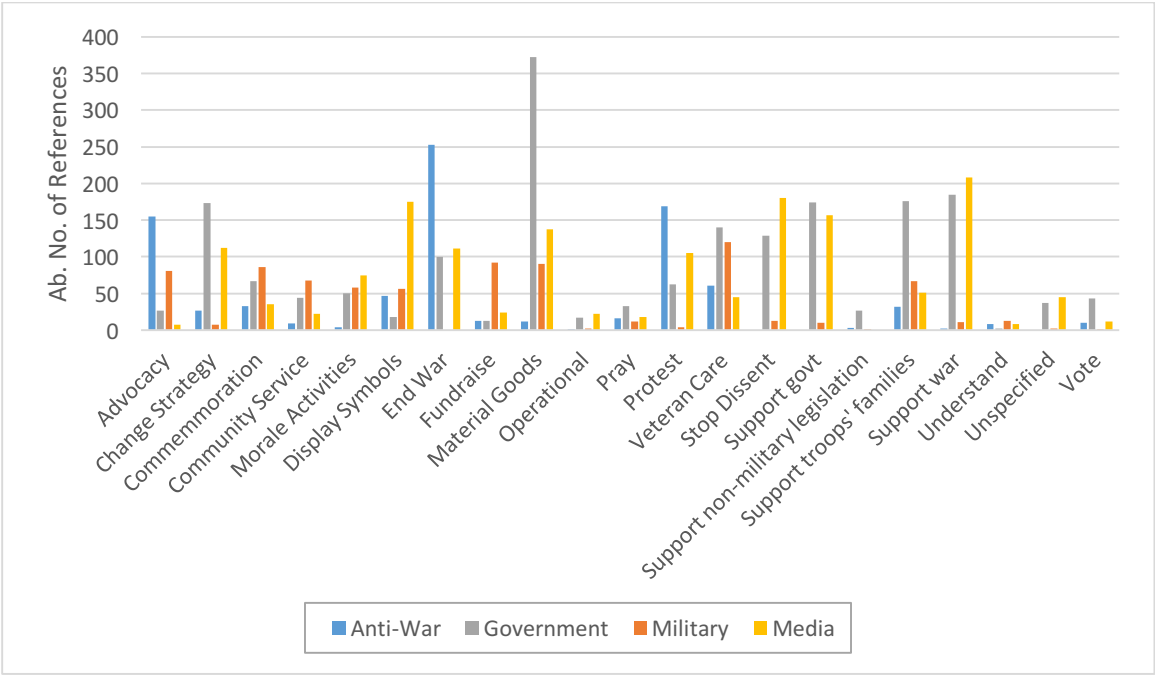


Figure 25: Support Practices by Source-Type - US

Analysis of supportive practices by source-type indicates that the dominance of the “material goods” category derives from the contributions of the Congressional Record to the sample, particularly debates regarding appropriate supplies for US reservists and budgetary allocations. Democrat (180 references) and Republican (186 references) engagement in the “material goods” strain of StT discourse is similar, reflecting a consensus amongst formal political actors that military personnel in the field must be outfitted, regardless of partisan disagreement as to the legitimacy of the war and/or specific policy decisions. Other than this, the two parties agree on little – the next three most common results for the Republicans are supporting the war (169), supporting the government (151), and ceasing dissent (119). Democrats, in contrast, use StT discourse with reference to changing strategy (117) – this derives from Congressional debates supporting withdrawal, and opposing the surge – providing veteran care (112), and supporting troops’ families (105). Each party made a small (approx. 15-30) number of references to commemoration, community service, and morale activities. Democrats, however, referenced “protest/dissent” as an appropriate means of StT 60 times, compared to the Republicans’ two. The two political parties’ reference to particular supportive practices, as in the UK, aligns with what we would expect given their official positions on the war in Iraq. It is, however, noteworthy that each party makes reference to each supportive practice listed, further illustrating the complex intertwining of potentially contradictory attitudes towards the troops – and the fallacy of attributing a homogenous position to a discrete political actor.

The chart also indicates the anti-war NGOs, as expected, are the main contributors, and in roughly similar proportions, to the “end war”, “protest”, and “advocacy” practices. The rise in number of “advocacy”

references in the US in contrast to the UK is likely due to a difference of framing of very similar activities between the two states. The UK evidences a more traditional/conventional “protest” frame, while US groups frame their activities as advocacy and/or lobbying. While this distinction is somewhat semantic, it also reflects the legacy of the post-Vietnam construction of “protestors” as “anti-troop”. As illustrated in Chapter Eight, this reliance on an “advocacy” frame reflects a tendency amongst major US anti-war groups to frame their activism in the name of the troops, rather than a broader opposition to war generally.

There is greater diversity amongst military-related NGOs. Providing veterans’ care is the most common practice referenced by Disabled American Veterans (53 references), Veterans of Foreign Wars (35), and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans’ Association (27 references). The most common response for Birdies for the Brave, however, is conducting morale activities – which reflects the organization’s mandate of honouring service personnel and veterans at sporting events. Operation Gratitude, like uk4uThanks!, is predominantly concerned with providing care packages. DAV and IAVA secondarily emphasize advocacy, reflecting their mandate of lobbying the government for veterans’ services, while VFW emphasizes material goods and supporting troops’ families. All organizations also connect fundraising/donation to StT. In contrast to the “apolitical” stances of UK and other US military-NGOs, the VFW also makes (infrequent) reference – eleven, to be precise – to supporting the troops by supporting the war.

Press coverage of supportive practices mirrors that of the government. This reflects media reportage of the government, but, given the dissemination potential and general social influence of the media, may also represent a nascent convergence. Amongst themselves, however, divergence remains, as the *Washington Post*, which is the greatest contributor to StT discourse in absolute totals, most often references StT in the context of supporting the war (110 references), above displaying symbols (96) and stopping dissent (82). The *New York Times*, in contrast, most commonly mentioned stopping dissent (61), followed by displaying symbols (59), and supporting the war (57). The *Wall Street Journal*, finally, first references supporting the war (41), followed by stopping dissent (37), and a tie between supporting the government, changing strategy, and providing material goods, at 27. In comparison to the UK, the messaging of war opponents, and corresponding political actions received less coverage in the US press. As “ending the war” was the second-most common reference in the aggregated results, this supports the conclusion that the press is largely reflecting state patterns of StT discourse, rather than an absence of end war/protest practices. It also suggests the lesser social influence of the organizational actors, such as anti-war groups and far-left Democratic politicians, associated with the end war/protest bundle of StT practices.

Finally, the discourse reflected in the four graphs (US and UK) indicates that support may be active (such as community service), passive (such as displaying a symbol), or even negative (abstaining from dissent). As

with the preceding discursive themes, then, the significance of this overview is the remarkable polyvalence of the discourse. This suggests that rather than seeking to arrive at a singular definition as to what it is to support the troops, a more useful line of enquiry is to map and identify the complex intertwining of the various meanings, subjects, social relations, and logics expressed within the discursive formation.

4.5.4 *Support the Troops in Relation to/Against...?*

The final discursive theme identified through the “journalistic” interrogation of the texts relates to constitution of the reason(s) (i.e. external challenges or antagonisms) troops require support.

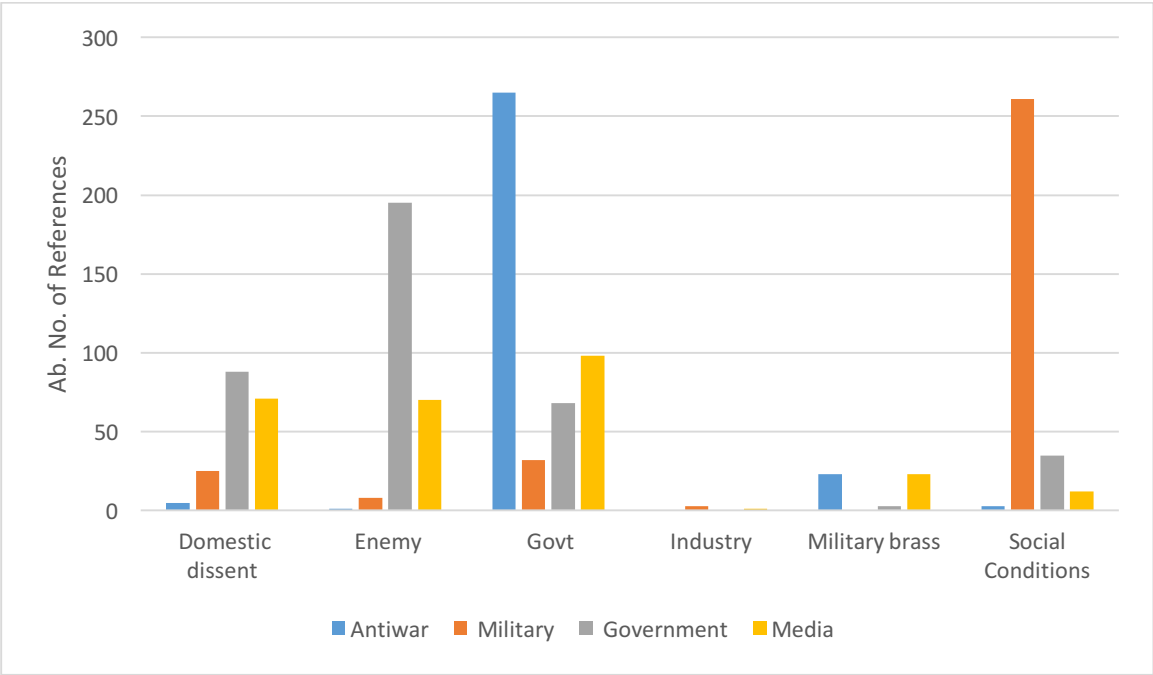


Figure 26: *Antagonisms Requiring Support by Source-Type - UK*

The government (i.e. particular administration and the state generally) is constituted as the greatest “hazard” to the troops (at 465 references), followed shortly by “social conditions” (312). This category encompasses discourse constructing the troops as vulnerable to some (ostensibly, as constituted within the corpus) “agent-less” harm, ranging from PTSD to losing a limb to unemployment and/or homelessness. This category illuminates the degree to which the troops are constituted as imperilled or challenged by situations unattributed to particular social actors.⁶³ It should be noted that nearly half (215) of the references positing the government as a threat to the troops stem from the StWC alone, reflecting its greater data availability,

⁶³ It is worth providing a brief illustration of the coding principle. Discourse which expresses concern for the troops “in harm’s way” without subsequently placing the troops in (implicit or explicit) relation to another collective subject by, for instance, calling for the government to bring them home, or specifying the source of harm as the military enemy, are coded as “social conditions”.

but also its centrality to the overall phenomenon. That said, all source-types invoke this frame, including the three major UK political parties. Conversely, the “social conditions” category is accounted for nearly exclusively by military-support NGOs – led by the Legion (95) and H4H (83). Though other actors do invoke this frame – *The Sun*, for instance, references it 10 times, while the Labour party does so 13 times – it is less pervasive than the “government” trope. None of the anti-war NGOs, other than three references from the StWC, use this construction, nor do the vast majority of the newspapers.

Other notable sources of challenge are “domestic dissent”, which refers to discourse constructing opposition to the government/war as a source of concern to the troops, and, logically, the “enemy”, which encapsulates discourse that positions the troops as opposing foreign military forces in combat. The Labour party is the largest proponent of the “domestic dissent” frame (43 references), followed by the Conservatives (22), and, interestingly, *The Guardian* (22). References to an external enemy as imperilling the troops is also promoted by conventional political authorities, with Labour accounting for 73 such references, and the Conservatives 61. The anti-war groups do not engage in this discourse, though it is reflected in the press and, minimally (5 references or less) the texts of military NGOs.

Interestingly, “industry” does not figure highly in this discourse nor, somewhat surprisingly, does the “military brass”, which incorporates discourse constructing the actions of the military institution itself as grounds for support. Significantly, this discursive strand highlights, even in aggregate form, the potential divisibility of “the troops” from the broader military institution – a phenomenon discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five. It is also important to emphasize that despite the starker assignation of blame on the government and social conditions for the troops’ predicament, contestation and heterogeneity still exists. Though not invoked by each organization/actor, with the exception of “industry”, which is rarely raised at all, each supportive concern is raised within each source-type.

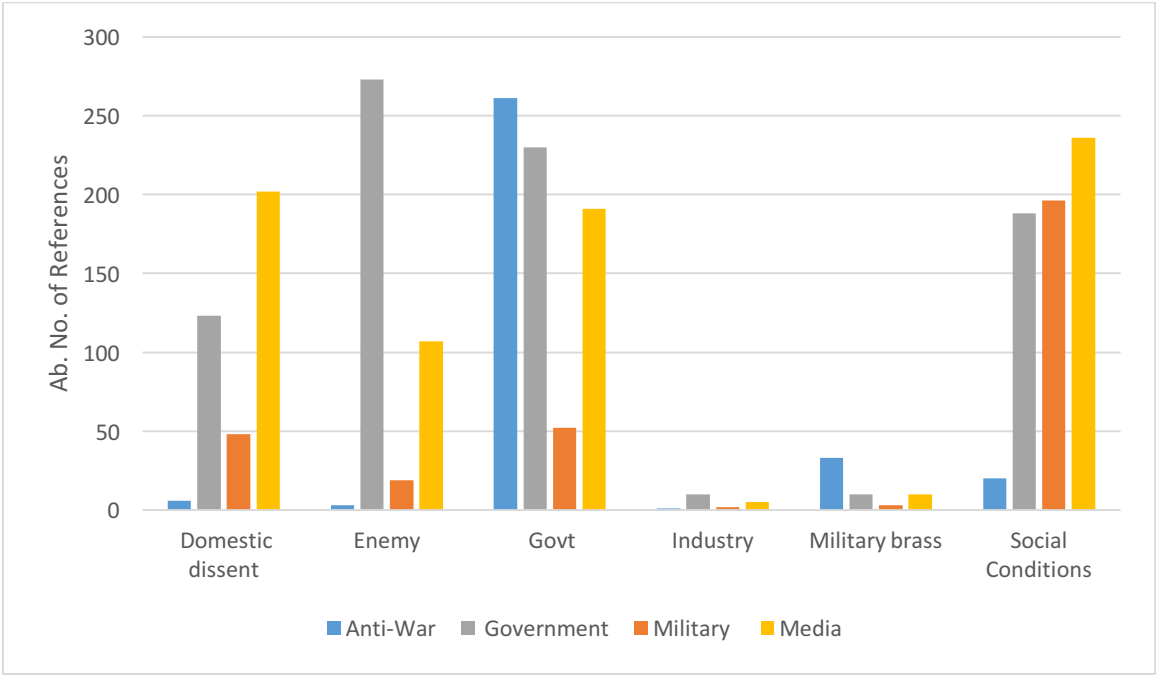


Figure 27: Antagonisms Requiring Support by Source-Type - US

Results for the United States largely parallel those of the UK. The government, at 732 references (of 2319), is technically the most common “antagonist” to the troops, though social conditions, at 712, are a close second. In contrast to the UK, however, the main proponent of the government as to “blame” for the predicament of the troops is not an anti-war group (though collectively they are the greatest source of this frame, at 274 references), but Democrats, at 203 references. The government is the primary locus of responsibility for the combined NGOs (all exhibiting similar distribution of antagonism references, with the exception of Military Families Speak Out, which is the only organization which constructs domestic dissent as a cause for concern). Though the service-oriented military NGOs – IAVA, VFW, and Disabled American Veterans – also occasionally invoke this frame, it is second to “social conditions” across the board.

The Democrats are also a major propagator of social conditions as threatening the troops (101 references), second only to, interestingly, *The Washington Post* (112 references). The *Post*’s great engagement with the “social conditions” frame (it references the government only 87 times, but domestic dissent 107) likely reflects its afore-mentioned coverage of local, grassroots supportive practices in greater detail than the *NYT* and *Wall Street Journal*. The *WSJ* follows the same pattern, while government is the second most-common antagonistic reference for the *NYT*.

Finally, similar to the UK, neither industry nor the military itself figure highly in accounts of the “reasons why” the troops require support. “Domestic dissent” (396) and the “enemy” (405), interestingly, are nearly equivalent portions of total “against” references. Of these, approx. 68 per cent of the “enemy” constructions

derive from formal political actors – split nearly evenly between Democrats and Republicans. The domestic dissent frame has a broader base, and is propagated by all three major papers, and all military NGOs save *Birdies for the Brave*. The major contributors, though are, unsurprisingly, given attempts to connect StT with supporting the war, Republicans, who account for 27 per cent of references to the “enemy” alone.

As with other dimensions of StT discourse, the results for “antagonisms” of the troops suggests a greater degree of polarization in the US compared to the UK. The comparative prominence of agentless social conditions, however, problematizes a reading of StT as simply a matter of instrumental polemics articulated between two clearly-defined, opposing positions. Once again, it must be noted that all sources of concern are articulated/referenced by each type of political actor/institution.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter constitutes an empirical contextualization for the interpretive chapters to follow, demonstrating the ubiquity, heterogeneity, (dis)continuities, and patterns expressed within the StT discursive formation. It provided a structured comparison of StT discourses in the United States and the United Kingdom,⁶⁴ which contain similar discursive aspects. The major differences lie in the comparative proportion of these various aspects (e.g. “pray”) within their discursive themes (e.g. “how to StT”), and the way they combine with other discursive tropes. Each case also, moreover, found each discursive theme in virtually every source-type, highlighting not simply the most prevalent discursive aspects, but their contestation, as well. There is, in other words, remarkable continuity between the two cases, which may be taken as a further illustration of the nascent transnationalisation of StT discourse.

There are, however, a few salient differences between the manifestation of StT in the US and UK. With respect to the articulation of StT over time, for instance, though the two country-cases mirror each other through the first half of the period, they later diverge, with the UK demonstrating an increase in (particularly state/government) StT discourse from 2008 onwards, while the opposite occurs in the United States. Similarly, while both states indicate that “everyone” is constituted as the primary supporter of the troops, the United States demonstrates a higher proportion of references that specify “politicians” and “government” as supportive of the troops, exceeding the corresponding proportion in the UK. This reflects the greater emphasis on StT in formal partisan politics in the US and speaks to the political currency of the discourse. This divergence is also evident in articulation of supportive rationales, wherein though “obligation” is the dominant construction in both cases, the US, again, indicates a far greater emphasis on

⁶⁴ I also collected data on the social construction of the troops, as well as the characterization of dissent. This material is analysed in detail in the subsequent chapters on the meaning of the “troops” (Chapter 5) and possibility of dissent (Chapter 8).

“supporting the war”. The two cases demonstrate the greatest divergence in constructions of “how” to support the troops, as the dominant practice in the UK is found to be “ending the war”, while the US results are more ambiguous – providing material goods is the most common reference, followed by “ending the war” and “supporting the war”. Finally, the government is constituted as the greatest source of concern/challenge to both US and UK troops, though the distribution of references to other sources of threat varies more widely in the US than the in UK.

In summary, an archetypical narrative for the United States would be one of “everyone” supporting the troops out of a sense of obligation (underscored by strong support for the war) against, alternatively, the government or a disparate set of social conditions, expressed through the public contestation over the war, and the provision of material goods. The United Kingdom, in contrast, would be typified by “everyone” being obligated to StT against the government, expressed by calling for an end to conflict. As indicated by the preceding analysis, however, while these discursive articulations exist – and may even approach hegemony – within each country case, the discourse is more complex than sketched above. To understand the meaning(s) of these articulations, as well as their positioning vis-à-vis and transection by alternative StT discourses, we must examine the discursive themes in greater detail. It is important to defy the easy reduction of the StT discursive formation to the lowest common denominator – “support the troops, oppose the war” (UK) or “support the troops and (maybe) the war” (US) – and instead utilize the (dis)continuities between and across categories as an initial step towards “tracking” the subjectivities, social relations, power dynamics, and politics enabled (and precluded) by the contestation occurring within StT. In the balance of the dissertation, I consider various iterations of StT with the aim of explicating what the overall phenomenon *does* – and its implications for the construction of both citizenship and collective subjectivity in relation to the use of (military) force.

CHAPTER FIVE: MAKING SENSE OF “THE TROOPS”

In this chapter, I examine the many ways the troops are constituted and made meaningful within StT discourse. This chapter sets the table for my examination of StT discourse as a representation and reproduction of the normative civil-military relationship in Chapter Six. I argue that the troops are constituted as a) necessarily collective; b) predominantly passive; and c) dependent. Most importantly, “the troops” are not synonymous with the institutional military, nor do they easily correspond with our cultural understandings of “the soldier” or “the veteran”. Instead, “the troops” are produced and given meaning in relation to other collective subjects. They may represent the institutional military, military personnel, “private” citizens, family members etc. – often at the same time.

This “travelling” of the troops poses an interesting analytical problem, as they are given substantive meaning primarily in relationship with these other collective subjects – particularly society. I examine the details and implications of this co-constitution in the following chapter. Here, I highlight the key features of “the troops” – their collectiveness, passivity, dependence, and multi-layered social signification – that pertain regardless of their contingent contextual production. I am, to a degree, “fixing” the troops in order to identify their political (re)signification and operation in StT. Put differently, I excavate the “skeleton” of the troops, rather than pinning down a definitive account of their precise phenotype, or personality traits, etc. Conceptually, this is similar to “figuration”, wherein subject-positions are considered to be “distillations” of shared meanings, background understandings, normative orientations, etc. into a seemingly-stable “image”¹ that implies more than it literally represents.

My analysis of the troops as a collective, dependent, passive and “travelling” subject stands in contrast to the existing StT literature, which demonstrates an intuitively-resonant yet analytically unproductive tendency to generalise from “the soldier” (particularly enlisted personnel) to “the troops” to the military. Stahl, for instance, suggests that StT discourse works to “transfer[] guilt from policy makers to an embattled individual soldier in need of forgiveness” and “fuse[s] lower-rank soldiers together with the leadership”.² He argues, in essence, that StT aggregates the socially-laudable characteristics of the “soldier” and gives them to the unitary, institutional military.³ Managhan, though considering the troops a distinct figure,⁴ similarly deduces “the soldier” from the troops. In her analysis of the role of “the troops” in anti-war dissent, for example, she argues that “what was ultimately being protected was the figure of the soldier, a figure that

¹ Weber 2016, 28. For original, see Haraway 1997.

² Stahl 2009, 544-5 and 549.

³ Ibid, 549.

⁴ Managhan 2012, 107.

ultimately embodied nothing less than the promise of the nation”.⁵ There is a tension in existing StT analysis, wherein scholars read the “soldier” figuratively, but “troops” literally, as an aggregation of either figurative soldiers or “actual” military personnel. In this reading, the social positioning of “the troops” is artificially fixed to a particular *a priori* association. As a result, existing scholarship misses the ways in which “the troops” operate as a collective subject in its own right.

To demonstrate the relational production of “the troops” and identify their (few) seemingly-stable characteristics, I draw on aggregated data from the US and UK case studies. This is balanced with a close reading of key quotations that provide a more detailed, interpretive illustration of the way these broader constructions manifest in specific texts and utterances. Correspondingly, the quotations discussed in this chapter are exemplars of the overall discourse, chosen to succinctly convey characteristics of the “troops” and their social relationships that may simply be implied in other, similar aspects of the discourse. As an example, my aggregated interpretive analysis indicates that the troops are nearly uniformly constituted positively in both the US (99 per cent of “social perception” references) and the UK (97 percent positive “social perception” references). A close reading of the “negative” constructions of the troops reveals that though there are a few direct oppositions to the troops (see Ch.7), most of these “negative” references are actually critiques of perceived negative caricaturing of “the troops” by others.⁶ For the purposes of this chapter, I read these results as suggesting that the “the troops” as a collective subject have a generally positive valence – albeit one that may be contested in context.

The chapter proceeds by demonstrating the troops’ necessarily collective nature, and “their” corresponding ability to discursively represent and (re)produce a variety of collective subjects. Subsequently, drawing on the discursive construction of the troops’ passivity, the troops are parsed from the institutional military and the “soldier”. The following section illustrates the troops’ production, within the logic of support, as socially dependent. The implications of this dependence are elaborated with reference to the affective legacy of Vietnam and the troops’ relationship to the “veteran”. The chapter then concludes with an examination of the implications of the troops’ (re)production as collective, passive, dependent and substantively indeterminate for understanding society’s relationship with war.

5.1 TROOPS AS COLLECTIVE

This section demonstrates the “collective” construction of the troops, and provides a brief illustration of the ways in which “the troops” represent and (re)produce a variety of collective subjects.

⁵ Ibid, 116.

⁶ See for instance, Taranto 2007.

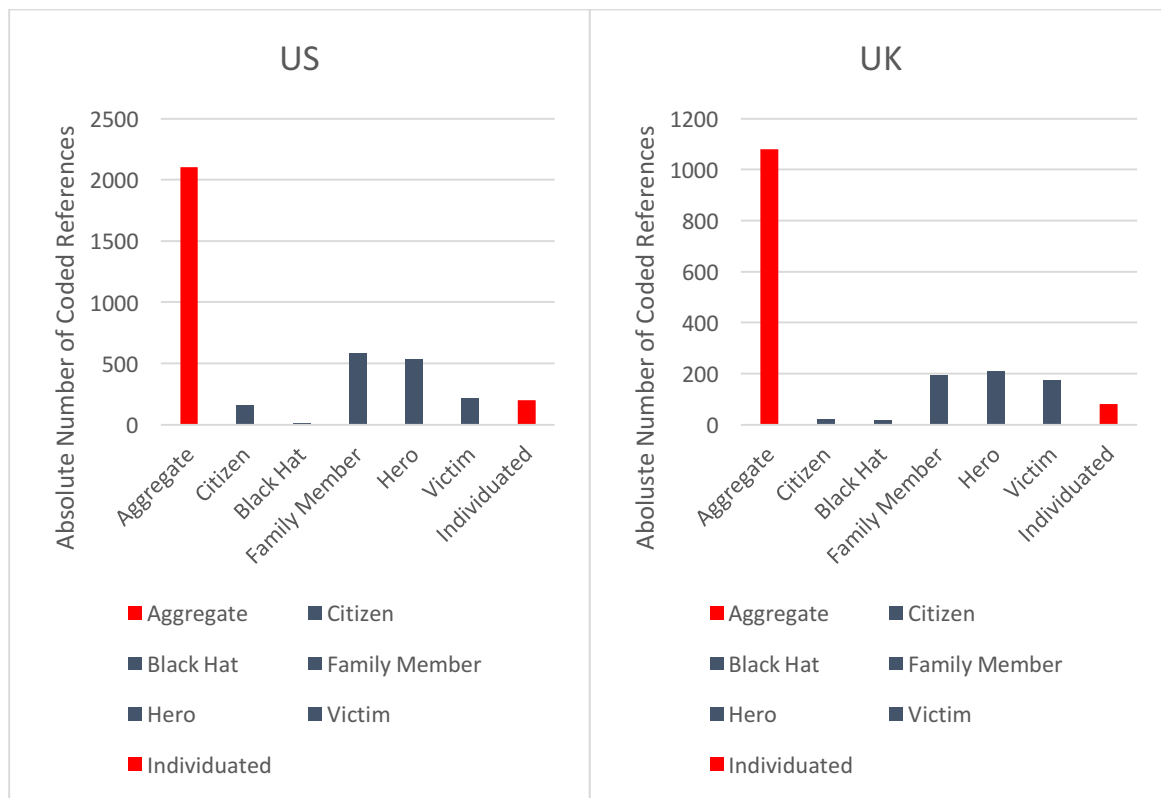


Figure 28: Social Identity of the “Troops”

These charts demonstrate uses of “the troops” a) to refer to a collective subject (“aggregate”) and b) in conjunction with individuals (“individuated”). The “individuated” category predominantly captures references to specific people alongside “the troops” – particularly deceased individual soldiers – rather than the production of a single “troop”. In each case, logically, given the plural nature of the noun, the troops are constructed in the aggregate (2104 references in the US, 1081 in the UK), with limited references to individuals (197 in the US, and 81 in the UK). The sub-categories (in blue) refer to the construction of the troops’ social identity as a collective subject. Recall that these frames are not mutually exclusive – the troops may be, and often are, both family members and heroic, for instance. Figure 28 also indicates there are many references to the troops from which their relational social identity cannot be inferred (approximately 30 per cent of aggregate references in the US; 44 per cent in the UK). The collective nature of “the troops” is “their”⁷ most concrete and defining trait. The implications of this collective nature for the (re)signification and political operation of the troops are explicated throughout this chapter.

For the moment, it is sufficient to note the varying, and potentially contradictory, social identities within in the troops may be (re)produced. “Family member” (580 in US, 194 in UK) and “hero” (541 in US and 212 in

⁷ Technically, as a (singular) collective subject, rather than a corporate entity of pre-existing individuals, the troops should be referred to as “it/its”. As this is grammatically awkward, however, I use the language of “they/their” throughout the dissertation.

UK) are the most common constructions, followed by “victim”, “citizen”, and “black hat”. “Citizen” captures references to the troops as public actors, possessing rights and acting in the formally political sphere – in the US, many of these references derive from coverage of the “citizen-soldiers” of the National Guard and Reserve forces. The category of “black hat” encompasses discourse that connects “the troops”, directly or indirectly, to misconduct in war. It is predominantly populated by criticism of the war/occupation of Iraq as illegal and the US and UK prisoner abuse scandals.⁸ A cross-check of the results by source-type did not reveal significant divergences in the proportion of these constructions. In both the US and UK, the “hero” frame, though not absent from anti-war groups’ discourse, makes up a smaller proportion of its total than for the government, newspaper, and military NGOs. In the UK, pro-military NGOs contribute the majority (131) of these “hero” references, while, anti-war groups account for the majority of “victim” references (102 of 174). In the US, the government, interestingly, is the greatest source of “citizen” frames (70 of 165). While in the US the “black hat” frame derives primarily from news coverage (11 of 14 references), in the UK, most references (13 of 17) are from anti-war groups. This multi-layered construction of the troops – as family members, citizens, heroes, and/or villains – provides an initial illustration of their production in context, and defiance of easy identification with a single substantive identity or collective subject.

5.2 THE TROOPS, AGENCY, AND THE INSTITUTIONAL MILITARY

A key implication of the troops’ constitution as multiple collective subjects is that the troops are not reducible to, or synonymous with, the institutional military. Drawing on constructions of the troops’ agency, this section conceptually prises “the troops” from their common-place association with the military per se.

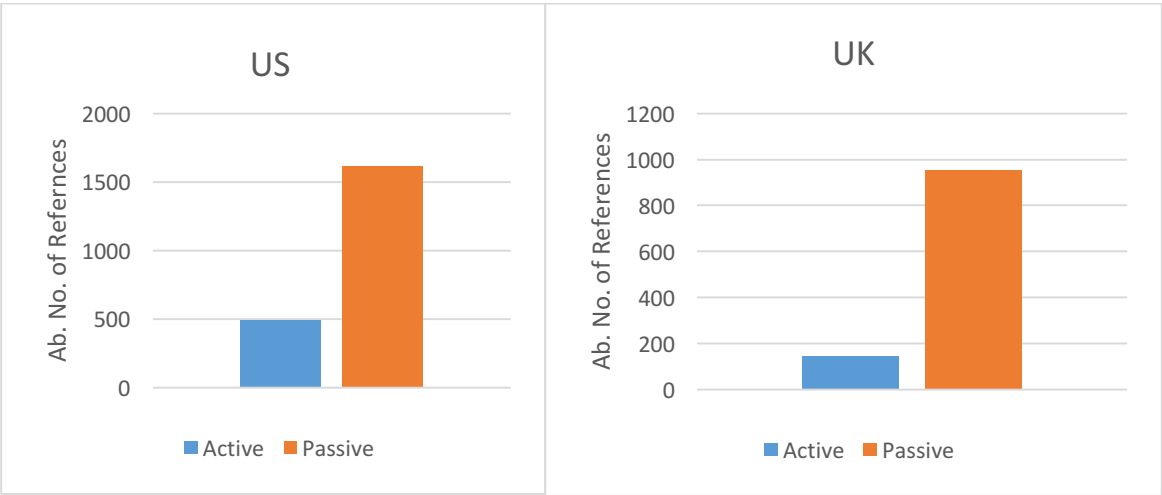


Figure 29: Troops’ Agency

⁸ See, for instance StWC 2005a.

Figure 29 indicates that in both the US and UK, the troops are predominantly constructed as a passive, rather than active, collective subject. The troops were coded as “active”, or “agential”, if they were portrayed as engaging in any form of activity – as *doing* something. “Active” framings of the troops account for a minority of “agency” references, at 23 per cent of these references in the US, and 13 per cent in the UK. In each case, the proportion of references classified as passive/active for each source-type were similar. In the US, anti-war groups, military NGOs, and the press constructed the troops as active in less than 25 per cent of their total “agential” references, while the government/state sources’ “active” references reached 30 per cent. In the UK, military NGOs, at 20 per cent, had the greatest proportion of “active” references, with the balance of the source-types each totalling less than 15 per cent in agential constructions of the troops.

A transcript of US Republican presidential candidate John McCain’s 2008 nomination speech provides a quick illustration of this framing:

“When it came time to support our troops fighting to protect our freedoms and way of life, my opponent said he’d never deprive them of the funds they needed to fight -- and then he did just that. Barack Obama voted against funding the equipment our troops rely on as they fight to protect us. That is not putting the men and women of our military first”.⁹

The troops in this passage are clearly active – they are “fighting to protect our freedoms”. The reference to agency as fighting, in particular, is significant, as it reflects broader patterns in constructions of troops’ agency in the US and UK. When the troops’ activities are specified – which is not always the case – aggregated analysis indicates that combat is their primary activity. In the UK, it is approximately three times more common (and nearly twice as common in the US) than the next most frequent activity – asking or thanking for support. Crucially, within this passage the troops are unambiguously linked to “the men and women of our military” – and, via the military, the state. This too reflects a broader pattern wherein the agential, combat-oriented troops are frequently constructed as either synonymous, or primarily identified, with the formal military institution. When the troops act, they act as the institutional military, or its constituent personnel.

The use of “the troops” as a metonymy for the military is even stronger in the “operational” strain of StT discourse (see Figs. 20 and 21), which reflects a continuation of the conventional use of the phrase “support the troops” *within* the military. A 2010 speech by the UK Minister for Defence Personnel, for instance, observes “The excellent medical support to our troops is truly a joint effort [of the armed forces] and sustaining such deployed operations depends on moving people and materiel by air and sea as well as overland”.¹⁰ Together, the explicit references to war operations and “protecting our way of life” serve to

⁹ McCain 2008.

¹⁰ Robathan 2010a.

structurally distinguish the troops from society through a connection with the military's discrete institutional structure and practice of combat – an exceptional practice sanctioned only by association with the state.¹¹ This discursive collapse of the troops into institutional military reproduces the instrumental relationship between the military and state that underpins much of realist international relations theory. It also aligns with the intuitive understanding of the troops as the military.

5.2.1 Passivity and the Troops' Dissociation from the Military

Significantly, however, as indicated by Fig. 29, the vast majority of references to the troops' agency – approx. 80 per cent in each case – represented them as passive. This suggests that though the troops may rhetorically "stand in" for the military or enlisted personnel, this does not exhaust their constitution within the discursive formation. Instead, the troops' construction as predominantly passive enables us to see the multi-layered ways in which the troops may also (or alternatively) represent and interpellate other constellations of societal collective subjects.

These constructions of the troops as "passive" include both decontextualized references, such as bumper stickers and signs proclaiming "support the troops", and instances where the troops are not framed as doing anything. A 2009 White House blog post by Dr. Biden, spouse of Vice-President Biden, for instance, notes: "As a military mom myself, this is personal – but it's also the duty of all Americans to support our troops. It can be as simple as saying 'thanks'".¹² Though StT is contextualized by the balance of the text – Biden was reporting upon a visit to on-base military families – the troops are not framed as *doing* anything. A 2003 Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament statement upon the deaths of British military personnel in a helicopter crash provides a similar illustration of this framing: "All life lost in this conflict, either by accident or design, is a tragedy. As some of the placards on the anti-war protests have said, 'Support our troops, bring them home.'".¹³ The rest of the text expresses CND's dismay over the extent of civilian casualties and condemns the war. Nowhere are the troops presented as active – they are neither blamed for the conflict, nor are they constructed as implementing it. As observed by Silvestri, in contrast to the StT rhetoric of the First Gulf War (see Ch. 3), this passivity facilitates, though does not necessitate, a "dissociation" between the warriors and the war¹⁴ (see also Ch. 6). It casts doubt as to whether "the troops" act as/are warriors at all.

The troops' passivity thus further demonstrates the point raised in the section above: The troops' social production is not contingent on what "they" do/are, but rather their relationship to others. Biden's call for

¹¹ Millar and Tidy 2016, 3.

¹² Biden 2009.

¹³ CND 2003a.

¹⁴ Silvestri 2013, 109.

Americans to show “appreciation for our troops and their families”, for instance, despite its framing within an official White House visit, shifts the primary identity of the troops away from the military towards the so-called private sphere, as family members (see also Fig. 28). CND’s messaging, similarly, separates “the troops” from the military (and state) by reading the helicopter accident into a broader loss of predominantly civilian life. This framing is reinforced by the call to bring the troops “home” – as opposed, for instance, to “withdrawing the troops”, or “bringing home the military”. It inflects the troops with domestic, even familial, connotations of “private” social positioning.

Within these examples and the broader discursive formation, the troops are neither wholly synonymous with the military as the statist instrument of force, nor with “civil” society as family members or citizens. Instead, “the troops” travel between multiple subject-positions, and may be read as many at once. In a 2003 address to Congress, US Senator Frist, for instance, made a statement recognizing the “commitment and sacrifice of Tennessee citizen soldiers. One thousand Tennessee National Guard troops and airmen have been deployed to participate in Operation Iraqi Freedom...These men and women leave full-time jobs and their families to serve their country and protect our liberty...”¹⁵. The troops are identified as members of the military and explicitly placed in the context of the war in Iraq (the text also mentions their “mission”), while simultaneously constructed as employees and, again, family members.¹⁶ The relevant collective subject with which “the troops” are identified oscillates between the military, the (nation)state, and the family.

The mutability of the troops’ social positioning challenges the common-place association of “the troops” with the military institution. While the troops-as-military aligns with hegemonic cultural narratives regarding gender, soldiering, and war, this construction, as demonstrated above, does not account for the preponderance of StT discourse, nor the operation of the “troops” within it. Instead, the transitivity of the troops in terms of social positioning and collective subjectivity makes it a vector for the transmission of “militaryness” into ostensibly civilian spaces and relationships,¹⁷ and vice-versa.

5.3 THE PLURAL OF “SOLDIER” IS NOT “TROOPS”

Significantly, the predominant passivity of the troops, in combination with their collective nature, distinguishes them “the soldier” – an important cultural figure through which the collective experience of war is often interpreted. The passivity of the troops, in particular, exists in uneasy tension with dominant cultural narratives lauding “the soldier” as a heroic autonomous agent. This section proceeds with a brief sketch of the figurative “soldier” to pinpoint the sources of this tension. As with the “troops”, “the soldier”

¹⁵ Frist 2003, S4883-4.

¹⁶ Silvestri 2013, 112

¹⁷ Millar and Tidy 2016, 5.

does not refer to an actually-existing, objective “thing”, but rather a discursively-constituted social ideal.¹⁸

Like the troops, the “soldier” has a positive valence, as soldiering is constructed as “an activity that many of the country’s most talented, most selfless citizens want to do and should have the right to do”.¹⁹ The soldier is implicitly contrast with the non-serving civilian: “the brave wear a uniform, the coward wears a suit”.²⁰ S/he is informed by a presumption – or “ideological contention” – that “a person in uniform can do no wrong”.²¹ Crucially for my analysis, “the archetypical soldier of popular imagination” (re)produced within the gendered civil-military divide is masculine (see Ch. 3), though no longer necessarily male.²² The soldier, as a canonical cultural figure of war, is characterised by an “essential ability to fight and defend,”²³ and possesses the idealised attributes required for military success. These include “aggressiveness and endurance of hardships and physical toughness”, as well as “risk-taking, discipline, technological mastery...absence of emotion, and rational calculation”.²⁴ As described by Hale, masculinity is so central to the production of “the soldier”, it comes to ground, hierarchically, the articulation of masculinities within and without the institutional military.²⁵ As the idealised “super-citizen”, the soldier mirrors and reproduces the universalised, unmarked and “normal” masculine public subject of the contemporary West.²⁶ In the context of the US and UK, as in much of the contemporary West, “the soldier” is therefore also implicitly produced as cis-gendered, heterosexual, and white.²⁷

This schematic outline highlights a defining attribute of the soldier – “his” heroic agency. In contrast to the troops’ indeterminate passivity, the soldier acts along two key axes – volunteering for service, and engaging in combat. The decision to risk significant harm by joining the military posits the soldier as an autonomous liberal agent, freely *choosing* to renounce the rights to which the democratic citizen is otherwise entitled.²⁸ By volunteering to protect the polity, the soldier exercises an independence (at least, in figuration)²⁹ that stands in stark contrast to the passivity of “the troops”. In doing so, the soldier also evidences a different temporality to the static troops. Volunteering for military service is a form of war preparation, done in

¹⁸ Bell 1999, 137.

¹⁹ Enloe 2000, 16.

²⁰ Sands 2008.

²¹ Richler 2012, 163.

²² Basham 2013, 44.

²³ Hale 2012, 710-11.

²⁴ Hale, Connell, and Barrett, cited in Millar and Tidy 2016. For originals, see Hale 2012, p. 700; Connell 1995; and Barrett 1996, 140.

²⁵ Kirby and Henry 2012, 445; See also Barrett 1996.

²⁶ Basham 2013, 13; On the universality of the white male subject, see: Thornton 2011 38-40.

²⁷ Basham 2013, 13 and 47. See also Ware 2010; and Prividera and Howard 2006.

²⁸ Millar 2016a, 17; See also MacLeish 2013, 144; and Cowen 2008, 16.

²⁹ This is not to minimize the many factors, such as socio-economic status, membership of a marginalised group and/or ethnicity, or geographic location, etc. that may affect actual individuals’ decisions to join the literal armed forces.

anticipation of securing the polity during a future conflict. The troops, in contrast, are constituted only in the context of war but, as a passive collective subject, without directionality. They are fixed in something of a naturalized, ahistoric “ever-present” conditioned by their reception of support.

The soldier’s futurity is oriented towards the second expression of his/her agency: the engagement in combat, generally understood as physically proximate fighting/killing.³⁰ This too is intertwined with masculinity, as “proximity to killing [in war] appears to be a powerful indicator of gender status”, with those closest to the violence designated as possessing “the most secure, and hegemonic militarized masculinity”.³¹ The troops, though they exist in the context of war, as a consequence of their passivity, they do not act violently. The soldier’s violent agency also communicates a particular spatialization – the battlefield. The troops, in contrast, traverse and blur these conventional spatializations (and genderings) of war, as they may signify multiply collective subjects – including military personnel and private citizens – often at the same time. Together, these factors combine to parse “the ultra-agency of the masculine combat soldier” from the “passive, objectified – almost fetishized – collective subject of the troops”.³²

5.3.1 *The Troops and the Soldier*

This conceptual distinction between the individuated soldier and the collective troops, however, should not be taken to mean that the two are empirically disconnected in the operation of StT discourse. Just as “the troops” may travel between societal collective subjects, their meaning in context is frequently related to, and played off of, commonalities and contrast with “the soldier” – particularly in terms of gender (see Ch. 6). The interplay between portrayals of individuals within StT discourse (Fig. 28) and the collective troops provides an effective illustration of this dynamic. A UK MP’s remembrance of deceased individual soldiers, for instance, states:

“I am sure that the whole House will join me in paying tribute...to those members of our armed forces who have lost their lives in Afghanistan since the House last met: from 1st Battalion the Royal Welsh, Fusilier Jonathan Burgess; from 1st Battalion the Mercian Regiment...We salute their bravery, we honour their sacrifice and we remain steadfast in support of our troops...We will genuinely work with the Government in support of our troops, their wives and families...”³³

The deceased are constructed in accordance with the tropes of hegemonic soldier masculinity; they are brave, risk-taking, and, by implication, involved in combat. They are also, in contrast to the anonymised, collective troops – named. As observed by Parry, the practice of naming individuals creates an important

³⁰ Millar and Tidy 2016.

³¹ Daggett 2015, 365; See also Goldstein 2001, 274-9 and 204.

³² Millar 2016a, 17.

³³ Harman 2010, c39.

sense of immediacy and identification.³⁴ It is a process of recognition compelled by the sacrifice within the liberal military contract. This recognition, however, is immediately followed by a distancing and displacement, as the speaker quickly moves from saluting the bravery of the deceased to supporting the troops. The positive characteristics of the combat soldier – bravery and sacrifice – are read into the collective subject of the troops. The troops are also, by association, implied to be heterosexual via the reference to “their wives”. The contrast between the soldier and the troops thus separates the masculinity of the combat soldier from the passivity of the troops, while still serving to distance the deceased individuals from the actual practice of violence. Their bravery, in some ways, derives from this association with the troops, rather than a particular practice of warfare.

It is also unclear which “troops” are being supported – the dead, in remembrance, or the “remaining” troops. This is another crucial characteristic of “the troops”; as they are not reducible to a group of particular individuals, “they” cannot be killed. The “ever-present” troops are oddly immortal. The slide from the deceased individual to “the troops” preserves the viability of the *figure* of the hegemonic combat soldier, even as the individuals interpellated by it die, through its attachment to a structurally-invincible collective subject. It is no coincidence that in both the US and UK, the majority of references to individuals in proximity to “the troops” occur in the context of death. In the US, of the 197 references, 123 (or 62 per cent) are accompanied by references to death (76) and injury (47). In the UK, 72 of 81 (89 per cent) references to individuals in the context of the troops were in conjunction with references to death (40) and injury (32). This insulation of “the soldier” with “the troops” precludes the deaths of individuals from overly-threatening the polity’s ontological security. It conveys, as described by Scarry, “the fact that the fate of the overall army, or overall population, and not the fate of single individuals, will determine the outcome”.³⁵ This oscillation between the troops and the soldier works to normalise war, as the “authority of soldiers” may be invoked,³⁶ but in the context of a blurry “massification” that “draw[s] attention away from individual body counts”.³⁷

The key take-away of this analysis is not that “the soldier” is absent from references to the troops. The soldier (and the veteran, as the subsequent sections will demonstrate) are invoked frequently, and their characteristics are often imputed, generally through a process of gendered contrast and association, to the troops in context. What matters (as elucidated further in Chapter Six) is that this is not a uniform process of transposition, but rather a more contingent construction. As a result, the indeterminacy of the troops vis-à-vis the hegemonic combat soldier helps to uphold the soldier’s normative coherence and hegemonic status even as gendered civil-military relations, and the underlying structure(s) of violent political obligation, are

³⁴ Parry 2011, 1192.

³⁵ Scarry 1985, 71

³⁶ Tidy 2015a, 226.

³⁷ Stahl cited Fischer 2014, 214; for original, see Stahl 2009.

under negotiation.

5.4 DEPENDENCE, VIETNAM, AND THE VETERAN

To briefly switch gears, this section expands upon a corollary implication of the production of the troops as passive. As the troops are constituted relationally in context, their production as a collective subject is informed by the particular dynamic of these relations, not just their associations. I deal with the heterogeneity of the troops' social positioning in Chapter Six. Here, I highlight a common thread – support – apparent throughout these relationships and upon which they all rely.³⁸ In contrast to the protective dynamic evidenced in the archetypal gendered military divide – and soldier/civilian relationship discussed above – the troops' common passivity is (re)produced within relationships of dependence.

A 2006 *Washington Post* article, for instance, describes the efforts of an NGO called Soldiers for Truth which advocates for “the best available training, leadership and equipment for our kids”.³⁹ The organization's mandate is to “protect” the troops against an unresponsive military brass that endangers soldiers' lives by failing to provide them with appropriate body armour.⁴⁰ Anti-war groups employ similar frames, with the General Secretary of UK CND, for instance, stating, “Yesterday saw the 100th British combat death in Afghanistan this year, yet the Government wants us to stay...How many more will die by then?...We need to end this bloody war and bring the troops home now!”⁴¹ In this example, the war – and government – are posited as threatening the lives and well-being of British troops (see Figs 26 and 27). “The troops”, in contrast, are not represented as doing anything other than implicitly suffering harm. Their safety is connected to, and dependent upon, the government heeding the desires of anti-war activists to “bring them home”. Uk4u Thanks!, a UK charity providing Christmas boxes to military personnel, articulates a similar formulation, citing an MoD endorsement that: “Knowing that the public are behind them when they are working in often very difficult conditions, especially at this time, is a real morale boost for our Servicemen and women”.⁴² The impression left by such constructions is that support is directly connected to the wellbeing (and, potentially, the success) of military personnel abroad, through the subtle implication that should support not be forthcoming, they would be worse for it.

Through the insistence upon support's importance, this framing suggests that without it, the troops could not function. The polemical slogan common among more radical pro-military Americans, “If you don't stand

³⁸ There is no necessary connection between passivity and dependence – the agential, even violent troops, are still frequently constructed as requiring support/help/aid in completing their mission. Dependence is a key characteristic of “the troops” regardless of their agency; constructions of passivity are simply more frequent.

³⁹ Shulte 2006.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ CND 2010a.

⁴² Uk4uThanks!, 2010.

behind our troops, please feel free to stand in front of them”,⁴³ takes this logic farther. This allusion to violence against “non-supporters” counterintuitively constructs the troops as vulnerable to some indeterminate harm at the hands of those who do not support them. Not only are the troops dependent upon support, but its absence is construed as a threat. The reception of support is a constitutive condition – at two levels – of the troops’ existence. On the one hand, it is essential to the survival of the military personnel read into the troops, at the proximate level of practice. On the other hand, it is the premise of the discursive production of the collective figure of the troops itself. In other words, though the various groups represented by “the troops” – the military, service personnel, family members, etc. – would exist independent of support, the coherence and intelligibility of “the troops”, *as troops*, is contingent upon this relationship of dependence.⁴⁴

5.4.1 *The Legacy of Vietnam*

Particularly, though not exclusively, with respect to the US, the constitution of the troops as subtly dependent upon support is related to the “discursive legacy” of Vietnam.⁴⁵ As discussed in Chapter Three, during the First Gulf War, broad-based support for the troops in the US was understood as a redemption of society’s Vietnam-era “betrayal” of the troops.⁴⁶ The proffering of support for the troops, as a result, is inflected by the belief that “national unity and citizen support for the troops has a critical operational value” and will “maximize the soldier’s chances of survival”.⁴⁷ This is not a US-specific idea – the military operationalisation of societal support has long genealogy, stemming from the *levée en masse* and inception of mass democratic armies (see Ch. 3). Napoleon famously believed a three-to-one ratio of moral to physical factors was the key to military success, while UK Field Marshall Montgomery held that “morale [is] the greatest and only factor in war”.⁴⁸

The cultural memory of Vietnam furthers this narrative by making the source of morale, the civilian population, explicit. It shifts the “morale factor” from its historic constitution as a reserve of empowerment and strength to a source of vulnerability. A 2005 Veterans of Foreign Wars statement condemning an anti-war vigil outside Walter Reed military articulates this logic: “The political protesters of the ‘60s didn’t end their war and neither will this new generation. They will, however, achieve the same result: they will devastate troop morale... Morale means everything on the field of battle, but good morale starts at

⁴³ MacLeish 2013, 212.

⁴⁴ This production of the troops as inherently dependent/supported collective subject interpellates members of the military – to whom “troops” often pertains – and compels from them particular forms of “good conduct”, such as gratitude. For more on the subjectification of members of the armed forces via and to “the troops”, see Millar 2016a.

⁴⁵ Coy et. al. 2008, 163.

⁴⁶ Beamish et. al., 1995, 345 and 351.

⁴⁷ Huiskamp 2011, 291.

⁴⁸ In Scarry 1985, 105.

home...".⁴⁹

Here, the troops are dependent upon morale on the "home front" and construed as physically endangered – via an unspecified mechanism – by anti-war dissent. As argued by Enloe during the First Gulf War, the "unappreciated, alienated male Vietnam vet" looms large over subsequent conflicts, implicitly informing contemporary practices of support.⁵⁰ US reportage of veterans' reactions to the invasion of Iraq follows this narrative. Coverage of a March 2003 StT rally, for instance, quoted a Vietnam veteran as stating "I'm here to support the troops because I know what it was like when people didn't".⁵¹ As observed by Managhan, StT discourse is "haunted" by the betrayed Vietnam veteran, who hovers, as a "living ghost", in contemporary "pledge[s] of never again".⁵² Vietnam is iteratively constructed as founding myth of the contemporary troops.⁵³

This is not to say that the Vietnam veteran may be extrapolated, or pluralised, to "the troops". The figurative Vietnam veteran also invokes a host of other meanings, such as physical and psychological disintegration, military failure, national impotence, and continuing neglect that do not pertain to "the troops".⁵⁴ As Managhan points out, the elevation of "the troops" as the locus for popular affect, ideology, and myth-making regarding war actually works to efface the Vietnam veteran, by displacing civil-military relations on to a more amenable subject.⁵⁵ The relationship between "the troops" and the "Vietnam veteran" is not synonymity, but a cautionary juxtaposition. It freezes the troops in an unchanging, constant rehearsal of the refusal/redemption of the past. In 1997, a US political commentator lamented that "The war keeps coming back. It's forever".⁵⁶ The troops' temporality is not only static, but ever-present. It is aimed at maintaining a normatively-charged, idealised status quo. If the troops are (re)produced by support, they cannot be the "Vietnam vet", who was/is defined by its absence.

While, for obvious reasons, such frames are more common in the US than UK, the spectre of Vietnam appears in UK constructions of the troops as well (see Fig. 17). In 2010, for instance, a Plaid Cymru MP invoked Vietnam in relation to Afghanistan, as an analogy for a failed military operation.⁵⁷ MP Llywd stated, "Some of us said at the beginning that it was another Vietnam. At the time, we were laughed at, but I am afraid we

⁴⁹ VFW 2005a.

⁵⁰ Enloe 1993, 176.

⁵¹ Associated Press 2003.

⁵² Managhan 2011a, 456.

⁵³ Mann 2014, 33.

⁵⁴ Managhan 2011a, 454-5.

⁵⁵ Managhan 2011a, 454 and 456. See also McMahon 2002.

⁵⁶ Brendan Walsh, quoted in McMahon 2002, 160.

⁵⁷ For more on the use of analogies in force-related foreign policy decision-making, see Khong 1992.

are rapidly getting there”.⁵⁸ He follows, however, this “quagmire” framing with a paradigmatic recitation of the post-Vietnam redemption script:

“As long as the troops are there, they deserve every possible support. They deserve the best kit, they deserve our support, and they deserve every comfort and care when they return to the UK...It is not the people out there who are the authors of foreign policy. We...are the authors of this unfortunate foreign policy, but it is they who daily have to stand in harm's way. We should respect them for that and give them every possible credit”.⁵⁹

Llywd refutes each of the US’s perceived failures of the Vietnam-era conscripts: a) a lack of proper equipment; b) inadequate veterans’ care; c) inappropriate assignation of blame for an unpopular war; and d) a general failure to venerate their military service. Though, in a literal sense, the “Vietnam veteran” exists at a remove from the British social imaginary, its tropic meaning of betrayal, abandonment, and alienation have resonance across “liberal” societies. McCartney, for instance, found that UK military personnel serving post-9/11 also connect support with morale. It is perceived both as a recognition of their professionalism and, poignantly, appreciation of their potential sacrifice.⁶⁰ There is a tinge of sympathy to the constitution of the dependent troops, as it relies on “the massification of a collection of unfortunate who are not”, and indeed, could never be, by virtue of their collective nature, “there in person”.⁶¹

“The troops” capture an enduring tension in the liberal military contract, wherein ostensibly separate, feminised society is dependent upon the masculine and protective military (see Chs. 2 and 3) – yet success in war is considered to be premised upon “morale”. This morale, in turn, connotes a dependent relationship with society. “The troops” act as a site for the negotiation of this dual subjectification of society to military, yet “military” to society – a dynamic played out in greater detail in Chapter Seven.⁶² The legacy of “Vietnam” in (re)producing the troops is not in literal references to a particular conflict, but rather the sense of ontological insecurity regarding the collectivity’s identity and ethics that “Vietnam” conveys.⁶³ The troops must be dependent, as it is only in supporting them that this legacy – or, in the case of the UK, spectre – may be put to rest.⁶⁴

5.4.2 *The Troops and the Veteran*

This section illustrates the positioning of the troops vis-à-vis “the veteran”, as a mode of normalising and evaluating war, within StT discourse. Consider the following exchange from a US DoD news story commending “Homes for Troops”, a small NGO, and partnering developer for their work building homes for

⁵⁸ Llywd 2010, c226.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ McCartney 2010, 423-4.

⁶¹ Boltanski 1999, 13.

⁶² Millar 2016a, 20-1.

⁶³ For more on ontological security, see Steele 2008.

⁶⁴ Managhan 2011, 455.

disabled veterans. The developer states, “As a company, we never could have given what Pisey (Tan) did, but we can at least try to make life a little bit easier for him...We can make sure he knows that this country supports him, and we’ll try to be there for him”.⁶⁵ This quotation invokes several of the tropes associated with “veteran” – sacrifice followed by dependence and hardship. The shade of Vietnam is also present in the forestalled betrayal underlying the declaration “try to be there for him”. The individual veteran (Tan) is subsequently quoted as stating that such organizations are “truly a blessing”.⁶⁶ He performs the “thanks” required by his receipt of philanthropy, and implicitly accepts the invitation,⁶⁷ inherent to all such rehabilitation programs, to resume his “normal” life outside the military.⁶⁸

The story goes on to juxtaposition Tan with the troops, noting that while deployed, he wondered about “the level of public support for the troops”. Upon his discharge, however, he was “introduced to a lot of the programs and to a lot of support...And it basically showed [him] that life can go on”.⁶⁹ “The troops” are initially introduced as a collective subject – military personnel – with which Tan identified on active service. As Tan reimagines himself as a disabled veteran, “the troops” travel with him. The troops, by association, take on some of the characteristics of “the veteran”. The troops simultaneously represent serving personnel and veterans, eliding the disjuncture of the switch from an agential, ideally masculine “soldier” subjectivity to the dependence and deficit that frequently accompany the “veteran”. As a collective subject which cannot be “injured” per se, the troops naturalize the occurrence of injury while at the same time highlighting its rarity. In doing so, the troops represent injury as an “accidental or unanticipated” consequence of war.⁷⁰ If Tan is encompassed within the passive, positive “troops”, his practice of soldiering is obscured, leaving his subsequent injury to appear to be an accident, or “bad luck”, rather than a foreseeable, even likely, occurrence. The play between the “veteran”, the “troops”, and the “veteran-troops” serves, in Achter’s words, to “disrupt the connection between the state and the consequences of war”.⁷¹ Tan acquires normality and a form of symbolic immunity to injury through his association with a broader, ambivalent collective subject. The collectivity of the troops helps to integrate “the veteran” into the normative liberal social order, by offering “him” identification with an entity that both is, and is not, “veterans”.

5.5 CONCLUSION: THE TROOPS AND THE MEDIATION OF WAR

This chapter has identified the key, relatively consistent characteristics of “the troops” – collectiveness,

⁶⁵ Kruzel 2007.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Millar 2016a, 19.

⁶⁸ Achter 2010, 64.

⁶⁹ Kruzel 2007.

⁷⁰ Scarry 1985, 74-81.

⁷¹ Achter 2010, 63.

passivity, and dependence – and used these features to demonstrate the ways in which the troops are (re)produced relationally. The troops are not synonymous with, nor reducible to, the other major cultural interpretive figures of war, namely the institutional military, the soldier, and the veteran. Instead, the troops are an ambivalent collective subject, taking on substantive meaning through their positioning via other subjectivities, including the military/soldier/veteran, but also other significant collectivities, such as society, the state, and the family. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of these characteristics for the troops’ operation within StT discourse. I suggest that as an ambivalent collective subject, “the troops” performs two key political discursive functions. It facilitates the mass identification with (and interpellation by) the collective “troops” while simultaneously distancing this group from the practice of violence.

5.5.1 Universal(izing) Identification

The applicability of “the troops” as a collective subject to all members of the political community as a locus of identification and/or obligation (see also Ch. 6) is best illustrated by an examination of the collective subject’s ambiguous gendering.

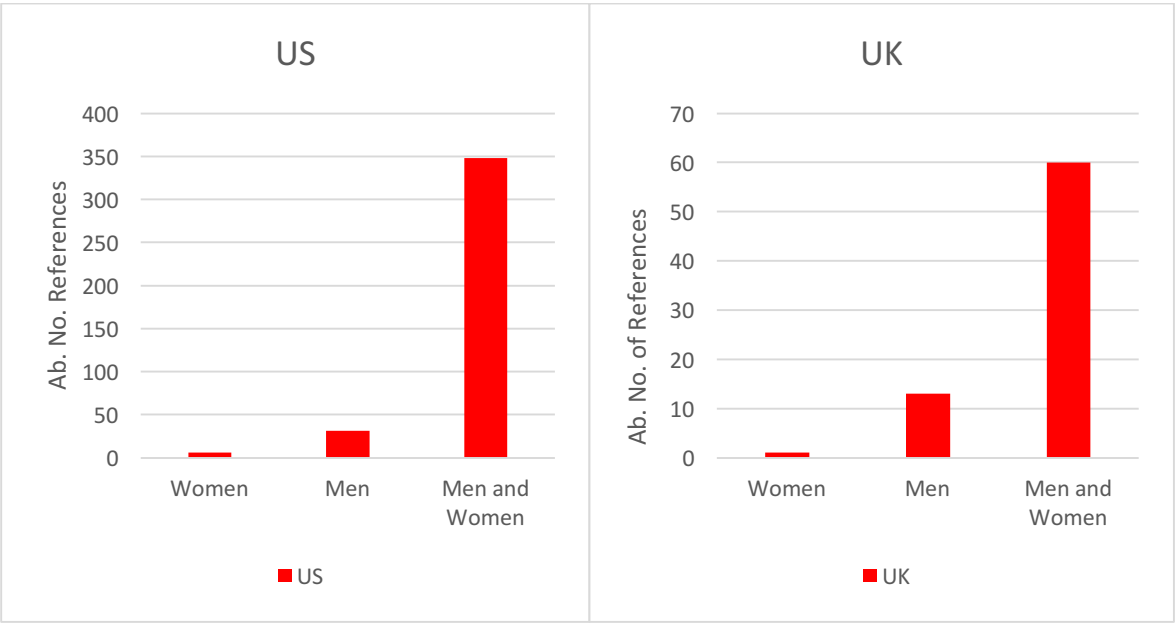


Figure 30: Sex of “The Troops”

Figure 30 represents instances in which the troops were represented as sexed (i.e. corresponding to male or female bodies) in the discourse. In constructing the troops as possessing male and/or female bodies, this

discourse refers to the troops-as-military personnel, and thus a corporate entity made up of individuals.⁷² Instances in which the sex of the troops could not be determined were not coded. In both cases, where sex was mentioned, the vast majority (91 per cent in US, 81 per cent in the UK), the text referred to both men and women. This was followed by references to men alone (8 per cent in US, 18 per cent in UK) and women alone (2 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively). The slightly greater proportion of references to men in the UK is partially attributable to greater use of the StT variation “support our boys”, particularly by the tabloid press. Figure 30 indicates that not only may “the troops” correspond with either male or female bodies, when directly noted, the troops most often correspond to both.

Though this point may seem semantic – or an offshoot of the political correctness of public rhetoric – it may also be read as a reflection of the mythical liberal military contract, which holds that all who aspire to “good”, implicitly masculine, public personhood are liable to serve. In the US and UK, both citizenship and military service are formally available to both male and female identified/identifying persons, meaning that to capture this all-encompassing political obligation, the troops *must* be sexed as both male and female. (Recall, that as “the troops” is a necessarily collective subject, conceptually there is no such thing as an individual “troop”). In other words, regardless of the sex/gender of the individuals read into the troops, “the troops”, as a collective subject, *must* include both male and female persons, to be consistent with its (re)production in, and of, a liberal democratic society. This subtle reinforcement of the equality of political service thus constitutes “the troops”, due to their collective nature, as an ideal vessel for popular empathy and identification. If the troops are men and women, they may also be, and encompass, everyone.

This mutability of the troops, facilitated by their collective and indeterminate social production, also pertains to other axes of diversity and intersectionality, including race and sexual orientation and identity. Unfortunately, though unsurprisingly, there are few explicit references to race or sexual orientation/identity within the discourse. As a result, the inductive, interpretive method applied to coding the broader corpus does not explicitly map the way in which “the troops” are made meaningful at these intersections.⁷³ The corpus does not contain references to “the troops” in a queer, trans, or non-binary identifying gender context. The US corpus a few references to gay and lesbian service personnel, primarily in the context of the US military’s now-repealed don’t ask, don’t tell policy.⁷⁴ This discourse replicates the extension of formal

⁷² The construction of the troops within the discourse, therefore, exhibits the sex/gender correspondence typical of everyday usage; my poststructural reading of gender as discourse is not reflected as an intersubjective understanding within the discourse itself.

⁷³ Or rather, it does, by highlighting these silences, but the meaning(s) of these omissions are, by necessity, read and interpreted differently than, for instance, the explicit mapping of gender.

⁷⁴ Bumiller 2011.

liberal equality – and the military contract – seen in the formally equal sexing of the troops above.⁷⁵ The troops are not explicitly made meaningful with respect to race, and the racialized subtext of StT represents an important avenue of inquiry for future work. Generally, StT mirrors broader social silences surrounding “marked” (i.e. non-white, trans, LGBT, queer, etc.) subjectivities in the US and UK.

The collective nature of the troops facilitates this process, as their plurality facilitates their reading as universal. In contrast to the universal sovereign (singular) subject – the basis of both the Western citizen and soldier – which is implicitly constructed by regulatory norms premised upon white, male, and heterosexual “standards of excellence”,⁷⁶ “the troops” are able to incorporate any given particularity. The absence of explicit reference to “unmarked” social identities is not an indication that “the troops” are either, for instance, raceless, or a straightforward reproduction of the white male Western subject. Instead, the flexibility of the troops, facilitated by the collectivity and relational production, enables “them” to accommodate (or co-opt) various axes of intersectionality. They are, in some ways, a more effective avatar of the liberal military contract than the (citizen) soldier, since, as a necessarily collective subject, “the troops” may represent and interpellate both individual and collective, and universal and particular, subjectivities.

As a caveat, the troops’ all-encompassing ambivalence, as discussed here, relates only to the properties and characteristics, as demographic “social facts”, explicitly projected onto the troops within the discursive formation. This analysis does not account for the mutually-constitutive production of the troops and these categories. Here, the troops are sexed as male and female, regardless of their contingent, relational (re)production. The collective subject of the troops – not the individuals that may be interpellated by the troops, but the figure itself – is ambiguously gendered. “The soldier” is gendered as masculine as a cultural archetype, due to the confluence of the historical performance of soldiering by male bodies, and the social and philosophical constitution of “soldiering” as associated with masculine characteristics and hierarchical social relationships. The subject-position is masculine, though individual soldiers may be male or female.⁷⁷

My point is that as a collective subject whose substantive meaning is produced relationally, the gender/gendering of the troops, is distinct from the sex (and gender) of the individual subjects (i.e. military personnel) frequently understood as making it up. As observed by Hutchings, the gender of concepts does not derive from their association/identification with a “substantive masculine characteristic”, but rather their “differentiat[ion] from other feminized and masculinized alternatives in the appropriate hierarchy”.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ For more on the politics of sexuality in the US military, please see: Rich et. al. 2012. For the UK, see Basham, 2009. On discrimination against transgender persons in the US military, see: Kerrigan 2012.

⁷⁶ Brown 1995, 124; Frazer and Lacey 55.

⁷⁷ For more on the gendering of “soldier” as a masculine subject-position that may be performed by female identified/identifying (but not feminine) bodies, see Millar 2015; King 2015.

⁷⁸ Hutchings 2008, 394.

To analyse the gender/gendering of the troops, we need to position it within these relationships.

As observed previously, “the troops” contain a gendered tension between the masculine, protective troop-as-military/soldier and a potentially feminised troops-as-dependent/victim/veteran, etc. The frequent production of the troops as passive and dependent superficially suggests a feminine subject-position, yet the troops may also take on aspects of warrior masculinity associated with the institutional military and/or soldier. Attempting to definitively “gender” the troops therefore risks essentialism, as “the troops”, as a both new and collective subject, is not (yet?) produced via consistent patterns of gendered relationships in the same vein as the figurative soldier. I do not consider the troops to be genderless, or gender-neutral; but rather understand gendering as contextual and ambiguous. Tracking this ambiguity offers an excellent analytical lever upon the negotiation of the gendered political obligation and citizenship of the liberal military contract. In Chapter Six, I pull on this gendered thread to identify the contestation of the normative civil-military relationship by examining the contingent and substantive constitution of the troops – and society – in relation to each other, and the hegemonic masculinity of the (citizen) soldier.⁷⁹

5.5.2 What Happened to War?

“The troops”’ ability to encompass any race, gender, sexual orientation, affect, orientation towards conflict, etc., also renders “them” a key mediator of war to the public. As observed by Klenotic, most citizens of Western liberal democracies “experience war as a mediated phenomenon...It seeks, in the representation of itself and even in its very real playing out, to replicate the mediate narrative it has come to project about itself”.⁸⁰ Warfare, is narrativized, rather than directly accessed. StT discourse posits “the troops” as a collective, yet lauded phantasm, as the logical locus for popular identification, affect, and interpretation of the public’s relationship to conflict. Simpson, for instance, argues that the “domestic populations of junior coalition patterns see the conflict too rigidly through the experience of their own troops”.⁸¹ Media coverage of the US and UK has also been criticised for focussing too tightly on the experiences and fortunes of “our boys”, and “our troops”, at the expense of a broader perspective on the goals, aims, and progress of the war itself.⁸² War is presented as a series of discrete human interest stories,⁸³ as something that “happens” to the troops, rather than a practice in which the troops – and with them, the political community – are actively engaged.

⁷⁹ In this chapter, I empirically demonstrate that “the troops” may be masculine or feminine, depending upon the dynamic and substantive characterization of their relationship to society.

⁸⁰ Klenotic 2008, 109.

⁸¹ Simpson, 2012, 126.

⁸² Shea 2012, 628.

⁸³ Ibid, 627.

The distancing of war from the troops and, through them, the identifying and supportive political community, is illustrated by representations of the troops’ relationship(s) to violence (see Fig. 31 below). Each text was coded for violence (or not), though, as before, the potential co-occurrence of constructions of the troops as both employing and vulnerable to violence means the total number of references exceeds that of the paragraph units.⁸⁴

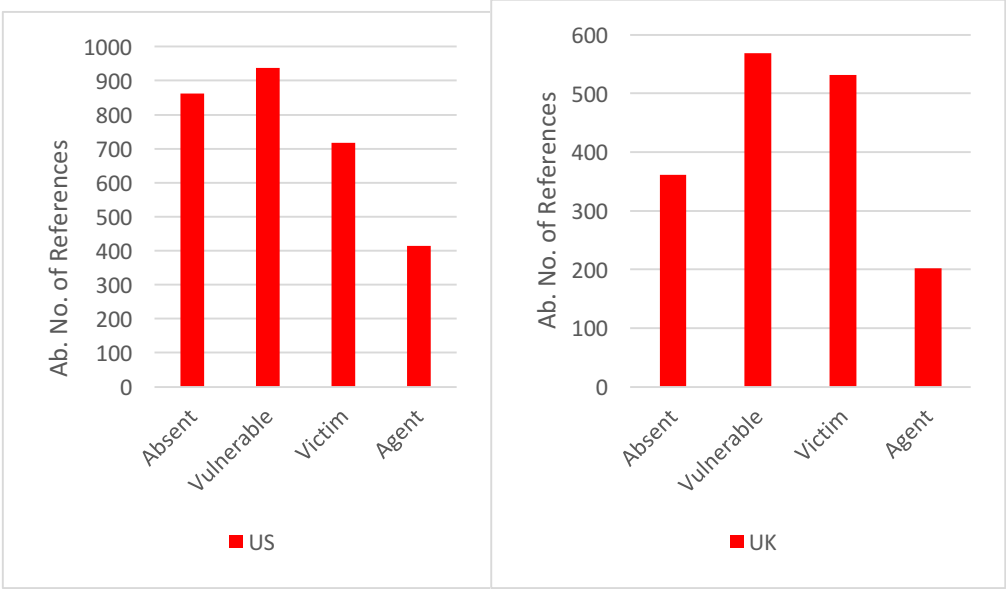


Figure 31: *Troops’ Relationship to Violence*

In both the US and UK, the troops are most often constructed as vulnerable to violence (937 of 2,930 references, and 569 of 1,663 references, respectively). In the US, this is followed by references to texts that contain no references to violence (862) and constructions of the troops as victims of violence (717). In the UK the victim frame (531) is more common than the absent frame (361). In both cases, in keeping with the troops’ typical passivity, they are rarely constructed as enacting violence. Instead, the troops are portrayed as either vulnerable to violence, or disconnected from it all together. In both cases, newspapers and the government are the greatest purveyors of “violence-less” constructions of the troops, at 80 per cent in the US, and 68 per cent in the UK. Interestingly, anti-war and pro-military NGOs account for 67 per cent of constructions of the troops as victims of violence in the UK, but only 48 per cent of these results in the US. Results for “vulnerable” are relatively evenly distributed between the four source-types, with the government being the greatest contributor to the category in the US (40 per cent), as a result of the many Congressional appropriations debates that occurred during the GWoT. Anti-war groups account for the largest portion (36 per cent) of “vulnerable” constructions in the UK. This reflects both the frequent

⁸⁴ The total number of paragraph-units is the sum of each of the “year” and “unclear” codes, as they are mutually-exclusive and used each time a text is classified.

reference to troop casualties in the context of war opposition and the previously-discussed over-representation of the Stop the War Coalition within the corpus.

Fig. 31 indicates that the constitution of the “troops” as dependent and frequently passive, demonstrates and facilitates a normative shift away from the activities of war – i.e. killing, violence, combat, etc. This is also reflected in the fact that the “enemy” is less-frequently referenced as an antagonist to “the troops” than the government or social conditions in both the US and UK (see Figs. 26 and 27). Many StT analysts, including Stahl, interpret the discourse as “manufacturing symbolic distance between the citizen and soldier”,⁸⁵ facilitating the depoliticization of conflict. My aggregated interpretive analysis suggests an alternative reading. I argue that as an ambivalent and socially “travelling” subject, capable of representing a variety of individual and collective subjectivities, “the troops” narrow the distance between citizens/soldiers and society/military. In doing so, “the troops” facilitate an odd dissociation between those collective subjects they contextually represent – including the military, enlisted personnel, and “soldiers” – and violence.

Richler refers to this confluence of projected identification with the content-less “troops”, and the dissociation from violence their passivity facilitates, as constituting a “received experience[] of war” for the broader public.⁸⁶ The “anonymizing” and universalised/ising representations of the troops, as argued by Tidy, serve to neutralize potentially-controversial individuals, actions, or conflicts by generalizing “the troops” into “ahistoric and apolitical ciphers”.⁸⁷ Though the troops provide an interpretive framework for war, their discursive (re)production sidesteps violence.⁸⁸ The vulnerability, passivity and dependence of “the troops” enables the moral calculus of war to be shifted from concerns of conflict legitimacy or for distant others, to a short-sighted moral investment in “the troops” well-being.

StT discourse is revealed to be rarely about the troops “themselves”, but rather the polity’s relationship to itself, in the context of war. As a mediator of war (and interpretive frame for society’s negotiation – or denial – of its own implication in violence), “the troops” does not suggest a particular substantive conceptualisation, or impose a particular conclusion, but acts as a place for social interaction. Jenkins et. al., drawing on Winter, observe that the UK Cenotaph “functions so well as a commemoration because of its essential indeterminacy” – its avoidance of concrete representation – which enabled post-war “mourners to ascribe to it their own feelings and thoughts, whether of private grief, patriotism, or pacifism”.⁸⁹ The troops

⁸⁵ Stahl 2009, 557.

⁸⁶ Richler 2012, 270.

⁸⁷ Tidy 2015a, 226.

⁸⁸ There is no little irony to this function of “the troops”. As noted by MacLeish (2013, 99) for soldiers – those most often directly interpellated by the troops – war lacks the coherent narrative that develops within popular discourse “at home” and is “tacked on” afterwards. Though the literal troops lack an immediate interpretive framework for war, the figure of the “the troops” becomes one

⁸⁹ Jenkins et. al. 2012, 360. For original, see Winter 2014, 102-5.

work in much the same way. “They” can be over-written with anything, enabling the polity to simulate an experience of war without actualising it, since, as a collectivity, the troops may never die. “The troops” are collectivized so that “we” can be them, kill them, love them, and ignore the fact that they (we) also kill. The political community may go through the motions of the mythologised mass, “good war” upon which the liberal military contract is founded, leaving the cultural interpretive canon of war relatively intact. In this way, “the troops” reflect and reproduce a broader condition of the GWoT, wherein “war” is distinguished from “violence” as an interpretive structure. As stated by Simpson, “...[W]ar is expanded to incorporate all means which deliver political effect: violence is mixed into other political activity, so that there is a severe erosion of the interpretive difference between military and political activity; war and peace”.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Simpson 2012, 231.

CHAPTER SIX: POLITICAL OBLIGATION, GENDER, AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

In this chapter, I move from the consideration of the figurative aspects “the troops” to examine their contingent constitution in relation to the other side of support – society. Building upon an understanding of the troops as a mediator of war/conflict for ostensibly-separate society, this chapter analyses the constitution and (re)production of the civil-military relationship within StT discourse. As observed by Basham, social mobilisation for war necessarily requires the generation of an account, founded upon a complex “intra-action of war, citizenship, and subjecthood”, of “which citizens should fight and die, and for what ends”.¹ This is the differential distribution of precarity of contemporary liberal warfare raised throughout this thesis, wherein despite the mythologized universal (masculine) obligation of military service,² only a small portion of citizens currently serve. The account of “who dies” – the troops – therefore, is underscored by the implicit, reciprocal construction of the other, larger group – society – who does not.

I conduct a relational analysis of the positioning of society vis-à-vis the troops, arguing that StT discourse reflects the on-going transformation in the normative structure of civil-military relations in the US and UK (see Ch. 3) – and possibly liberal democracies generally. In this analysis, I bracket questions of substantive identity to instead examine the normative structure(s) of the civil-military relationship. In other words: *Upon what grounds are the troops supported? Why?*

To address these questions, I refer back to the supportive rationales identified in Chapter Four, which demonstrate the myriad reasons, both implicit and explicit, underlying individual and social support for the troops. This emphasis on the structure and logic of the relationship, rather than its particularistic content, enables me to avoid projecting preconceived notions as to the nature of “supporters” into my research, instead deriving their characteristics relationally through grounded interpretive analysis. It allows me to bring the US and UK into the same analytic frame, and highlight continuities of supportive logic between the two. Most importantly, this approach enables me to interrogate the seeming structural stability of the gendered/ing civil-military relationship. My analysis reveals that StT discourse is not an unproblematic or straightforward reproduction of the gendered military contract, but rather contains three ideal-typical modes of support – or structures of political obligation. I pay particular attention to the gendering of “good public personhood” as it relates to military service. This enables me to see the contestation, and contingency of the civil-military relationship – and blurring of the civil-military divide. In this context, StT is read as means

¹ Basham 2013, 20.

² Sasson-Levy 2003, 322.

of contesting the underlying gendered/gendering structure of political obligation regarding collective force in the contemporary liberal state.³

The chapter proceeds with an overview of the three ideal-typical logics of obligation – communitarian, contractarian, and moral – found within StT discourse, and an explanation of how these categories were generated. This initial section also presents an aggregated depiction of references to each model within the sample, as a means of contextualizing the subsequent discussion of contestation. The balance of the chapter uses exemplary quotations, in a manner similar to Chapter Five, to detail each of the three logics of obligation. In doing so, I focus on the normative dynamic of civil-military relations, the construction of “good” gendered citizenship, and the implied premise of political community.

6.1 NORMATIVE CONTESTATION OF OBLIGATION: OVERVIEW

In Chapter Four, I presented an overview of the “reasons why”, implicit or explicit, that people support the troops (See Figures 20 and 21). The analysis found that in the US, “obligation” was the dominant supportive rationale, followed by “support the war”, “danger”, and “morally right”. In the UK, “obligation” was also the most common supportive rationale, followed by “sacrifice” and “morally right”. An initial glance at this material, given the fourteen observed supportive rationales, suggests contestation. Without a means of relating these categories to each other, however, the meaning and patterns of this contestation may be lost in the noise. This section thus moves from the inductive typology of the descriptive results to a conceptually-informed framework that underpins the identification and analysis of the three ideal-typical modes of political obligation considered in the balance of this chapter.

By these ideal-types, I refer to the structure, implicitly gendered, of the political obligation(s) of members of the political community – to both the community and to each other.⁴ As in the modern state political obligation has come to be strongly associated with citizenship, it constitutes a logical idiom for communicating the relationship between these obligations and the overarching polity. I should note, however, that though “citizenship-as-membership” is understood with regard to “status, rights, political engagement, responsibilities, and identity/solidarity”, I am only interested in these dimensions as they relate to the question of organized political violence.⁵ My emphasis, in contrast to much of citizenship (particularly liberal citizenship) scholarship and theorizing, is in the relationship to force.⁶ Narrowing citizenship down to

³ I.e. the existence of multiple modes of political obligation implies contestation.

⁴ This is a slight differentiation from the use of the term in classical liberal thought, which understands political obligation more narrowly, as source of citizen’s obligation to obey the law (See Simmons 1981). Given the foundation of the law in the state’s coercive capacity, I flip the conceptualisation of political obligation to the question of a citizen’s duty to maintain or create the capacity for law.

⁵ Bosniak 2003, 186.

⁶ Carter 1998, 71.

its potentially violent duties, such as soldiering, then, is not a conceptual slip, but rather a conscious choice, in keeping with my insistence upon the continuity of violence and politics. As a result, I do not engage in the many academic and lay debates regarding the “true” character and/or meaning of citizenship. This is not reify “citizenship”, nor its state-centric assumptions, as any more ontologically “real” than the other subjects, such as the troops, discussed thus far.

Political obligation, then, is a means of capturing the ways in which the call to “support the troops” variously interpellates individuals and groups, and structures the boundaries of political community. The examination of these gendered supportive rationales, and the complex and ambivalent ways in which they intertwine, permits me to connect the “relative position[ing]” of the “soldier and civilian” with the corresponding positioning of collective subjects – namely the troops and society – by looking at the dynamic of their mutual imbrication within what MacLeish refers to as “a vast apparatus of power”.⁷ This relational emphasis also highlights the centrality of civilians – who, contra the soldier, are frequently left out of international relations analysis – to the (re)production of the discursive military and war as a social relation. In contrast to the implicit claims of conventional IR theory raised in the introduction, this chapter and the one that follows demonstrate that civilians – and society – need not be practitioners of force to be implicated in violence, or for violence to be a crucial means of making up the political community.⁸ By contestation, therefore, I am looking at/for alternative articulations of the normative structure of civil-military relations to that of the archetypical liberal military contract. Changes in the gendering of this political obligation help us to analytically “see” this contestation, as departures from the feminine/society-masculine/military historical regularity, liberal cultural narrative, and scholastic heuristic is indicative of a broader transformation in civil-military relations.

⁷ MacLeish 2013, 198.

⁸ Cowen 2008, 24.

6.1.1 Ideal-Typical Political Obligation in US and UK

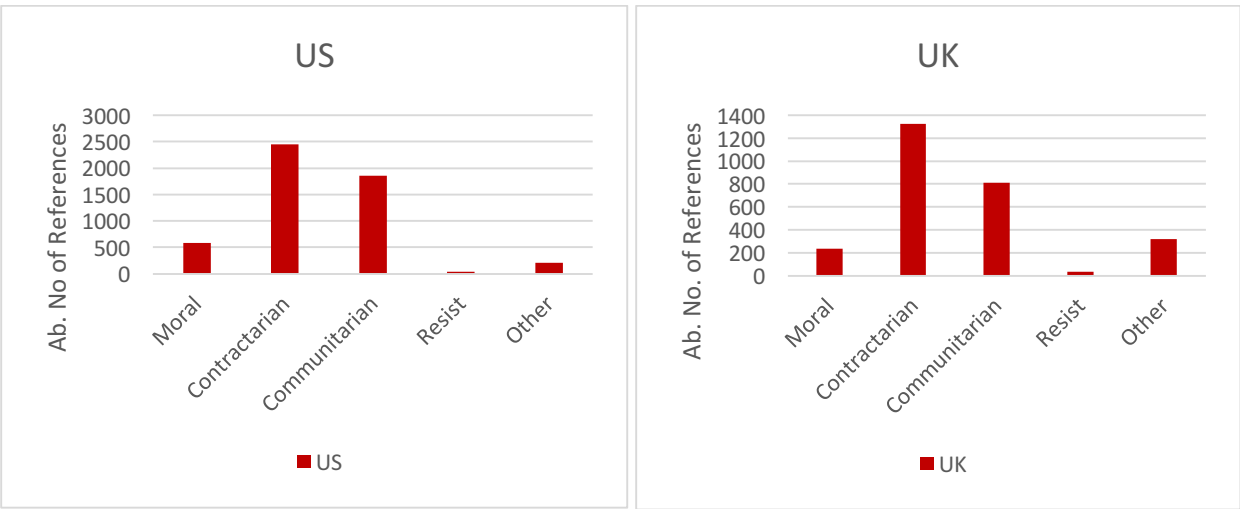


Figure 32: Ideal-Typical Logics of Political Obligation in US and UK

To generate these ideal-typical understandings of political obligation, I examined two inter-related criteria: the normative dynamic of support, and the relationship between the troops, society, and war the dynamic implies. To begin, I grouped the “operational”, “revenge”, and “end war” supportive rationales into one category, represented in Figure 32 as “other”. As these references construct support for the troops as a means to an end, they align with instrumental constructions of the troops as the military. Like the IR literature, they also leave the underlying normative social relationships implicit. This instrumental construction therefore does not produce a good illustration of normative civil-military relations, or the nature of political community. The paucity of “other” references in both the US and UK further speaks to the dissociation of “the troops” from both the functional, institutional military (see Ch. 5). This reinforces my reading of StT as fundamentally about the normative civil-military relationship, and nature of political community, rather than a comment upon the military, or even military personnel, per se. The few references suggesting one should not support the troops – or that are read inter-textually as opposition to the troops – are included in the “resist” category. I return to a discussion of the significance and meaning of this resistance in Chapter Eight.

I grouped the remainder of the references into three ideal-typical logics of political obligation – communitarian, contractarian, and moral – which are each explicated in detail in the subsequent section. Briefly, “communitarian” incorporates supportive rationales that a) construct supporting the troops as a form of war participation/input; and/or b) blur the distinction between supporters and supported through the corollary sense of a shared mission and common fortune. This logic is communitarian in so far as it reflects the notion that the holistic, indivisible political community is the central entity of political concern,

and “conceives of values as rooted in communal practices” – in this case, warfare.⁹ Communitarian strains of StT discourse therefore have a good deal in common with republican notions of citizenship. This category includes the “support the war” supportive rationale, and the associated categories of “equation of supporting the war with StT”, “necessary”, and “participate”. References to “patriotism” proved difficult to categorise, but were ultimately added to the communitarian ideal-type, as they appeal to a sense of common political membership and cause in soliciting support for the troops. (Should these “patriotism” references be removed, the overall pattern in Figure 32 remains the same).

Contractarian references, in contrast, reproduce the basic tenets of what I have previously presented as the liberal “military contract”. The normative dynamic is one of contractual obligation, based on the assumption of reciprocal obligations within the liberal public sphere,¹⁰ yet – interestingly – this logic is independent of a shared mission. This category encompasses the supportive rationales associated with “obligation” – “danger”, “fait accompli”, “hardship”, and “sacrifice”. This strain of StT discourse, unsurprisingly, despite connecting the troops with society, reproduces a highly-individualistic, yet mandatory, vision of political belonging, broadly aligning with liberal understandings of citizenship. The moral ideal-typical model of political obligation, in contrast, incorporates the supportive rationale of “morally right” (and “love”, for the US) – references to StT because it is a moral or normative good, independent of a sense of common community. This ideal-type exhibits an elective affinity with what might be termed “altruistic” or “apolitical” understandings of citizenship, which eschew the liberal public sphere in favour of an idealised private constituted by a network of individual relationships.¹¹ “Moral” obligation articulates in an “anti-political” manner similar to Weber’s “ethic of conviction”.¹²

The above charts therefore illustrate the number of references in the US and UK invoking the supportive rationales associated with the three ideal-typical understandings of political obligation. As the supportive rationales are not mutually exclusive, this is the total number of references, or instances of coded text, rather than paragraph units of analysis. The above charts are intended *entirely* as an heuristic device, to show the relative proportions of references aligning with elements of these ideal-types within the sampled discourse. Not every instance of incorporated text aligns perfectly with the three categorizations; indeed, due to the internal heterogeneity of StT discussed in Chapter Four, many of the discursive references blur, and combine, elements of the three. It should also be noted that I have deductively attached these analytic logics – communitarian, contractarian, and moral – and their gender/gendering, on the inductive categories as a means of using contemporary scholarly vocabulary to succinctly identify and communicate their normative

⁹ Frazer and Lacey 1993, 2.

¹⁰ Ibid, 2.

¹¹ See Berlant 1997.

¹² Weber 1946. Thanks to E. Frazer for this insight.

dynamics. I do not claim that these logics, or their gender/ing, are self-consciously or purposively created by the actors, nor that they derive from some social internalisation or endorsement of the tenets political theory. Figure 32 should be read simply as indicative of a pattern of contestation regarding the normative structure of StT, wherein moral and communitarian rationales co-exist with the dominant contractual understanding. The chapter proceeds with an explication of the gendered, normative structuring of the civil-military relationship, via political obligation, within each of the three ideal-types.

6.2 STT AND COMMUNITARIAN CONSTRUCTIONS OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The communitarian strain of discourse contained within the StT discursive formation is typified by a normative civil-military dynamic of participation. To begin with an explicit articulation of this supportive logic, in a post thanking the US NGO Operation Gratitude for their care packages and support, a service member states:

“[In Iraq]...Grizzly [sic] murders occurred every day. Today, thanks to the bravery and sacrifices of our soldiers - and to you for supporting them from afar - hundreds of criminals and terrorists have been killed or captured, the schools and hospitals have been rebuilt and are operating...In addition to this, our soldiers are winning a thousand small victories every month - glorious little triumphs that shine like stars against the blackest night...Your gifts, prayers and support have made a significant contribution in this just and worthy endeavour”.¹³

The support provided by ostensible civilians via Operation Gratitude is directly connected to the day-to-day engagement in military violence, contributing to *killing or capturing* the enemy. The supporters are represented not as the feminized, passive home front that grounds the gendered (liberal) civil-military divide, but rather as part of the military “team”. They help successfully prosecute what is, in this case, an explicitly just war. The UK NGO uk4uThanks!, which provides Christmas boxes to deployed military personnel, demonstrates similar constructions. Its posted responses from the troops emphasize the operational utility of the items provided. Thanks for the 2008 Christmas box, for instance, noted: “The small mugs were great and something that soldiers will keep in their kit for ranges and other days away...The superbright keyfob torches are really good and regularly being used as signal torches between vehicles on convoys”.¹⁴ This quotation highlights that while the troops may be dependent upon civilian support, as exhibited by their use of quotidian, even domestic, items provided by civilians in the battle space, the purpose of this support is to further the troops’ success in war. Organizations such as the Law Enforcement Equipment Program (an associated group of America Supports You) and, somewhat surprisingly, Military Families Speak Out, go further, providing specialist military equipment, such as batons, helmets, body armour, and even sniper scopes to deployed military units, stating, ““I believe that it is our responsibility to

¹³ Maj. DCC, qtd. In OpGrat 2006a.

¹⁴ Uk4uThanks!, 2009.

assist our Armed Forces in any and all ways possible”.¹⁵ Through the provision of war-fighting materials, and the contribution to “killing terrorists”, civilian support is constituted as a form of war participation by proxy.¹⁶ The troops, in turn, are relationally constituted as agential, standing in for either/both the institutional military and combat military personnel, and, as the subsequent section will demonstrate, are masculine/ised.

This reading of support as a form of war participation is not limited to new or marginal troop-supply/morale NGOs, but exists across the discursive spectrum. In 2009 the Royal British Legion, the preeminent “established” UK military charity, ran a campaign directed at MPs, electoral candidates, and the general public encouraging them to “take the pledge” and “do their bit” as a “great way of showing your support for the whole Armed Forces family”.¹⁷ Though the Legion suggests that “how you do that is up to you”, the presentation of the slogan alongside photos of armed soldiers in theatre in Iraq/Afghanistan clearly connected the provision of support to the practice of war fighting.¹⁸ This implicit framing of support as war contribution, as observed by the UK NGO Peace and Social Witness, represents a “substantial departure from the Royal British Legion’s historic message of remembering the horror of war, towards supporting those involved in current war”.¹⁹ In the broader context of communitarian, participatory StT discourse, this change should be read not as epiphenomenal or a cynical marketing ploy, but rather as a reflection of a broader process of contestation over the normative (gendered) structure of civil-military relations.

This is mirrored by the US Veterans of Foreign Wars’ (VFW) observation that “We are in an era of persistent conflict where success is dependent upon our whole Nation working in concert. Your participation in this collaborative process counts immensely...You not only serve the living, but you honor [sic] the fallen and safeguard their proud legacy”.²⁰ Here, though the participatory aspect of support is foregrounded, the explicit connection to war fades, as VFW posits both advocating for the quality and readiness of America’s “all-volunteer force” and preparing to care for new veterans as equivalent inputs to “success”. This is typical of mainstream articulations of this discourse, which preserve the logic of citizen participation in the troops’ mission, but do so with a broadened conceptualisation as to what counts as a contribution. In 2008, for instance, the Speaker of the US House of Representatives stated: “In the military there’s a saying, that when we’re in battle, we don’t leave any soldiers behind on the battlefield. We in Congress have said to our veterans, and when you come home, you will not be forgotten...That is how we support our troops”.²¹ The

¹⁵ LEEP 2008; and Oregon Military Families Speak Out 2009.

¹⁶ For an example of a more extreme articulation of this position, please refer to Millar and Tidy 2016.

¹⁷ RBL 2010a.

¹⁸ See, for instance, RBL 2010b.

¹⁹ QPSW 2014, 6.

²⁰ VFW 2008b.

²¹ WashingtonPost.com 2008.

use of the term “we” clearly identifies the Speaker and her fellow Congressional “supporters”, with the military, and claims a form of participation in the extended “battle” of the GWoT. In this instance, however, the war contribution is limited to funding the US Veterans’ Administration – coping with the aftermath of military violence rather than contributing to it (even by proxy). The paradigmatic example of this expanded notion of war participation is Bush’s famous November 2001 speech announcing the global war on terror, wherein he answered the question “What can I do to help in our fight?” with:

“...All of us...mak[e] a commitment to service in our own communities. So you can serve your country by tutoring or mentoring a child, comforting the afflicted, housing those in need of shelter and a home...You can support our troops in the field and, just as importantly, support their families here at home, by becoming active in the U.S.O. or groups in communities near our military installations”.²²

Together, Bush and Pelosi’s statements, as with the bake sales and bike rides proposed by many UK NGOs as a means of “doing your bit”,²³ expand the practice and experience of warfare, albeit at a remove and divorced from its typical association with violence, into the banal quotidian practices of the everyday. At the same time, this discourse reads civilians, functionally, into the military, as these same practices, from community volunteering to veterans’ care to posting sniper scopes, are framed as helping to achieve the mission. With such a range of supportive activities on offer, everyone has the opportunity – or, rather, the responsibility – to, if not engage in military violence themselves, functionally approximate the noncombat support personnel within the military.²⁴ As a result, the spatial divide separating discrete military and civil spheres within the typical liberal social and political order appears not only subject to challenge, but potentially inapplicable.

The question of “what can I do?”, expressed across both UK and US texts, gets at the heart of this normative structure of political obligation, and what is at stake in this blurring of the liberal civil-military divide. It is not the particular answer to the question that matters – as seen above, what to do could be constructed as virtually anything – but rather the underlying assumption that something must be done. “The troops” are recognized as a constituent aspect of the community, and incorporated into a (presumably) pre-existing social network characterised by relations of “reciprocity, mutuality, and interdependence”.²⁵ The founder of the major UK charity Help for Heroes, for instance, states, that the impetus for the charity was that “We knew that thousands of people felt the same as us; that something had to be done”.²⁶ The communitarian discursive strain presents an indivisibility between supporters (civilians) and supported (troops), and a sense of common cause. The equation of supporting the troops with supporting the war, a trope that recurs

²² Bush 2001a.

²³ See, for instance, H4H 2009b.

²⁴ Millar and Tidy 2016, 11.

²⁵ Frazer 1999, 1.

²⁶ Dancy 2008.

hundreds of times in both the US and UK (see Figures 20 and 21) is the most common articulation of this construction.

UK Member of Parliament Fox captures the general tenor of this discourse well in his 2007 declaration that “We support our troops, and therefore we support the mission. Although people who say that they support our troops in the abstract but do not support the mission may find that their approach goes down well in the House of Commons it certainly does not go down well with our troops”.²⁷ The reverse of this logic – supporting the troops *because* you support the war (see section 6.2.2 for examples) – though differing in initial motivation/locus for action, similarly exemplifies this mode of political obligation. The troops and supporters together constitute the community, and thus, regardless of opinions on the war, the activity must be supported. The war is a shared fate.²⁸ As observed by Managhan, this discourse reproduces a device seen throughout the GWoT, wherein “even strategic considerations were interpreted in terms of whether or not one was for or against the war effort”.²⁹ This conflation is compounded by the implicit framing of support for the troops, through this insistence upon common cause, as itself a form of war participation. This position is cogently encapsulated by General Hillier’s statement, made in the context of a comparable shift in Canadian civil-military relations, that “When a single Canadian soldier walks on soil in a foreign, hostile land, every single Canadian walks with him or her”.³⁰

It is tempting to understand this strain of StT discourse as simply reflecting a conservative, right-wing political position. But this sense of common cause is also observed in the discourse of anti-war organizations attributing responsibility for the conflicts. In a plea to US politicians to cease funding the war in Iraq, a Military Families Speak Out supporter argued, for example, that “If you vote to continue funding this war in Iraq, it will no longer be President Bush’s war. It will be yours. If you fund it, you’ve bought it and you own it and we will remember.” This reads funding the war as a form of participation and, as a result, an acceptance of responsibility for the conflict – a responsibility that, by implication, the speaker reads the politician’s broader constituency as unwilling to accept. Collective responsabilisation for the conflicts can also be observed in the UK Stop the War Coalition’s “Not in My Name” campaign,³¹ which draws on a communitarian sense of common identity – the membership implied by the “name” – to discredit the Blair administration’s claims of the war’s necessity. In doing so, the slogan also implicitly constructs a sense of collective

²⁷ Fox 2007.

²⁸ See Frazer 1999, 43.

²⁹ Managhan 2011a, 442.

³⁰ Richler 2012, 136.

³¹ Stop the War Coalition. “Not in My Name/Don’t Attack Iraq!. Photograph of Protest Signs. Bishopsgate Institute Archives, London.

responsibility³² – even complicity – for the war throughout the public, through the construction of violence as a practice of the group.

This collapse of support into war participation, and the civil into the military “sphere”, do not align with liberal understandings of military service and citizenship. Instead, they articulate a notion of citizenship that roughly parallels republican conceptualisations. As summarized by Carter, republicanism is a “belief in the dignity of politics and increased political participation [and] willingness to subordinate private interest to the public good”, guided by an emphasis on civic virtue.³³ As with previous discussions of liberalism, it is not my intent to arbitrate the specifics of republican political theory, nor to suggest that republicanism perfectly parallels the tenets of an explicit program of political communitarianism.³⁴ Instead, I am interested in highlighting the correspondence between the aspects of communitarian StT discourse – namely the indivisibility of society and troops, and their common cause – and the “republican” principles of participation and subordination of private interest. We can then, drawing upon my initial conceptualisation of the military as a discourse, understand war participation as a component of public political obligation – even for “civilians” with no connection to the formal institution.

6.2.1 Gendering Participatory Support

Sasson-Levy observes that, as previously discussed, in the West, military service has come to be a “hallmark of citizenship”, in inherently gendered terms (see Chs. 3 and 5).³⁵ The normative model of the “good citizen” is the masculine (historically, though now not exclusively male) combat soldier, who risks his/her life for the collective.³⁶ Although “the troops” as a collective subject are ambiguously (and relationally) gendered (see Ch. 5), within this strand of discourse, they are (re)produced in relation to the culturally-hegemonic figure of the combat soldier. This gendering of war participation is most evident in the common recasting of StT as meaning/requiring supporting the war at a smaller scale through the insistence that the “warrior”³⁷ cannot be separated from the war.³⁸ In a 2007 Congressional debate regarding withdrawal from Iraq, for instance,

³² The slogan “Not in Our Name” was also prevalent in the US in the lead-up to, and immediate aftermath of, the invasion of Iraq. It was widely promoted by a group of the same name from 2002-2008, which was associated with the broader United for Peace and Justice coalition (whose texts are analysed in this project). Not In our Name 2002.

³³ Carter 1998, 70.

³⁴ See, for instance, Pocock 1975; Appleby 1992; and Oldfield 1990; On political communitarianism see Frazer 1999.

³⁵ Sasson-Levy 2002, 359.; See also Janowitz 1956, 191.

³⁶ Goldstein 2001; Sasson-Levy 2002, 360.

³⁷ A 2007 Washington Post article notes that “warrior” has become a common form of address within the US military establishment, giving the example of an automatic message sent by a Marine public affairs officer: “Warriors, I will be out of the office until Monday.” Aspiring to embody heroic cultural figures is not limited to those outside the formal military institution. See Henderson 2007.

³⁸ This quotation reverses the directionality of the obligation to StT noted in the previous Fox quote, but without challenging the indivisibility of the war, troops, and society, as the “community”.

Representative Ros-Lehtinen declared, “While urging a withdrawal, some state that they support the troops. But as leaders of the American Legion and the Veterans for Foreign Wars have stated, you cannot separate the warrior from the war”.³⁹ She then refers to her stepson and his wife, noting that both were Marine pilots who had served in action, praising their commitment and that of “their fellow service men and women”, and noting that “they are so confident in success that they are willing to risk their lives to secure it”.⁴⁰

In this passage, Ros-Lehtinen leverages the common – though not uniform – oscillation between the figures of the troops and the soldier, explicated in Chapter Five, to rhetorically equate supporting the (collective) troops with supporting the (combat) warrior, and thus the war. The personal traits associated with her family members – perseverance, confidence, willingness to accept risk, and proximity to combat – moreover, reproduce the hegemonic model of Western military masculinity, “associated with practices of strength, toughness and aggressive heterosexuality”.⁴¹ The fact that Ros-Lehtinen is clearly offering up these “warriors”, as proxies for the troops, as a model to be emulated, further demonstrates the foundational connection between military service and citizenship within this discourse. As a normative ideal, the “warrior” troops are invoked as a means of shaming those who support a withdrawal for their apparent failure to meet this same level of commitment – and thus fulfil their political obligation of war participation.

Similar constructions exist in the UK, where, though the “warrior and the war” construction (as a remnant of Vietnam) is less prevalent, the troops are imbued with the characteristics of military masculinity. As an example, upon the 300th soldier death in Afghanistan, a member of the House of Lords stated:

“We pay tribute to their bravery, we honour their sacrifice and our thoughts are with their families...They are fighting there to keep our streets safe here. That is why the Opposition is united with the Government in support of our troops and their mission...Let us remember all our service men and women...Their skill and courage are unsurpassed”.⁴²

Note the rhetorical shift from the deceased 300 soldiers, who make the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the collectivity – “to keep our streets safe” – to the troops as a whole. In this way, the 300 individual soldiers – who, in death, allude to the figure of the hegemonic combat soldier – enable these characteristics of military masculinity to be extended to the “skilful and courageous” (living) troops. The troops are held up as a “triumphalist image...that give[s] us the idea of the human with whom we are to identify”, promoting “the patriotic hero who expands our own ego boundary ecstatically into that of the nation”.⁴³

In this context, the communitarian strain of StT discourse may be understood as an attempt to resist the

³⁹ Ros-Lehtinen 2007, H1830.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Duncanson 2009, 64; See also Barrett 1996.

⁴² Baroness Royall of Blaisdon 2010, c1196.

⁴³ Butler 2006, 145.

structural feminization of supporters (as civilians) within the conventional gendering of the liberal civil-military divide. In other words, claims to support-as-war participation make it possible to read non-serving civilians into “the [masculine] citizen-soldier ideal of the civic republican tradition, [which] fuses military service and participatory citizenship”.⁴⁴ Support-as-participation is a means of refusing identification with a structurally subordinate subject-position of feminized civilians – in some ways, a move to (re)assert privilege.⁴⁵ Masculinity is key here, as it both drives the anxiety associated with not serving in the military during wartime, and offers a means of extending the military, or “militaryness”, out into society, through the functional equation of civilian support with war contribution. This can be seen in the gendered undertones, for instance, of the various UK calls for civilians to “to do their bit”. These evoke the WWI image of the small child asking their father, “What did you do in the war, Daddy?”,⁴⁶ as an expectation of not only good citizenship, but also masculinity.

The transformation of support into a form of war contribution – and thus appropriate civic masculine citizenship – relies on the approbation of those socially and discursively “authorized” to inhabit military masculinity. The performance of “thanks” by military personnel for operationally-useful support, as seen in the uk4uThanks! and Operation Gratitude quotations that open this section, are crucial to this construction. As serving soldiers engaged in combat, they are able to draw on “the authority of [their] presence, this direct experience of the real”⁴⁷ field of battle to not only mimic the figurative combat soldier, but also to recognize this military masculinity (and performance of “good” citizenship) in others.⁴⁸ The same move of constructing combat experience – and, by extension, war participation – as the *sine qua non* of citizenship is also seen in Fox’s above comments, which set up the troops as the arbiter of appropriate “support”. This discourse produces a tautological construction, wherein supporters rely on war participation – itself founded on a hegemonic, combat model of appropriate citizen masculinity – as a means of resisting structural feminization. This, in turn, (re-)masculinizes the troops by casting relations of dependence as a consequence of a solidaristic, communitarian common cause in war, rather than a failure of masculinity.

To conclude this section, the communitarian strain of supportive political obligation evidences a participatory dynamic of civil-military relations, wherein normative citizenship is premised upon a political obligation to contribute to (or take responsibility for) the violent activities of the whole. This results in the autotelic reinforcement of the supremacy and moral validity of hegemonic military masculinity as model

⁴⁴ Sasson-Levy 2003, 321-22.

⁴⁵ On avoiding feminine subject-positions, see Whitford 2000, 8 and 76.

⁴⁶ For an image of the referenced recruitment poster, see The Victoria and Albert Museum, nd.

⁴⁷ Mitchell 1991, 27.

⁴⁸ For more on combat soldiers arbitrating the “reality” of war, soldiering, and military masculinity, see Tidy 2016.

of citizenship for both civilians and those actively serving. While the two are distinguished in specific action, they are equivalent in function and normative obligation. As described by Aron, in another context, “citizen rights”, and further, the ability to be recognized as a “good” citizen at all, “imply duties, above all that of military service”, which are, in his words, “quintessentially national” – or holistic.⁴⁹ While, as evidenced by Figure 32, the relative prevalence of this discourse differs between the US and UK, it represents a substantial portion of the overall discursive formation in each. War participation is not only a requirement for being in political community, but the premise of the political community itself.

6.3 STT AND CONTRACTARIAN CONSTRUCTIONS OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The contractarian strain of StT discourse constructs the normative dynamic of the civil-military relationship as a reciprocal, if asymmetric, relationship between individuals. In this ideal-type, support is framed as something “owed” to those who accept personal risk on behalf of others. This construction of support-as-obligation has come to typify UK state messaging regarding the armed forces, with MP Robathan’s 2010 statement serving as an exemplar:

“...[T]he nation and the Government have a moral obligation to care for those who have made a commitment by joining the armed forces, and taking on the duties and sometimes the sacrifices that service requires...[W]hen we provide support, we must place the ex-serviceman or woman at the heart of what we do...[O]ne of the yardsticks by which a Government are judged is how well they treat their ex-servicemen and women. We are determined to treat them with dignity and respect and to reflect the huge debt...that we all owe to all of them. It is our moral duty to do so”.⁵⁰

The paragraph explicitly references an “obligation” and “duty” to care for and support the troops. In framing this obligation in terms of a “debt”, it outlines a contractual notion of civil-military relations. Supporters “owe” the troops, either as actively serving or as veterans, their support for services rendered. Indeed, the quotation goes further, indicating that this political obligation of support is so central to the political community, it is the means by which “a government [is] judged”.

The support-as-obligation trope is, similarly, so common to the US discourse it is difficult to select a single example, but this 2004 speech by Representative Herseth provides an excellent illustration of the nearly-identical normative dynamic in the US context:

“...We must acknowledge our obligation to this generation of heroes who deserve what has been promised them, particularly in the areas of health care, disability compensation and educational opportunities. Supporting our troops means...providing them with the resources to get the job done in the dangerous situations in which we have put

⁴⁹ Cited in Carter 1998, 71. For original, see: Aron 1974, 652.

⁵⁰ Robathan 2010b.

them; but it also means ensuring that we know and understand our troops' needs when they return home and how to best meet those needs.”⁵¹

Though the contractual language is less obvious in this example, the components remain. The troops – or “heroes” – are “deserving” of the support, be it military equipment or education, that has been “promised” to them. The passage draws a line of equivalence between supporting troops-as-soldiers in the field and supporting troops-as-veterans following the end of the conflict (see Ch. 5). It captures the general tone of “obligatory” constructions of US support also observed by MacLeish in his ethnography of Fort Hood military base, wherein visiting civilians were prone to grand proclamations that “If you’re American, you will always be 100 percent in debt”.⁵² Significantly, MacLeish notes it is unclear whether such declarations are intended for the troops, civilians, “or both” – a rhetorical indeterminacy which speaks to the intertwined, mutually-implicated production of both collective subjects within StT discourse.⁵³

In contrast to communitarian StT discourse, wherein this sense of duty is articulated towards the collectivity as a holistic, social entity, the structure of normative political obligation vis-à-vis force in this discourse is between individuals (or, perhaps, a group of discrete individuals). Another quotation from UK Hansard in 2007 makes this clear: “Our society should be more aware of the sacrifices that our armed forces make, and the problems that they face. Those of us in this country who enjoy the protection provided by our armed forces have a duty to support them”.⁵⁴ Support is owed to the troops because they accept hardship to protect, interestingly, not the community per se, but the more disaggregated, individualised “those of us” who do not serve. Civilians are obliged to provide support because the troops are doing something on their (personalised) behalf. A press release by the US NGO Disabled American Veterans, publicizing special military-oriented television programming, put this even more directly, declaring:

“[T]he channel’s “heart-felt gratitude and appreciation to the men and women who have served and currently serve in our armed forces...We salute their dedication and sacrifice, and we applaud their courage...We hope this will let them know we...recognize what they are doing for us all.”⁵⁵

Though the “obligatory” nature of this support is subtler, the civil-military relationship is framed as one of asymmetric obligation, wherein the troops are implicitly portrayed as undertaking military service in the place of the supporters. The discrete spatialization of the liberal political community into civil and military

⁵¹ Herseth 2004.

⁵² MacLeish 2013, 184.

⁵³ MacLeish 2013, 184.

⁵⁴ Fox 2007.

⁵⁵ VFW 2004a.

spheres is, correspondingly, reproduced and maintained. Sacrifice is vague, and limited to the military; as observed by Cole, civilian supporters are encouraged, implicitly or explicitly, to continue their normal lives.⁵⁶

This construction of support as a multi-layered web of individualized, interpersonal – though still political – obligation facilitates the move to “support the troops, but not the war”, an iteration of StT discourse which, for many, defines the overall phenomenon. Contractarian support is not mutually exclusive with the communitarian emphasis supporting the war, but, in ideal-typical form, constructs an alternative normative structure of civil-military relations best demonstrated by discourse expressing ambivalence, or even opposition, to conflict. This belief that (in a reversal of the republican trope) “never again in America should the warrior ever be confused with the war” is most clearly expressed in the rationale of “fait accompli” – the notion that citizens have no moral choice but to support the troops. *NYT* coverage of a 2003 StT rally provides a clear illustration of this sentiment, with one demonstrator stating, “If you're going to fuss, fuss before the war...but now that the war is going on, stop and support the troops.” Another demonstrator, the mother of a Marine reservist, echoed “Don’t get me wrong...I’m against the war. But they are supporting us”.⁵⁷ As in the above aphorism, these expressions show a clear distinction between StT and “fussing”, which, as articulated by the first speaker, is self-evidently irrelevant once the conflict has begun.

The lack of a sense of “common cause”, or shared fortunes in war, is also present in much of the UK “obligatory/indebted” discourse. Well-known examples of this position are the widely-publicized declarations of Piers Morgan (then-editor of the *Daily Mirror*) and Liberal Democratic leader Charles Kennedy that they opposed the war in Iraq, but would support the troops once it began.⁵⁸ The furore surrounding these positions once the war began – which media commentators and Morgan himself observed forced a change in editorial direction of the *Daily Mirror* – indicates the centrality of obligatory support to the UK civil-military relationship. In Morgan’s own words, upon the invasion of Iraq, he had “never seen such a switch in public opinion,” stating that, in hindsight, “It’s entirely down to the natural sense in this country – particularly among the tabloid readership – that once a war starts, if we’re involved, we must unequivocally support our boys and girls”.⁵⁹ This sense of popular obligation was also evidenced by the wearing of pro-military “support the troops” apparel, such as the plastic charity wristbands made ubiquitous in the US. As one supporter stated to the *Guardian*, “We’re not pro-war, but we support the troops”.⁶⁰ As observed by Dixon, in the UK, during the initial stages of the GWOt, people often supported the military in spite of, rather

⁵⁶ Cole 2005, 148.

⁵⁷ Gootman 2003.

⁵⁸ Hall 2003; Burrell 2003.

⁵⁹ Burrell 2003.

⁶⁰ Burkeman 2005.

than because of, their missions.⁶¹ These statements, by explicitly denying their support for the mission, indicate that the “burden” accepted by the troops on behalf of their fellow citizens is not, as may be assumed, war participation. Instead, they are owed support for their acceptance of military service – independent of their involvement in conflict.

The discursive excision of war from military service, moreover, is what enables anti-war groups to advocate for “supporting the troops by bringing them home” without violating either the obligation of support or lapsing into normative incoherence. In the US, this was a common refrain of virtually all peace groups during the GWoT. United for Peace and Justice and CodePink, which were both founded specifically to oppose the invasion of Iraq, consistently campaigned on the message that “‘supporting the troops’ and ‘ending the war’ are one and the same”, hosting “bring them home” vigils, and incorporating pro-troop symbolism, such as the iconic yellow ribbon (paired with a peace sign), into protest materials.⁶² More established, conventionally pacifist peace organizations, such as Pax Christi, also engaged in this discourse, providing a lucid summary of this position: “Pax Christi USA deeply believes that the best way to truly support our troops is to bring them home rather than place them in the physical and moral jeopardy involved in carrying out an illegal and immoral military action on behalf of powerful but narrow interests”.⁶³ Here, the previous separation of supporters from the mission is extended to incorporate the troops, presenting them as similarly disenfranchised and victimized by the war. In doing so, the anti-war discourse produces the troops and supporters as belonging to the same community, yet alienated from the conventional political authority frequently lauded in communitarian/republican discourse.

Briefly, similar constructions are also present in the discourse of UK anti-war groups, as seen in CND’s endorsement of “support our troops, bring them home” protest signs.⁶⁴ An archived copy of a Stop the War Coalition 2010 speech responding to UK Armed Forces Day, for example, mirrors the construction of Pax Christi seven years earlier, stating that “The government says it has organised Armed Forces Day to support the troops. But if it was genuinely concerned with supporting the troops, it would bring them home and end this aggressive foreign policy which is making Britain so unpopular”.⁶⁵ This sentiment was also propounded by lay StWC members, voicing various iterations of the notion that “we do support the troops but the best

⁶¹ Dixon 2012, 130.

⁶² See, for instance, CP 2004a; UfPJ 2003b; UfPJ 2006.

⁶³ PC 2003a.

⁶⁴ CND 2003a.

⁶⁵ Stop the War Coalition. “Draft Text for Armed Forces Day”, approx. 2010, from uncatalogued archive at the Bishopsgate Institute, London.

way of supporting them is to bring them home. They are ill-equipped, they have been put in a completely impossible situation, in a war they don't understand".⁶⁶

At one level, of course, as observed by Coy et. al., the use of such language is a means of strategic self-representation, distancing the anti-war groups from the post-Vietnam caricature of protestors as "anti-troop".⁶⁷ In doing so, Dixon points out that the "support the troops" discourse is subject to resignification by anti-war groups and war opponents, as the pan-societal promotion of the military's popularity (both by the government and other social actors) may "inadvertently strengthen support for withdrawal".⁶⁸ The necessity of this strategic move, however, to ensure a fair hearing for war opposition, further speaks to the deeply-embedded naturalization of the obligation to support the troops. While the separation of the "warrior from the war" permits contestation within this particular discursive strain as to *how* one should support the troops, it reifies the normative expectation that they *are* supported.⁶⁹

The construction of support as an (apparently undeniable) contractual obligation reproduces, unsurprisingly, a fairly stereotypical rendering of the liberal military contract. Sasson-Levy, reading between the lines of classic liberal political thought, observes that in a liberal conception of citizenship, "military service is perceived as part of the citizen's minimal obligations to the state, in exchange for which the citizen receives equal civic, political, and social rights".⁷⁰ Janowitz, in describing Western states since the US and French revolutions, similarly argues that military service, undertaken to "defend individual freedom and achieve social and political justice", constitutes a key aspect of modern citizenship.⁷¹ This liberal notion of serving in exchange for rights therefore parallels the contractual construction of political obligation, wherein support is represented as reciprocally owed to the troops by their fellow citizens.

While this discourse, in its recognition (and enforcement) of the supportive obligation, constructs a sense of shared community between the supporters and the troops, it does not translate into a sense of common cause. It is unclear how the discursive separation of the "warrior from the war" squares with the contractual cultural narrative. As a result, the contractual strain of StT discourse exposes the failure of the "mythical" liberal military contract to fully account for contemporary civil-military relations. In the absence of universal service, a key component of the liberal contractual premise of equality,⁷² there is a piece missing. Contractual

⁶⁶ StWC 2009a.

⁶⁷ Coy et. al. 2008.

⁶⁸ Dixon 2012, 120 and 129.

⁶⁹ In the interests of accuracy, it should be noted that UK anti-war groups, in contrast to those in the US, frequently use the phrase "bring them home", without the StT preface. This injects an element of indeterminacy to the statement, as the reason for "bringing them home" must be inferred. See Chapter 8.

⁷⁰ Sasson-Levy 2002, 35; See also Basham 2013, 40.

⁷¹ Janowitz 1976, 200. See also quoted in Sasson-Levy 2002, 359.

⁷² Frazer and Lacey 1993, 70.

StT discourse invokes the idiom of archetypal liberal political obligation and citizenship, but is unable to performatively fulfil it. As in the construction of support-as-participation, contractarian discourse is undershot with a sense of normative discomfort over non-service in wartime. A *Baltimore Sun* columnist quoted in a VFW press release, for instance, observes that “This is one of the most challenging and uncomfortable subjects in American society—the lack of shared responsibility, across all social and economic classes, in the nation’s defense...We support the troops, but most of us have no interest in seeing our own families engaged directly”.⁷³ Similarly, the chairman of the UK charity Help for Heroes proclaimed at the opening of a new rehabilitation facility:

“In the same way that Mark [whom the facility commemorated] *chose* to risk everything to help his friends, we must act like heroes to support our wounded. *We do not have to join the Services, we don’t have to go into a minefield or risk our lives* under fire but we should act to support those who do, we can take part in something a little heroic...They are prepared to risk their lives for their mates, we should be prepared to look after them. They deserve the best we can give them”.⁷⁴ (emphasis added)

6.3.1 Ambiguous Gendering of “Indebted” Support

Liberal, contractarian attempts to grapple with violent political obligation reflect the overarching problem identified by this dissertation – the disconnect between the mythical contract and the contemporary experience of war. MacLeish refers to this situation as the “guilty-minded civilian public sphere”, wherein only a tiny fraction of citizens are called on to make sacrifices in war, and the majority of people are not only “indifferent” to the war, but, in this construction, morally indicted by their (presumed) apathy.⁷⁵ This account, as with republican/communitarianism, seems to once again rely on the implicit elevation of the figure of the hegemonically masculine combat soldier as the model of normative citizenship. To a degree, this is true, as the above quotations frequently reference the troops’ selflessness, acceptance of sacrifice, bravery, etc. – all lauded character traits associated with archetypal Western military masculinity.

Closer examination, however, reveals the gendering of civilian supporters in relation to the troops (and vice-versa) to exhibit the same tension between the individualised figure of the (combat) soldier (and, to a degree, the veteran) and the collective subject of the troops observed in Chapter Five. The discourse examined thus far – particularly the above H4H quote – constructs “heroism” as the benchmark of idealised normative citizenship. Heroism, however, does not necessarily derive from proximity to combat. Instead, a careful examination of the normative dynamics of the support-as-obligation discourse reveals that the heroism of the troops derives from “the voluntary assumption of risk, and the corresponding exception of

⁷³ Dan Rodricks cited in VFW 2006a.

⁷⁴ H4H 2010a.

⁷⁵ MacLeish 2013, 212.

the volunteer from the rights and protections to which they are otherwise entitled".⁷⁶ This voluntary renunciation of rights and acceptance of risk is also reflected in the plethora of references to "danger" and "hardship" as corollary reasons that civilians (see Figures 20 and 21) are indebted to the troops. The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans' Association (IAVA), for instance, frames veterans' support as redressing the hardships endured by the troops as a result of their exposure to war, such as the fact that "Over 26,000 troops have been wounded in action, and almost 45,000 veterans have been diagnosed with PTSD".⁷⁷ In the words of IAVA, "We owe it to these men and women", whom they construct as the "newest generation of heroes", to get them they help they need".⁷⁸ The UK Legion, similarly, emphasises the danger of active military service, noting that "A career in the Armed Forces is unique. Those who join know that they will have to follow orders, even if this leads to their death."⁷⁹ Heroism lies in the acceptance of risk and subsequent forbearance of suffering.

The idealized characteristics of the troops within contractarian, liberal discourse are divorced from the hallmark of republican citizenship – the duty to participate in the collective violence of the polity, as grounded in the figure of the hegemonically masculine combat soldier. The US DoD's "America Supports You" program, for instance, publicized Walmart's practice of posting the photos of all local residents serving in the military on a "Wall of Honor."⁸⁰ Veterans of Foreign Wars lobbied US airlines to eliminate luggage fees for "young enlisted troops" because "those who wear the uniform are a special class of citizen, and they deserve special treatment because they have earned it".⁸¹ Similar programs recognizing the service of "the troops" as an undifferentiated entity (see Ch. 5) are also found in the UK (increasingly so, since 2010). "Tickets for Troops" for instance, much like the US professional sporting spectacles discussed in Chapter Three, provides tickets for current and former military personnel to attend sporting events. The troops are encouraged to wear their uniforms (another change in UK military tradition)⁸² and receive the applause of the attending crowd.⁸³

⁷⁶ Millar 2016a, 17. See also MacLeish 2013, 144; and Cowen 2008, 16.

⁷⁷ IAVA 2007a.

⁷⁸ IAVA 2008a; IAVA 2007a.

⁷⁹ RBL 2007a.

⁸⁰ VFW 2005b.

⁸¹ VFW 2008a.

⁸² During the GWoT, the UK government relaxed its previous recommendation against wearing military uniforms off-duty (a reaction to IRA-related safety concerns in the 1970s and 1980s) to encourage uniforms in public, as a means of raising the positive social profile of the army. BBC News 2013.

⁸³ UK MoD 2010b.

As alluded to by these examples of hero recognition, the troops' heroism lies not in their use of force, but in their acceptance of military service.⁸⁴ The defining of heroism by the decision to join the military makes it easier to generalize this heroic, lauded social status from the individual volunteer to "the troops". It also decentres the combat soldier as the implicit model of masculinity and normative citizenship. After all, if heroism resides in joining up, then "at the time of the defining action, the figure in question is less a soldier than a citizen".⁸⁵ Lutz, in her analysis of military recruitment material, suggests that soldiers are discursively granted "supercitizenship", wherein civilians should praise/value their service "in exchange for not being asked to kill and die" – a reading of contemporary US civil-military relations that aligns with the contractual construction of political obligation.⁸⁶ I suggest, however, that this understanding of the "supercitizen", as applied to the US and UK during the GWOt, blurs the related, but distinct logics of communitarian, solidaristic war participation, and a contractarian model premised on military service. The emphasis is not on the liability to commit violence, but the acceptance of vulnerability to violence – itself a key aspect of military masculinity. Correspondingly, I argue that within this strain of discourse, "the troops" may not be (citizen)soldiers at all, but (soldier)citizens, to whom the "regular" understandings of reciprocal, contractual political obligation in an individualised public sphere may be more comfortably applied.

The implications of this move for the gendering of the civil-military relationship are ambiguous. As indicated by Figure 30, and many of the specific quotations used in this section, the troops are frequently referred to as "men and women". At first glance, this would seem to challenge the typical gendering of the civil-military divide, but only if we read sex and gender as correspondent (and, potentially, essentialist). In a situation where, as demonstrated above, the "heroic" troops are read first as citizens, and military second, the egalitarian incorporation of women into the collective subject of the troops is not only possible, but required by the tenets of liberalism (see Ch. 5). This is complicated, however, by the fact that, as argued by Brown, the subject of "citizen" itself, though universalised, is implicitly (re)produced as masculine (as well as white, heterosexual, Christian, etc.) throughout the modern West.⁸⁷ As a result, the extension of normative citizenship to women, through their incorporation into "the troops", does not inform the gendering of the collective subject. This is encapsulated in Help for Heroes' explanation that though its slogan says, "It's all about the blokes", the message is "intended to encompass both the men and women of armed forces", whom the founder encountered "as individuals".⁸⁸ Contractarian, liberal StT interpellates both men and

⁸⁴ The implied republican and liberal models of StT essentially split the characteristics of the hegemonic combat soldier outlined in Ch.5, with republicanism drawing on the autonomous engagement in violence, and liberal emphasizing volunteerism and the acceptance of risk.

⁸⁵ Millar 2016a, 17.

⁸⁶ Lutz 2001, 236. See also Cowen 2008, 17.

⁸⁷ Brown 1995, 183; see also Berlant 1997, 23.

⁸⁸ H4H 2009c.

women, as citizens, as liable for military service, without challenging the gendering of “citizenship” or “militaryness” as masculine.

The meaning of this for the overarching structure of gendered political obligation is unclear, as the constitution of both the troops and civilians as citizens suggests that both supporters and serving military personnel could be read as masculine, leading to a civil-military relation similar to the communitarian collapse of the civil and military spheres. The consistent construction of civilian supporters as both separate from and indebted to the troops, however, belies the implicit claim to equality in such a reading. Instead, civilians are produced as what Lutz refers to a “subcitizens”,⁸⁹ as the differential engagement in military service and vulnerability to violence generates a hierarchical structure of political obligation. As all within the hierarchy are citizens, the gendering of the reified civil-military divide is ambiguous. It could be read as a hierarchy of militarized masculinity⁹⁰ extending into the “civil” sphere – an attempt to eliminate the feminine from the public.

As observed by Barrett, however, “masculinity achieves meaning within patterns of differences”,⁹¹ suggesting that when war is discursively rendered irrelevant to support, the point of differentiation – of good public masculinity – must lie elsewhere. The soldier thus haunts this construction of normative masculine citizenship, as the locus of masculinity is subtly shifted from the perpetration of violence – which informs the republican/communitarian construction – to the more generalized endurance of risk. The discourse’s central emphasis on support as owed to the troops due to their performance of military service in the place of others maintains and reproduces the protective dynamic between the troops and civilians, though the direct connection to collective violence is severed. Contrary to the archetypical reading of the liberal military contract, the troops protect civilians not from war, but rather from military service. As a result, an amended version of the overarching gendered, spatial liberal civil-military divide is (re)produced, wherein the masculine troops (who may be of either sex) protect a feminised, subordinated civilian sphere from harm.

In sum, contractarian StT discourse demonstrates an obligatory, indebted dynamic of civil-military relations between autonomous, rights-bearing individuals that is premised upon a universal political obligation to serve in the military. In contrast to the communitarian ideal-type, the “debt” owed by civilians to the serving troops derives from not their participation in war – and engagement in violence – but rather their voluntary acceptance of danger and hardship in the place of others. This contractual structure of political obligation facilitates – even compels – the separation of the “warriors from the war”. As a result, the liberal model of normative citizenship implicitly constructed here is not the agential, violent, hegemonically masculine

⁸⁹ Lutz 2001, 237.

⁹⁰ Connell 2000, 212-227.

⁹¹ Barrett 1996, 133.

combat soldier, but rather the “heroic” masculine citizen who volunteers for service and endures harm. This strain of discourse (re)produces the spatialized, discrete civil-military divide, by (attempting) to remove violence from the foundation of political obligation. In consequence, the relationship between the troops and supporters is ambiguously gendered, as the structurally masculine troops “protect” feminised civilians not from war per se, but rather their own political obligation to serve. The supportive collectivity envisioned in such discourse, therefore, is one which accepts and validates a version of the liberal military contract, and assumes an ethical responsibility for, if not the practice of war, certainly the need to recognize, support, and act in the best interests of “the troops”. The “civilian anxiety” associated with non-service in wartime is not resolved, but rather, as characterized by MacLeish, carried forward as a source of unanswerable and indefinite guilt.⁹²

6.4 STT AND MORAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The final ideal-typical model of civil-military relations articulated within the StT discursive formation is characterized by a moral, paternalistic understanding of political obligation in relation to force. It incorporates the discourse of the “morally right” and associated “love” supportive rationales, which express a sense that it is “good”, or “appropriate” to support the troops without providing a specific reason (such as hardship), a structure of contractual obligation, or sense of community. The official description of the US DoD’s America Supports You program provides a reasonable illustration of this discourse, stating:

“America Supports You is an ongoing nationwide program that helps showcase American’s support for the men and women of the Armed Forces. Since its launch in November of 2004...the program has welcomed over 200 grassroots organizations and more than 25 corporate members to its team. Many America Supports You team members support the troops through letter writing, care packages, helping the wounded when they return home, assisting military families, sending an email or kind gesture...”⁹³

The balance of the quoted document, as in this passage, provides almost no context for the provision of support, save a reference to the apparent finding of “military sociologists” that “the support of the American people has had a positive and important impact on troop morale”.⁹⁴ The importance of morale – a “discursive legacy” of the Vietnam War⁹⁵ instilled with a vague sense of exigency in securing the troops’ safety (see Ch. 5)⁹⁶ – is itself unexplicated. As a result, by virtue of its flat, taken-for-granted presentation, StT is naturalized as a pro-social, laudable act. Similar constructions are found in the UK including, for instance, a 2010 MoD press release publicizing the Band of the Parachute Regiment’s holiday tour of Afghanistan “to provide musical support to British forces, which means entertaining our troops and boosting their morale when they

⁹² MacLeish 2013, 184-8.

⁹³ AmericaSupportsYou.mil 2006a.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Coy et. al. 2008, 163.

⁹⁶ Huiskamp 2011, 291.

are away from their loved ones”.⁹⁷ There is little context/explicit rationale provided for StT and, as above, the troops are subtly positioned as the recipients of the supporters’ patronage. In general, the supportive logic of this moral civil-military dynamic is difficult to illustrate, as it is characterized by the naturalized failure to provide one. Instead, this moral strain of StT discourse advances the idea that one should StT because, in the words of a US Congressman, “it is really, really nice” when politicians cooperate to support the troops – “it is exactly the right thing to do”.⁹⁸

The above quotation refers to a Congressional decision to “put [their] money where [their] mouth is”⁹⁹ not in relation to operational activities, or even veterans’ care, but rather to reimburse the troops’ domestic travel to reunite with family members between tours. In contrast to communitarian and contractarian structures of political obligation, the moral strain constructs support as accruing to the “private” lives and activities of “the troops” as individuals and, particularly, family members. The UK Soldiers’ Charity (formerly the ABF), in a 2010 fundraising appeal, stated that:

“...We support soldiers, former soldiers and their families whatever their age, whatever their rank, whenever they need it. We currently support over 6,000 individuals. Last year they ranged in age from 5 months to 107 years old. Here are just a few of their stories...It is thanks to your generosity that you make our work possible”.¹⁰⁰

Though the charity elsewhere makes frequent reference to the military service of the troops, in this passage the primary identity of those being supported is clearly private persons in need of welfare services. This positioning is brought home by the visuals of the webpage, which links to individualised stories of hardship with photos of the recipients. Men in uniform – clearly active service members – are presented alongside women, the elderly, and disabled veterans in civilian clothes as equivalent beneficiaries of the charity. While it is clear that their “militaryness” is the factor qualifying the troops for support, it is constructed as private social relation, rather than a public obligation or practice of warfare. This paternalistic support works in an affective register, using compassion to “draw attention to the social, political and economic needs of military families”¹⁰¹ – and with them, the troops.

The provision of moral, paternalistic support for “private” troops results in a counterintuitive challenging of the state as the relevant collective subject – or moral community – of concern. A 2006 statement by the Stop the War Coalition, endorsing the NGO Military Families Against the War (nearly identical to MFSO in the US) stated “All we want to do is to tell Tony Blair what we think which is he should bring the lads home – they

⁹⁷ UK MoD 2010c.

⁹⁸ Moore 2004, H H1690.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ ABF 2010.

¹⁰¹ Silvestri 2013, 112.

need to be with their families. They don't need to be shot at in Iraq.”¹⁰² The moral unit of the family is directly positioned against the state (as invoked by “Blair”). This denies any sense of “common cause” in the war, not only between the troops and supporters, but also between the troops, supporters, and the state. This sense of affective connection underlying paternalistic support is not limited to “familial” appeals. A parishioner quoted in a 2003 *NYT* article examining religious responses to the invasion of Iraq declared, “As a Catholic, where you have an interest in human life, you have to support the troops...I definitely support the troops and everything they do, but inside I'm torn”.¹⁰³ The relevant structure of moral obligation is religious, as the speaker places her support for the troops in the context of a broader metaphysical moral duty. This, in turn, suggests that it is membership within the global Catholic community, rather than the profane political community, from which this supportive impulse derives.

The CND quote referenced in Chapter Five, in framing support for the troops in terms of the tragedy of “all life lost in this conflict, either by accident or design”,¹⁰⁴ performs a similar move. By positing the troops’ accidental deaths as morally equivalent to the “designed” deaths of Iraqi civilians and military personnel, CND constructs a sense of shared fortune between the two groups. It produces an undefined collective subject to which both implicitly belong, and from which CND derives its sense of morally-imbued support. Interestingly, this sense of a generalised appeal to a universal community is not limited to anti-war organizations, but can be found throughout the discursive formation. A piece promoted by America Supports You, for instance, quotes the founder of a grassroots morale charity, the Thank You Foundation, as affirming that “a simple ‘Thank You’ can transcend political and religious differences to let those who have served know that they are appreciated”.¹⁰⁵ Within moral StT discourse, the source of paternalistic support is shared membership in a morally-relevant collective subject – explicit or implied – which corresponds imperfectly with the territorially-bounded political community of the state.

This diversity in collective subjectivity is compounded by the consistent articulation of paternalistic, moral support in an affective, charitable idiom. A long-time volunteer for the British Legion, for instance, describes her “commitment to the cause” as driven by the recognition that “There will always be ex-servicemen and women who need our help...[W]e can encourage the younger generations to continue to support the ex-service community and carry on the good work of so many who went before them”.¹⁰⁶ The troops are the subject of “good work”, a construction which exemplifies the ways in which this discourse “produces the

¹⁰² StWC 2006a.

¹⁰³ Davey 2003.

¹⁰⁴ CND 2003a.

¹⁰⁵ Quigley 2007.

¹⁰⁶ RBL 2003a.

contemporary British military as a notionally apolitical social ‘cause’.¹⁰⁷ The UK charity BLESMA illustrates this framing, as, in describing to potential donors “how you can help”, it notes that while the state makes general policy, the organization “concerns itself with individual cases”, asking “will you make them your concern too?”.¹⁰⁸ This is a moral indictment of the failure to provide support, but works in a completely different register to that of the communitarian and contractarian logics, instead (re)producing “the troops” as akin to any other “needy” group. In the US, a group publicized by America Supports You gives a paradigmatic example of this constitution of the “troops as cause”:

“‘Sponsor the Troops’ goal is to provide morale, welfare and recreation items to deployed American troops. The purpose of providing this service is to let the troops know that people “back home” appreciate their service to our country and appreciate the sacrifices their families make. The organization fields requests from servicemembers asking for items. Troops can make specific requests for books, snacks, CDs or DVDs, a pen pal, or some other item.”¹⁰⁹

Though the organization’s statement invokes the contractual rationale of service as a source of obligation (a demonstration of the complex intertwining of the two logics), the representation of the troops as the recipient of “sponsorship” in the form of banal, everyday items – as the recipients of the (ostensibly) voluntary charity of others – is the governing frame. As charitable causes, though imbued with moral force, have an apparently spontaneous quality,¹¹⁰ they have a tendency, as observed by Sylvester in relation to Western development workers, to construct a normative dynamic wherein the benefactors are in, but not of, the communities they help. Donors may be “compassionate and show an admirable sense of urgency – as they hold themselves aloof”.¹¹¹ Put differently, as summarized by Boltanski, “To make it into an obligation...the action of causing suffering and the action of giving assistance...would have to be placed within the same framework”.¹¹² Paternalistic support constitutes a moral structure of political “obligation” which, on the surface, is “a well-intentioned, altruistic and unconditional interaction, wherein one individual or group acts to benefit another without expecting anything in return”.¹¹³

This spontaneity, however, is belied by the discourse’s (re)production by (and of) anti-war groups. In the United States, anti-war groups tempered their opposition to Iraq with declarations that they “loved” the troops. CodePink, for instance, in establishing their anti-war *bona fides*, also reminded the public that they “lobb[ied] for veterans’ rights under the banner “Love the Troops, Hate the War”.¹¹⁴ The logic of this position was summarized by Pearl Jam frontman Eddie Vedder, in a qualification of his anti-Bush statements: “We’re

¹⁰⁷ Tidy 2015a, 221.

¹⁰⁸ BLESMA 2008, 13.

¹⁰⁹ Sylvester 2013, 105.

¹¹⁰ Jenkins et. al. 2012, 361.

¹¹¹ Sylvester 2013, 105.

¹¹² Harris cited in Boltanski 1999, 13.

¹¹³ Gronemeyer cited in Millar 2016a, 13. For original, see, Gronemeyer 2010, 56.

¹¹⁴ CodePink 2006a.

just confused on how wanting to bring them [the troops] back safely all of a sudden becomes non-support. We love them."¹¹⁵ In both instances, anti-war sentiment is proclaimed in the context of an interpersonal, affective idiom that reflects the language used by people with loved ones in the military, regardless of their position on the war. The *New York Times*, for instance, quotes the family members of a deployed soldier as explaining their display of yellow ribbons "just to support the troops...And obviously that Michael would come back home safe to us."¹¹⁶ Affective ties are represented as not simply an insulation against criticism, but also as a genuine moral compulsion to StT. This can also be seen in the many variations of the frequent anti-war slogan "support the troops, bring them home, and take care of them when they get here".¹¹⁷

This articulation of support as a matter of "care" is compounded by the pairing of support for the troops, in both the US and UK, with other progressive causes in broader campaigns for social justice. The lead banner of a major US anti-war protest in 2005, for instance, read "End the War in Iraq, Bring the Troops Home Now, Justice for Hurricane Victims".¹¹⁸ A UK mass protest in the same year marched under the slogan "Stop the Bombings, Stop the War, Bring the Troops Home, Defend Civil Liberties and Defend the Muslim Community".¹¹⁹ In contrast to other forms of anti-war speech, wherein the rationale for bringing the troops home is more ambiguous, here supporting the troops/bringing them home is constructed as a matter of affective social conscience, akin to expressing anti-racist sentiments regarding Hurricane Katrina or discrimination against British Muslims. This levels a potential political distinction between the troops and civilian casualties, thus depoliticizing their involvement in the war. Dixon notes that this also emphasizes identification with the troops, rather than horror at the suffering of others, as an impetus for anti-war activism (see Ch. 8).¹²⁰ This voicing of moral support contributes to the co-optation, observed by Enloe during the First Gulf War, of the affective labour of civilians – particularly women – as sources of potential resistance to aggressive, neo-imperial foreign policy by framing StT as a matter of everyday solidarity and private, interpersonal "care" for the troops.¹²¹

These aspects of paternalistic support – the sense of a detached, charitable duty to "help" and lack of sense of shared fortune, paired with affective, interpersonal connection – paradoxically produce a moral structure of obligation that is not socially recognized as political. In failing to set out a rationale for support, or to construct a sense of shared community, paternalistic support superficially (though often explicitly) relieves obligation of its political, "public" character, instead relying on the idiom of affective, ostensibly "private",

¹¹⁵ Gorin 2003.

¹¹⁶ Hanley 2003.

¹¹⁷ MFSO 2008a.

¹¹⁸ UfPJ 2005a.

¹¹⁹ CND 2005a.

¹²⁰ Dixon 2012, 104.

¹²¹ Enloe 1993, 163.

care. This mirrors Berlant's observation of a general rise of "national sentimentality" in the US, wherein political relations, such as those to the troops are "considered not to be about citizenship"¹²² at all. The "altruistic" ideal-type of citizenship relies on an explicit denial of the relevance of politics, political membership, or even a "public" community – all of which serve to depoliticize conflict and elide the implication of the collectivity in war – in its constitution of the normative structure of civil-military relations. Citizenship is "downsized" to "a mode of voluntarism".¹²³ As in the contractarian model, this structure of normative obligations exists between individuals, but the foundation of these responsibilities is not a public political "contract", but rather affective appeals to alternative, "non-political" sources of morality, identification, and belonging.

As demonstrated above, (fairly conservative) appeals to the family and invocations of heteronormative kinship structures¹²⁴ are common means of expressing paternalistic support. A barber interviewed by the *NYT* in 2005 put it succinctly, maintaining, "You've got to be there for them [the troops]...You can't stop loving the kids just because you don't like their father".¹²⁵ Paternalistic, moral political obligation in relation to force – or rather, in its denial of force – results in the collapse of public and military "spheres" into the ostensibly private. The civil-military dynamic is the mirror-image of that of communitarianism, wherein the "private" is obliterated by participatory political obligation, "dragging" the private/public together, into the "military". Each results in the discursive military's production of the social (and the implosion of the spatial civil-military divide that contractarian strains of StT try, and fail, to maintain), albeit from differing directions. Moral "political" obligation constructs a collective subject "whose survival", as phrased by Berlant, "depends on personal acts and identities performed in the intimate domains of the quotidian".¹²⁶

6.4.1 Flipping the Gendered Civil-Military Divide

This collapse of the private and military "spheres" relies upon, and reproduces, a "flip" of the conventional, liberal gendering of the civil-military divide underlying the archetypical contract. The designation of the troops as recipients of charitable works and private altruism constructs them as "needy" recipients of care. These constructions are commensurate with the general constitution of the troops as passive – and, dependent (see Ch. 5) – as well as the positioning of the troops vis-à-vis the figure of the veteran. The notion that the troops require "care" when they "get home", in conjunction with the publication of individual veterans' struggles as a means of generating supportive compassion and charitable awareness, implicitly extrapolates from the beleaguered and potentially-betrayed veteran to the "troops" as a whole. This logic

¹²² Berlant 1997, 11.

¹²³ Ibid, 5.

¹²⁴ For more on the role of the family in "domesticating" war and promoting StT in the US, see Silvestri 2013.

¹²⁵ Kayal 2005, 10.

¹²⁶ Berlant 1997, 4.

of paternalistic support is also pushed further, to incorporate the troops in the battlespace. The UK Stop the War Coalition, for instance, explicitly positions itself as a defender of the troops, arguing, “We want to save lives by bringing them [the troops] home”.¹²⁷ Paternalistic support is a matter of the troops’ life and death. Similarly, both US and UK StT discourse are rife with calls to “protect” the troops – from the elements, from the enemy, from the war, from unspecified harm. US Congressional debates regarding funding for Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance, involve frequent calls to “protect the troops” through the provision of appropriate armoured vehicles and flack vests.¹²⁸ Nearly identical debates occurred in the UK parliament, most notably with respect to the implications of the 2009 helicopter shortage for force protection and the evacuation of the wounded.¹²⁹

Within this moral structure of political obligation, the figure of the hegemonic, masculine combat soldier seems to disappear, as the troops are constructed as imperilled victims of conflict. They are produced as what Berlant refers to as “citizen-victims – pathological, poignant, heroic, and grotesque”,¹³⁰ marrying, as in the contractarian ideal-type, suffering with worthiness. The consequences of this figuration for the gendering of the civil-military divide may be understood in two ways – as reflecting either an empowered feminized civilian sphere caring for a dependent, masculine troops, or as a structural feminization of the troops vis-à-vis agential, masculinised civilian patrons. There is a case to be made for both readings – and the many references to “care” and “love” are definitely suggestive of a potential maternal, rather than paternal, logic of support. It would be an essentialist error, however, to further the “conflation of feminization with the absence of war”,¹³¹ or, conversely, the provision of care. Understanding the gendered dynamic of civil-military relations in the context of moral citizenship therefore requires examining the multi-faceted substantive (e.g. characteristic-based, such as loving) and relational (e.g. hierarchical positioning) gendering of societal supporters vis-a-vis the troops.

The above construction of civilian supporters as “protecting” the troops and “saving their lives” is crucial to arbitrating this gender dynamic. This positions civilians in a relationship of hierarchical superiority over the dependent troops – a situation I argue is more akin to the operation of the patriarchal welfare state, or masculine head of household, than a maternal logic of care.¹³² Similarly, moral constructions of political obligation attribute many characteristics associated with stereotypical hegemonic Western masculinity, such

¹²⁷ StWC 2009b.

¹²⁸ See, for instance, Lautenberg 2005, S526.

¹²⁹ BBC News 2009b.

¹³⁰ Berlant 1997, 1.

¹³¹ Hutchings 2008, 395.

¹³² As the “military”, the troops are necessary for the provision of protection, yet are themselves dependent on the protection of others – those they are meant to protect. For analogous relation to women’s positioning within the welfare state, see: Pateman 1987, 23.

as rationality, selflessness, independence, and, given the frequent familiar references, heterosexuality,¹³³ to civilians, rather than “the troops”. The clearest demonstration of these constructions is the discourse(s) surrounding the increasingly-common recognition of civilian supporters, either in the press or through formal awards, for their service to the troops. In recognizing the careers of public servants and politicians in the US Congress, for instance, it has become commonplace to remark upon the individual’s support for the troops – regardless of their formal connection to the armed forces. A former US Senator, for instance, was praised as having “supported our troops fervently. Senator Bayh was not afraid to call out leaders when he felt an injustice was being done, and he spoke up often for our men and women overseas when necessary”.¹³⁴ In speaking truth to power, the senator exhibited independence and even risk-taking – “not afraid to call out” – to act in the best interests of the troops. Similarly, a tribute to a retiring US regional postmaster lists his work providing mail to service personnel, and his recognition by the National Guard for his support of the troops as key evidence of his long career as “one of our finest public servants”.¹³⁵

Support for the troops – particularly that cast in the masculine idiom of contribution to the community – is central to social recognition as not only a good citizen, but also as a good person. In the UK, for instance, the founders of Help for Heroes were awarded a “Millie” (or “Military Award”) by the Sun tabloid, to recognize their “invaluable help to the Armed Forces”.¹³⁶ The US National Military Family Association awards a “Very Important Patriot” for “exceptional volunteerism” to individuals who have “demonstrated outstanding service that contributes to improving the quality of life in their military...communities”.¹³⁷ Supporting the troops is socially lauded and elevated as a normative exemplar. This connection of support with good public personhood and the generation of social capital is also evident in efforts of military-related charities to generate corporate sponsorship, which highlight “excellent PR opportunities”, staff team-building, and bolstering corporate social responsibility as benefits of support.¹³⁸

Despite the vanishing of “the soldier”, hegemonic masculinity continues to derive from associations with the military as a proving ground for good public personhood. To paraphrase Tidy, the normalisation of the troops as a form of social cause subtly, yet powerfully reifies an underlying assumption that “military objectives are socially valuable”.¹³⁹ In this strain of StT discourse, however, this masculinity is demonstrated (or accrued) through the public performance of protective and beneficent patronage of the vulnerable and dependent troops, rather than through war participation or military service. As a result, the idealized citizen is a

¹³³ See Connell 1995.

¹³⁴ Reid 2010, S90s00.

¹³⁵ Lantos 2005, E2530.

¹³⁶ Iggulden and Newton Dunn 2008.

¹³⁷ Armed Forces Press Service 2008.

¹³⁸ Uk4uThanks!, 2010b.

¹³⁹ Tidy 2015a, 224; See also Enloe 2000.

superficially private actor, motivated to support the feminized troops out of a sense of altruism, and affective interpersonal connection, rather than a public duty. This moral structuring of political obligation may be understood as dealing with gendered civilian anxiety by contesting – even reversing – the conventional (liberal) gendering of the civil-military divide and, through it, the mythical military contract. The (re)masculinisation of the civilian-citizen thus furthers, and is facilitated by, the replacement of the political community with a private realm of affect, which enables the separation of not only the troops from the war, but the public from the troops.

Though it is the normative imperative to “cope” with collective involvement in, and experience of, war that animates this discourse, its normative coherence relies on the denial, and corresponding depoliticization, of conflict. In this way, the gendering of the paternalistic civil-military divides operates analogously to Sasson-Levy’s account of the gendering of (some) non-combat soldiers in the Israeli military. Instead of accepting either a combat-based understanding of masculinity, against which they would fall short (as in republicanism) or understanding themselves as feminized (as in liberalism), the soldiers instead propose “alternative definitions for their masculinity, which are not anchored in military life” but are instead domestic, and emphasise “autonomy, independence, and responsibility in the private sphere”.¹⁴⁰ Both paternalistic support and non-combat military masculinity reflect a need to address, albeit through a denial of its legitimacy, the culturally hegemonic figure of the combat soldier as a norm of good masculine citizenship. The affective “privatization” of StT acts as means through which the discursive military “travels” along a gendered vector outside the formal institution to interpellate all citizens.

In summary, the moral structure of political obligation is characterized by a civil-military dynamic wherein an empowered and benevolent civilian populace provides charitable support to a needy constituency. It implies what might be labelled an “altruistic” understanding of citizenship. The troops are structurally feminized, and contrasted with a hierarchically superior, protective civilian sphere that manifests many of the traits of hegemonic masculinity, such as rationality and autonomy. The premise of political community paradoxically, is an affective, seemingly private idiom of an interpersonal and paternalistic care/dependence, which bypasses the realm of the formally political. Through this elevation of the public obligation of support to a private, normative (and individualistic) characteristic, war is depoliticized and almost entirely elided, as the supporters and troops are not necessarily constructed as belonging to the same political community (let alone sharing a common goal).

¹⁴⁰ Sasson-Levy 2003, 320; For the (re)construction of stereotypically feminine practices as masculine, see also Henry 2015.

6.5 CONCLUSION: HETEROGENOUS POLITICAL OBLIGATION

This chapter has illustrated the articulation of three ideal-typical logics of gendered political obligation the relation to force in the US and UK during the GWoT, summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Summary of Three Ideal-Typical Structures of Political Obligation

Structure of Political Obligation	Dynamic of Civil-Military Relations	Citizenship Model	“Good” Citizen Masculinity	Premise of Political Community
Communitarian	Participation	Republican	Combat Soldier	War Participation
Moral	Paternalism	Altruistic	Benevolent Civilian	Civilian Protection (of Needy Others)
Contractarian	Obligation (or Indebtedness)	Liberal	Citizen Heroes	Military Service

In doing so, I have demonstrated that StT is not a homogenous – or meaningless – discourse, but rather one characterised by distinct logics of obligation, understandings of gendered citizenship, and visions of the political community. StT is a political contestation regarding the nature and bounds of political membership, as articulated in the relationship to the collective use of force. This analysis reflects the failure of the mythical liberal contract, our conventional understanding of the gendered civil-military relationship, and, significantly, the IR assumption of the static and “found” nature of civil-military relations to account for the normative structure of violent political obligation. The following chapter expands upon this analysis to outline the implications of the contestation and complex intertwining of these three ideal-typical models for the liberal military contract, the gendering of normative citizenship, and the bounding of the political community.

CHAPTER SEVEN: AMENDING THE LIBERAL MILITARY CONTRACT

This chapter presents an account of the complex intertwining of the three ideal-typical structures of political obligation. I argue that these three ideal-typical models produce a political, if incomplete, contestation of the liberal “military contract” and governing cultural narratives relating military service and gender to political belonging. At the same time, I also suggest that these discursive strains are central to obscuring the failure of the mythic liberal contract to account for the current mass experience of war and “civilianness”, instead propping up its normative coherence.

The chapter proceeds with an empirical demonstration of the co-existence and intertwining of the three ideal-typical supportive logics. This is followed by an interrogation of the work this interweaving performs in alleviating the gendered civilian anxiety of non-service in wartime. I subsequently demonstrate how the mutable gendering of civil-military relations transform our previous understanding of military service the *sine qua non* of “good” (masculine) citizenship into a political obligation of support. The articulation of alternative modes of political obligation and dominant “public” masculinity preserve the normative coherence of the liberal military contract, and superficially reproduce the spatialized liberal civil-military divide. I then outline the ways in which the amended liberal military contract both bounds the political and, ultimately, through the articulation of positive obligation, produces the political community.

7.1 CONTESTATION AND REINFORCEMENT: INTERTWINING STRUCTURES OF POLITICAL OBLIGATION

As in Chapter Six, I demonstrate the intertwining of the three ideal-types with a few key, particularly compelling, quotations. The best example of this complex, intertwined contestation is found in an iterated conversation regarding the meaning of StT taking place over a series of weeks in, of all places, the “Dr. Gridlock” traffic column of the *Washington Post*. The discussion was triggered by the column’s author – who identifies himself as a Vietnam veteran – asking where to get a yellow ribbon decal for his car.¹ Most initial responses articulated a paternalistic understanding of support, with a reader noting that she “just bought five” because “it is so important to show that we love and support our troops!”.² The column also included, however, a more “controversial” statement:

“I hope your column does not encourage people to get these magnets. If you put one on your trunk, no troop will see it. No life will be saved. If someone does or does not have a magnet on their car, is the war closer to being won or lost? What purpose does empty, more-patriotic-than-thou symbolism serve?”.³

¹ Schaffer 2004a.

² Schaffer 2004b.

³ Ibid.

At first glance, this appears to be an argument that one should not support the troops – and is responded to as such by the author, who invokes a contractual notion of obligation, stating “They are serving for you...You can salute them, or not”.⁴ He implies that since service cannot be refused, the salute is irrelevant – the writer may be a poor citizen, but they cannot “opt out” of their obligation. A closer reading of the original statement, however, suggests that the writer is critiquing not the troops, but society, for engaging in superficial symbolic gestures instead of making greater sacrifices. It is a subtle communitarian critique of more moral modes of support. The column’s author responds with a contractarian retort, and thus highlights the complexity and indeterminacy of the overall discourse. The exchange underscores the futility of attempting to arbitrate what it “really” means to support the troops.

Subsequent interventions in this debate further bring home this point, by intertwining ideal-types within the same response, rather than as differing interpretations of the same yellow-sticker practice. One reader argued, endorsing the original critique of yellow ribbons, that:

“...[A]ll fair-minded Americans support our armed forces because of the sacrifices they make for all of us, and just because some people choose not to “salute” the troops by displaying these images does not make them less supportive or less American. To imply otherwise is a bit like asking ‘Do you still beat your wife?’ and stating you are un-American to not display a ribbon or flag. Patriotism is not defined by symbols.”⁵

Here, the reference to sacrifices for “all of us” invokes a contractual notion of obligation, while framing the general practice in terms of “patriotism”, and “being American” refers back to the communitarian understandings of war as a collective practice. Similarly, another reader writes that they have recently procured a “red, white and blue ‘Freedom Isn’t Free’ ribbon”. The slogan references the contractarian notion that those serving in the military perform a service for those who do not – but one tinged with more communitarian, republican patriotism by its use of the flag’s colours. The reader goes on to state that “the best part is, my purchases actually support the troops in a double way because I bought them at the Marine Corps Museum Shop”,⁶ ensuring that charities supporting the troops benefit from the sale. This invokes a paternalistic, moral relationship between the supporter and the troops.

Crucially, these contrasting statements indicate that while the three ideal-types may contest the gendered structure of political obligation in relation to the military/war, they do not challenge the central premise of the “mythical” liberal military contract: service grounds citizenship, and the troops must be supported. Instead, they offer alternative logics of the same relationship. In doing so, they are compatible with, and reinforce, each other. Together, the three ideal-types provide a range of supportive “options” that may

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Schaffer 2004c.

⁶ Schaffer 2004d.

be blended and (re)combined to ensure that all political positions, opinions on the war, and civic identities are not only reconcilable with supporting the troops, but are interpellated by and compelled to StT. The above yellow ribbon dissident refutes moral support in favour of a communitarian model, which is met with a contractual construction of obligation. These logics are in turn combined to justify the subsequent two interlocutors' construction of their own activities as consistent with the normative expectation of support.

Moral and communitarian logics of support are intertwined, with each other, and the liberal, contractual structure of political obligation. A "message of support" for the troops publicized by the UK Help for Heroes, for instance, immediately suggests a moral logic of support through its charitable frame, emphasis upon the wounds of service personnel, and the need to "not forget" their service. The statement goes on, however, to observe that "These men are modern day heroes. We cannot let them come to terms with their injuries behind closed doors. They have to know they are respected for being the best of the best and for the sacrifices they have made".⁷ The pairing of "heroic", deserving troops with an apparently paternalistic mode of support reflects the transformation of "support" from a contractual obligation of citizenship, through the use of charitable idioms, "into a universal moral value".⁸ Through this combination of supportive logics, the sentimental and affective charitable encounter with the wounded troops comes to "frame citizenship and political agency within the docile discourse of contemporary liberalism".⁹ It acknowledges and (re)produces a shared political community, and a sense of the liberal "public", but one characterized by interpersonal, seemingly spontaneous social relations, rather than an overarching structure of "formal" political obligation. As a result, as observed by MacLeish, the strictures of the liberal military contract are imbued with a "feeling of personal and autonomous obligations" that "gives them their regulatory force".¹⁰

A comparable dynamic is visible in the intertwining of communitarian/republican and contractarian/liberal constructions of the civil-military relationship. A 2003 House of Commons statement frames the war as such:

"We cannot funk this challenge and leave it for future generations. We cannot heap up the problems at their door and leave them to face the consequences. We must not deprive our troops of the support that they fully deserve from all quarters of the House. We must shoulder our responsibilities and seize that moment..."¹¹

The connection between supporting the troops and the fate of future generations reflects a

⁷ H4H 2010b.

⁸ Millar2016, 14.

⁹ Silvestri 2013, 113.

¹⁰ MacLeish 2013, 144.

¹¹ Smith 2003, c778.

communitarian understanding of political obligation in relation to force, and a shared sense of fortune in regard to outcome. The references to “we” as seizing the moment, and “their” responsibilities similarly invoke the participatory dynamic of communitarian support. At the same time, the declaration that the troops “deserve” the support of all in the House references the distinction between troops and supporters that characterizes support-as-contractual-obligation (as does the implicit observation that some in the House may be tempted not to support the war). In the same way the paternalistic mode of support transforms the liberal contract into a matter of morality, the communitarian mode morphs it into a matter of loyalty, commitment, and collective survival. Support, though expected and normalized, is transformed into an affectively-inflected emergency.

In the aggregate, the complex and ambivalent intertwining of the various aspects of these structures of political obligation maintains the apparent stability and “mythic” consistency of the mutually-dependent “relative position[ing]” of the “soldier and civilian”, and troops and society.¹² This both reflects and reproduces “a vast apparatus of power” that naturalizes the norm of military service and practice of warfare, enabling them to be experienced and discursively (re)produced as immediate, obligatory, spontaneous, urgent, affective, and irrefutable.¹³ In doing so, it constructs the political obligation to “support the troops” as ironically apolitical – the implications of which are discussed in Chapter Eight. In this context, it is no wonder that the lowest common denominator reading of StT – something akin to the tautological “support the troops because they are the troops” – is characterized by a sense of “strong patriotic identification mixed with feelings of practical political powerlessness”.¹⁴

7.2 FLEEING THE FEMININE

This tension between contesting the structure of political obligation underlying the military contract – the terms – while conceding its central premise of support, is evocative of the common disquiet regarding non-service in wartime that I raised in the introduction. The normative citizenship-military nexus, as articulated by Stiehm, has been intimately tied to the performance of hegemonic masculinity in so far as “all militaries have...regularly been rooted in the psychological coercion of young men through appeals to their (uncertain) manliness”.¹⁵ While this “psychological coercion” may predominantly apply to young men, in a formally equal, liberal democratic society, it is a source of anxiety available and applicable to all those who might seek to self-identify with the contemporary content of hegemonic masculinity, including the performance of “good” liberal citizenship. Each of the three models therefore should be understood

¹² MacLeish 2013, 188.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Berlant 1997, 3.

¹⁵ Cited in Whitworth 2005.

as an attempt to cope with the, for lack of a better term, ontological uncomfortability of living as a full citizen and yet a civilian in what is collectively understood as a time of war. The communitarian model does so by reframing banal practices of support as a form of war participation, functionally equivalent to the military activities of the troops. The moral model severs the political relationship between the troops and civilian supporters, instead recasting the normative dynamic as one of paternalistic charity, thus enabling the supporters to assume the traits of Western masculinity. The contractual model, interestingly, is the least successful in this regard, as its reification of support-as-obligation owed to fellow citizens for “services rendered”, though successful in distancing civilians from the war, maintains their dependence upon the troops. Each of the three exhibits a move, as described by Agostino, referring to women in the institutional military, to “flee” femininity and take on aspects of hegemonic masculinity to seek social acceptance.¹⁶

On its own, therefore, the contractarian model is unable to “square” the current situation of professional militaries and distant conflicts with the mythical cultural narrative of liberal military service as a universal obligation of (gendered) citizenship. The contestation of the mythic contract by the two alternative structures of political obligation exposes the failings of contractarianism, and liberal conceptions of masculine citizenship, to account for the contemporary transformation in civil-military relations. The intertwining of alternative genderings of citizenship and political obligation as a result of this contestation, however, end up reproducing and maintaining the liberal military contract. Both communitarian and moral understandings of political obligation simultaneously assume and deny the central premise of the liberal military contract – the responsibility of citizens to/for the violence of the collectivity, as expressed in the figure of the hegemonically masculine combat (citizen) soldier. They obscure the failings of the mythic liberal military contract by adapting its premises to their own logics of affect and participation, thereby increasing its mutability and applicability. To borrow a phrase from Higate, the StT discursive formation, as a whole, works to provide civilians with “an ontologically secure sense of military masculine identity”.¹⁷ It assuages what Managhan, in another context, refers to as the “cultural legacy of gendered guilt”¹⁸ inherent to the normative division of violent labour.

In this way, StT should be considered not only a (re)production of the civil-military relationship(s), and discourse of war, but also a masculine/ising discourse. It operates according to what Kim Hutchings identifies as the logics of contrast and contradiction. The logic of contradiction “gives masculinity its flexibility and malleability and enables changes in dominant modes of masculinity” in order to prevent the

¹⁶ Agostino 1998, 565.

¹⁷ Higate 2001, 450.

¹⁸ Managhan 2011a, 451.

inconsistencies that arise in the maintenance of masculine social order(s) from challenging the coherence of the whole.¹⁹ The ability to “shift” between the participatory, masculine citizen-soldier and the beneficent, empowered civilian patron construct a “network of permutations that may take masculinity in radically different directions, while still preserving a sense of continuity”.²⁰ Each contains a differing construction of the troops, understanding of the political community, and acknowledgment of violence, but are still articulated within an overarching military discourse of masculinity and political obligation. This common register facilitates a move towards the resignification of the feminized “society” of the obligatory, liberal dynamic of civil-military relations as itself masculine – a shift in the “dominant mode of masculinity”.²¹

The three ideal-types also exhibit the logic of contradiction, as they share the “crucial characteristic” of masculine discourses: they are “not feminine” and are differentiated within a fixed value hierarchy.²² Together, all three draw social capital and intelligibility – and are, as a constellation of collective subjects – produced by “militaryness” and military association. Each of the three ideal-types indicates a refusal of the structural feminization of the liberal gendered civil-military divide (see Chs. 2 and 3). The foundation of normative citizenship in the figure of the hegemonically masculine combat soldier continues to extend a hierarchy of military/ised masculinity beyond the formal institution, interpellating civilians – a situation the three ideal-typical modes of support cannot fully overcome.²³ Rather than challenging this premise of normative citizenship, and the foundational role of (potential) violence in the political community, these discourses (imperfectly) resolve the “problem” of the combat soldier by replacing him with “the troops” (see Ch. 5). As “the troops” are more easily resignified in relation to society – as aggregate idealized combat soldiers, as citizen heroes, as the institutional military, as dependent victims, etc. – the tension of maintaining “good” public masculinity in wartime is resolved by an endless series of potential contrasts between dominant masculinities, unified by a central contradiction. This refusal of femininity, of course, is never fully convincing; if StT was entirely successful in addressing gendered civilian anxiety, there would be no need to proclaim and police support for the troops. Within the StT discursive formation, I argue, the intertwining and shifting between the three ideal-types provide a new construction of gendered political obligation with respect to violence, and a transformation in the normative structure(s) of civil-military relations.

¹⁹ Hutchings 2008, 401.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Hutchings 2008, 401.

²² Ibid.

²³ Feminist security scholars would understand this process as militarization.

7.3 DON'T MIND THE GAP: AMENDING THE LIBERAL MILITARY CONTRACT

I “diagnose” the complex intertwining of the three ideal-types of violent political obligation as a move towards the redefinition of normative citizenship not in terms of war participation, nor even necessarily military service, but rather a universal obligation to provide military support.²⁴ Support for the military has come to subtly replace the universal liability of military service as the *sine qua non* of political obligation in the liberal military contract. It reflects a substantial shift in the underlying normative structure civil-military relations, such that we should understand supporting the troops as a form of military participation, seen and reproduced by the extension of the discursive military throughout, and productive of, society.

My argument can be understood via analogy to military practice. Though numerous sociology and social psychology studies have queried the empirical validity and specific mechanisms of small unit combat cohesion, the notion that many soldiers are motivated to fight not by overarching political or nationalistic affiliations, but rather affection for, and obligation to, “the man next to them” is a powerful narrative.²⁵ Indeed, a 2003 study of US soldiers involved in Iraq cited “fighting for my buddies” as their primary combat motivator.²⁶ As King observes, this too is likely tied to constructions of masculinity, shame, and violent obligation to the group.²⁷ It is rooted in the same elevation of the combat-soldier as the pinnacle of normative masculinity that undergirds the liberal military contract. The transformation of military service into military support, therefore, may be understood as an extension of the logic of “fighting for the man next to you” to the entire polity.²⁸ As a result, all countervailing concerns, such as differences of opinion upon the war(s), political orientation, and even previously cross-cutting social cleavages such as race, gender, class, etc. are elided in the universal need to support the troops – to participate in the military as good citizens – in a time of war. In the words of a Vietnam veteran who disagreed with Iraq and disliked President Bush:

"Vietnam was not supported back home, but you know what? I really didn't care. The guy I cared about was the guy next to me, the guy who was getting shot at and was going to help me survive. It's the same thing now. You have to take care of the people fighting over there. I'm all for the troops. I'm for every soldier."²⁹

This replacement is most evident in (one of the) most remarkable silences in the StT discursive formation.

²⁴ Bacevich (2005, 108) makes a similar point, arguing that “support for” has replaced “service with” as the standard of good US citizenship. What I contend, however, is that while this is commonly read as passive or apathetic, support ought to be understood as active, participatory, and political.

²⁵ King 2013, 24-39; see also Janowitz and Shils 1948.

²⁶ Wong et. al. 2003, 9.

²⁷ King 2013, 63-73.

²⁸ Roger Stahl (2009, 558) makes a similar point, but locates it in the citizen’s willingness to “authorize state violence”, rather than a form of apoliticised military participation.

²⁹ Applebome 2004.

Though everyone is, in one manner or another, obliged to StT, it is very rarely suggested, even in the communitarian structure of political obligation, that the best way to StT is to join the military. The US corpus contains fourteen references to joining the military in the context of StT. Of these, only five actually make the case that people ought to StT by joining the military; two reference past wars, while another two decry the operational utility of conscription to military success. The rest deploy the spectre of non-service to criticize the public stances and policies of others. Of these, only one invoked a typically-gendered frame of military service to cast aspersions upon a politician with no personal connection to the institutional military, suggesting that he “can’t imagine himself or anyone close to him actually being in the line of fire.”³⁰ In the UK, though suggestions that people ought to join the military were made during the early GWOt,³¹ I was unable to find any such arguments framed as a means of supporting the troops.

This represents a marked shift from the general discourse of war, military service, and gender that typified the “mythic” wars and cultural narratives of the past (see Ch. 3), wherein state propaganda, recruitment materials, popular culture, and political norms expected that all able-bodied normative citizens – men – would volunteer (or, eventually be conscripted) into military service.³² The aforementioned “white feather” (for non-serving “cowards”) campaigns of WWI, for instance, along with state recruitment posters, drew on gendered logics of masculine shame and feminine vulnerability to encourage men to join the military.³³ Though the formal equality of men and women became a greater theme in WWII recruitment materials (and onwards, to Vietnam and the Falklands) in the US and UK,³⁴ only men were subject to conscription, or permitted/expected to serve in combat.³⁵ Such issues are all but absent from the contemporary discourse of war, troop support, and, implicitly, citizenship. This is at least partially attributable to the political discontent regarding the war in Iraq – but the initial invasion of Afghanistan, generally perceived as a “good”, legitimate war, also failed to trigger either mass volunteerism or a discourse promoting it. In 2002, Bush explicitly ruled out a draft, praising the volunteer force and framing people’s everyday activities as a form of war contribution.³⁶ Contemporary StT discourse, then, is a reflection and reproduction of an on-going shift in the normative expectations of civil-military relations. We are moving from discursive coercion and regulation that promoted military service (and direct war participation) to a discourse that now disciplines and compels support for the military (regardless the war).

³⁰ Krugman 2003.

³¹ See, for instance, Rech 2014b.

³² Goldstein 2001, 276.

³³ Goldstein 2001, 272; Stanley 1983; Gullace 1997; Braybon 2003, 86-112.

³⁴ See Brown 2012.

³⁵ Combat roles were opened to women in the US military in 2015 and UK in 2016. A bill is currently under consideration that would require US women to register for the draft by 2018. Fisher 2013; Shane 2016; BBC 2016.

³⁶ Cited in Cole 2005, 148.

Despite the valorisation of the troops, there's no impetus for people to become "one".

My diagnosis of StT as military participation is not intended to claim that StT is equivalent to military service, either in terms of its discursive construction or social recognition.³⁷ What the term is meant to do is resist, or offer a rethinking of, many diagnoses of contemporary civil-military relations as "post-militarist", and characterised by cynical attempts of elites to generate "passive political support" for military ventures.³⁸ There are elements of truth to such characterizations: the transition from military service to military support facilitates the depoliticization of conflict, and political elites and anti-war actors engage in StT discourse strategically, to further their own policy aims. What this reading cannot capture, however, is the centrality of StT, and the political obligation towards violence to the subject-formation of the troops, supporters, and the polity itself. In other words, it cannot account for the way the social relationships, power relations, and normative obligations constructed within StT discourse exceed the "control" of these actors, not only constraining their range of political possibilities, but also producing and positioning them as intelligible socio-political subjects. As a result, "post-militarist" framings reify the on-going debate (and liberal spatialization of society) regarding a growing "civil-military gap" in the US and UK³⁹ without problematizing the assumption that such a "gap": a) exists; and b) is a cause for concern.

What I argue, instead, is that while there is a disconnect between society's acknowledgement of collective violence and the polity's engagement in war, the discursive military remains fundamental to reproducing contemporary notions of normative citizenship. The same is true of the more critical scholars who read StT as an instance of "militarism" (see Chs. 2 and 4), understanding it as "symbolic recruitment", and thus a form of moral conscription.⁴⁰ While this analysis connects StT to these processes of subject-formation, it also implicitly relies on the liberal distinction between civil and military spheres. It suggests that there are other civilians and citizen/public subjectivities, who do not send letters overseas or belong to the "citizen-support brigade"⁴¹, that are therefore separate from the "military". Militarism, in other words, does not account for the foundational normality of the military-gender-citizenship nexus to (re)producing the liberal polity itself, and thus its continuity with, rather than deviance from, politics.⁴²

³⁷ As observed by Basham (2013, 21) and Higate (2003, 27-42) in the UK context, military personnel frequently point out the difference between their own identities and experiences and those of civilians, invoking the common refrain "they [civilians] don't understand".

³⁸ Shaw 2005, 95; see also Dixon 2012, 117.

³⁹ Applebome 2004.

⁴⁰ Harding and Kershner 2011, 83.

⁴¹ Lewis 2012, 13.

⁴² The militarism analysis of not only StT but liberal societies, by continuing to rely upon the liberal distinction between violence in politics, reproduce in their own work the underlying structure of the ideology they seek to critique. See Millar 2016b 184-6.

7.4 BOUNDING THE POLITICAL, PRODUCING THE (LIBERAL) POLITY

I argue, instead, that the shift to a normative, masculine ideal of military support, in an era of ostensible formal equality, wherein all can aspire to “good” public personhood, produces citizens as always-already supporters. Regardless of a given individual’s personal politics, beliefs, behaviours, etc., they are interpellated, as a member of the polity, by normative structures of political obligation that compel and presuppose support. StT, as argued by Managhan is “compulsory” – a condition for social intelligibility and political agency for “supporters” (and/or society) and “troops” alike.⁴³ StT may, in this way, be understood as bounding the political, in so far as to be in, or a member (citizen) of the political community is, by definition, to be supporting the troops.

By “the political”, I do not mean the sphere of (liberal) public life typically referred to as “politics”, involving formal elections, governments, policy, or even the state⁴⁴ – though StT has strong implications for the articulation of politics as well (see Ch. 8). Instead, I refer to the “establishment of that very social order which sets out a particular, historically specific account of what counts as politics and defines other areas of social life as not politics”.⁴⁵ The transformation of the normative structuring of political obligation in relation to force – as (re)produced and reflected in StT discourse – is foundational to the construction, ordering, and bounding of the political community. It informs who belongs (those to whom political obligation pertains), who is out (those who either refuse obligation, or do not have it extended), and the terms upon which the community relates to itself. The contingent production of the gendered structure(s) of political obligation informs the collective subject formation of, not only “the troops” and society – but also the polity itself.

7.4.1 “Everyone” Supports the Troops

As an illustration of this argument, consider the discursive production of the “supportive collectivities” outlined in Chapter Four. Figures 18 and 19 indicate that at least fourteen potential supportive groups – or collective subjects – are produced with the corpus. From the perspective of the contingent production of the polity, the most significant component of the graphs is the contrast between statements claiming that “Brits/Americans” do/should support the troops, and those stating that “everyone” does/should support the troops – the dominant frame in each state. As noted in Chapter Four, the contrast between the two supportive groups is straightforward. Help for Heroes, for instance, noted in a 2009 news story that:

⁴³ Managhan 2011a, 451.

⁴⁴ Edkins 1999, 2.

⁴⁵ Edkins 1999, 2.

"This Christmas the absolute finest young men and women Britain has to offer will still be fighting in Helmand, supporting coalition forces, and winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. It is good to see the British nation is becoming so much more patriotic and is really starting to get behind our troops with charities such as Help for Heroes."⁴⁶

The passage is explicit as to the national, British identity of the troops. Brits are called to participate in the war effort – "get behind our troops" – according to a communitarian logic, through involvement with a charity that draws on moral frames – helping the troops at Christmas. This direct framing of StT as "national" is also common in the US, as indicated by Figure 19 and unsubtly exemplified by the name of the DoD's "America Supports You" program.

The more common "everyone" frame is less direct in its form of address and, correspondingly, the collective subject(s) it produces. In 2003, for instance, the fundraising tagline of the UK Army Benevolent Fund was "ABF: Supporting the Best. Your Army. Your Charity", combining a contractarian logic – the "deserving best" – with the implied audience's moral political obligation.⁴⁷ These unspecified exhortations are also common across the US and UK anti-war movement(s), as illustrated by US United for Peace and Justice's 2008 declaration: "Our demand remains clear: we call for the immediate end to the war and occupation in Iraq and for all the troops and contractors to be brought home now!" – "Bring them home now!"⁴⁸

Even politicians frequently use this frame, as illustrated by then-Prime Minister Brown's 2010 House of Commons statement declaring, "It is because of all our brave men and women in our armed forces that our families, our communities and our country are safer and more secure. At this time, it is right to remember all who have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan and all those who serve in our armed forces".⁴⁹ This statement combines all three supportive logics – the contractarian provision of protection, a communitarian sense of common fortune, and a moral duty to remember – in addressing the unspecified community of "we". Similarly, in reference to the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal, a US Congressperson stated: "Things are not going all that well in Iraq. One may think that everything is good and it is productive. We support our troops. We stand with our troops. That is not the question."⁵⁰ Even in the context of a military scandal – which the speaker himself connects to military "culture" – StT is naturalized to the extent that it is "not the question". The amended military contract is so foundational to politics it is irrelevant to a formal political debate regarding military activities. These statements (re)combine the three logics of political obligation to construct a relationship between the addressed audience and the troops. The

⁴⁶ Help for Heroes 2009d.

⁴⁷ ABF 2003.

⁴⁸ UFPJ 2008

⁴⁹ Brown 2010.

⁵⁰ Meek 2004.

precise nature of the supportive audience(s) – or collectivity(s)– however, is unspecified.

The apparent assumption that these statements will be both meaningful and socially intelligible to “us”/“everyone” can be read at (at least) two levels. The first is that in many instances, given the social identities of the speakers – politicians, government officials, and charity workers or activists – the implicitly addressed audience can be assumed to be the national society. This inference reflects the modern, naturalized correspondence of the military with the territorial nation-state. Who else could it be? As we have seen, however, the collective subjects and social relations produced and implied by “the troops” do not neatly correspond with the institutional military (Ch. 5). They are an arbiter/mediator of the collectivity’s relationship to the use of force – and locus for the negotiation of political obligation. This implicitly addressed StT discourse may also be read, then, as a reflection of the efficacy of the three intertwined logics in producing a unified, singular polity where “everyone” “obviously” supports the troops. It (re)produces, in other words, the territorial and national assumptions undergirding the first, statist reading.

7.4.2 Political Obligation and Collective Subject Formation

Put differently, the StT discursive formation is premised upon the ostensibly stable and objective existence of the social relationships and subjectivities – those that make up the gendered/ing, amended liberal contract – that it itself is crucial in (re)producing. This process parallels – and further specifies – Scarry’s argument that wars are not fought for political communities as they are, but as they are ideally imagined, hoped, or believed to be. As she puts it:

“If the democracy for which one dies existed in a world safe for democracy, one would not be dying to make the world safe for democracy. If the country for which one kills existed in a world in which there was an end of wars, one would not be killing to make a war that ends all wars”.⁵¹

Engagement in the collective use of force, in other words, (re)produces not just the political community as a collective subject, but as a particular type of idealised collective subject. At the same time, however, the very process/necessity of its production implicitly acknowledges that this idealised political community is a fiction. It is not already real/manifest as the basis for the action done in its name. The political community produced by war, and within StT discourse, is an aspirational, yet unacknowledged, normative project.

The slightly paradoxical nature of this “back and forth”, yet simultaneous, performance of political action is analogous to Derrida’s discussion of the performative nature of declarations of independence. Derrida

⁵¹ Scarry 1985, 130-1.

asks “who signs, and with what so-called proper name, the declarative act which founds an institution?”,⁵² highlighting the indeterminacy of whether the institution is produced or asserted as independent in such a statement. The problem, as he sees it, is that the entity (or collective subject) which is understood as signing a declaration of independence does “not exist as an entity, it does not exist, before this declaration, not as such”.⁵³ The collectivity which declares independence is theoretically created as a collectivity (though certainly drawing upon pre-existing notions of what constitutes a collectivity) by the declaration. As a result, it both does and does not pre-exist itself, and bring itself into being.

This indeterminacy of the ontological status of the political community typifies the StT discursive formation. If the polity(s) that engaged in the GWOt were “really” characterised by the mythical liberal military contract wherein all eligible (masculine) citizens serve, there would be no need to ameliorate the gendered civilian anxiety impelled by its non-performance. There would be no need to re-draft the terms of normative masculine citizenship as “military participation” – and no need to support the troops. The contestation over normative civil-military relations is a “construct-substantiating process”, wherein the polity goes to war not so much as to annihilate an opponent as to “first ‘make’ and then ‘make real’ its own beliefs, its own territorial and ideological self-definition”.⁵⁴

While each logic of political obligation could be understood to produce a corresponding ideal-typical vision of political community – republican/communitarian, liberal/contractarian, altruistic/moral – the more significant point is their multi-layered combination to (re)produce a polity bringing about, and premised upon, the amended liberal military contract. By virtue of their reification of the essentiality of military support and common address of the universalised “everyone” (or “every citizen”), they work to instantiate a modified performative ideal of a liberal polity. The discursive military, in other words, as described by Lutz, is “a medium for evoking images of [ourselves] and the societies [we] live in” – for bringing about the idealised community.⁵⁵ This performative polity – produced with context-specific variation in the US and UK – derives its normativity from military participation/support. Its logic of political obligation vis-à-vis force is not externally-oriented, towards the ethics of war or killing of others, but rather of what is owed to members of its own community. The intertwining of the three ideal-typical logics, however, erases this underlying contestation. The efficacy of “everyone” as “obviously” representing some pre-given community obscures its embeddedness in – and the contract’s indebtedness to – productive discursive power. Instead, the strictures of the amended liberal contract are enacted by, and within, infinite constellations of the three archetypes. Overall, the contestation over the normative structure(s) of

⁵² Derrida 1986, 8.

⁵³ Ibid, 10.

⁵⁴ Scarry 1985, 132 and 140.

⁵⁵ Ben-Ari 2004, 346. For original see Lutz 2001.

gendered civil-military relations is a conversation about the polity's relationship with itself (and eliding the collectivity's engagement in violence against others in the process).

7.4.3 *Limning the Liberal Performative Ideal*

Crucially, despite the particular articulation of StT's underlying structure(s) of political obligation within the modern, statist idiom of citizenship, the universalised liberal subject interpellated by the amended liberal contract does not perfectly correspond with our *a priori* national boundaries. A small but significant portion of the corpus comprises explicit appeals and/or expectations for non-nationals to support the troops of a foreign state. The most straightforward of these constructions reference the contributions (or lack thereof) of allies in the GWoT. A 2010 statement by UK Minister of Defence Fox, for example, announces,

“The British Government supports both the mission and the counter-insurgency strategy. I encourage Allies to demonstrate strategic patience and give time for the counter-insurgency strategy to work, but stress the need to be able to show significant progress, consolidating ISAF's hold in central Helmand, and accelerating the training of the Afghan security forces. We need to produce a stronger narrative alongside the political leadership we are providing to ensure that our troops get the support they deserve.”⁵⁶

Fox rhetorically extends communitarian (“support the mission”) and contractarian (“deserve”) logics of obligation beyond the UK to implicate the political leadership of allied NATO states. As a result, the collective subject implied by the “our” modifying “our troops” is unclear. It likely pertains to the UK, but in the context of the quotation, could also be read as referencing NATO allies, Afghanistan, or all three. The discourse does not necessarily construct the NATO “political leadership” as belonging to the same polity as the troops, as it clearly (re)produces the obligated subjects as (nation)states. At the same time, however, their production within the language of StT suggests the allies are implicated by the broader liberal project/social order instantiated by the amended liberal contract, and expected to perform as such.

A 2003 reprimand of the Turkish government by Secretary of State Powell, for failing to adequately contribute to the US mission in Iraq, employs a similar frame. Powell warned Turkey that the US was looking for “full cooperation in the days ahead, full support for humanitarian efforts as well as an effort to support our troops in northern Iraq.”⁵⁷ On one hand, this statement, contextualized by war and the spectre of territorial conquest, seems to be operational in nature, reifying the existence of the US and Turkey as territorial nation-states. On the other, Powell not only references StT – a discourse inextricable from its contemporary (re)production of political obligation – but does so as a means of expressing his “lingering

⁵⁶ Fox 2010.

⁵⁷ Kessler and Pan 2003.

sense of disappointment”⁵⁸ in Turkey’s past failures. Powell subtly suggests that Turkey is not living up to its contractual obligation(s), wherein the US provides aid in exchange for war participation. Without overdrawing the implications of this illustrative example, the passage suggests an intertwining of the political logics underlying StT – that membership is limned by responsibility to/for collective force – with the geopolitical.⁵⁹

The extension of the liberal performative ideal through political obligation also, infrequently though significantly, blurs conventional political boundaries to bring individuals and groups into an amended polity. A 2005 *Wall Street Journal* article, for instance, approvingly quotes an Iraqi soldier, Staff Sgt. Alaa Akram as praising the “American soldier”, who “never worries about money” but is “worried about his country”, as an ideal to which the Iraqi army should aspire.⁶⁰ The *WSJ* commentator notes that “It is nice to know that someone supports the troops”.⁶¹ This statement obviously contains a pointed rebuke to those who do not meet the speaker’s standard for StT. It also, however, suggests that non-nationals may “opt in”, or be read in, to the polity through their performance of StT as a form of allegiance. Such a move invokes a politics and logic not dissimilar to that of minority groups joining the armed forces as a declaration of equality and membership within the (domestic) liberal state.⁶² Members of the US Black Congressional Caucus similarly proclaimed their support for the troops during the GWOt specifically as black Americans (see Fig. 21), to demonstrate membership in the polity. In doing so, they simultaneously bring the experience(s) of black Americans into both the floating signifier of “the troops” and the universalised (implicitly white) polity instantiated within the amended liberal contract.⁶³ Both stances reflect, however, a shift from membership being premised upon a willingness to join the military – to potentially kill for the collectivity – to an acceptance of the obligation to participate, via support, in simply upholding its normative legitimacy.

This blurry extension of political obligation, and imperfect limning of the liberal polity(s), is not limited to formally “political” US speech. In a particularly striking example, in 2007 the UK Army Benevolent Fund launched a US branch – the British Army Benevolent Fund America – with the rationale that:

“Given the current scale of operations in which the British Army is involved, demand has been increasingly placed on our charity to support soldiers and their young families through difficult times. We hope the American people will be able to learn more about our charity and its work and support their allies by making a donation or attending

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Provocatively, this geopolitical operation of the liberal logic(s) of StT suggests its potential to act as a “standard of civilization” – a demonstration and condition of membership in the West. (On the standard of civilization see Bowden 2009).

⁶⁰ Taranto 2005.

⁶¹ Taranto 2005.

⁶² See Krebs 2006; Ware 2010 and 2014;

⁶³ See, for instance, Cummings 2003, 556; D’Amico 2000, 105.

our fundraising events.”⁶⁴

While this statement shows the same dilution of the compulsory nature of support as above, it is noteworthy for its assumption that individual Americans, rather than the state, would feel moved to support British troops. It is an invitation for US citizens to participate, via support, in the discursive British military, thus extending the collective subject – the liberal “British” polity – produced via political obligation. Alternatively, this statement may be understood as constructing a liberal performative ideal – or normative project – common to the US and UK. The commonality of the logics of political obligation identified in this dissertation between and across the US and UK reflect their common heritage and status as (Anglophone) Western liberal democracies, but it also suggests their mutual instantiation of a broader, transnational liberal order going forward.

This potential production of a common community – if not a polity per se – is also seen in the discourse of the anti-war movement. The enduringly global/transnational character of the anti-war movement is well-established in the IR literature, and need not be recounted here.⁶⁵ Instead, I want to draw attention to the rare though illuminating use of the specific logics of StT in transnational context. The US NGO Military Families Speak Out, for instance, drew on growing Canadian and Australian opposition to the war in Iraq to encourage its supporters to contact their Congressional representatives, stating:

“...Canada's House of Commons passed a non-binding resolution calling on their government to stop the deportation of Iraq war resisters who came to Canada seeking refuge from participating in a war that they saw as illegal and immoral...The Australian government, once among the Bush administration's closest allies, is now standing up against the Iraq war...The world stands behind us as we demand that our own government bring all of our troops home from Iraq now, and give them the care they need when they get home”.⁶⁶

The quotation demonstrates an interesting ambivalence in its (re)production of the supportive collectivity. The reference to the Bush administration and “our” troops suggests a national frame of reference, yet Canada is commended for its service to heroic and endangered US military personnel. The governments and peoples of Canada and Australia are posited as standing with MFSO in supporting the safe return of the (presumably US) troops. The reach of the liberal performative ideal is extended via moral (and subtly communitarian) logics of political obligation to encompass “the world” as united in a common normative project – protecting and caring for “our” troops.

This malleability of the supportive community (re)produced within StT discourse suggests that the obligatory structures of the amended military contract construct not a single, unified polity, but rather a

⁶⁴ ABF 2007.

⁶⁵ On links between the US, UK, and Australian peace movements in post- 9/11 era, see Gillan and Pickerill 2008. For political science theorizing on transnational activism, see Tarrow 2005; Keck and Sikkink 1998.

⁶⁶ MFSO 2008b.

plethora of inter-related, over-lapping, and shifting collective subjects. These subjects may or may not correspond with (trans)national boundaries, but each are held up to/produced within the overarching liberal performative ideal instantiated by the three structures of obligation. StT may be interpreted as both assuming and (re)producing a transnational liberal normative project and social order. This suggestion parallels Cynthia Enloe's claim that StT practices – particularly the proliferation of yellow ribbons – in the US during the First Gulf War were, in effect, endorsing Bush's New World Order.⁶⁷ My argument is slightly less direct, and does not suggest the level of purposive intent sufficient to constitute "endorsement". What I have tried to demonstrate here is the ways that StT, and corresponding processes of collective subject formation, operate according to logics of solidaristic political obligation. The emphasis upon what is "owed" to the polity, or its members, paradoxically facilitates the elision of war, as the political stakes accrue to the nature and production of the idealised political community. "Endorsement" of the liberal order is therefore strong; participation, again, is likely a fairer characterisation of the relationship between StT and the geopolitical projection of Western military power.

In so far as "difference" comes into play, then, it is not typically in the form of negative contrast against an outside enemy, conditioned by the statist boundaries of nationalism. Figures 26 and 27 of Chapter Four, recall, indicated that both the state/government and social conditions are more commonly posited as detrimental to the troops than a battlefield enemy. Instead, as suggested by the work of Abizadeh, the obligatory logics, values, and construction(s) of civil-military relations achieve meaning through their relationship(s) – be it difference or correspondence – to "hypothetical values and the imagined collective identities centred on them", or an imagined historical past.⁶⁸ In other words, the (indirect) experience of war transmitted through StT discourse may inform collective subject formation on the basis of its imagined manifestation of contemporary values (e.g. righteous, masculine citizenship), and/or its departure from a perceived ideal of the common social imaginary (e.g. mythical Western "good wars"). StT represents an instance of the positive, solidaristic articulation of political membership, identity, and collective subjectivity in relation to collective violence. The analysis of political obligation therefore provides a potential complement to studies of the (re)production of the political community via negative definition to an external "Other", and relationships of antagonism and enmity.⁶⁹ In either case, however, as Mann observes, "in the end, the real justification is not the reason for the war, but the subject that is constituted through it".⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Enloe 1993, 173-5.

⁶⁸ Abidazeh 2005, 58.

⁶⁹ Campbell, cited in Sheehan 2005, 140 and 163; Campbell 1992.

⁷⁰ Mann 2006, 160.

7.5 CONCLUSION: NORMALIZING THE LIBERAL SOCIAL ORDER

In this chapter, I argued that StT is a requisite – and the presumption – of membership in the various liberal collective subjects produced by and within the discourse. Its underlying logics of gendered/ing political obligation are also, in relation to force, the premise of the overarching liberal performative ideal of “collectivity” itself. Kenneth MacLeish expresses a form of this idea in his characterization of the military service of others, in a war which many Americans opposed, as akin to Mauss’ “gift”:⁷¹

“But while we may not have asked for this gift and may even have objected strongly to it, it cannot be refused. At least on our end of the thing, it is arguably the case that we have accepted the gift merely by inhabiting a social order that is upheld by violence, by the dying of those who have gone before here and in foreign lands”.⁷²

Though the framing of service as “gift” might be thought to undermine what I have argued is the inherently political nature of military service/support in forging this social order, the quotation provides an excellent sense of the inextricability of contemporary liberal social imaginaries and StT. As observed by Barkawi, “it is all too easy to forget amid the everyday world of Western societies that our states too, and the orders they provide, rely on coercive power, on an iron foundation deployed at home and abroad”.⁷³ While StT initially appears to be “about” the military, or military personnel – and it is, at times – it is mostly a discourse of “our” relationship to the practice of collective violence and, correspondingly, about ourselves.

The constitution of “support as the new service” instantiates the social order and normative coherence of the liberal polity – and overarching transnational liberal social order – by preserving the structure and premise of the mythical military contract, but rewriting the terms. In this way, even ostensibly non-liberal modes of citizenship (e.g. republicanism, altruistic) and political membership (and collective subjectivities they imply) end up reinforcing the social order and normative coherence of the liberal performative ideal, by reifying and reproducing its underlying normative structure. This is facilitated by and enables the articulation of a gendered hierarchy of citizenship in the ostensibly “civilian” sphere, through continued reference to militaryness as the ultimate arbiter of normative political membership.

Though StT superficially upholds and reifies the spatial civil-military divide, it also results in the conceptual collapse of all “social” life into the pervasive and discursive military, through the normalization and naturalization of participation. In this way, StT also depends upon and disproves the enduring distinction between politics and violence presumed, yet never fully practiced, by liberal social orders, simply by exposing the work required to produce a separate institutional military and “civil” supportive society – not to mention the pacific/domestic and violent/international. It highlights the limitations to meaningful

⁷¹ See Mauss 2011.

⁷² MacLeish 2013, 187.

⁷³ Barkawi 2011, 716.

critique and dissent imposed by “the self-referential nature of our social imaginaries” – here, of gender, the military, and social violence – as we can only “see” “that which shows up as invalid against its background”.⁷⁴ We lack alternative ways of imagining political belonging, obligation, masculinity, and war, as they are not “visible” within our “standard moral orientation”.⁷⁵ The implications of this intertwining of the normative civil-military relationship, as represented and reproduced by StT, with the broader liberal (a)political imaginary for contemporary practices and articulations of dissent are addressed in the next chapter.

⁷⁴ Grant 2014, 413.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE APOLITICS OF SUPPORT AND (IM)POSSIBILITY OF DISSENT

This chapter discusses the implications of the “redrafting” of the liberal military contract within and by the StT discursive formation for the possibility of intelligible dissent and effective resistance. I understand “dissent” as characterised by direct, often explicit contestation – or even argumentation – of a commonly-held position. It is frequently, though need not be, linguistic, and, significantly, is intersubjectively understood as engaging in “politics”.¹ Resistance, in contrast, is understood as a more indirect, performative contradiction of a hegemonic position/discourse – a breach of the normal expectations of conduct. This reading of resistance is similar to Foucault’s notion of “counter-conduct”, which captures behaviours, affects, subjectivities, and discourses that not only refuse governing, regulatory norms of discursive power, but also positively “struggle” against it.² Significantly, though resistance contests naturalized assumptions and is “political”, it is not recognized as “politics”.³ I therefore distinguish between instances of dissent and resistance based upon the particular discourse/practice’s constitution, within StT, in relation to politics.

I begin with an examination of the treatment of “politics” within StT discourse as it relates to both “the troops” and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I find that, as implied by the hegemony of the premise of the new military contract, StT is naturalized as “apolitical”. Displays of non-conformity and potential war opposition are read as inappropriate politicizations of the precarious predicament of the troops. I substantiate this point through an examination of the construction of “dissent” within StT discourse – a debate which largely revolves around the question of war opposition, rather than troop support. In doing so, I expand upon previous references to the discourse of anti-war and peace groups as conventional sources of counter-hegemonic discourse – particularly the call to “bring them home!”. I argue that not only has dissent been popularly constructed as an inappropriate (even dangerous) activity, but that anti-war groups are unable to transcend the gendered military contract. Instead, they participate in a chain of equivalence, wherein war is opposed because it threatens the troops, rather than as a negative practice in and of itself.

8.1 THE APOLITICS OF SUPPORT?

Cowen, drawing on Hardt and Negri, argues that not only does democracy “not belong to war”,⁴ but it also does not “belong to the military”.⁵ War, as observed by Hardt and Negri, involves “strict hierarchy and

¹ This reading of dissent is similar to Habermas’ (1989) understanding of communicative reason, in so far as it takes place in, and accepts, the liberal “public sphere” as the place of politics, and bounds of the political.

² Sokhi Bulley 2013, 2; and Foucault 1990.

³ Sokhi-Bulley 2013, 2-3 and 6.

⁴ Hardt and Negri 2004, 17.

⁵ Cowen 2008, 17.

obedience, and thus the partial or total suspension of democratic participation”.⁶ Cowen notes that these circumstances also apply to the military, and associated figures of “exception” – she names the soldier, but the troops are also encompassed within this category. The military requirement of renouncing individual rights renders them “outside the space of democracy”, as the acceptance of “blind” obedience is at odds with the deliberative and participatory responsibilities of civilian, democratic citizenship.⁷ Under these conditions, the implications of the production of StT as a form of military participation for dissent become clear. If support is now the equivalent of “fighting for the man next to you”, the purported civilian is now imbued with the same responsibilities of obedience, solidarity, and apolitical obligation as the soldier. The redrafting of the liberal military contract not only transforms the premise of political community from an assumed obligation of military service to one of support, but also prioritizes solidarity with “the troops” above meaningful democratic debate. This dynamic is evident, to provide one example among many, in a 2003 Congressional statement praising StT activities in schools:

“...I learned that our young children, who have the same opinions that many of their parents do and many Members of Congress do, have a vitally important opportunity, *despite those opinions, to show what counts, and that is support for our troops...*[U]ltimately, I hope that that [sending emails to the troops while in school] gave them a sense that they can engage in the great issues of our time, that they can venture an opinion, that that opinion counts, and that they can give some solace and some comfort to people who are fighting for their future...”⁸

Engagement in conventional democratic practice – voicing opinions and involvement in public affairs – though lauded, is clearly subordinated to the greater obligation of “military” participation. The passage blurs the communitarian insistence upon common cause regardless of “politics” with a moral logic of providing “comfort” to supplant liberal democratic values of dissent. Supporting the troops is “what counts” – a fact further brought home by its framing in a pedagogical context. While emailing the troops is framed as “voicing an opinion” and giving young people agency in the context of war, none of the subsequently quoted emails express ambivalence about StT or doubts about the war. This passage illustrates a predominant theme within StT, wherein “symbolically, the military supersedes the state as the arbiter of freedom, champion of the nation, model for social relations and author of its destiny”.⁹

As the troops are not reducible to “the military”, this is something of an oversimplification. But it does capture the way in which the orientation towards the use of force, represented by “the troops”, has come to inform and reflect both the obligations of citizenship and the structures of authority and legitimacy within the polity. The discursive “military” in many ways displaces the state as symbolic “sovereign”.

⁶ Hardt and Negri 2004, 17.

⁷ Cowen 2008, 16-7.

⁸ Israel 2003, H2373.

⁹ Howard and Prividera 2008, 170; cited in Dixon 2012, 118.

Normative citizenship and public participation is related to, implicitly, the collective use of force, rather than alternative democratic ideals. As a result, the implication of society in “military participation” makes the practice of support a self-legitimizing tautology.¹⁰ At a more concrete level, this “flip” of the typical relationship between separate civil society and the military raises serious questions as to the viability of the democratic control of the armed forces, both as a liberal principle¹¹ and practice of governance.¹² Stahl argues that StT encourages a “short-circuiting” of civilian engagement with the military via the construction of a “quasi-personal”, or moral, relationship between ostensibly-separate civilians and “the troops”.¹³

More immediately, this subtle shift from democracy to the “military” as the locus of political obligation is seen in, and furthered by, the continual production of “support” as explicitly apolitical. This is paradigmatically represented in the materials of the UK NGO Help for Heroes, which, in response to the FAQ, “Is H4H political?”, responds that:

“H4H is strictly non-political. We accept that wars happen under any government and seek to support those people wounded in war, not to comment on the reasons behind such conflicts. Wars are brutal and Servicemen and women are injured almost daily - we can’t prevent this, but together, we can help those who are wounded in the service of our country to recover...”¹⁴

This passage does several important things. Firstly, it denies its own political nature and implicitly casts the attachment of “politics” to StT as negative and inappropriate. In doing so, it limits the ambit of politics to opinions on the war – partisan, ideological opinions on war – as it suggests that conflict will “happen under any government”. War, oddly, is constructed as irrelevant to the obligation to provide support for the troops, which is not raised as a political matter.¹⁵ The quotation denies the democratic agency of the addressed “everyone”, as they “can’t prevent” conflict. The call to StT, then, reflects a reading of “civilian” supporters, as suggested above, into the military, and thus held to the same “apolitical” standards as the troops “themselves”. Theirs, in other words, is “not to reason why” but rather, mimetically, to “do or die”.¹⁶

Similar, though slightly less direct, constructions of the apolitics of StT are found throughout the US corpus. A *NYT* article regarding a new veterans’ support organization, Vets 4 Vets, for instance, notes that though its founder “has roots in the antiwar movement”, he “insists that this group is apolitical”.¹⁷ Such utterances are

¹⁰ Butler 2006, 97.

¹¹ See Millar 2016b.

¹² MacLeish 2013, 188.

¹³ Stahl 2010, 30.

¹⁴ H4H 2010c; H4H 2009d.

¹⁵ Tidy 2015a, 229-30.

¹⁶ Alfred Lord Tennyson 1890.

¹⁷ Downes 2008.

not limited to charitable organizations that might have a strategic (i.e. financial) interest in appealing to as broad a constituency possible. A 2007 *Washington Post* article, entitled “At Walter Reed [a US military hospital], Mellencamp Shuts His Mouth and Sings”, approvingly recounts the entertainer’s decision to, in the author’s words “check[] his politics” – his outspoken opposition to the invasion of Iraq – in order to support the troops.¹⁸ Time and again, the apolitical obligation to StT is contrasted with the “politics” of the war.

Similar constructions are also observed by Jenkins et. al. in their analysis of the spontaneous commemoration practices that took place in Wootton Bassett (now Royal Wootton Bassett), UK, where the bodies of deceased British service personnel were repatriated from 2007 to 2011.¹⁹ As described by Jenkins et. al., the commemorative practices at Wootton Bassett were frequently treated by the mayor, locals, and national press as distinct and separable from the opinions on the war. Perceived attempts to “politicize” the space of remembrance, be it by radical activists or politicians, were strongly resisted.²⁰ The US Department of Defense’s commemorative “Freedom Walks”, which took place around the US from 2005-2008 to remember the 9/11 victims and StT in Iraq and Afghanistan, incurred similar concern and controversy. Though the DoD insisted they were a “non-political homage to the victims and a salute to veterans past and present, devoid of commentary on the merits of the war in Iraq”, others, including the *Washington Post* (which withdrew as an official sponsor of the first Walk) and anti-war groups, expressed concern that the event subtly endorsed the war, and was therefore political in nature.²¹ As observed by Tidy, such discussions contribute to an overarching depoliticization of war commemoration, in which “potentially contentious elements are stripped out” of remembrance.²²

Jenkins et. al. take this point further, arguing such debates are founded upon an implicit definition of “political” that articulates “a flawed distinction” between “those who simply and solemnly honoured the dead, and those who sought to exploit [these activities] for their own ends”.²³ This definition, however, obscures the fact that, “the construction of an issue as apolitical ‘cannot be anything other than intensely political’”,²⁴ and, while never fully convincing, requires substantial representational work by a variety of societal actors. It is the operation of what Kelly refers to as “hegemonic power” – seen in the totalizing and normalizing constructions of gendered normative citizenship reproduced by the discursive formation –

¹⁸ Freedom du Lac 2007.

¹⁹ Jenkins et. al. 2012, 360.

²⁰ Jenkins et. al. 2012, 358 -360; See also Morris 2009 and Daily Mail 2010.

²¹ The inclusion of a performance of a song called “I Raq and I Roll” by a prominent country artist in the program likely did not help with these concerns. Montgomery 2005.

²² Tidy 2011a; See also: Imber and Fraser 2011.

²³ Jenkins et. al. 2012, 361.

²⁴ Tidy 2011a, 329; Millar 2016a, 22-3.

rather than its “objective” character that renders StT discourse apolitical.²⁵ StT discourse superficially denies its political articulation in a disciplining way, thus simultaneously constituting itself, and the conditions of legitimate dissent, as entirely political.

8.1.1 War Participation and Abdication of Political Agency

The separation of the troops from the war – and support from politics – facilitates the depoliticization (or perhaps apoliticization) of collective force generally. The move from service to support, and corresponding displacement of democratic debate from normative citizenship, absolves “society” from any responsibility for/in the collectivity’s engagement in war. Enloe, writing about StT practices of the First Gulf War, notes that “In tying a yellow ribbon ‘round an old oak tree’, or car antenna, a porch pillar, or a shop sign”, women were, in effect, “voluntarily constructing a feminized ‘home front’ to complement a battle front”.²⁶ The reconstitution of citizenship as a form of military participation not only alienates civilian “supporters” from the decision to go to war, but posits this alienation as a normative good. Supporting the troops does not function to justify war per se, but rather to elide the notion that war, generally, requires justification – a move Stahl refers to as “deflection”.²⁷ Susan Sontag’s central ethical dilemma of war – “who is responsible – those who commit the deed, or those who send them off to do battle?”²⁸ – is short-circuited. “The troops” are no longer necessarily constructed as engaged in battle, and those “who send them” are read into the troops. As seen in Figures 26 and 27, there are only two factors left to “blame”: a government that makes “political” decisions at a remove from the supportive, “military” civilians, and a generalized, agentless “war” that, much like a natural disaster,²⁹ befalls everyone.

Paradoxically, then, StT may also be understood as war participation, at a remove, in so far as, as observed by Scarry, “conventional war entails the participation of a massive number of people, only a small fraction of whom are engaged in the active verbal advocacy of either the elimination or perpetration of war”.³⁰ It also, according to Sylvester, likely constitutes an experience of war, however limited, as “supporters” display bumper stickers, advocate for veterans, oppose war, or even consume news relating to the troops on television.³¹ StT entails a depoliticization of conflict that facilitates contemporary and future wars. Given the amount of discursive work performed to separate “the troops” from violence, however, in all but the communitarian mode of political obligation, such participation must be understood in negative

²⁵ Kelly 2012, 730. This working of the hegemonic, productive power of the discursive military also accounts for why, thus far, these “apolitical” discourses have gone relatively unexamined by social scientists.

²⁶ Enloe 1993, 174.

²⁷ See on this point Stahl 2009, 535.

²⁸ Cited in Coker 2012, 62. For original, see Sontag 2003.

²⁹ Stahl 2010, 30.

³⁰ Scarry 1985, 65.

³¹ Sylvester 2013, 66-70; 98.

terms – as a turning away from war. Though StT is a discourse “of” war, it is not centrally “about” war participation. StT implicates all citizens in a normative relationship to each other, to produce the idealised polity. Violence, and the conduct of war, is secondary to this primary concern. As Carruthers observes, “the war in Iraq is not the first one in which citizens have declined – or expressed a desire to defer – their ‘right to know’”.³² Shaw further observes that the professional military and state elites have a long record of strategically “insulating the military from general social criticism”.³³ Contemporary StT discourse, however, marks a shift in the construction of this deferral from an apathetic failing of democratic, deliberative citizenship to a constitutive requirement. The amended liberal military contract, now understood as a form of military participation, compels dissociated “complicity” in the collectivity’s practices of war as a condition of normative membership.

8.1.2 Constructions of Dissent Within StT Discourse

The elision of violence and depoliticization of war under the guise of a political ethic of, paradoxically, “apolitics” is also seen in the fact that not all positions are treated as “equally” political. Though it is possible for supporting the war to be seen as a political position, as in the case of Freedom Walk, within StT discourse it is anti-war positions that are read as synonymous with “politics”. Baroness Royall of Blaisdon’s 2009 House of Lords statement – note that it occurs long after the initial invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan – provides a good example of this construction:

“I am confident that the whole of this House is fully behind our troops in Afghanistan and that this will continue to be the case. Sometimes I find it slightly difficult when noble Lords are critical of various aspects of the war. It is right that there is a space for people to question and be critical but, as my noble friend says, the important thing is that our troops, their families and those who are wounded should know that they have the full support of all parties represented in this House”.³⁴

The quotation mirrors the previous distinction between the obligation to support the troops and the engagement in democratic debate. While the Baroness acknowledges that there should be space for debate, “what is important” is providing support for the troops, a clear hierarchy which delegitimizes opposition to the war as “political”, while naturalizing the apparently-obvious moral rectitude of supporting the troops. This subtle opprobrium attached to war opposition is also apparent in US discourse. To provide an unusual, yet striking illustration, in 2007 a team of US competitive bridge players faced a year-long suspension and were accused by other bridge players of “treason” and “sedition” for displaying a handwritten sign that said “We did not vote for Bush” at an awards ceremony.³⁵ Other bridge players noted that it was common for

³² Carruthers 2008, 71.

³³ Shaw 1991, 136-7.

³⁴ Baroness Royall of Blaisdon 2009, c662.

³⁵ Strom 2007.

competitors to wear “Support the Troops” buttons, but “they don’t go after those people”.³⁶ Though the stakes in this example are relatively low, it illustrates the extent to which the disciplining of “political” speech and normalization of StT extended beyond formal politics and conventionally authoritative social actors. Within StT discourse, opposing the war is a matter of a politics, whereas supporting the war is frequently portrayed as non-political or neutral.³⁷

This observation is borne out in my analysis of constructions of, and attitudes towards, dissent within the corpus. The graphs below represent instances of StT discourse which implicitly or explicitly comment on “dissent” *in the context of StT*. This does not, nor was it intended to, capture the totality of public commentary on dissent during the GWOt. I derived the meaning of “dissent” from within the text, coding instances of self-understood dissent, or commentary upon the dissent of others. I did not impose a definition as to what “counted” as dissent upon the corpus, instead deriving it inductively. As a result, though I originally intended to map perspectives on dissent “generally”, the graphs broadly reproduce the association of anti-war positions with “politics”/dissent, and the war (and troops) with apolitics. As such, they reference public constructions of war opposition.³⁸ The additional categories associated with negative/positive refer to more specific constructions of dissent, and are incorporated into, rather than additive to, the overall total.

Dissent was more often constructed as “positive” in both the US (658 total references) and UK (371 total) than negative (454 and 100 references, respectively). The implications of this result should not be over-leveraged. As discussed in Chapter Four, the disparity in the data availability between peace/anti-war groups and other actors likely over-represents their position within the discursive formation.³⁹ As such, considering the results for newspapers alone (recall that they comprise a complete universe) somewhat complicates this picture. While positive constructions remain most frequent in the UK (70, compared to 63 negative), negative constructions slightly edge out positive results in the US, at 185 to 174. This is likely a better reflection of overall trends.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ See also Kelly 2012, 730-1.

³⁸ These graphs only represent paragraph-units from which a perspective on dissent could be fairly assessed – it does not encompass the totality of the sample.

³⁹ The existing evidence is slightly contradictory: A 2003 Gallup survey found that 67 per cent of surveyed Americans were less sympathetic to the anti-war cause following mass (and inconveniencing) protests. A different survey taken the same month found that 57 per cent of respondents found protest “acceptable”, but 69 per cent of respondents disagreed with the protesters. Roper Center 2014; and Lyons 2003.

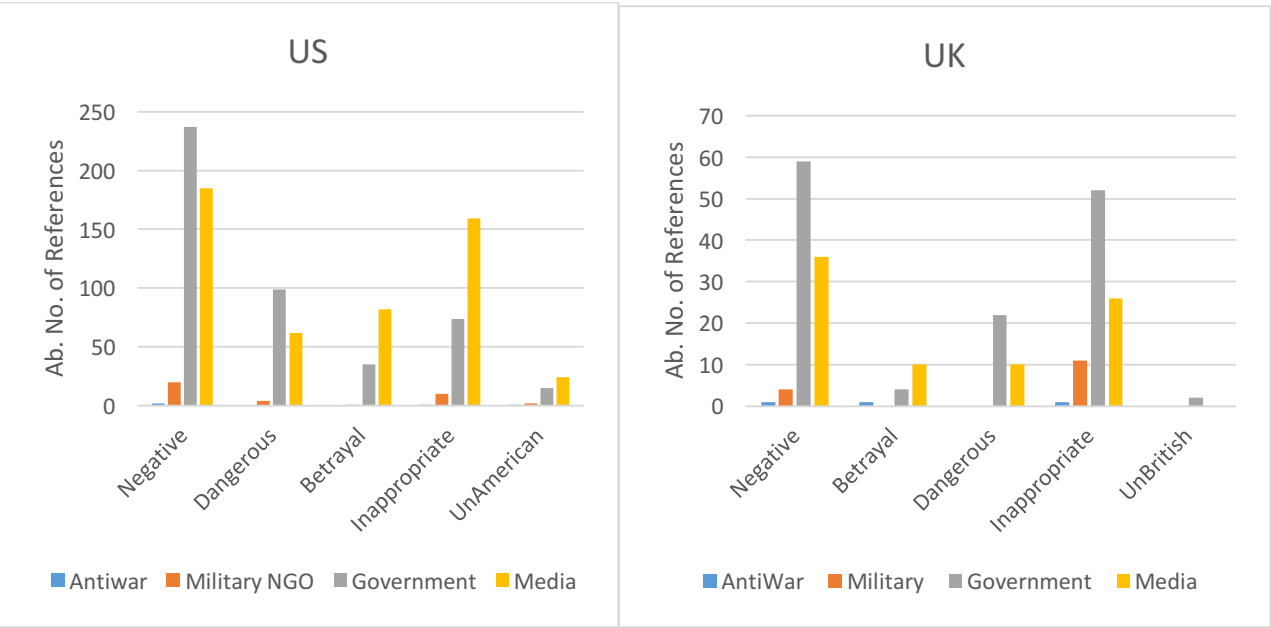


Figure 33: Negative Constructions of Dissent

The disaggregation of negative constructions of dissent by source-type aligns with expectations. As “dissent” was constructed as synonymous with opposing the war, the government is the predominant source of this frame in both the US and UK, followed by the media. This is true of each associated category (e.g. betrayal, dangerous etc.). Interestingly, a comparatively low number of negative orientations towards dissent were put forward by pro-military NGOs. The ordering of the subcategories is also the same for the US and UK, with dissent as “inappropriate” registering the most references (US = 234, UK = 91), followed by “dangerous” (165 and 32), “betrayal” (118 and 15), and “un-American/British” (41 and 3). Together, these depictions of dissent express the common idea, consonant with the contractarian model, that while the troops are deployed, it is “inappropriate” to voice dissent. A spokesperson for the UK Prime Minister’s Office, for instance, said in 2008 that:

“
While he [Blair] recognised that there were differences of view over the war and that it was perfectly legitimate to ask questions about it, he nevertheless believed that at a time like this, it was important for the country to show support for the troops on the ground and the job they were doing”.⁴⁰

Though the speaker concedes the technical right to debate the war, he nonetheless frames it as a questionable choice.

The other subcategories again harken back to the “discursive legacy” of Vietnam,⁴¹ and the belief that active opposition to war in wartime not only fails to support the troops, but also potentially provides “aid and

⁴⁰ PMO 2004.
⁴¹ Coy et. al., 2008.

comfort” to the enemy (see Ch. 3). This constitutes a betrayal of the whole, a framing consonant with the communitarian ideal-type.⁴² A 2007 statement by a US Senator provides a good example of this trope:

“To all of those who suggest that General Petraeus [the US commander in Iraq] should be called ‘General Betray Us’, I have a message for you. You are giving aid and comfort to our enemies. We used to try people who did this as traitors...[T]he Senate Democratic majority leader was quoted as saying no one wants us to succeed in Iraq more than Democrats. Well, I say...stand by your words. Let’s focus on succeeding in Iraq and for once show a united support for our troops”.⁴³

As in the communitarian archetype, support for the war is rolled into support for the troops, while the notion that the failure to provide support might endanger the troops suggests the paternalistic, moral structure of political obligation. Together, they foreclose the space for legitimate war opposition, by contrasting it with the irrefutable, constitutive obligation to StT. In doing so, the passage “portray[s] the anti-war left as dangerous, feral, and shockingly, awesomely effective”,⁴⁴ a position contemporaneous commentators observed as pervading the organized yet unofficial political right (e.g. members of the conservative press, think tanks, pro-military advocacy groups, etc.). Unsurprisingly, given the differing historical trajectories of their respective armed forces, though elements of this frame were present in UK discourse, the overall trope was less clearly articulated. Together, the “aid and comfort” elements exceed results for “inappropriate” in the US (283 to 234), but were barely half of those in the UK (45 to 91).

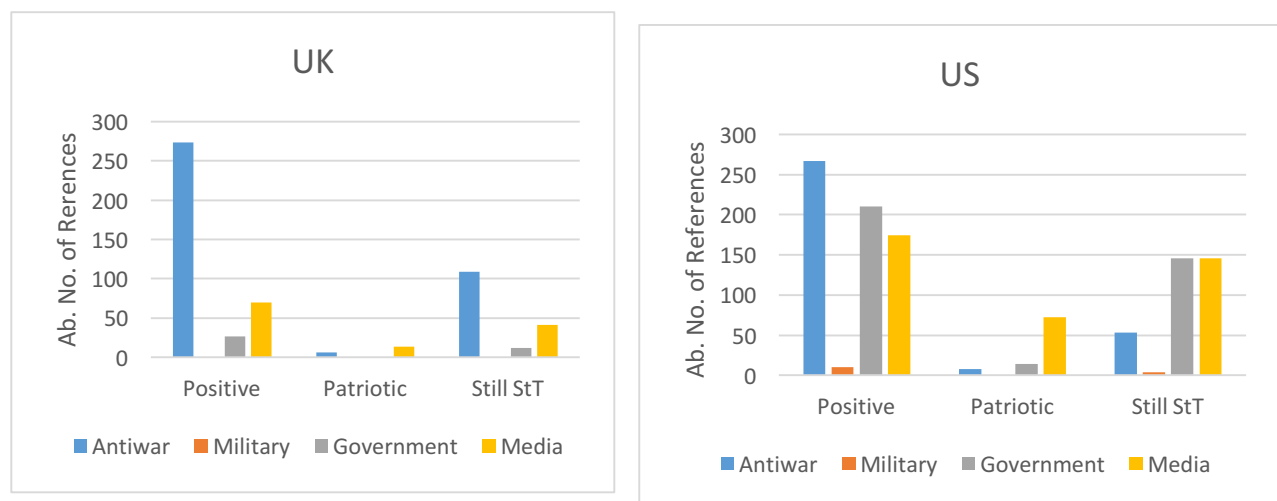


Figure 34: Positive Constructions of Dissent

In the context of StT, positive constructions of dissent exist in dialogue with the negative orientations. They make the case that one could be patriotic (communitarian mode of political obligation) and oppose war

⁴² Huiskamp 2011, 291.

⁴³ Bunning 2007.

⁴⁴ Gitlin 2003.

(contractarian) and still support the troops. The above chart indicates that when provided, the explicit casting of war opposition as “still” StT is more common in both the US (343) and UK (162) than the “patriotic” frame (44 and 20, respectively). A 2003 *Independent on Sunday* op-ed captures the “patriotic” contextualization of StT, arguing:

“It is humbug for Mr Kennedy to turn round and pretend that he supports [the war] merely because it has started and our troops are involved. If you really want to support our boys, the truly patriotic course is to call for them to be removed speedily from the sands of Mesopotamia to the shores of Blighty”.⁴⁵

This quotation blends appeals to patriotism and the inseparability of the “warrior and the war”, using the communitarian structure of political obligation to demand responsibility for, and express opposition to, the invasion of Iraq. Similarly, a 2004 request for debate by US Congressperson Jackson-Lee, demonstrates the framing of dissent as “yet”, or as equivalent to, StT. She stated: “I rise with a humble spirit to salute the people of Iraq who have shown us the ability for a successful election and ask that we honor and support our troops, but yet have an open and full debate on the redeployment of our troops on the floor of the House regarding Iraq”.⁴⁶ The naturalization of supporting the war as the “default position” is clear, as even a request for debate on the war, let alone outright war opposition, is couched in the terms of StT. The speaker invokes a contractarian understanding of StT by acknowledging it is required regardless of one’s position on the war. The passage once again highlights the normalized slide from StT, to supporting the war, to supporting a particular political administration (see Figures 22 and 24), as even the request for debate is implicitly recognized as a form of dissent.

Interestingly, the positive framing of dissent cross-cuts source types in the US to a greater degree than the UK, reflecting (some) Democrats’ opposition to the war in Iraq. The UK, in contrast, had a more explicitly unified UK parliament where, as discussed in Chapter Four, only the Liberal Democrats were critical of the war (and subsequently forced to defend the position). It should also be noted that the presence of these “positive” frames in the UK media is partially attributable to UK coverage of US StT movements. It contributed to UK public discourse and (re)producing the archetypical structures of political obligation, but not as explicitly attached to British troops. The dominance of the anti-war groups in the UK again reflects the greater availability of Stop the War Coalition materials in compared to other NGOs.

The interplay between these positive and negative framings of dissent illustrates the naturalization of StT as not only apolitical, but utterly unremarkable: a mandatory (and limiting) aspect of public discourse during the GWOt. This limited interpretive data supports Managhan’s characterisation of StT as a “social

⁴⁵ Watkins 2003.

⁴⁶ Jackson-Lee 2006.

imperative”, such that “opposition to war MUST be seen to coincide with support for the troops”.⁴⁷ As demonstrated in each section of Chapter Six, what is conventionally understood as anti-war and peace discourse also demonstrates, alone or in combination, the gendered/ing political obligation of the three archetypes. The communitarian ideal-type was characterised by calls for the polity to take responsibility for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – to engage, in other words, in politics. It reproduced the solidaristic notion that war is an enterprise in which the collectivity is implicated, furthering the “participatory” structure of supportive obligation...and potentially “blaming” the democratic populace for the war. It is perhaps for this reason that communitarian obligation is not as well-represented in anti-war discourse as the other two rationales (and occasionally recedes from analysis). Anti-war and peace discourses, by acknowledging that the troops are “heroes” who “deserve” support – and often themselves frame StT as apolitical – also further the contractarian construction of political obligation as individualised, and (imperfectly) reciprocal. The moral mode of obligation is also congruent with war opposition, as it portrays the troops in the affective, often familial terms, of “love.” It highlights the extent to which the troops, too, are victims of conflict. As a result, the possibility of resistance to the liberal military contract – rather than “simply”⁴⁸ dissent regarding the specific wars – is engulfed within the existing discursive formation.

8.2 CAN'T WE JUST “BRING THEM HOME”?

The hegemony of the amended liberal military contract is exemplified by its reification within what, initially, appears to be the most common and coherent counter-discourse – “support the troops, bring them home”. As noted within the contractarian and moral archetypes discussed in Chapter Six, variations of this phrase appear in both the US and UK StT discursive formation(s). Managhan qualifies it as a “rallying cry of the mainstream American anti-war movement”.⁴⁹ As “bring them home” (BtH) comments on the relationship between the armed forces and society, it was included in the sampled corpus as a means of identifying connections and interactions between conventional, authoritative state discourse, and that of social movements and peace groups. A 2005 statement by Congressperson Lee provides a strong illustration of the correspondence of BtH with StT:

“The way we support our troops is by developing a plan to get them out of harm's way and to bring them home. To date, more than 1,600 American troops have given their lives, over 11,000 American troops have been injured, and over 17,000 innocent Iraqi civilians, including women and children, have died in a war that should never have started in the first place...We should send the signal that we support our troops, we love our troops, we value our troops, and we want them home.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Managhan 2011a, 441.

⁴⁸ This is also an exigent political project. My point is that without addressing the deeper normative structures that produce StT discourse, longer-term war opposition may be less effective, and possibly forestalled.

⁴⁹ Managhan 2011, 441.

⁵⁰ Lee 2005, H4039-H4040.

This quotation is founded upon the presumption, discussed above, that StT was being equated with supporting the war (and the Bush administration). The speaker attempts to resignify StT by debating its “true” meaning, and turning it back against the pro-war Republican political establishment. Her reference to the troops’ having “given their lives”, and being placed “in harm’s way”, invokes the contractarian, heroic acceptance of risk, which is balanced with a moral, affective declaration that the troops are “loved”.

A UK CND press release discussing the war in Afghanistan contains similar constructions, stating:

“Thousands marched through London on Saturday 24th October, calling for troops home from Afghanistan. Eight years on from the invasion of Afghanistan the death toll amongst British troops is higher than ever, with an awful price being paid in the blood of Afghan civilians... With two thirds of people wanting British forces to withdraw, now is the time for the Government to bring the troops home”.⁵¹

As above, the troops are constructed as victims, synonymous with Afghan civilians, of the war and government policy – a version of altruistic political obligation, wherein civilians are constructed as “protecting” the troops.

As I designed the study to map StT, rather than investigate anti-war discourse specifically, these passages are provided not to make claims about the relative prevalence of “bring the home” (BtH) frames, but rather to demonstrate that the study is alive to potential counter-discourses and resignification. My purpose is to further illustrate the peace and anti-war movement’s engagement with civil-military relations and “supporting the troops”. It is not to construct a picture of anti-war discourse and practices during the GWoT overall. (In effect, for all the reasons outlined above as to the (re)production of existing structures of normative political obligation, I make the theoretically-informed choice to treat BtH as a sub-type, or constituent aspect, of StT discourse, rather than a fully-articulated “competitor”). BtH is therefore a small – about 11 per cent of paragraph units in the US, and 14 per cent in the UK – but telling portion of the corpus.

In the US, 77 per cent of BtH references stem from anti-war groups, 13 per cent from government (overwhelmingly, but not exclusively Democratic) sources, and 10 per cent from newspapers, predominantly coverage of anti-war activities. In the UK, in contrast, 96 per cent of BtH references are from anti-war groups, with only 4 per cent from newspapers. Once again, this small window on anti-war discourse reflects the extent to which the UK political establishment, in contrast to that in the US, was relatively unified (at least in public) in relation to Iraq and Afghanistan. Significantly, this does not mean that all anti-war groups incorporated in the study make frequent reference to BtH – in the US, 73 per cent of the anti-war BtH references stem from the overarching coalition United for Peace and Justice and Military Families Speak Out. CodePink accounts for 20 per cent of these constructions, while the more traditional, pacifist organizations,

⁵¹ CND 2009.

Pax Christi and Peace Action, together account for only 8 per cent. A similar pattern (though one, again, influenced by the greater data availability for the Stop the War Coalition) is evident in the UK, as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Stop the War Coalition account for the vast majority of these constructions. Veterans for Peace and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom do not use these frames at all. The pacifist NGO Peace and Social Witness does so only twice. In their anti-war activism, not all organizations strategically connect bringing the troops home with anti-war activities.

That said, the NGOs that do not produce public materials invoking BtH are multi-issue groups. Their opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was often conducted in conjunction with broader campaigns – United for Peace and Justice (US) and Stop the War Coalition (UK) – each of which is the largest domestic anti-war network in their respective states.⁵² In the UK, CND and the StWC, along with the Muslim Association of Britain, worked as partners in leading protests against the invasion of Iraq. Peace and Social Witness and WILPF promoted CND and StWC events on their websites, even whilst noting some differences in ideology and aims.⁵³ A similar dynamic is seen in the US. Peace Action was a founding member of United for Peace and Justice, and CodePink, Pax Christi, and Military Families Speak Out each signed joint statements and promoted the events of the broader network.⁵⁴ As a result, though some organizations may not use these constructions, their activist activities, institutional associations, and cross-promotion of events disseminated the BtH instrumentalization of StT discourse.

The key takeaway of this brief illustration of the “bring them home” trope by anti-war groups is that, with extremely few exceptions (see the subsequent section), the groups do not problematize the underlying construction of support as a political obligation, nor the equation of the soldier with normative citizenship. Instead, as observed by Woehrle, Coy, and Maney in their quantitative study of US anti-war groups' discourse from 1990-2005, the groups “strategically” conceded the hegemonic status of the heroic soldier (and support for the troops”), seeking to “harness” its hegemonic power by calling on the government to bring them home.⁵⁵ My illustrative findings largely mirror Woehrle et. al.'s quantitative finding that 94 per cent of peace groups' references to soldiers/the troops were positive, either supporting “the troops” or portraying them as victims. Only 6 per cent portrayed military personnel in a negative light.⁵⁶ To my knowledge, a similar study of UK anti-war groups' discourse does not yet exist. A 2008 study by Murray et. al. of the UK press's treatment of anti-war groups and attitudes, however, found that prior to the war anti-war groups were

⁵² Pickerill and Webster 2006, 415.

⁵³ See, for instance: PSW 2006; WILFP and Cynthia Coburn 2003. For an overview of the dynamics of post-9/11 anti-war activism in the UK generally, see: Gillan et. al. 2011.

⁵⁴ See, for instance, PA 2005; CP 2010; PC 2004; and MFSO 2003. For an overview of the US peace movement post-9/11 generally, see Toussaint 2009.

⁵⁵ Woehrle et. al. 2008, 30-39.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 38.

portrayed positively (and received a fair hearing). Once the invasion of Iraq began, a “support our boys consensus” was formed, and the space for legitimate dissent was circumscribed.⁵⁷ Due to its reproduction of the polyvalent structures of political obligation identified in Chapter Six, the seemingly-obvious counter-discourse of “bring them home” is not meaningfully counter-performative. Instead, as observed by Managhan, “supporting the troops became, more or less, a condition of legitimate dissent”.⁵⁸ Supporting the troops constitutes a “discourse trap”⁵⁹ for anti-war groups which, though instrumentally useful in the short-term, severely curtails their long-term ability to address the underlying normative structures that facilitate the collective engagement in the use of force.

In this way, StT discourse reflects and reproduces the problematic tensions characterising veterans’ and military families’ anti-war activities (represented in this study by the Military Families Speak Out). As identified by Managhan and Tidy, former combatants and the family members of deceased combatants, such as Cindy Sheehan (US) and Rose Gentle (UK), are extremely effective anti-war activists. They “earn” their dissent through their association with military service – and, by implication, combat.⁶⁰ The dissenting former soldier has fulfilled his/her duty under the mythical military contract, while the grieving mother is granted a platform by the loss of a child. Both figures are accorded the ability to “dissent”, or oppose the war, through their connection to the hegemonically masculine combat soldier.⁶¹ Unlike civilians, their dissent cannot be portrayed as stemming from cowardice or ignorance, or implicitly cast as a failure of their political obligation(s). In some ways, the dissenting soldier or military family member accrues the presumed legitimacy to engage in deliberative democratic debate that the StT discursive formation denies civilians...once again highlighting the dependence of liberal “politics” upon the potential for, and proximity to, violence. As observed by Managhan and Tidy, however, this dependence upon the authority of war experience⁶² – and implied fulfilment of the liberal military contract – ends up (re)producing the underlying social relations and power structures their anti-war rhetoric seeks to challenge.⁶³ The grieving mother is subject to and produced by what Managhan refers to as the “compulsory discursivity”.⁶⁴ She is enabled to speak by her construction as a grieving mom, but as a result she is unable to speak (or, more precisely, be recognised/heard) as anything other than a grieving mother.⁶⁵ Her potential for more radical, transcendent dissent is constrained. Just as these particular figures draw their authority from proximity to combat and the

⁵⁷ Murray et. al. 2008.

⁵⁸ Managhan 2011a, 442.

⁵⁹ Michaels 2013, 2.

⁶⁰ Managhan 2011a, 438-466; and Tidy 2015b.

⁶¹ Tidy 2015b, 457-8.

⁶² See also Burke 1999, 10.

⁶³ Tidy 2016, 14.

⁶⁴ Managhan 2011, 447.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

combat soldier, so too do anti-war groups draw authority and legitimacy from their “compulsory” production within StT discourse. The invocation of “the troops” provides de-politicized, “common-sense”, legitimacy-by-association with an affective yet groundless symbol. Couching anti-war discourse in StT enables it to be heard, but severely limits what it is able to intelligibly say.

8.3 MEANINGFUL RESISTANCE AT THE MARGINS?

The engagement of “mainstream” US and UK anti-war organizations in StT means that although these organizations are typically considered sources of dissent and political agitation, they contribute to the abdication of political agency vis-à-vis both the “military” and collective engagement in conflict. Though I selected these organizations to illustrate dissent and contestation (which, to a degree, they do), the study ends up reflecting the broader social relations, networks of power, and hegemonic character of StT’s underlying structure(s) of political obligation. By selecting texts on the basis of providing an accurate mapping of the discursive formation, I made the trade-off of reproducing the (rather extreme) marginalization of the few counter-discourses which resist the compulsion to StT. This does not trouble the study’s performative validity, as I am able to: a) effectively highlight contestation internal to StT discourse (such as the move to “bring them home!”); b) delineate the axis along which this occurs (modes of political obligation); and, c) demonstrate its limitations (difficult to not StT). This interrogation and illustration of the hegemonic nature of the underlying liberal military contract, however, means the study, like the discursive formation itself, is less able to “see” resistance. As resistance is frequently ad-hoc, uncoordinated, and lacks proponents with conventional political authority, such anti-StT discourses are not widely present in the public record.

The major silence I identify is the paucity of opposition to “the troops” or the obligation to StT. The hegemony of the amended liberal military contract, however, is not deterministic or causal (see Introduction). It informs the conditions of political possibility for effective resistance, and the ability of resisting subjects to be intersubjectively recognized as *legitimate*. I do not claim that more radical resistance to StT is impossible, but rather that it is difficult to engage in counter-hegemonic discourse while also being recognized as a viable and legitimate member of the political community. Exceptions to this overarching silence do, however, sneak in around the edges of my mapping of the hegemonic discursive formation. While it is beyond the scope of this study to delve into these practices in detail – they offer a fruitful avenue for future research – this section provides a brief discussion of instances in which people were constituted as not supporting the troops, and the disciplining reactions that followed.

Figure 32 in Chapter Six illustrates this counter-discourse. The “resist” category of political obligation, which encompasses references that either suggest people should not – or are represented within the text as an

instance of someone not – supporting the troops. 36 such references are found in the US sample (of a paragraph unit total of 2129, for less than 1 per cent), and 31 in the UK (from 1129, or 3 per cent). These are not mutually exclusive with constructions that do endorse StT. In instances of contestation over the “true” meaning of StT, both frames may occur in the same paragraph. For example, a Disabled American Veterans’ statement decrying the use of a name similar to their own by a scam NGO (Disabled Veterans’ Association) frames the other organization’s practices as a “scandalous act of betrayal that fills every veteran with anger and disgust”.⁶⁶ My use of the “resist” frame stems from DAV’s disqualification of the other organization as StT, rather than a direct refusal of the obligation to StT. In fact, the contrast between the fraudulent NGO and DAV is used to reiterate their own normative validity and support for the troops. Similarly, as evidenced by the following StWC statement, some of the “resist” discourse follows the pattern described above, wherein the anti-war movement frames the government as not StT. In this way they implicitly validate their own position as the “true” defender of the troops: “In the coming election campaign in Britain, the candidates will refer to this war only to laud ‘our boys’. The candidates are almost identical political mummies, shrouded in the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes.”⁶⁷ In this passage, the accusation that politicians do not StT, while not necessarily reifying the myriad political obligations leading to StT, also does not refute them.

8.3.1 Resistance in the UK

In both the US and UK, discourse directly and unambiguously refuting the naturalized presumption of supporting the troops (and underlying political obligation to do so) makes up a (very) small proportion of the corpus. Veterans for Peace UK, for instance, criticized the Legion’s late-2000s decision to frame its long-standing poppy campaign in terms of “...support of ‘our Heroes’”, arguing: “There is nothing heroic about being blown up in a vehicle. There is nothing heroic about being shot in an ambush and there is nothing heroic about fighting in an unnecessary conflict”.⁶⁸ This example strikes at the heart of the mythical military contract. It decries the presumed heroism of the hegemonically masculine combat soldier, and thus the basis for the contractual mode of political obligation. It also avoids constructing the implied subject of the ambush as an agentless victim, in need of charitable support from society. The status of VfP as a veterans’ organization, of course, renders this resistance incomplete, as VfP unavoidably invokes the intersection of hegemonic combat masculinity and authoritative dissent discussed previously. Though VfP opposes unquestioning support for the troops and the underlying construction of normative citizenship, their subjectivity as legitimate dissenters rests on this same construction.

⁶⁶ DAV 2007. See also PR Newswire 2007.

⁶⁷ John Pilger quoted in Best 2010.

⁶⁸ VfP UK 2010.

A 2004 CND protest conducted under the banner “Stop the Torture – Bring the Troops Home Now” made a clearer statement, as it asked Britons to “Join us to protest about the shocking abuses in Iraq and to call for the withdrawal of the illegal aggressor force”.⁶⁹ “Bringing the troops home” is reframed not as a supportive compulsion for the troops’ sake, but implied to be a means of stopping the harm they cause to innocent Iraqis. The juxtaposition of the troops with torture produces them as violent (and potentially criminal) actors. In doing so, the passage is able to side-step political obligation by removing the troops, rather than the protestors, from the normative liberal social order. This quotation also provides a good example of a subtle oscillation in the UK BtH discourse. While much of it plays directly into the “protect” the troops frame, as discussed previously, some offers a more ambiguous message, simply proclaiming “troops out”.⁷⁰ The meaning of these references to the troops is left open, relying on the observer to determine whether such calls are on behalf of the troops themselves – or are a more instrumental, almost operational means of ending the war. This can be seen in the contrast between the US and UK regarding “ending the war” as a supportive rationale for StT, illustrated in Figures 20 and 21. Despite a much smaller corpus, the UK case contains 124 references to StT to end the war (all deriving from anti-war groups), while the US demonstrates 115 (predominantly from anti-war groups, but also the media and government). The undecidability of such invocations of the troops subverts the compulsive hegemony of StT. Those who encounter this version of BtH must reflect upon what it “really” means. “Troops out” encourages critical engagement with the underlying assumptions that normally accompany StT while also avoiding the hegemonic backlash that often shuts down, and delegitimizes, more overt criticism.⁷¹

Such disciplining is evident in the reactions to two prominent “anti-troop” occurrences – or, more accurately, what were constructed as “anti-troop” occurrences – in the UK. Help for Heroes was founded in 2007 with an initial mandate to raise money for a new military-specific rehabilitation centre and swimming pool at Headley Court. Its inception was contextualized by a widely-reported incident in which a member of the public was reported to have verbally abused severely wounded soldiers swimming at a public leisure centre.⁷² The woman was said to have argued that the soldiers “hadn’t paid” and might “scare children”, sparking “widespread condemnation”.⁷³ A Conservative MP reacted to the story by declaring “It may well be that these people had paid for the use of the pool, but our soldiers have paid so much more for their

⁶⁹ CND 2004a.

⁷⁰ See, for instance, CND 2007a.

⁷¹ I am not claiming that this is what such discourse is necessarily strategically or consciously designed to do. Instead, I suggest that this particular framing, by leaving the social relations and political obligations of the “troops” unaddressed, more readily invites alternative readings of normativity of the troops. Ambiguity opens space for resistance.

⁷² H4H 2007a.

⁷³ Harding et. al. 2007.

country,"⁷⁴ invoking the contractual obligation structure of political obligation. The contrast of the female member of the public to the male service members further underlines this point. Their gendered positionality implicitly suggests that the soldiers served on her behalf, and thus she (and everyone else) owed them the best public services available.⁷⁵ Admiral Lord Bryce, former head of the Armed Forces, went further, demanding the woman be "named and shamed", stating that "these people are beneath contempt and everything should be done to get their names and publish them in the press".⁷⁶

The woman in question, though uncompassionate and unkind in her remarks, was demonized in the national press for failing to recognize the moral worth of the troops, and her obligation to support them. The fact that a local incident involving only two people, neither of whom are public figures, was broadly reported in the national press, publicized by Help for Heroes, and met with such opprobrium highlights the difficulty inherent to articulating critical constructions of the troops. The woman in question is not criticized for taking a political position; her actions fail to meet the criteria for politicality (and legitimate dissent). Instead, her resistance is politicised for being distasteful and morally offensive, a reflection of the naturalization of the amended liberal military contract.

Importantly, these condemnations were not isolated, but also met far less polemical – or direct – challenges to StT. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was frequently singled out for criticism as "not supporting the troops", implicitly impugning their honour, or undermining their morale throughout the GWoT. In 2004, for instance, the Archbishops of York and Canterbury "rebuked" the US and UK governments for the coalition's treatment of prisoners.⁷⁷ Much of the reaction to the statement took the Archbishops (and Church of England) to task for failing to recognize the "necessity of public support for our Armed Forces", and inappropriately bringing their "private" views to bear on the public sphere, thus promoting harmful disunity.⁷⁸ The views of a prominent clergyperson, informed by religion (and therefore moral, sacral notions of political obligation), were relegated to the "private" sphere – failing to earn recognition as legitimate dissent or political speech. The connection between supporting the war, StT, and the underlying structure of normative citizenship was solidified, as Williams's defence of Iraqi prisoners' human rights was seen as threatening the bonds of political obligation "at home". John Kelly similarly observes that the Archbishop's 2009 decision to ask for reflection upon the "wisdom of the decisions to go to war" during a remembrance

⁷⁴ Daily Mail 2007.

⁷⁵ For more on soldiers as ultra-deserving of public welfare, see Cowen 2008.

⁷⁶ Harding et. al. 2007.

⁷⁷ Curtis 2004.

⁷⁸ The Times 2004.

service at St. Paul's spurred outrage in the tabloid press.⁷⁹ *The Sun* marshalled the argument that "they're soldiers, not politicians" and "we have to support our troops".⁸⁰

As argued by Kelly, these instances of commemoration are more visible as acts of resistance than banal, everyday practices. They elicit public commentary and, as a result of the rigorousness with which their tenuous apolitical nature is policed, have indelible political undertones.⁸¹ The intersection of this insistent (a)politics and resistance, however, suggests that the only refutations of StT sufficiently explicit to be "seen" are also subject to being dismissed as not only not political, but offensive.⁸² They are unintelligible as legitimate political acts, and their proponents are not recognized as legitimately political subjects.

8.3.2 *Resistance in the US*

These dynamics of sporadic, overt, and "offensive" resistance are also evident – in more dramatic fashion – in the US. A letter to the *NYT*'s "Ethicist" column, for instance, queries:

"We have heard a lot recently about how, even if we oppose the war in Iraq, once it was under way, we should support the troops. How is this ethical? Our troops are volunteers; they chose to enlist and fight where ordered. Is there an ethical obligation for those who oppose the war to support the troops?"⁸³

The writer identifies another significant silence in the discursive formation: the implications of volunteering, as lauded within the contractual archetype of political obligation, for military service. Soldiers could, particularly within liberal, individualist ideology, be held responsible for the choice to serve and risk war. She challenges, in other words, the presumption of the amended liberal military contract that the individual choice to join the military does not absolve society from further action. The passage resists the totalizing, amended liberal contract by openly questioning it, implicitly (re)politicizing "support". A similar letter to a local paper, publicized by a *Wall Street Journal* columnist for the purpose of discrediting it, challenges this even more explicitly, declaring:

"I do not support the troops who are willing to kill for their government, for the money it pays, for the education they may receive later--if they make it home alive with their brains intact--or any patriotism they claim to represent. A yellow ribbon should denote cowardice in the case of welcoming these people home...The willingness to kill, maim and torture for the government is not something to be proud of".⁸⁴

It is difficult to imagine a more direct refutation of the heroism of the hegemonically masculine combat soldier/citizen hero and the normative obligation to support the troops. The letter portrays soldiers as willing

⁷⁹ Kelly 2012, 730.

⁸⁰ Ibid; For original, see, Newton Dunn and Phillips 2009.

⁸¹ Kelly 2012, 730-1.

⁸² For an IR perspective on the intersection of "offensiveness" and politics, see Hansen 2011.

⁸³ Cohen 2003.

⁸⁴ Taranto 2004.

to commit violence for material gain – essentially, as mercenaries – and explicitly reads yellow ribbons negatively, as endorsing the military, state, and war. Rather than confront this construction, the column's author congratulates the writer on her honesty, suggesting that this is the position "actually" held by all anti-war activists.⁸⁵ These activists, by implication, are just as self-evidently radical, offensive, and unfit for membership in the political community as the letter-writer. The Ethicist, similarly, answers the original query by chastising the author for "cast[ing] individual soldiers as the architects of the war you disdain",⁸⁶ undermining the moral validity of her discussion of precisely this point – that enlistment means agreeing to potentially commit violence without a say in the matter. He goes on to highlight the plethora of meanings associated with StT, running the gamut of the three archetypes in a paragraph, noting that war opposition and StT are not mutually exclusive. In doing so, he reads the author "back in" to the amended liberal military contract, by providing her with an irrefutable chain of equivalence, and a "support" for every political inclination.

Similar to the UK, the most overtly transgressive resistance in the US also occurs in a commemorative context. The most infamous of such activities are the protests of deceased service members' funerals held by the Westboro Baptist Church (WBC), a small, radical religious group. WBC members picketed the 2006 funeral of Matthew Synder with signs that read "You're going to hell", "God hates you", "Thank God for dead soldiers", and "Fag Troops".⁸⁷ The Westboro Baptist Church propounds a theodicy that holds up "the nation's deceased military personnel...as stunning, corporeal evidence that God is punishing this nation for its tolerance of homosexuality and other vices".⁸⁸ Protesting a deceased soldier's funeral refuses to grant even a veneer of the respect "owed" to those who undertake military service. The abusive, negatively-inflected references to homosexuality⁸⁹ attempt to undermine the hegemonic, implicitly heterosexual masculinity of the combat soldier – and, through this figure, that of the collectivity which identifies with and honours him. Still further, through the WBC's framing of the troops' deaths as a symptom of what they perceive as the moral decay of the polity, they performatively suggest an alternative structure of normative political obligation. This alternative "ideal" suggests war ought to be welcomed and recognized as divine punishment. Within this worldview, their proselytizing protest activities are normatively required by, and for, the "righteous" community discursively constituted within their rhetoric. Obligation still pertains, but it is an obligation to oppose "the troops".

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Cohen 2003.

⁸⁷ Grinberg 2010; Alito 2011.

⁸⁸ Brouwer and Hess 2007, 70.

⁸⁹ None of those whose funerals were protested identified as queer (though this, of course, beside the point). Ibid.

Unsurprisingly, these protests were met with virulent backlash. Indeed, it is hard not to see these practices, particularly due to their hateful framing of LGBT people, as anything other than offensive. This reflects the deep ingraining of the amended liberal military contract and respect for LGBT rights, but also the aforementioned tendency of the press to cover only the most radical, provocative discourses. Subtler acts of resistance, such as not clapping at a parade, deciding not to display a yellow ribbon on one's car, or finding alternative means of charitable giving go unremarked. As negative resistance – failing or refusing to engage – these practices do not actively contest, or provide an alternative narrative to the amended military contract. Instead, such silences and non-actions are elided by the broader discursive formation, as all civilians are constructed and interpellated as always-already supporters. Political abstention from support, if not “offensive”, is invisible.

Press coverage of the WBC also serves to partially co-opt these practices as a means of solidifying the affective righteousness and normative commitment to the amended liberal military contract through collective revulsion. Matthew Synder's family condemned the protests in the press, and filed a lawsuit for emotional distress against WBC, originally winning five million USD in damages.⁹⁰ Media organizations, though distancing themselves from the group's message, filed amicus briefs (excoriated by veterans' groups) defending the principle of free speech⁹¹. Both AMVETs and the VFW issued statements focusing, interestingly, on the media, rather than the WBC – perhaps a reflection of how self-evidently abhorrent their practices are perceived to be – indicating disbelief that the WBC decision had implications for free speech and freedom of the press. They argued ““I have a job that requires me to be correct; why shouldn't the press be held to that same standard?”⁹² Here, “correctness” refers not to factual accuracy but appropriateness. A study of military bloggers' responses to the protests noted that bloggers tended to understand the WBC as synonymous with mainstream anti-war protestors, observing that: “Every day, military members who support our troops that are in harms [sic] way, or who are involved in the war on terror and suppoting [sic] America, go to work at the Pentagon. And every day they are met with protesters who try and undermine their morale”⁹³. Upon losing his appeal, Snyder's father invoked similar language, commenting that “too many people have died to protect our rights and freedoms to have them degraded and spit upon like this church does”⁹⁴. In general, reaction to the WBC funeral protests, as with the UK pool incident, referenced the contractual mode of supportive obligation, wherein any “anti-troop” discourse is decried as a normative

⁹⁰ NBC News 2010.

⁹¹ Schogol 2010; NBC News 2010.

⁹² Schogol 2010.

⁹³ Brouwer and Hess 2007, 79.

⁹⁴ Grinberg 2010.

failure of reciprocity. In doing so, it reversed, though to the same effect, the common collapsing of anti-war dissent into an “attack on the soldier body” and thus “the ultimate immoral act”.⁹⁵

Not only was the WBC constructed as intolerable, but this abhorrence was extrapolated to those who might seem to be even remotely sympathetic to their activities – the media and the anti-war movement. A similar reaction accompanied a widely-distributed photograph of a single protestor in San Francisco carrying a sign that stated “We support the troops when they shoot their officers”.⁹⁶ This single instance, buoyed by its apparent reference to (predominantly apocryphal) Vietnam-era anti-troop protest, was similarly framed as expressing what the anti-war movement “really” felt. This sweeping generalization underlined StT as not only exigent, but the only normatively acceptance public stance. To even implicitly validate such radical resistance would be to undermine the amended liberal contract, and imperil one’s position as a member of the political community. As observed by Lewis, “resistance may not be futile, but it may make you an enemy combatant”.⁹⁷

Though the WBC protests were eventually ruled as protected speech, the group (and, by implication, those associated with them) was not recognized as socially intelligible, or legitimately political. Although, in contrast to the pool incidents, the WBC protests were public and conducted in an explicitly political register, including protest signs, messages directed at the state, press releases, and formal organization, they were not constructed as political actors. Their refusal to validate the amended contract pushed them beyond, and outside, the intelligibly political. Snyder’s father, for instance, stated, “They wanted their message heard, and didn’t care who they stepped over”, initially seeming to recognize a form of “politics”, before dismissing them as “a bunch of clowns”.⁹⁸ Similarly, Chief Justice Roberts characterized the WBC’s picketing as “certainly hurtful, and its contribution to public discourse may be negligible”,⁹⁹ again disregarding the group as “merely” hateful, rather than performing a political, if incredibly unkind, act. (I make this point, and broader discussion, in relation to the construction of the WBC and its implications for potential resistance to StT, not to validate the group’s politics or positions. The WBC is, due to their intolerant and abusive stance on LGBT rights, characterised as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Centre)¹⁰⁰.

This symbolic rejection of the WBC from both politics and the idealised political community is also seen in the spate of state and federal legislation severely restricting the right to protest at military funerals or federal

⁹⁵ Stahl cited in Fischer 2014, 214; for original, see Stahl 2009.

⁹⁶ See, for instance, Taranto 2003; and McInnis 2003, H2846.

⁹⁷ Lewis 2012, 13.

⁹⁸ Simmons 2007.

⁹⁹ Liptak 2011.

¹⁰⁰ Wing 2013.

cemeteries.¹⁰¹ When signing the most recent bill, Obama stated, “We have a moral sacred duty to our men and women in uniform...The graves of our veterans are hallowed grounds.”¹⁰² In contrast to Williams, whose “private” religious views, in seeming to criticise the troops, were cast as inappropriately political, Obama draws on notions of sacral, moral obligation in a political context, to delegitimise the WBC’s attempts to dissent. Here, the resistance of what is, as observed by Brouwer and Hess, an objectively small group of six to twenty people,¹⁰³ is framed as an intolerable assault upon the morals and unity of the community and reconstituted to reaffirm the normative validity of the underlying gendered, amended liberal military contract. The WBC and “shoot their officers” examples illustrate, yet again, the subordination of the principles of deliberative democracy – including the toleration of highly offensive, dissenting speech – with “tasteful” military participation, and the political obligation to StT. In both the US and UK, the most visible resistance to the hegemonic intersection of gender, war, and political obligation fails to achieve intersubjective recognition as legitimate politics, but rather is typically dismissed as insulting or abusive – if not both.

8.3.3 Counter-recruitment: A “Real” Alternative?

Finally, though it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss in detail, I turn to a more viable “competitor” discourse to the amended liberal contract – counter-recruitment discourse and practices. The counter-recruitment movement, unlike the sporadic and radical practices of resistance discussed above, is actively organized, and purposively working to construct a coherent counter-narrative to the hegemonically masculine combat soldier and the service/support/citizenship nexus. As observed by Rech, counter-recruitment (CR) in the US and UK has arisen, in part, as a reaction to the “largely ineffective modern anti-war movement”¹⁰⁴ discussed above. It seeks to address, expose, and politicize the material and normative structures that encourage individuals to join the military, with the hope of stemming recruitment.¹⁰⁵ CR politicizes the amended military contract through the distribution of counter-propaganda (“jamming” recruitment materials); providing information about the material realities and experiences of military service; and lawsuits and lobbying.¹⁰⁶ CR largely avoids both the language and question of support, instead framing the issue as one of more effective anti-war opposition. These discourses and practices intersect with the StT discursive formation tangentially. Their potential lessons for explicit resistance to StT is worthy of future study.

¹⁰¹ Brouwer and Hess 2007, 86-7.

¹⁰² Wing 2013.

¹⁰³ Brouwer and Hess 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Rech 2014, 246.

¹⁰⁵ Rech 2014, 246; See also Harding and Kershner 2011; Alison and Solnit 2007.

¹⁰⁶ Rech 2014, 253-5; Harding and Kershner 2011; Alison and Solnit 2007; and Tannock 2005.

Traces of these politicising positions can be seen, however, in the discourse incorporated in this study. A US Peace Action flyer calling on people to “support the troops by bringing them home”, for instance, also contains a small side-bar explaining opportunities for the public to get involved with counter-recruitment activities.¹⁰⁷ CODEPINK, similarly, publicizes anti-recruitment FAQ, occupies recruitment centres, and encourages “creative, forceful tactics to confront a murderous, imperial, military machine that recruits youth like cannon fodder”.¹⁰⁸ Pax Christi provides links to the major US counter-recruitment campaigns¹⁰⁹ organized by the American Friends Service Committee and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, each of which emphasizes “awareness of possible dangers of joining the military and false promises made by recruiters”.¹¹⁰ Peace and Social Witness issued a 2014 report on “The New Tide of Militarisation” in the UK, where they explicitly noted, with concern, the Royal British Legion’s move to selling poppies under the auspices of “supporting our troops” as a discernible change from the past.¹¹¹ Also in the UK, the NGO ForcesWatch was founded with the express purpose of addressing “unethical military recruitment” which uses “toys, computer games and military hardware and...ideas of steady employment, getting an education, having experiences that other young people do not have, and 'self-discovery powered by the army'” to, essentially, animate the mythical liberal contract to potential recruits.¹¹²

In deconstructing and “myth-busting” the glamour of a military career and experience, however, these organizations (re)produce some of the key tropes upholding the polyvalent structures of political obligation in the amended contract. Virtually all CR discourse, for instance, invokes the “economic draft”, or “poverty draft”, which suggests that in an all-volunteer military, it is typically the poor, marginalized, rural, and members of visible minorities that recruiters target for service, due to their lack of alternatives.¹¹³ Peace Action argues that this “draft” “has unfairly burdened many of our nation’s most vulnerable youth with fighting this war and enduring the long-term fallout of joblessness and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder”.¹¹⁴ The construction of military recruitment as a form of deceptive predation constructs those already in the military as victims of “the system” in a mode not dissimilar to that of the moral, paternalistic civil-military dynamic. As a result, while this form of resistance to literal military participation works to undermine the foundation of the amended contract – the idealized, heroic masculine soldier – it is still congruent with a supportive orientation towards the troops. This activism tends not to explicitly address how people who are not in the institutional military should relate to “the troops”. As a result, due to its organization and side-

¹⁰⁷ PA 2007.

¹⁰⁸ CP 2008a.

¹⁰⁹ PC 2005.

¹¹⁰ AFSC 2016; see also FoR 2016.

¹¹¹ QPSW 2014, 6.

¹¹² ForcesWatch Nd.

¹¹³ For more on this term/concept (noting that its empirical basis is disputed), please see Marsical 2007.

¹¹⁴ PA 2007.

stepping of the question of “support”, CR potentially poses a more effective form of resistance than the “offensive” examples provided above. At the same time, it is not quite able to “shake” the normative and affective confines of the amended, gendered military contract, as CR proffers a morally-imbued, if objectifying, orientation towards service personnel.

8.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter demonstrated the ways in which the explicitly apolitical construction of supporting the troops serves to subtly shift the central political obligation of normative (masculine) citizenship from participation in deliberative, democratic politics to participation in the discursive military. This connection between StT and the bounds of the political constrains the scope of the political possibility for dissent, as the naturalization of the amended liberal contract limits the ambit of “politics” to varying positions on the war. The contract itself is not up for reflection or debate, as it enables, produces, and positions the range of subjectivities relating to the contemporary “civilian” (and institutionally military) experiences of war. StT also supports a slide from contestation over the war constituting politics to an understanding of only war opposition as making a political statement. This depoliticizes conflict, and obscures the culpability of supportive “civilians” in the collective violence of the whole, by facilitating a form normative of displacement.

The attempts of anti-war and peace groups to co-opt and resignify StT discourse, particularly through the common tropes of victimization and “bringing them home”, fail to shift its hegemonic status, as they play into the three archetypical structures of political obligation vis-à-vis violence. As it continues to rely on various forms of association with “the troops” and other military figures for political legitimacy, anti-war discourse, though a traditional source of dissent, is unable to transcend the amended liberal military contract. Though the anti-war movement may be successful in opposing particular wars, it is unable to address the underlying normative structures of gender, citizenship, and collective violence that facilitate war, as a general practice. Though instances of truly radical resistance do occur, their direct refusal to “honour” the underlying military contract means that these discursive practices are typically represented as distasteful, offensive, or just mean, rather than a potential form of politics. The meaningfulness of such resistance is also hampered by its sporadic and uncoordinated quality. It is more of a hegemonic “refusal” than an articulation of a coherent counter-hegemonic discourse. As the counter-recruitment movement is willing to dispute the normative validity of the military institution, and dismantle some key heroic “myths” about soldiering and service, it may prove an effective source of such resistance in the future. At the present, however, such discourses lack a means of normatively relating to those within the military – one reading of “the troops” – without implicitly conceding the many, totalizing structure(s) of political obligation that maintain the coherence of the amended liberal military contract.

I therefore suggest that what Harding and Kershner refer to as the “anaemic nature of the peace movement”¹¹⁵ during the GWoT is informed by its (re)production with the normative confines of the StT discursive formation, which limited the political possibilities for recognizable dissent. This careful mediation can be seen in Peace and Social Witness’s advice to their members to:

“Wear a white poppy [symbolizing opposition to war] as well as a red one. The red poppy signifies remembrance of those who have died in past wars. The white poppy carries the message that wars should no longer be allowed to happen. It is not advisable to wear only a white poppy, because *this is likely to cause unnecessary offence*” (emphasis added).¹¹⁶

The political space for pacifism is discursively foreclosed, as opposition to the war – particularly in the US, more ambiguously so in the UK – is now frequently framed as undertaken on behalf of the troops, rather than for its own sake. Support as the new service encourages a means-ends inversion. War is constructed as a fight to save “the troops”,¹¹⁷ rather than a political activity and decision, under the democratic control of the supportive civilians. In consequence, as observed by Jenkins et. al., it has become possible to oppose a specific war (e.g. Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.), but insensible to oppose war generally.¹¹⁸ Socially and politically intelligible opposition to war, in other words, is stalled in the register of Caedal’s pacific-ism, which opposes some, perhaps most, wars which threaten domestic political achievements – including those of liberalism – but accepts the necessity of military force.¹¹⁹ This reflects and reproduces the complicated entanglement of masculinity, citizenship, and liability to participate in war, wherein “war may be criticized from the standpoint of the human, but only when the human is a variant of the masculine, whether as cosmopolitan law enforcer, existential hero, or technology-savvy citizen”.¹²⁰ Tackling “war”, in other words, also requires tackling the connection between masculinity, legitimate public agency/personhood, and their implicit connection to violence. Voicing a socially intelligible, absolutist pacifism¹²¹ – alluding, as it does, to a future redundancy of militaries and implicitly casting aspersions as to their moral worth – becomes politically untenable. The production of “the troops” as a floating signifier – as “immortal”, collective, heroes, and victims – also elides the fact that violence is the mandate of the military. Unlike other anti-war discourses which have been “annexed” and invested with the unifying legitimacy of the amended liberal military contract, pacifism cannot be “colonized”.¹²² But it also cannot be politically understood.

¹¹⁵ Harding and Kershner 2011, 79.

¹¹⁶ PSW 2010.

¹¹⁷ Stahl 2009, 533; and Howard and Prividera 2008, 170, cited in Dixon 2012, 166.

¹¹⁸ Jenkins et. al. 2012, 361.

¹¹⁹ Ceadel 1987, 5.

¹²⁰ Hutchings 2008, 400.

¹²¹ Ceadel 1987, 5.

¹²² Foucault, cited in Brown 1995, 63.

CHAPTER NINE: WHAT'S NEXT?

"Today is the expression of a wide felt, but so far unstated feeling that we need to do something...In my parents' generation normal people got involved in war – horribly in many cases...We all knew the suffering of war. Then after WWII war became, once again, a professional activity for a small number of dedicated people, often far from the public eye and mind. Iraq & Afghanistan have changed that. Large numbers of British forces have become involved in ferocious struggles far from home..."¹ – Help for Heroes (UK) launch speech, 2007

"Sometimes they said: I support the troops but not the war. Or: Do you think we should be over there? Which is such a dumb question, Tanner, the Army captain, would think. Soldiers don't make those decisions...They bitch and moan, sure. But when the call comes, they pack their bags and go, knowing they may not come back. But Tanner doesn't say all that. Instead, he responds this way: 'Oh, so you were over there? Because you said, "We." Because, I mean, I know I was over there.'"² – US Army Captain Fred Tanner, 2006

In this dissertation, I have argued that "the troops" are a synecdoche for the polity.³ The troops stand in for, and (re)produce, a notion of the idealised community and its normative relation to the use of force internationally. Support for the troops is a way of working out who "we" think we are, and what we owe each other regarding the collective violence done by us, by us, and to make "us". In the contemporary US and UK, supporting the troops is an attempt to reconcile who, in wartime, we think we were with how we are now.

9.1 SUMMARY

As I have explained, using the "liberal military contract", an analytic heuristic capturing the complex and gendered cultural affects, narratives, and ethics relating to military service in Western liberal democracies, the contemporary experience of war in the US and UK does not align with prevailing cultural understandings of a "good war". Only a minute portion of the US and UK populations serve in the distant global war on terror, while the civilian population carries on with normal life. This disconnect sits uneasily with the cultural understanding – the liberal military contract – that in a time of war, it is the duty of all citizens to serve in the military. In the past, all citizens included only men, and the expectation today remains a component of the implicitly masculine "citizen" subject-position. As women participate in liberal democracies as formally equal citizens, and begin to serve in all military roles, including combat, the gendered expectation that the performance of "good" (masculine) citizenship involves military service is available to everyone. The shifting roles of men and women mean that the sex/gender correspondence of the masculine, protective military and the feminine, protected society common to Western lay and philosophical understandings of civil-military relations no longer holds – if it ever did. The global war on terror exposed the fracture of the liberal

¹ Help for Heroes 2007b.

² Washington Post, 2006.

³ For more on synecdoche in IR, see Mutimer 2009.

military contract, and facilitated the expression of “gendered civilian anxiety”⁴ stemming from non-service, and corresponding association with purportedly feminine society, in wartime.

Supporting the troops, as I have argued, works to alleviate or ameliorate this anxiety by “re-drafting” the liberal military contract. Military support, rather than military service, has come to be constructed as the *sine qua non* of good – and still masculine – normative citizenship. The potential for, and connection to, collective political violence remains the foundation of the liberal political community. The StT discursive formation facilitates and supports this “amendment” in several ways. Firstly, within StT discourse, the troops are constituted as a floating signifier, whose meaning and (re)production of specific collective subjects, such as the institutional military, family members, military personnel, and/or society, is reliant on relational context. As a passive, dependent collective subject, “the troops” are able to mediate war to society while separating the war from the use of violence. The troops’ collectivity, moreover, renders them able to encompass, and be (re)signified as, any given group, individual, or identity within liberal society. “The troops” interpellate all potential individual and group subjectivities, bringing them into the amended contract. The troops are also, though explicitly (and necessarily) sexed as male and female, ambiguously gendered, “taking on” their gendered properties relationally. The troops through this all-encompassing interpellation, act as a gendering vector, “transferring” these gendered properties to other collective subjects by association or contrast.

This transfer occurs through the construction of differing modes of gendered political obligation, and the corresponding constitution of society and the troops. Each articulates a slightly different response to the “fracture” of the liberal military contract. The communitarian/republican mode of political obligation constructs StT as a form of war participation, collapsing the distinction between the liberal civil and military spheres. The troops are produced in relation to the hegemonically masculine combat soldier, and imbued with “his” characteristics and stereotypically agential, protective, gendered positionality. Within support-as-participation, “the troops”, by association, transmit this hegemonic masculinity to the polity – a process of mimesis. The tensions of the liberal military contract are resolved by removing the gendered and functional differentiation between military personnel and civilians.

The contractarian/liberal model of political obligation, in contrast, largely parallels the normative logic and gendered civil-military divide of the archetypical liberal military contract. Support is constituted as a contractual obligation that pertains regardless of perspective on the war(s), and owed to those who take on not war-fighting, but the burden of military service, on others’ behalf. The troops remain characterised by an aspect of hegemonic military masculinity – volunteering for service and enduring suffering. The gendered

⁴ This notion draws on Managhan’s “cultural legacy of gendered guilt”, 2011a, 451.

dynamics of the civil-military divide are altered, but remain more or less intact, as the heroically masculine troops protect a dependent, feminised citizenry from military service. Correspondingly, the contractarian model of political obligation addresses part of the contemporary disconnect with the liberal contract – the fighting of controversial, distant wars – through the elision of violence, but maintains the structure, gender/ing, and hierarchical power dynamic of the liberal civil-military divide. It is an incomplete means of addressing the potential transformation of contemporary civil-military relations.

The moral/altruistic model of political obligation, in turn, addresses the normative, gendered tensions of the liberal military contract by reversing the stereotypical gendering of the liberal civil-military divide. Through the constitution of support-as-paternalistic-care, the troops are (re)produced as dependent, passive victims, while the supportive civilians are imbued with the hierarchical superiority and substantive gendered/ing characteristics of dominant Western masculinity. Society, in this case, is (re)masculinised not through association, but contrast, with the feminised and “needy” troops. By constituting support as a matter of affective, “private” interpersonal relationships, the civil-military divide – and the formally political – is bypassed. The moral structure of political obligation addresses the gendered civilian anxiety of the liberal military contract by denying its politicality. Instead, this moral logic constitutes benevolent civilian support as the ideal of normative masculinity in a manner not dissimilar to the gendered power dynamics of development and charity workers vis-à-vis their constituencies.

As each of these models relies on a different construction of the relationship between the polity and the war(s), and thus the premise of the political community itself, none is wholly successful in addressing the disconnect of contemporary civil-military relations. Each of these logics of political obligation excludes some subjectivities, ideological positions, relationship(s) to the state, positions on the war(s), etc. Together, however, they create a totalizing, interlocking web of justifications, genderings, and relations of support capable, like “the troops” themselves, of interpellating any given subject-position. As each logic maintains the masculinity/service/citizenship nexus as its underlying premise, switching between and combining the logics addresses all potential objections to StT. All three, similarly, draw social capital and intelligibility through association with “militaryness” and in relation – either directly or indirectly – to the hegemonically masculine combat soldier. By replacing “the soldier” with “the troops”, the three logics resolve the central tension of the liberal military contract by continually resignifying, and gender(ing), the troops in relation to a chain of dominant masculinities. The reliance normative citizenship, and thus the political-social order, upon a binary, hierarchical distinction between masculine and feminine remains intact.⁵

⁵ Without the coherent and consistent discursive (re)production of a binary gender order that appears objectively “real” upon which to hang/arbitrate this amendment, the recasting of service-as-support through interlocking logics

As a result, the overall StT discursive formation, through the intertwining of these logics, (re)constitutes support as a form of military “participation”. Ostensibly-separate society is conceptually and symbolically (re)masculinised by reading it into the discursive military. In this way, support for the military, rather than service, becomes the hallmark of normative citizenship (which remains implicitly masculine), and foundation of political community. Citizens, as a condition of political membership, are constituted as always-already supporters. Support is pre-political. I therefore understand the articulation of political obligation in relation to collective violence – articulated as StT in the contemporary US and UK – as bounding the political community. Resolving the tensions of the mythical liberal military contract and underlying gendered civil-military divide, may be understood as not only preserving the normative coherence of the liberal social order (and liberal state), but also as discursive (re)producing it.

StT, as a discursive formation, operates upon the assumption of a normatively consistent liberal polity, free of underlying gendered tensions, that “obviously” supports the troops. The performative instantiation of this assumption throughout the discourse serves to create this idealised liberal political community. Though it is a strong discursive structural effect, the gendered/ing structure of liberal civil-military relations reflected and (re)produced by “support” is therefore neither timeless nor objectively real. Instead, civil-military relations, and the idealised polity they imply, are continuously instantiated by the assumption and extension of solidaristic, positive logics of political obligation. Far from being epiphenomenal or “meaningless”, StT is a reflection and (re)production of the processes of collective subject formation in relation to force through which the polity and, potentially, the transnational liberal social order, are “made real”,⁶ maintained, and naturalised.

Within this solidaristic process of collective subject formation, “our” combat motivation stems not from a political conflict or relationship of antagonism to a specific, foreign “Other”, but rather from the positive obligation of what is “owed” to the imaginary person beside us, or imagined polity behind us. The politics of collective violence are almost entirely elided, and the amended military contract is so naturalised as to be normatively invisible. This leads to an odd reversal of the typical public obligations of deliberative democracy, as the norm of apolitical loyalty is transferred from “the soldier” to the “supportive citizen”. Those associated with the troops, in turn, such as the former combatant or military family member, become the socially and politically authoritative “dissenters”. StT therefore facilitates a narrowing of the space for democratic dissent, wherein only the war(s) themselves are open for political debate. As a result, anti-war groups, with few exceptions, have been unable to transcend their own production by and within the

of political obligation would not work. Masculinity is a useful “anchor” for the intelligibility of war. See Hutchings 2008, 393.

⁶ See also, Mann 2006, 159-160.

amended, gendered liberal military contract. Instead, to gain a hearing for their immanent critique of particular wars, the groups rely on the same ideal-typical logics of political obligation described throughout the dissertation. Those that resist – such as those people involved in the UK pool incident or the Westboro Baptist Church – are symbolically ejected from the political, and instead dismissed as “merely” offensive. As a hegemonic discourse, StT constitutes respect for, and acceptance of, the underlying premise of the amended military contract – support – as a prerequisite for legitimate politicality. The space for more effective resistance, including socially-intelligible pacifism, is almost entirely foreclosed.

9.2 IMPLICATIONS

In the balance of the conclusion, I outline the implications of my analysis for the on-going politics of supporting the troops; the transformation of civil-military relations in liberal democracies; our academic understanding of civil-military relations (and its gender/ing); and the connection between collective subject formation, violence, and political obligation for theories of international relations.

9.2.1 *Do We Not Support the Troops?*

The hegemonic nature of StT and the amended contract raises the question as to what, if anything, is to be done. Is it possible, or even desirable, to not support the troops? Could this be done in a way that meaningfully recognizes, rather than simply gestures towards, the experiences and perspectives of those who have served in the military? Much of the problem, as observed by Brown in another context, is that the apolitics of support is, subtly, an ontological claim,⁷ related to our perception of the current social order as pre-existing and fixed, rather than a structural effect (admittedly, an incredibly sticky one). The amended liberal military contract appears eternal and unbreakable; it flows the constitution of the troops as “real”, in need of, and deserving support. StT may, as evidenced by its apolitical framing, be understood as a matter of identity, rather than a matter of politics. When supporting the troops is framed as something “we” do, it becomes an assumption and a precondition of political membership, dissent, and the production of the polity.

With this in mind, a potential solution – or the beginnings of one – is not to attempt to articulate a politics of *not* supporting the troops. Aside from inviting the difficulties inherent to generating a meaningful politics of negation, as occasionally experienced by the anti-war movement, this move prejudges a hegemonic outcome in the same way as does supporting the troops. A more modest goal would be to work towards a politics (an actual politics) of the troops: to frame and understand supporting the troops (or not), whatever it might mean, as a matter of politics, rather than a condition of being political. In other words, though “why

⁷ Brown 1995, 75.

we fight” remains an important question,⁸ I argue that examining “what we owe”, or how we relate, to those who fight – as I have begun to do in this dissertation – is an essential precursor to the “re-politicisation” of war. What violent obligations do/should we owe each other?

This would involve, as phrased by Brown, moving from a politics of “we are” to “we want this for ourselves”, or “we want to be this”.⁹ While what “we want” is intimately tied to who we believe we are, the phrasing of the conversation “in political language”¹⁰ would inject some necessary indeterminacy into the outcome. The ambiguity of the UK anti-war movement’s “troops out” campaign may offer as a model for such a project. In other words, the political aim should not be to supplant or eliminate StT, but to encourage its careful examination, and open space for other modes of being. The seeds of this project already exist, as for all its apparently compulsory nature, the constant exhortation to StT quietly and implicitly raises the possibility that someone might not. The difficulty inherent to doing so, however, is not the comparatively short-term political costs of being perceived as traitorous or nonsensical, but rather the discourse’s entanglement with the broader liberal social contract. To begin to truly (re)politicize StT is to open up and politicize the state’s foundational and continual reliance upon the practice of (masculinized) violence – a different prospect altogether.

9.2.2 Transnationalisation of the Transformation?

This process of (re)politicisation is complicated, as I have demonstrated throughout the dissertation, by the continued grounding of normative citizenship in both masculinity (and the underlying binary notion of sex/gender) and the engagement in violence. This is perhaps most evident in the remarkable similarities between the US and UK’s manifestations of the StT phenomenon. Originally, I chose to study two cases of StT as a means of generating insights into the phenomenon through contrast. Considering both cases within the same project has also encouraged a broad, and more abstract mode, of relating to StT and violent political obligation. I was struck, however, by the continuities in the political and discursive operation of StT – if not specific content – between the two. As a result, with the exception of Chapter Four, I have not presented substantial direct comparison between the US and UK. Instead, I have presented the various logics and articulations of StT in the two states side-by-side, to highlight their similarity and intersection(s).

That said, differences do exist,¹¹ and are non-trivial to understanding the manifestation of StT in context. Most importantly, StT is so prevalent in the US that even a 20 per cent sample of relevant sources exceeds

⁸ See on this point Stahl 2009.

⁹ Brown 1995, 75.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See Ch. 4 for more details

the entire identified UK universe in absolute number of coded references. I have also noted, in Chapter Four and elsewhere, the greater unity of the UK political establishment in relation to the war in Iraq – and thus the meaning of StT – compared to the political polarisation of the US between the Democrats and Republicans. These two facts, in combination with the UK's 2011 codification of the liberal contract into the legislative Armed Forces Covenant, suggests that the meaning of UK StT discourse is more elite-driven than that of the US. Similarly, while “supporting the war” emerges as the most common means of StT in the US, “ending the war” is the preferred means of StT in the UK. Contestation over the war in Iraq influenced the manifestation of StT differently in each state. This is also seen, perhaps most importantly, in the greater indeterminacy – and thus radical potential – in the UK anti-war movement's occasional use of the ambiguous slogan “troops out” in place of “bring them home”, compared to the US anti-war groups' consistent reification of the gendered, amended liberal military contract.

Given the two state's varying historical civil-military trajectories and traditions of domestic governance/citizenship, however, the articulation and intertwining of the three logics of political obligation in each context represents a compelling convergence. This is clearly illustrated by the creeping transnationalisation of StT. McCartney, for instance, has observed the importance of the “transatlantic gaze” in contemporary UK civil-military relations, noting a feeling common to “all levels of the British military” that “the Americans have got it right”.¹² One officer noted that US soldiers were “cheered in the street, given priority in queues, on transport and in shops, and often have their restaurant bills picked up by grateful citizens”, while another characterised US StT as “rolling out the red carpet”.¹³ Both indicated that these practices were a model to be envied, and should be cultivated in the UK. The historian Andrew Roberts, in a 2008 column for the *Telegraph*, also remarked disparagingly upon UK support for the military, observing, “How much better the American system. To wear a uniform there is a matter of pride, recognised by a populace that understands the uniqueness of a vocation which occasionally calls upon people to be prepared to make a sacrifice”.¹⁴

The convergence in civil-military relations and affective/normative orientations towards “the troops” described throughout the dissertation reflects a common condition of contemporary liberal democracies with professional militaries – but also, potentially, a purposive process of emulation. References to the US model also occur in Hansard throughout the GWoT, with one MP remarking, for instance, on the superiority of New Zealand, Canada, and Australia's – with the US as the “gold standard” – institutional handling of veterans' affairs by a designated ministry.¹⁵ The speaker went on to praise the US practice of stopping

¹² McCartney 2010, 426.

¹³ Ibid, 426.

¹⁴ Roberts 2008.

¹⁵ Mensch 2010.

veterans on the street to thank them.¹⁶ Looking farther afield, the *Daily Mail* sought to shame the Oxfordshire County authorities into providing an honour guard for repatriated bodies of deceased UK soldiers by negatively contrasting the UK response with Canada's RCMP-escorted procession down the "Highway of Heroes".¹⁷

Indeed, as observed by Managhan and Richler, StT discourse and imagery was prevalent throughout Canada during the war in Afghanistan; Australia experienced a similar rise in pro-military rhetoric and symbolism at approximately the same time.¹⁸ My inquiry was not designed to support generalisations, nor to make claims beyond the interpretation of the contingent meaning of StT in the US and UK during the GWoT. This brief discussion, however, suggests it is fair to posit StT and its nascent transnationalisation, as potentially indicative of a broader social renegotiation of civil-military relations, in contexts of volunteer militaries and distant conflicts. The tensions between liberal democracy and volunteer military service I have described here are not limited to the US and UK. The investigation of the (potential) manifestation of this tension, and its implications, elsewhere, and in other idioms – such as, for instance, post-conscription Germany – offers a strong foundation for future research. As the democratic control of the armed forces is increasingly globalised as an institutional structure, international policy, and liberal principle,¹⁹ there is increased scope for these insights – in their logic of inquiry, rather than specific interpretive findings – to travel.

9.2.3 (Re)Thinking Through Civil-Military Relations

My argument, and the process of normative transformation it describes, has three primary implications for our academic understanding of civil-military relations. The first reiterates a conceptual point introduced to frame the dissertation. As my analysis has demonstrated, StT manifests many of the empirical phenomena, such as "spectacular" sporting events,²⁰ and the social veneration of military values,²¹ associated with militarism. The ubiquity of StT, and its use to modify any and all potentially-controversial political positions regarding conflict, has a great deal in common with militarization, wherein "a person or thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military, or comes to depend on for its well-being on militaristic ideas".²²

Both emphasize the normalization of "the military". The militarization understanding of normalization, however, is "thinner" than that implied by my analysis of StT; it suggests that those involved no longer notice

¹⁶ See also Lord Craig of Radley 2007.

¹⁷ Almond 2008.

¹⁸ Richler 2012; Managhan 2011b. For Australia, see: McDonald 2005; Manne 2006; and Hobbs 2010.

¹⁹ See Millar 2016b, 174-176.

²⁰ See Fischer 2014; Mann 1987.

²¹ See, for instance, an analysis of the UK Troops to Teachers program, Dermott 2012.

²² Enloe 2000, 3.

the pathology of their social production.²³ My interpretation of StT as a (re)production and reflection of various forms of political obligation, in contrast, means that it is implicated in processes of collective subject formation and the construction of social imaginaries to an extent that belies militarism's implicit "abnormality". StT is "normal" in so far as it forms a condition of possibility for the political – the realm many militarism scholars want to "empty" of militarism/militarization. If we understand StT as reflecting the underlying normative structures of civil-military relations, and accept that these political obligations are crucial to political community, it follows that either StT is not militarism, or that militarism itself is not deviant, but more constitutively "normal".

The second implication of my work for our understanding of civil-military relations follows from this point. Policymakers and practice-oriented academics, particularly military sociologists – a neighbouring discipline which has much in common with the concerns of IR strategic studies – consider the decreasing military service across the liberal democratic West, as noted in the introduction, to indicate a concerning "civil-military gap".²⁴ The phenomena I have interpreted as representing a transformation in the normative structure of civil-military relations unsettles these commentators for an entirely different reason they do militarism scholars. Military sociologists believe this "gap" has negative implications not for society, but the military (as both an institution and body of people). In particular, the "civil-military" gap is perceived to be detrimental to the military's institutional political neutrality; demographic equity in service; alignment of civil and military values; and strategic and normative restraint in military deployments.²⁵ These concerns are the motivating rationale for policies such as the US DoD's "America Supports You" program,²⁶ and the UK government's post-2010 emphasis on codifying and disseminating the Armed Forces Covenant.²⁷

My analysis of StT as a shift in the normative model of masculine citizenship towards support, suggests that while the "civil-military" gap likely pertains to interactions with the formal institution, it does not accurately capture the current state of Western civil-military relations. Instead, my conceptualisation of the discursive military suggests that Western civil-military relations are characterised by widespread, compulsory, and always-already military "participation", identification with "the troops", and social and affective investment in society's relationship to the armed forces. The passivity of "the troops", and specific emphasis of StT on the normative civil-military relationship, do, however, facilitate a depoliticization and elision of violence. Correspondingly, I suggest that an alternative reading of this transformation in civil-military relations is not a civil-military gap, but rather a civil-*violence* gap. This conceptualisation better captures the common refrain

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See, for the US, Feaver and Kohn, 2001; for UK, Strachan 2003.

²⁵ See, for instance, Rahbek-Clemmensen 2012; Cornish 2012.

²⁶ See Butterworth and Moskal, 2009.

²⁷ See Forster 2011.

of US and UK military personnel, well-documented by journalists and academics, that while civilian “support” is appreciated, civilians “just do not understand”.²⁸ My research into the diffuse nature of military participation, and social distancing from war, offers a means of critically engaging with military sociology’s taken-for-granted analytic assumptions – not least of which is the “gap” itself – and moving towards greater specificity in diagnosing the nature of the “problem”.

Thirdly, and most importantly for International Relations, my analysis of the normative structure of civil-military relations as continually contested and contingently (re)produced suggests that we should not understand civil-military relations as pre-given and static. This assumption, which is accompanied by an instrumental conceptualisation of the military, recall, is common to democratic peace theory, strategic studies, and, inadvertently, critical security studies. Understanding the structure of civil-military relations as a discursively (re)produced structural effect, rather than a “found” institutional relationship, means that, logically, civil-military relations differ between time and place. They therefore should not be understood as influencing international politics in a uniform fashion, and thus dismissed as analytically irrelevant to IR, as done in realism and the neos. Put simply, my analysis indicates that we cannot treat civil-military relations, by assumption, as structurally synonymous with the liberal spatialization of discrete civil-military spheres, or, conversely, as an expendable resource of a monolithic state.

This point is not sophisticated, but it bears elaboration. A key implication of my dissertation is that if we want, as IR scholars, to understand the politics of war in the international, we should adopt an understanding of civil-military relations as contingently, if consistently, reproduced as a structural effect and social fact, and analyse it as such. At the moment, IR takes the structural effect and dominant cultural narrative as to the governing (and, subtly, normatively appropriate) liberal structure of civil-military relations as given, and imports it into scholastic analysis. As a result, the civil-military relationship is treated as an inevitable, functional response to the anarchic international, rather than a key means of (re)producing war in the international. Much of International Relations scholarship, as a result, contributes to the (re)production of the liberal, gendered civil-military “divide” as objectively real.²⁹

The powerful insights that may be generated by examining the implications of the power and representational work that goes into (re)producing the social facticity of the civil-military divide are lost. This is the perspective advocated by feminist security, critical war, and critical military scholars, which I have drawn upon and elaborated throughout this dissertation. To understand the conditions of political possibility for the use of violence in international politics – arguably the foundational question of IR – we need to

²⁸ For UK, see McCartney 2010, particularly 63-5; Basham 41-43. For the US, see MacLeish 2013; Finkel 2013.

²⁹ For more on the role of academics in (re)producing military policy and governance myths, see Millar 2016b.

consider not just the structure(s), of “civil-military” relations, but also their contextual (re)production, substantive value and identity content, logics of political obligation, acknowledgment of violence, and gender/gendering. More radically, given my reading of civilians as participating in the discursive military, we ought to consider whether “civil-military relations” remains valuable as an analytic category. It may be more fruitfully supplanted with a broader analysis of “military relations”, or simply political obligation in relation to force.

9.2.4 Reflecting on Gender and the Civil-Military Relationship

What does my analysis mean for the gender/gendering of civil-military relations (or, more accurately, political obligation)? The primary empirical implication of my interpretation of StT for gender/ing and civil-military relations is the observation of the further “unhinging” of gender – the social (re)production of subjects and relations as masculine and/or feminine – and the “sexing” of male and female bodies. The dependent troops, for instance, may be men and voluntaristic liberal heroes may be women. “Everyone” is necessarily indicted by the implicitly masculine requirement of normative citizenship to support the troops and participate in the military. The examination of civilians – particularly male identifying/identified civilians – in wartime, is, in some ways, the obverse of the women in combat debate. Each problematique seeks to understand the discursive construction and negotiation of subject-positions that contrast structural and symbolic gender (e.g. feminine society) with our stereotypical cultural notions of the correspondence of embodied “sex” with the expectations of that gender (e.g. female civilians are more easily “squared” with the social order to “square” than male civilians, etc.).³⁰

A corollary of this point is that my interpretive finding that contestation over contemporary US and UK civil-military relations does not align with the conventional gendering of the liberal civil-military divide of a feminine/ised society, and masculine/ised military. The republican model of citizenship collapses the public and private spheres into an entirely “public” hierarchy of military masculinity through gender. The altruistic model of citizenship brings both the civil and military into an apoliticised “private” network of affective and spontaneous interpersonal relationships, anchored by a benevolent, paternalistic masculine citizen. The StT discursive formation as a whole blurs the military and the “public”, as civilians are constituted as military participants and normatively masculine supporters. Put briefly, if there is no civil-military divide, or it articulates in a non-binary manner that contradicts the liberal spatialization, the conventional gendering of the structural relationship does not hold. The structure(s) of political obligation are be gendered/ing in some other way.

³⁰ See Millar 2015, 773.

This observation is in no way revolutionary, as the spatialized gender divide is not put forward by most theorists as an empirical truism or inevitability. Elshtain's *Beautiful Warrior and Just Soul*,³¹ to choose one expression of this binary, are philosophical images – an analytic heuristic – that resonate with enduring historical patterns, lay understandings of sex/gender and the military, and, indeed, frequently align with contemporary empirical structural and symbolic gender/ing expressions. The typical social and academic narratives of the gender/ing of civil-military relations reflect a spatial division of labour that pertains to most modern states, particularly liberal ones. This is what animates the *Beautiful Soul/Just Warrior* construct as a useful heuristic and place to begin, as I have done in this study, when examining civil-military relations – particularly in societies that are self-consciously liberal, and (re)produce this gendered/ing spatialization of public/private, civil/military, etc.

My illustration of StT's departure from this binary gendered/ing narrative therefore underscores feminist analysis' emphasis upon assessing the gender/ing of concepts and relationships, just as the civil-military divide above empirically and in context, rather than by assumption.³² This can be fraught process. As observed by Hutchings, there is a tension in many analyses of gender and war, between, on the one hand, treating masculinity, and its substantive characterisation(s), as "fixed" in order to anchor interpretive analyses of war. On the other, masculinity is understood as embedded in a "formal, relational" structural of gendered meaning, which contingently "render[s] war both intelligible and acceptable".³³ This tension also occurs in my analysis, I treat the gendered civil-military divide, and its association between masculinity and the military, as a discursively-produced "social fact" against and through which the contestation of normative civil-military relations occurs. I do not, in turn, deeply consider the ways in which masculinity, and the gender binary are constituted by this process, instead relying on this differentiation (if not its substantive characterisation) for my analysis. My analysis further highlights the difficulty, articulated by Hutchings, of arbitrating the gender/ing of an ambiguous subject, such as the troops, without straying into an essentialised synonymy of masculinity with warfare, and femininity with its absence.³⁴ Though poststructural accounts of gender alleviate this tension, my analysis further underscores the need for caution identified by feminist scholars in referencing binary gendered associations as conceptual heuristics that do empirically manifest in all times and places. My project therefore offers additional support for feminist epistemological commitments to examining the constitution and blurring of boundaries, and the need for on-going critical reflection through the interpretive process.³⁵

³¹ Elshtain 1990.

³² On avoiding essentialism see Ackerly and True 2010, 10.

³³ Hutchings 2008, 393.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 395.

³⁵ Ackerly and True 2010, 29.

As I have illustrated throughout the dissertation, contradictions of the liberal gendering of the civil-military divide are politically revealing in illuminating normative and social transformations. These alternative genderings suggest that the binary logic of both the civil-military spatialization and of masculinity/femininity is not sufficient to fully understand the gender/ing of violent political obligation. The (re)masculinisation of the supportive civilian and society, for instance, is in some ways analogous in logic to Butler's understanding of drag. Just as drag performances "play upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed", the contrast between the civilian's structural association with (purportedly-feminized) society and its performance of (purportedly masculinized) militaryness "*implicitly reveals the imitative structure*" of the gendered civil-military divide, "*as well as its contingency*" (emphasis in original).³⁶ Applying the insights of queer IR as to the blurring and transecting of binaries, including that between sex and gender,³⁷ to the contingent gender/ing of violent political obligation is thus a powerful avenue for future research. This will also encourage, and require, a greater attentiveness to the role of sexuality in (re)producing these same structures of normative violent obligation.³⁸

9.2.5 Political Obligation and International Politics

Finally, the most "macro" implication of the thesis for international relations is the relationship I have illustrated between political obligation, violence and collective subject formation in the (re)production of the political community. At a general level, attending to the contingent (re)production of gendered civil-military relations enables us to give analytical depth and specificity to the role of violence in the production of political community. More specifically, my analysis of the (re)production of the idealised political community by, and within, the discursive military suggests the immense promise of examining the contours, logics and boundaries of gendered political obligation in identifying, limning, and relationally-positioning political communities within the international.

On this basis, my conceptualisation of productive, gendered, and (potentially) violent political obligation supplements existing understandings of international politics in three key ways. The first is that, as emphasised throughout the dissertation, by tracing the extension and requirement of gendered political obligation in both constituting and interpellating particular subjects, I am able to overcome the methodological nationalism common to much of mainstream IR. In other words, by taking political obligation seriously, we are able to generate the collective subjects – their relations, properties, and boundaries – relevant to international relations through empirical analysis, rather than assuming them *a priori*. As a result, the analysis is able to span the conventional IR levels of analysis, and bring the everyday practices and

³⁶ Butler 1990, 137.

³⁷ See Ackerly and True 2010, 26; Weber 2016.

³⁸ For the importance of foregrounding sexuality in queer analysis, see Weber 2016, 15.

experiences of individuals and groups into the same analytic frame as IR's more "macro" concerns, such as international conflict.

Though my analysis has been articulated in the statist idiom of citizenship, it need not be so. My emphasis on the normative structure of gendered political obligation in relation to force could be transposed to examine the constitution of non-state entities, for instance, such as guerrilla forces or criminal organizations. Similarly, the constitution of the positive, solidaristic polity may give us purchase on the emergence of new forms of political community and membership, such as, in this project, the evolving transnational Western liberal social order. More concretely, this logic of analysis may also be applied to the examination of potentially supranational political entities, such as the European Union, or even ISIS, in order to examine both their substantive constitution and the logic and extension of their (violent) political membership. The analysis of political obligation, moreover, also has the potential to "travel" in time, elucidating, for instance, the gendered normative dynamics of political belonging in the colonial era, or the polyvalent structures of political obligation in the pre-modern "international".³⁹

The second key implication, as discussed in Chapter Seven, is that in articulating a positive, solidaristic notion of political membership, the analysis of productive, gendered political obligation offers a complement to the more explicitly difference-based accounts of oppositional subject-formation in international relations. As observed by Campbell, in naming/creating an oppositional "Other", or an enemy, the state is able to legitimate its own exercise of power, and create an appealing narrative of national "Self", both as a specific nation and a form of political community.⁴⁰ Political obligation, in contrast, offers a means of limning the community through the analysis of the positive network of obligations discursively constituted between individual and collective subjects. The process of "identity" production is therefore driven not so much by negative contrast – "we" are good, "they" are evil – but how "we" relate to each other, and on what grounds. The analysis of gendered political obligation in relation to violence therefore offers a means of analysing war as a social relation outside of the kinetic, physical battlefield, and tracing its (re)production within those civilian groups and institutions that seem, superficially, to be uninfluenced by conflict.

Thirdly, and most broadly, the productive relationship between political obligation, violence, and subject-formation I have proposed throughout the dissertation suggests that these relationships are constitutive of the international. If, in other words, we understand violent political obligation as producing both certain configurations of potentially over-lapping political communities and the notion of "political community" itself, then political obligation is also central to understanding the way in which these communities are

³⁹ See, for instance, Costa Lopez 2015.

⁴⁰ Campbell, cited in Sheehan 2005, 140 and 163; Campbell 1992.

constituted and arranged in the “international system”. Political obligation is a candidate ordering principle for the international. In consequence, it is reasonable to believe that examining contestation over the dynamics, logics, and gendering of violent political obligation may also enable us to better understand not only the conditions of political possibility for warfare, but also key dimensions of international change.⁴¹ If, for instance, the communitarian or moral logics of political obligation were successful in supplanting the liberal military contract, this would account for a profound change in the nature of the collectivity, as well as the prevailing understanding, within these polities, of the role of force in the international. The analysis of the contestation over the contingent gendering of political obligation in relation to force therefore has the potential to anchor a new research program that speaks broadly to the central concerns of international relations: war in the international system, the constitution of political community, and dynamics of enmity and identity.

⁴¹ Thank you to Julia Costa Lopez and Nora Stappert for their help in generating this insight.

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DATA SOURCES OF PRIMARY MATERIALS MAKING UP CORPUS

Newspapers Summary Table

	Right of Centre	Centrist	Left of Centre	Tabloid	Sampling
United States	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	<i>The Washington Post</i>	<i>The New York Times</i>	N/A	N/A
United Kingdom	<i>The Telegraph</i> <i>The Times</i>	<i>The Independent</i> <i>The Financial Times</i>	<i>The Guardian</i> <i>The Observer</i>	<i>Sun</i>	N/A

State Documents Summary Table

Country	Government Agency	Database	Keywords	Sampling
UK	House of Commons and House of Lords	TheyWorkForYou.com	"support our troops"	N/A
UK	Office of the Prime Minister	UK National Archive UK Web Archive UK Government Web Archive Wayback Machine Gov. of UK Announcements (live site)	"support our troops" OR "support the troops"	N/A
UK	Ministry of Defence	UK Web Archive UK Government Web Archive Wayback Machine Gov. of UK Announcements (live site)	"support our troops" OR "support the troops"	N/A
US	House of Representatives and Senate	Congressional Record (THOMAS.gov)	"support our troops"	20% of all returned results for each year

				(approx. 300 total)
US	Office of the President	George W. Bush Presidential Library Archive WhiteHouse.gov Wayback Machine Lexis Nexis	“support our troops” or “support the troops”	20% of all returned results for each year, for each database
US	Department of Defense	AmericaSupportsYou.mil Defense.gov OurMilitary.mil	“support the troops” or “support our troops”	20% of all returned results for each year (live site); most-crawled/archived results for Wayback Machine

Non-Governmental Organization Documents:

Summary Table: Military-Related NGOs by State (with Source Type)

Organization Type	United States	United Kingdom
Sports	Birdies for the Brave Live site Materials provided by NGO Wayback Machine	N/A
“Morale-raising”/Care Packages	Operation Gratitude/Freedom Alliance Live site Materials provided by NGO Wayback Machine	Uk4uThanks! Live site Wayback Machine
Wounded	Disabled Veterans of America Live site Materials provided by NGO Wayback Machine	BLESMA Live site Wayback Machine
Service-Specific	N/A	Army Benevolent Fund (now The Soldiers’ Charity) Live site Wayback Machine

All-Service	Veterans of Foreign Wars Live site Wayback Machine Institutional physical archives	Royal British Legion Live site Wayback Machine
Iraq/Afghanistan-Specific	Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Live site Wayback Machine	Help for Heroes Live site Wayback Machine

Summary Table: Peace/Anti-War NGOs by State (with Source Type)

Organization Type	United States	United Kingdom
Veteran/Military Associated	Military Families Against the War Live site Archived material (Swarthmore Peace Collection) Wayback Machine	Veterans for Peace UK Live site Wayback machine
Cyber/Mass Organizing	ANSWER/United for Peace and Justice Live site Archived materials (Swarthmore Peace Collection) Wayback Machine	Stop the War Coalition Live site Archived materials (Bishopsgate Institute) Wayback Machine
Pacifist	Peace Action Live site Archived materials (Swarthmore peace collection) Wayback Machine	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Live site Wayback Machine Personal materials held by activists
Women	CodePink Live Site Archived materials (Swarthmore Peace Collection) Wayback Machine	WILPF UK Live site Correspondence with archivists Wayback Machine
Religious	American Friends Service Committee Live site Archived materials (AFSC archive) Wayback Machine	Peace and Social Witness UK Live site Wayback Machine

