Pursuing Political Persuasion: War and Peace Frames in the United States after September 11th

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ABSTRACT *Despite the prominence of framing analysis in social movement research, the ways that power-holders and challengers attempt to persuade the general public remain under-theorized. We develop a multidimensional typology of what content producers frequently anticipate will make their frames potent. Moreover, we argue that several contextual factors influence which of these dimensions are emphasized in frames. To assess these propositions, we conducted an analysis of statements issued by President Bush and 10 US peace movement organizations following the September 11th attacks. Both sides touched upon all dimensions. President Bush's statements took advantage of discursive and emotional opportunities in crafting messages supportive of war and repression. Illustrating their strategic nature, PMO statements either appropriated or rejected dominant discourses for any single dimension. While peace groups took advantage of emotional opportunities, oppositional cultures curtailed their use of discursive opportunities. Lacking democratic legitimacy and rational legal authority, peace groups devoted a higher proportion of text to establishing the empirical credibility and the moral authority of their claims. The study advances social movement theory by highlighting the interplay of culture, power, and agency in the production of public collective action frames.*

KEY WORDS: Social movements, peace movements, frame analysis, political culture, September 11, United States of America

Introduction

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, created a critical discourse moment (Chilton, 1987; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gamson, 1992). In an emotionally-charged atmosphere of uncertainty, the US public thirsted to know who, what, where, why, and how best to respond. Seizing the moment, the Bush administration and the US Peace Movement each attempted to define the meaning of September 11th. The public policies enacted were based, in part, upon interpretations of the significance of the attacks. These policies have altered domestic civil liberties as well as international political relations.

While the framing contest was lopsided given the institutionally privileged position of the Bush administration in disseminating its message, both sides had much to gain, and to lose. To maintain their rule in a democratic polity, power holders need legitimacy – popular consent to their policies as reasonable, just, and in the interest of humanity (Mann, 1986; Barker, 1990). To achieve legitimacy, the administration had to actively fashion messages that persuaded mass audiences to support its responses to the events of September 11th. Conversely, peace movements strive to create popular opposition to the policies and rule of power holders where either or both are seen as unreasonable, unjust, and not in the interest of humanity. Peace activists could not assume that the general public would disapprove of a forceful response to September 11th. To the contrary, institutionally privileged language and ideas (also referred to here as dominant discourses) carry assumptions designed to silence the opposition and to predispose the public towards viewing peace activists as naïve, ridiculous, fanatical, and even traitorous (Gitlin, 1981; Hedges, 2003). To gain widespread sympathy and participation, peace movement organizations had to convince mass audiences that the administration's responses to September 11th were problematic, that viable alternatives existed, and that ordinary people could bring about these alternatives.

Given the high stakes, we wanted to know what frames the Bush administration and the US Peace Movement used in their efforts to capture the hearts and minds of potential supporters following September 11th. In particular, we were interested in the extent of similarities and differences between their respective frames. Would the wider dissemination and greater authority of frames used by the Bush administration and the mainstream media compel peace groups to focus upon the same themes? Or would differences in cultures, identities, audiences, and power bring about marked contrasts? Answering these questions will allow us to pinpoint the ways that cultural and structural contexts influence the frames of both power holders and movements, factors that have been neglected in recent work on framing.

We propose a multi-dimensional typology of frame contents that producers often anticipate will enhance the appeal of their messages to wide audiences. We further argue that specific contextual factors influence whether or not power holders and challengers emphasize the same dimensions. To assess these propositions, we analyzed the speeches made by President Bush, as well as the official statements issued by ten different US peace movement organizations between September 11th and December 31st of 2001. The results largely support our expectations. Both sides touched upon all seven dimensions of our typology. President Bush's frames took extensive advantage of discursive and emotional opportunities presented by the attacks, reinforcing a sense of threat while crafting messages supportive of war and repression.[1] Illustrating the strategic nature of their statements, peace movement organizations either emphasized or rejected dominant discourses (but not both) for any single dimension. Although they took advantage of emotional opportunities in an effort to strike a chord with the public, peace groups drew less upon discursive opportunities than President Bush. Instead, the groups mostly referenced oppositional narratives and appealed to oppositional identities in deference to their traditional adherents. Lacking democratic legitimacy and rational legal authority, peace groups also devoted a significantly higher proportion of their text to efforts to establish the moral legitimacy and empirical credibility of their claims. The study contributes to social movement theory by specifying the interplay of culture, institutional power, and agency in the production of multivalent public collective action frames.

Theory

After nearly two decades of preoccupation with structural sources of mobilization, sociologists in the late 1980s began to re-emphasize the importance of social psychological factors in the origins and activities of social movements. The application of Erving Goffman's (1974) framing analysis to collective action provided one important conceptual foundation for this refocus (Snow *et al.*, 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988, 1992; Gamson, 1988, 1992; Gamson *et al.*, 1992). Snow *et al.* (1986, p. 464) define a frame as a 'schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large'.

The ability of a frame to mobilize others to act, demobilize opposition, garner positive media coverage, or influence policy decisions depends upon its potency (Snow & Benford, 1988; Gamson, 1992). Snow & Benford (1992, p. 140) define a frame's potency as the extent to which the frame is successful in 'striking a deep responsive chord'. Despite an emphasis upon persuasion in political mobilization and contention, sources of potency remain under-theorized. Researchers have focused upon processes of aligning the frames of recruiters and potential supporters rather than upon the shared contents of frames that facilitate alignment (Snow & Benford, 2000). As a result, we know too little about which elements of a frame are most likely to be amplified, extended, challenged, or to serve as bridges in an effort at persuasion.

In addition, because of an emphasis upon the contingent and situational aspects of symbolic exchanges taking place in small groups, framing analyses have often neglected ways that the broader social context influences how actors try to persuade others. Even small groups do not construct meanings in a social vacuum (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 628).

Lastly, framing analysis has paid little attention to how differences in power might influence how different actors attempt to gain traction with large audiences (Ferree, 2003). For these reasons, we focus upon contents of a collective action frame that may enhance its potency as well as contextual factors – including power relations – that encourage those constructing frames to emphasize certain contents over others.

Anticipated Sources of Potency

Not being able to read minds or to know the future, those constructing frames must speculate about what contents audiences will find persuasive. This is particularly the case with public collective action frames – frames constructed for wide distribution with the intent of mobilizing broad-based support for agendas. Both power holders and challengers alike carefully construct public collective action frames well in advance of micro-level encounters (see for example, Ryan, 1991; Benford, 1993; Coles, 1998; Woehrle *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, these frames are often disseminated through non-relational mechanisms such as websites and press releases.

As those we study, scholars are not omniscient. Hank Johnston (1995, pp. 218–219) writes: 'No researcher can peer inside the black box of the brain and get a clear picture of what a person is thinking.' While researchers do not have the keys to open the black boxes of human cognition, through a combination of ethnography and careful textual analysis, scholars have developed an inventory of contents that public collective action frame producers frequently anticipate will be sources of potency. Based upon an extensive

review of the literature, we present seven anticipated sources of frame potency – empirical credibility, experiential commensurability, narrative fidelity, moral authority, identity appeal, emotional resonance, and threat salience.

In their pioneering work, Snow & Benford (1988, 1992) proposed three resonance factors that contribute to a frame's mobilizing potency. *Empirical credibility* involves the extent to which audiences perceive a frame's attributions as empirically substantiated; *Experiential commensurability* involves the extent to which a frame references events that audiences have personally experienced; *Narrative fidelity* involves a frame's referencing of longstanding beliefs, myths and folk tales that are central to audiences' understandings of the world. We expect actors to fashion public collective action frames that they believe many, if not most, will perceive as being empirically credible, consistent with personal experiences, and faithful to core narratives.

Snow & Benford's typology is by no means exhaustive. Accordingly, we add four additional frequently anticipated sources of potency. *Moral authority* entails a frame's appeal to venerable ethical sources for validation. Both religious and secular belief systems offer multiple bases of moral authority, including deities, prophets, founding figures, transcendent spirits, sacred or seminal texts, and honored rituals (Bellah, 1967, 1998; Coles, 2002).

Mobilization of consensus and action depends, in part, upon creating a positive association between the frames' claims and highly salient collective identities (Stryker, 2000; Nepstad, 2001). *Identity appeal*, therefore, is the extent to which a frame invokes and activates a collective identity on behalf of its prognostic attributions. The more salient the collective identity that is appealed to, the more persuasive the frame is generally assumed to be to those holding the identity invoked.

Recent research suggests that direct references to emotions play a critical role in mobilization (Goodwin *et al.*, 2001). In their study of emotion work in a transgender community, Schrock *et al.* (2004, p. 62) introduce the concept of *emotional resonance*: 'the link between targeted recruits' emotional lives and the emotional messages encoded in SMO framing'. By amplifying emotions that are widely expected of audiences, actors hope to intensify the potency of their public collective action frames. Emotions invoked in frames, in turn, are translated into moral obligations to support actively prognostic attributions (Aminzade & McAdam, 2001).

Frame producers may not only play upon existing emotions, but also attempt to create new emotions; in particular the emotion of fear (Altheide, 2004; Maney *et al.*, 2009). Accordingly, we highlight this specific type of emotional work using the concept of *threat salience*. Threat salience is a frame's anticipated ability to create feelings of fear and to use these feelings, in turn, to support its attributions. Knowing what content is commonly assumed to increase the likelihood of their frames being potent among general audiences, however, does not tell us *why* actors make these assumptions.

Contextualizing the Pursuit of Persuasion

We propose six contextual factors that affect not only which anticipated sources of potency power holders and challengers emphasize in their frames, but also the contents of their attempts to achieve potency within each dimension. We argue that three of the six factors – counter-framing, discursive opportunities, and emotional opportunities – contribute to challengers and power holders emphasizing the same dimensions. The other

three factors – oppositional cultures, democratic legitimacy, and rational legal authority – contribute to differences in the anticipated sources of potency emphasized respectively by challengers and power holders.

First, when one side receives active support from a substantial segment of the public, the other side responds in ways that try to diminish the potency of the opposition's frames while enhancing its own. For example, McCright & Dunlap (2000) document how conservative think tanks developed frames that systematically challenge other frames that present global warming as a social problem. The perception that this type of 'frame debunking' (McCaffrey & Keys, 2000) constitutes a serious threat to the potency of a frame often results in a combination of discursive counter-attacks and 'frame saving' efforts whereby the frame is modified in the hopes of maintaining its persuasiveness (Esacove, 2004). As both sides attempt to heighten the appeal of their frame directly at the expense of their opponent, both frames converge upon emphasizing the same dimension of potency.

Still the question remains as to why certain language and ideas are more likely to be borrowed than others. This brings us to the second and third contextual factors: discursive opportunities and emotional opportunities. We define discursive opportunities as critical discourse moments when bystanders become receptive towards either frames that draw upon dominant discourses, or, conversely, frames that draw upon oppositional discourses.[2] Rohlinger (2002, p. 483) defines critical discourse moments as 'times when an issue is particularly salient to an audience'. Such moments may be brought about by events and/or by heightened state or media attention to an issue. Discursive opportunities encourage both power holders and challengers to focus upon narrative fidelity as a source of potency. The narratives used in challengers' public collective action frames, however, often vary, depending upon whether bystanders are perceived as being receptive towards framing that draws upon the dominant discourse or, conversely, framing that draws upon oppositional discourses.

Power holders use their disproportionate access to, and influence over, mass communication mediums to apply repeatedly the same language and ideas to categorize and interpret events (Gamson, 1992). Frequent invocation by power holders gives certain ideas a familiarity that precedes critical discourse moments and an authority extending beyond the individuals referencing them (Steinberg, 1999; Ferree, 2003). It is precisely the familiarity and authority of dominant discourses that enhance the potency of frames that draw upon them (Chilton, 2002). In this context, we expect activists seeking to increase the appeal of their messages to harness dominant discourses and heavily incorporate the contents of power holders' frames (Maney *et al.*, 2005; Coy *et al.*, 2008).

Nonetheless, some critical discourse moments, such as the period following the near-meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant, produce a rush of public support for frames using language and ideas associated with oppositional cultures (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). An event might contradict or stretch to the breaking point the plausibility of interpretive frameworks crafted using dominant discourses (e.g. that nuclear power is a clean and safe source of energy). Trends in media discourses, mass-mobilization, and the emergence of powerful allies may also contribute to oppositional discourses receiving greater circulation and authority. In these contexts, we expect activists to challenge dominant discourses directly.

Collective public events can also alter the emotional context in which political actors operate. A frame will be more potent for audiences if it: (1) abides by norms governing the

expression of emotions in response to events; and (2) directly references intensely felt emotions. Norms govern the expression of emotions in response to collective public events (Whittier, 2001). Given that deviance from strong norms often elicits an intensely negative emotional reaction, we believe that framing that abides by the specifications of emotional norms is likely to be more potent than framing that fails to do so. In addition to emotional norms, intense emotional reactions to collective public events can also enhance the potency of framing. Actors are, therefore, likely to anticipate that referencing intensely felt emotions in ways consistent with dominant emotional norms will enhance the potency of their public collective action frames. When public events foster intense emotional reactions among general audiences, they also encourage actors to focus upon emotional resonance as a dimension of potency. Policy opponents will reference the same emotions in their efforts to mobilize support for contrasting issue positions.

Fourth, despite these pressures for convergence, even a cursory content analysis typically reveals major differences in the ways that power holders and challengers attempt to persuade audiences. Oppositional cultures are sub-cultures that challenge mainstream beliefs and practices (Mansbridge & Morris, 2001). Oppositional cultures motivate extra-institutional resistance to the agendas of power holders. Social movement organizations that too deeply avail themselves of dominant discourses and emotional norms to persuade the general public run the risk of alienating their core constituencies by contradicting what is familiar and authoritative in oppositional cultures (Whittier, 2001; Rohlinger, 2002; Maney *et al.*, 2005). Activists who use dominant discourses and abide by dominant emotional norms in their frames are vulnerable to allegations of co-optation by those who have constructed their life worlds in contradistinction to them.

Fifth and sixth, with regard to power relations, we argue that states with relatively open political systems and strong administrative capacities make it less necessary for power holders to focus upon empirical credibility, moral authority, and experiential commensurability in their frames. To the extent that elections and the rational administration of laws accord legitimacy to the state (Weber, 1957; Mann, 1986; Barker, 1990), the public is likely to also perceive policies proposed by power holders as reasonable, fair and just. As the ultimate arbiter within a society, the state rules upon the validity of empirical claims of others. Consequently, it is atypical to question externally the empirical validity of the claims of a strong state. In the case of representative democracies, the administration of laws enacted by democratically elected officials provides de facto moral authority for the policy positions of power holders. This authority reduces the need to appeal to moral authority in power holders' frames. Because bureaucratic states assume responsibilities for international affairs that do not directly involve most of the public, power holders do not have to convince audiences that what is being advocated is within their realm of daily lived experience. To the contrary, the mystification of statecraft increases the likelihood that the public will defer to the judgment of 'experts.'

Movements challenging the policy agendas of power holders, however, do not have the discursive luxuries accorded by democratic legitimacy and rational legal authority. The onus falls upon them to make a compelling empirical, ethical, and experiential case against those who are assumed to be acting in a lawful manner to protect the public's well-being. Accordingly, movements must devote a considerable amount of text and speech to provide a historical context for policy decisions along with healthy doses of moral polemics and personalized anecdotes. With these expectations in hand, we now discuss ways to assess their validity.

Method

Evaluating our conceptualization of framing as a multivalent process of discursive contention shaped by the broader social context required a research design that goes beyond the scope and rigor of most other studies. It also necessitated selecting a critical discourse moment where discursive and emotional opportunities could be readily operationalized. The three months following September 11th in the United States qualifies as such a moment. The attacks not only captured the attention of the US public but increased receptivity to nationalist and militarist frames. Gallup polls taken in the hours immediately following the morning of September 11th show that the majority of Americans saw the attacks as an 'act of war' and supported a military response (Moore, 2001; Saad, 2001). Emotionally, public opinion research indicates strong and widespread feelings of sorrow, anger, and national pride (Smith *et al.*, 2001). As stated above, we believe that frames referencing these emotions not only conform to dominant norms governing grieving, but also attempt to increase the potency of their attributions. Accordingly, we collected policy statements by President Bush and peace movement organizations issued between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2001. Statements from either source that draw heavily and positively upon familiar and authoritative language and symbols used historically to legitimate warfare are considered to be instances of frames that take advantage of discursive opportunities present during this period. Statements that heavily and positively reference normatively supported strong emotions widely experienced during this period are considered to be instances of frames that take advantage of emotional opportunities.

To account for the dialogic aspects of framing, we analyze both pro-war and anti-war statements from two opposing policy camps. On the government side, we collected and coded White House transcripts of 76 statements issued by President Bush. The statements focused, in chronological order, upon the events of September 11th, military intervention in Afghanistan, the USA PATRIOT Act (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism), and progress in the war on terrorism. The statements collectively embody the Bush administration's public collective action frames in the months immediately following September 11th.

To examine anti-war frames we gathered 58 official statements by 10 nationally recognized US peace movement organizations (PMOs) issued during the same period. The PMOs included in the analysis are the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Black Radical Congress (BRC), Council on American–Islamic Relations (CAIR), Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), New York City Labor Against the War (NYCLAW), Pax Christi (PaxC), Peace Action (PA), War Resisters League (WRL), Women's Action for New Directions (WAND), and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Five of these groups (AFSC, FOR, PaxC, PA, and WILPF) were chosen to create a longitudinal data set when combined with a previous study regarding the Persian Gulf War in 1990 to 1991 (Coy & Woehrle, 1996). We added the remaining groups to include an Islamic organization (CAIR), to increase the number of secular organizations in the sample (BRC, NYCLAW, WAND, and WRL), and to ensure representation of groups with organizational identities centered upon prominent social cleavages (e.g. race, ethnicity, class and gender). The breadth and diversity of the organizations included in the data set means that it captures prominent tendencies within the US peace movement. While by no means exhaustive of actors contributing to public political discourse,

statements by the US President and the Peace Movement constitute instances where power holders and challengers produced public collective action frames with the goal of generating support from adherents, constituents, and bystanders.

Assessing which specific anticipated sources of potency were emphasized in pro-war and anti-war framing required further methodological innovations. We entered the statements into NVivo – a software program that supports coding and content analysis. Few studies have systematically analyzed frames used by this many organizations in the same social movement, let alone frames used by political actors with contrasting power positions. Computer-assisted analysis eased the challenge of analyzing large amounts of textual data. The data-mining features of NVivo allowed us to work directly with each statement. In NVivo, both conventional (inductively based) and pre-designated (deductively based) coding were used to index the statements for ideas. Our analysis utilized 68 thematic codes for the statements by President Bush and 91 thematic codes for statements by PMOs.

We classified codes according to seven dimensions of potency (see Appendix). We took the following three steps to ensure the validity of our assignment of codes to one of the seven dimensions. First, in each case, we read the definition of the code, examined carefully paragraphs containing the code, and asked ourselves to which dimension the code belonged. In each instance we reached consensus among the three authors regarding the assignment of a code to a dimension. Second, to ensure mutually exclusive categories, we assigned no code to more than one dimension. Third, we excluded a small percentage of codes from the analysis. These codes focused upon calls for specific actions from audiences such as signing a petition or donating money.

In addition to categorizing codes by dimension of potency, for peace movement organization statements we also classified codes according to whether they appropriated or rejected dominant discourses. This classification scheme enabled us to assess variations in the framing practices of political opponents within one particular dimension.

While underutilized by researchers, quantitative methods are well-suited for comparative assessments of variations in framing (Johnston, 2002). We coded thematic propositions appearing as phrases or sentences within a paragraph as meaning units of analysis (Ratner, 2002). In turn, we analyzed the number of paragraphs containing a given thematic proposition. Because of differences in the volume of statements issued as well as the writing styles of peace movement organizations, we created weights based upon the number of words produced and the number of words per paragraph.[3] The code frequency tabulations provide measures of not only the main ways that one side attempted to gain potency on one single dimension, but also the relative attention paid by both sides to various dimensions. For opponents of war, the data also reveal the relative emphasis placed upon appropriating or rejecting dominant discourses.

Results

Dimensions of Potency

Figure 1 summarizes code frequencies for each of the seven anticipated sources of potency. With the exception of experiential commensurability, either President Bush or the peace movement organizations collectively devoted a considerable amount of text to each of the seven dimensions. The relative neglect of experiential commensurability is not
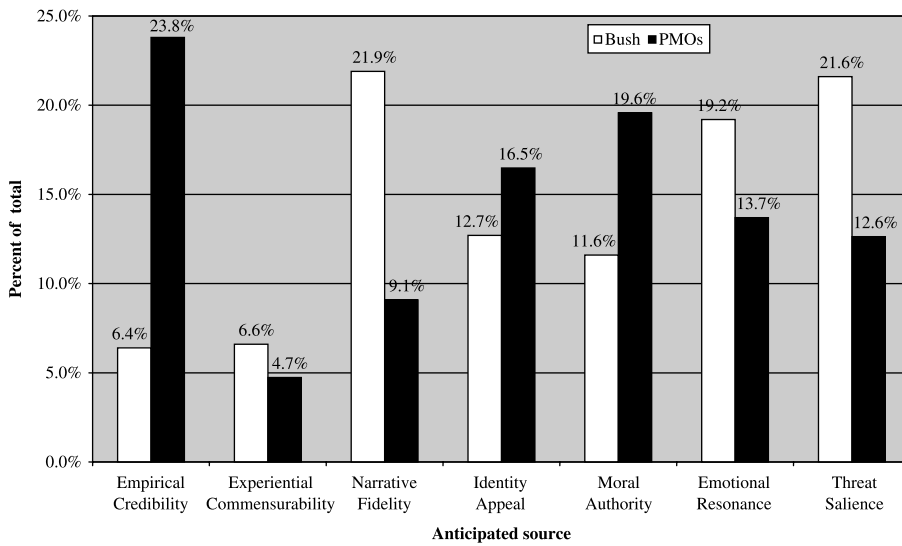
Figure 1. Code frequencies by anticipated source of potency.

surprising since an attack by foreign nationals on US soil is very rare. More important, less than 40 per cent of either actors' code frequencies fell under empirical credibility, experiential commensurability, or narrative fidelity. This finding suggests that the three dimensions conceptualized by Snow & Benford (1988, 1992) do not adequately encompass the myriad of ways that actors attempt to persuade potential supporters.

Figure 1 also shows that power holders and challengers devoted varying amounts of text to different anticipated sources of potency. President Bush's statements emphasized narrative fidelity (21.9 per cent of all code occurrences), threat salience (21.6 per cent), and emotional resonance (19.2 per cent). In contrast, peace movement organizations (PMOs) collectively emphasized empirical credibility (24.1 per cent), moral authority (19 per cent), and identity appeal (16.7 per cent). We look more closely at the texts to assess whether our theoretical framework can explain these similarities and differences.

Sources of Frame Similarities

Counter-framing. Peace movement organizations frequently responded directly to statements made by the Bush administration. For instance, Pax Christi responded to one aspect of President Bush's war on terror frame: 'The President says, "we shall make no distinctions between the terrorist and countries that harbor them." Shall a whole country be condemned for the actions of its leaders?' (Pax Christi, 26 September 2001).

We hypothesized that counter-framing would contribute to both sides devoting a significant amount of text to the same anticipated sources of potency. Table 1 provides a summary of the main frame content used by both sides. The table contains frame content that appeared frequently in terms of the number of paragraphs coded. In several instances, PMOs addressed themes emphasized in President Bush's statements and vice versa. For example, peace groups responded in kind to President Bush's focus on achieving threat salience. In 341 paragraphs in 76 statements, the President used the term 'terrorist' or

Table 1. Frequent frame content by anticipated source of potency

Policy Position:	Strategy:	Anticipated Source:						
		Empirical Credibility	Experiential Commensurability	Narrative Fidelity	Identity Appeal	Moral Authority	Emotional Resonance	Threat Salience
Pro-War (Bush administration)	Strengthen dominant discourses	Focus on attacks; Peacekeeping and relief efforts; No alternative to war	War on terror; American heroes; We've seen their kind before; A new era	Defending freedom; Support the troops; Good vs evil; United we stand; A mighty nation; Global leadership	Our great nation; Friends and enemies of women, children, workers, people of faith and the oppressed; Duty, honor, service	Righting wrongs; God's will and teachings; International laws and norms; US Constitution	Pride, love, fear, pain and anger into resolve, courage and hope; Grieving and remembering	Terrorist threat; War and repression heighten national security
Anti-War (PMOs)	Reject dominant discourses	Viable alternatives to war; Context of attacks; War as terror; What goes around …	Attacks as familiar to the oppressed	Militarism; US Imperialism; Global justice	Interests, values and commitments of women, workers, racial minorities and oppressed; Solidarity forever; Unquestioning patriotism	King, Gandhi and non-violence; Just war doctrine	Resist revenge; Don't be manipulated	Cycle of violence; War as the threat; Scapegoating
Anti-War (PMOs)	Appropriate dominant discourses	Two wrongs …	No more victims; War on terror better fought without war; Attack as test of character	Global leadership	Interests, values and commitments of people of faith; Peace is patriotic	US Constitution; Rule of law; God's will and teachings	Condemning, grieving and remembering; Anger, fear and pain into love, hope and courage	Human security through multilateral cooperation

'terrorists'. This is by far the most frequently appearing code in his statements, accounting for 41.8 per cent of code frequencies categorized as primarily attempting to achieve threat salience (herein percentage of dimension codes) and 9.2 per cent of all code frequencies (herein percentage of all codes). Ninety paragraphs (11 per cent of threat salience codes, 2.4 per cent of all codes) portrayed either the hijackers, supporters of the attacks, and/or other perceived enemies of the US as evil, extremists, fanatics, hateful, oppressive or zealots. Similarly, seventy paragraphs (8.6 per cent of threat salience codes, 1.9 per cent of all codes) portrayed perceived enemies as threats or dangers to persons, property, political or economic stability, and moral or political principles.

President Bush also tended to frame his administration's policies in terms of responding to threats to national security, with 192 paragraphs (23.6 per cent of threat salience codes, 5.6 per cent of all codes) containing instances of security framing. After references to terrorists, the security code appeared more frequently than any other code related to intensifying threat salience. In a televised address on 8 November 2001, President Bush used security framing in an effort to generate support for repressive legislation and for invading Afghanistan:

> 'Our nation faces a threat to our freedoms and the stakes could not be higher. We are the target of enemies who boast they want to kill – kill all Americans, kill all Jews, and kill all Christians. We've seen that type of hate before – and the only possible response is to confront it, and to defeat it'

Such framing not only seeks to intensify emotions related to feeling threatened, but it also resonates with the familiar, authoritative assumption that the state protects the nation and its way of life from danger.

Peace movement organizations frequently responded to such efforts to raise threat salience and appropriate it solely on behalf of war and repression. They devoted comparable percentages of their text to explicitly discussing terrorism (9.5 per cent of all code frequencies compared to 9.2 per cent of all code frequencies for President Bush's speeches). Rather than trying to challenge the President's stigmatization of the attacks, peace movement organizations reinforced it even while extending the scope of condemnation. By shifting the locus of whom and what are being threatened as well as whom and what are threatening, PMOs constructed war – not as a source of freedom and liberation – but as the primary threat to the innocent and less powerful. All but one of the PMOs noted the costs of war to civilians. For example, Peace Action wrote:

> . . . Americans are beginning to realize that the Bush agenda not only threatens our own rights, but those of our neighbors around the world. The President's plans to launch a preemptive strike against Iraq could require 200,000 to 300,000 U.S. ground troops. Such a war would cause widespread instability and anti-American sentiment in the Middle East, and could result in the deaths of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians . . . (Peace Action, 9/11, Letter to the Editor)

Peace movement organizations also addressed head-on the assertion that war and repression heighten national security. Nine of the ten PMOs explicitly referenced security in a combined total of 55 paragraphs (27.5 per cent of threat salience codes, 3.5 per cent of all codes), second only in frequency to the causes of terror. Peace groups argued that far

from protecting the public, the Bush administration's policies were jeopardizing its safety by feeding into a 'cycle of violence'. For instance, WAND stated:

> WAND believes that the bombing of Afghanistan is not helping to secure national or global security or achieving the stated objectives of the war on terrorism. Instead it is killing innocent civilians, escalating violence, increasing the likelihood of retaliation, causing instability in the region, eroding the support of our allies, attracting sympathizers to the terrorists' cause, and leading to the possible use of nuclear weapons (Women's Action for New Directions, 12 November 2001).

While President Bush's speeches presented the attacks of September 11th as part of a larger threat to the American way of life, PMO statements framed domestic repression in response to the attacks as threats to the US Constitution and Bill of Rights: 'Recent legislation, passed under the guise of the new "war on terrorism", severely challenges basic democratic founding principles such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and prohibitions against illegal search and seizure' (American Friends Service Committee; 17 December 2001). By highlighting inconsistencies between familiar, authoritative principles invoked to justify war and repression and the actual practices of war and repression, anti-war frames sought to generate high degrees of threat salience.

Discursive opportunities. In addition to counter-framing, we also hypothesized that discursive opportunities and emotional opportunities would contribute to similar frames being used by power holders and their challengers. President Bush frequently took advantage of discursive opportunities by repeatedly referencing longstanding narratives used to generate support for war. Almost 22 per cent of all code frequencies involved referencing narratives forming part of the dominant political discourse. Most often, his speeches portrayed the United States as defending freedom against those who would deny it. This narrative appeared in 213 paragraphs (25.8 per cent of narrative fidelity codes and 5.7 per cent of all codes). A logical extension of this narrative is framing calling upon the public to support the troops who were risking their lives to defend freedom. One hundred and twenty-eight paragraphs (15.5 per cent of narrative fidelity codes and 3.4 per cent of all codes) contained this support-the-troops frame.

President Bush also commonly portrayed the United States as a central protagonist in the epic struggle of good versus evil, with 127 paragraphs (15.4 per cent of narrative fidelity codes, 3.4 per cent of all codes) containing this code. In his first televised speech to Congress after September 11th, President Bush linked the attackers to anti-fascist narratives constructed to mobilize nationwide consent to participation in the Second World War:

> 'We are not deceived by their pretenses to piety. We have seen their kind before. They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions – by abandoning every value except the will to power –they follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way, to where it ends: in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies.' (President Bush, 7 December 2001).

By referencing a mythologized historical battle, President Bush not only drew upon a core narrative, but also enhanced the experiential commensurability of his claim that the US government will defeat terrorism militarily.

US peace movement organizations, however, did not take equal advantage of core narratives. A bivariate regression of percentage of total code frequencies (analysis not shown here) indicates that President Bush's speeches were significantly more likely to draw upon these narratives than were PMO statements. In fact, PMOs referenced freedom in only twelve paragraphs. Surprisingly, we also did not record a single instance of the 'support-the-troops' framing. The only other core narrative occasionally appropriated by the PMOs was the theme of the US as a global leader spreading democracy. However, this narrative appeared in only seven paragraphs (4.9 per cent of narrative fidelity codes, 0.5 per cent of all codes). Instead the peace groups mainly rejected the ideas that defending freedom and promoting good had anything to do with the government's foreign policy. The reasons for the movement's failure to seize upon core narratives as discursive opportunities will be discussed in the following section.

Nonetheless, as Figure 2 makes clear, peace movement organizations took advantage of discursive opportunities that were present along other dimensions of potency. For each dimension, we categorized codes according to whether they appropriated or rejected dominant discourses related to warfare. PMOs appropriated institutionally privileged language and symbols nearly as often as they challenged them (43.8 per cent vs 56.2 per cent of all code frequencies). Significantly, there was a pronounced pattern of favoring one strategy over the other within each and every dimension of resonance and potency (see Figure 2). A chi-square test shows the difference in the relative frequency per dimension of codes rejecting or appropriating dominant discourses to be statistically significant at the .001 level (chi2 score = 457.25; df = 6). That an analysis inclusive of ten different groups would show such clear distinctions in approaches for seven separate dimensions lends strong support to the idea that the social movement organizations strategically and
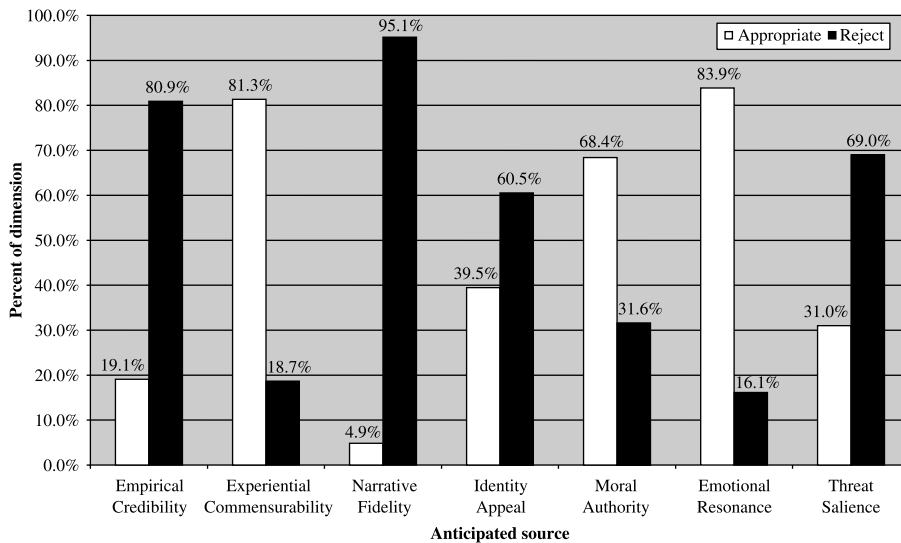

Figure 2. PMO responses to dominant discourses.

interactively craft their messages. Groups consistently devoted single dimensions to persuading specific targeted audiences.

Peace groups tended to avail themselves of dominant discourses in efforts to achieve experiential commensurability (81.3 per cent of dimension) and moral authority (67.1 per cent of dimension). Like President Bush's speeches, PMOs regularly spoke of the attacks of September 11th as a national experience defined by the victims it created. They extended concern for the victims of September 11th to civilians in general. The experiences of September 11th became reasons to avoid war and repression. AFSC, for instance, launched a 'No More Victims' campaign. The discursive logic of the campaign is typified by the following press release excerpt:

> The outpouring of love and support that has been expressed for survivors and victims of the September 11 tragedies has been overwhelming. We hope the American public will continue to respond to this appeal for the people of Afghanistan, who are themselves victims of these atrocities. (American Friends Service Committee; 2 Oct. 2001).

President Bush and peace movement organizations also appealed to the same venerable sources of moral authority such as religion, justice, human rights, international law and international opinion. Religion was frequently referenced by both actors. Both war supporters and opponents linked their claims to God's will and teachings and religious practices.

Emotional opportunities.   In addition to discursive opportunities, President Bush also took advantage of emotional opportunities. Nearly one-quarter (19.2 per cent) of the code frequencies involved abiding by emotional norms governing death or referencing emotions felt strongly by the US public after the attack such as pride, love, fear, pain, anger, resolve, courage, grief, laughter, hope and sorrow (see Figure 1 and Table 1). In his first nationally televised speech after the attacks, he stated: 'Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.' By referencing grief and anger, the President abided by emotional norms surrounding political violence against members of one's nation. Moreover, by moving from grief and anger to evoking justice, these emotions were translated into moral obligations to support state policies in times of danger.

While occasionally warning audiences to resist revenge and to avoid having their emotions manipulated by the powerful, peace movement organizations were far more likely to abide by emotional norms and reinforce strong emotions felt by most within the US public. Almost 84 per cent of codes related to efforts to achieve emotional resonance were categorized as embracing emotional opportunities (see Figure 2). Abiding by emotional norms of mourning, PMOs formally condemned the attacks, conveyed a deep sense of grief, and expressed sympathy for the victims and their families. PMOs explicitly referenced strong emotions such as anger, fear, and pain; warned against revenge; and expressed the hope that love and courage would prevail over hate. On the day of the attacks, WRL stated: 'We are one world. We shall live in a state of fear and terror or we shall move toward a future in which we seek peaceful alternatives to violence, and a more just distribution of the world's resources. As we mourn the many lives lost, our hearts call out for reconciliation, not revenge.' (War Resisters League, 11 September 2001).

By achieving resonance with the public's emotional dispositions, peace groups endeavored to increase receptivity to their calls for restraint.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate that while peace movement statements did take advantage of discursive and emotional opportunities to increase potency with the general public, they did so to a lesser extent than President Bush's statements. We turn now to assessing our explanations for instances where the two sides differed in how they tried to persuade the public.

Sources of Frame Differences

Oppositional cultures. The data supports our contention that oppositional cultures contribute to differences between the peace movement and administration framing. As noted above, peace movement organization statements were far less likely to reference core narratives compared to the President's speeches. Instead, the statements relied primarily on longstanding oppositional narratives. Historically, the peace movement has repeatedly critiqued the military-industrial complex and US imperialism to the point where these critiques form familiar and authoritative parts of an oppositional culture in the United States. Accordingly, activists could reasonably expect that frames drawing upon these belief systems would possess high levels of potency with traditional peace movement constituencies. More recently, peace activists have spilled over (Meyer & Whittier, 1994) into the burgeoning global justice movement. Although that movement's constituencies are quite diverse, broadly shared beliefs have emerged regarding the current global system and the need for more sustainable and equitable patterns of interaction across borders.

All three narratives were much in evidence in PMO statements after September 11th. Eight of the ten peace movement organizations in our analysis used anti-militarism narratives in 53 paragraphs (36.8 per cent of narrative fidelity codes, 3.3 per cent of all codes). Eight of the 10 PMOs also used anti-imperialist narratives in 32 paragraphs (22.2 per cent of narrative fidelity codes, 2 per cent of all codes). Similarly, eight of the 10 PMOs also used global justice narratives in 25 paragraphs (17.4 per cent of narrative fidelity codes, 1.6 per cent of all codes). For example, rather than representing the US government as a force of good, the BRC presents it as an imperialist force of evil: '[O]ne clearly sees the callousness and evil intent with which US imperialism treats the lives and property of others, especially non-white peoples around the globe' (Black Radical Congress, 13 September 2001). Saying that the United States is an imperial power rejects the core narrative that the US is a global leader spreading freedom, human rights, and democracy (Gamson, 1992). While protesting Congressional authorization of additional monies for the war in Afghanistan, WILPF combined anti-militarism and global justice narratives:

> This is on top of the over $800 billion yearly invested in military budgets world-wide to ensure the world's submission to globalization and the multinationals that run it... In opposing war and military budgets, we are defending the whole world against genocide, starvation and slave working conditions. (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, undated statement entitled *911 Housework*)

Considerations of potency suggest that the use of anti-militarism, anti-imperialist, and global justice narratives was directed more towards those belonging to oppositional cultures than towards the general public.

Overall, peace group statements focused more on appealing to collective identities than did the President's speeches (see Figure 1). Although nationalist identity was frequently harnessed to serve peace movement goals, the majority of their appeals were to oppositional identities based upon consciousness of racial, gender, and class inequalities. For instance, New York City Labor Against the War framed war opposition firmly in terms of its negative impact upon the interests of workers:

> War will also take a heavy toll on us. For Americans in uniform – the overwhelming number of whom are workers and people of color – it will be another Vietnam. It will generate further terror in this country against Arabs, Muslims, South Asians, people of color and immigrants, and erode our civil liberties. It will redirect billions to the military and corporate executives, while draining such essential domestic programs as education, health care and the social security trust. (NYCLAW, 27 September 2001)

Similarly, after noting the costs of the war in Afghanistan to 'African Americans and other poor communities across this country', the BRC urgently called for 'the building of a Black United Front Against the War and for the rebuilding and unification of the Black Liberation movement'. (Black Radical Congress, BRC Statement Against the War of Retaliation)

By referencing oppositional narratives and oppositional identities, peace movement organizations sought to increase their frames' potency with supporters. Such content, however, reduced the extent to which PMOs could take advantage of discursive opportunities along the same dimension of potency. The ideological incompatibility of the assumptions behind oppositional and dominant discourses renders their simultaneous application problematic. Portraying the US simultaneously as both a global leader promoting freedom and as an imperialistic power would be unlikely to strike a chord with either the general public or with those belonging to oppositional cultures. The strained plausibility of logical contradictions that are tightly coupled both thematically and spatially in a statement encourages actors to make a tradeoff for each rhetorical dimension – either to appropriate or to reject dominant discourses.

Democratic legitimacy and rational legal authority.   Two other major differences remain unexplained. Peace movement organizations devoted more text to gaining empirical credibility and moral authority than to any other dimension of potency (see Figure 1). In contrast, President Bush devoted the least amount of text to empirical credibility and a below average amount of text to moral authority. We interpret these differences as supporting our assertions that democratic legitimacy and rational legal authority provide greater empirical credibility and moral authority to power holders. As the democratically elected leader of a state with a long history of using war and repression as policy instruments, President Bush could simply assert that the September 11th attacks were unprovoked acts of aggression that must be responded to with war and repression. His administration profited from an immediate and significant boost in its legitimacy. National Opinion Research Center surveys indicate that great confidence in the executive branch had fallen to 13.5 per cent of respondents in the early stages of the administration (Smith *et al.*, 2001, p. 3). Immediately after September 11th, however, confidence in the executive branch soared to 51.5 per cent of

respondents. Being widely perceived as reasonable and just reduced the need for providing evidence or moral justification for administration policies.

Lacking these sources of legitimacy, peace movement organizations were forced to spend significant amounts of text providing evidence that the September 11th attacks were provoked (but not justifiable) acts that can and should be responded to through alternative means. Peace groups discussed extensively the causes of terrorism, including state-sponsored terrorism. PMOs also used what we refer to as a 'boomerang' frame. A boomerang frame presents power holders' policies as the root cause of violence by an out-group. In the context of September 11th, PMOs asserted that the attacks might not have occurred if the attackers were not provoked by US foreign policies. For instance, Pax Christi states:

> In this climate of international disorder, where the most powerful can act with impunity, it should not surprise us that some among the disenfranchised will strike back in any way that is possible. As long as US foreign policy is based on a principle of 'might makes right', those who have no power will strike back as best as they can. (Pax Christi, 25 September 2001)

All 10 groups included in our analysis used this type of frame. The boomerang frame provides a broader social and historical context that blames power holders for the suffering of ordinary people. As such, it attempts to undermine the empirical credibility of the administration's portrayal of the attacks as unprovoked acts of madmen.

The Bush administration argued that war abroad and heightened repression at home were the only possible responses to the September 11th attacks. Peace movement organizations devoted most of their energies towards trying to establish that alternative responses were, in fact, viable. We coded more paragraphs for alternative response framing than for any other code. The code appeared in statements by all 10 PMOs, a collective total of 171 paragraphs (45.4 per cent of empirical credibility codes, 10.8 per cent of all codes). In particular, PMOs tried to establish international institutions as effective responses to terrorism. For instance, FOR asserted the following:

> International police efforts remain the appropriate response to international crime. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's pledge that the United Nations – with treaties against terrorism already in place – should take the lead in efforts to rid the world of terrorism. Police action within the context and the support of the international community builds respect for law. Lawless actions in an undeclared war do not. (Fellowship of Reconciliation, 20 December 2001)

WAND similarly offered a list of alternatives to bombing in Afghanistan, including:

> Sending in an international military force to capture the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the terrorist attacks. Allowing for the extradition of suspects to third party countries for trial. Using an ad hoc tribunal, selected by the UN Security Council or affected states, to try suspects for the September 11th attacks. Prosecute under the statute on crimes against humanity; join the International Criminal Court. Leading the UN in bringing diplomatic, political, and economic pressure to bear against the governing regimes of nations that give support or shelter to terror networks (Women's Actions for New Directions, 12 November 2001)

The willingness of both of these peace groups to propose the use of force by international institutions in response to the attacks likely heightened the empirical credibility of their assertions of policy alternatives among those assuming that force is necessary to deal with organized violence. That these same groups are deeply committed to promoting non-violent solutions to international conflicts demonstrates the steepness of the uphill climb that they face in convincing the general public that viable alternatives to war exist.

Conclusion

Framing analysis has yet to explain adequately what producers anticipate will make their public collective action frames appealing. By conceptualizing ways that meso-level and macro-level processes shape the contents of frames, we remove the black box of cognition as a stumbling block to theorization on how political actors mobilize consensus. Our seven-dimension typology of anticipated sources of potency facilitates recognition of ways that collective identities, emotions, and discourses shape the contents of frames. In the first three months after September 11th, both statements by President Bush and ten US-based peace movement organizations attempted to gain potency on each of the seven dimensions in our typology. While assessing seven different frame attributes is laborious, it helped us to recognize the multifaceted and complex ways that political actors arouse passions, invoke principles, conform to norms, appeal to reason, offer evidence, spark the imagination, signal group affiliations, reference the sacred and revered and apply familiar narratives in endeavors to gain support for their policy positions.

The field of framing analysis has rightly been criticized for emphasizing strategic considerations to the neglect of dialogic and ideological aspects of discourse. However, our data also suggest that Steinberg (1998) goes too far in the opposite direction by calling for a theoretical and methodological breach. Such abandonment would be costly and premature. While frequently both appropriating and rejecting dominant discourses, the peace movement organizations included in our analysis focused their frames on only one of these approaches for each separate dimension of potency. It is statistically improbable that statements from 10 different PMOs would randomly and unintentionally produce such a consistent pattern of discursive separation. Rather, the findings suggest carefully crafted, multivalent frames aimed at, on the one hand, seizing upon discursive and emotional opportunities presented by heightened attention to the events of September 11th, while on the other hand, avoiding alienating traditional adherents belonging to oppositional cultures.

At the same time, our study integrates the insights of critics of framing analysis by highlighting the importance of dialogic processes and broader cultural contexts to strategic decision making. Discursive contention involved peace movement efforts to blunt the potency of the Bush administration's message. It also included attempts to draft off of the potency achieved by the administration's frames through appropriating their content to opposite ends (e.g. the boomerang frame). Our analysis also demonstrates how cultural factors shaped framing. Both sides were presented with the same discursive and emotional opportunities to persuade potential supporters. The oppositional cultures of traditional constituents, however, constrained peace movement organizations from taking full advantage of these opportunities.

Our research also highlights the importance of institutionally-based power as a structural factor shaping social movement frames. Peace movement organizations frequently referenced dominant discourses. By appropriating language and ideas given

potency via repeated use by power holders, PMOs sought to enlist their persuasive capacities on behalf of oppositional claims. In a time of externally precipitated crisis, to simply reject dominant discourses would likely result in ridicule if not incomprehension from the majority of public opinion socialized into taking these ideas for granted. Lacking the legitimacy of the State compelled PMOs to focus heavily upon establishing the empirical credibility and moral authority of their claims. Power disparities, therefore, both complicate and disadvantage peace movement efforts to be persuasive.

Our study complements recent scholarship highlighting the role of emotions in social movements. After the attacks, both sides abided by emotional norms of grieving, directly referenced intense emotions, and sought to translate these emotions into support for their policy positions. The importance of emotional work to the potency of a frame is hard to exaggerate, particularly in the context of collective public events that evoke strong emotions and activate forceful norms regulating the expression of emotion.

These insights were made possible through innovations in research design. Creating a multidimensional typology of frequently anticipated sources of potency enabled us to compare more precisely the contents of the frames of power holders and challengers, identifying similarities and differences in their persuasive emphases. To our knowledge, this is one of the first studies to provide a rigorous qualitative and quantitative assessment of how policy opponents attempt to persuade potential supporters. Subsequent research should explore different policy areas, critical discourse moments, cultures and institutional settings to deepen our understanding of how variations in contexts impact efforts at political persuasion.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Thematic patterns across collective action frames constitute discourses. Much of our recent work goes beyond the framing literature by focusing both empirically and conceptually upon discourses (e.g. Coy *et al.*, 2008; Woehrle *et al.*, 2008). Within this article, however, we have decided to work within the boundaries of frame analysis in an effort to make its application in future studies more useful.
2. Our definition differs from Ferree's (2003), in that we assume discursive opportunities vary over time, and that at certain moments the general public may be more receptive to oppositional discourses than to dominant discourses.
3. We weighted code frequencies for each peace movement organization using the following formula: (Median # Words for all PMOs/Total Words for Individual PMO) multiplied by (Mean # Words per Paragraph for Individual PMO/Median of PMO Means). We then summed the weighted frequencies to create one value for each code.
4. Texts of specific statements issued by peace movement organizations referenced in this article are available upon request.

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Appendix. Code classification by policy position and anticipated source of potency

Policy Position:	Empirical Credibility	Experiential Commensurability	Narrative Fidelity	Identity Appeal	Moral Authority	Emotional Resonance	Threat Salience
			Anticipated Source:				
Pro-War (Bush administration)	Cause of terror	Cold War	Coalition of Nations	American identity	Civil liberties	Anger	Extreme
	Gulf War	Hero	Democracy	God bless America	Crime	Courage	Friend or enemy
	No alternative	History	Freedom	Human cost: Children	Human rights	Fear	Security
	Oil	New era	Good vs evil	Human cost: Class	International law	Grief	Terrorist
	Peace	Sacrifice	Leadership	Human cost: Domestic	International opinion	Hope	Threat
	Pretext	War on terror	Power	Human cost: Gender	Justice	Laughter	Torture
	Relief		Troops	Human cost: Health	Religion	Love	Violence condemned
	September 11th		United Nations	Identity politics: Class	Right the wrong	Memory	WMD
	Smart bomb		Unity	Identity politics: Gender	Terror condemned	Pain	
	Vietnam			Identity politics: Religion		Pride	
				Patriot		Resolve	
				Oppressed		Sorry	
						Trust	
						Victims	
Anti-War (PMOs)	Alternative response	Empathy	Democracy: Failure	American identity	Civil liberties	Anger	Cycle of violence
	Boomerang	Hero	Democracy: Spread	(positive and negative)	Crime	Anxiety	Domestic threat
	Causes of war	Human spirit	Foreign policy: Failure	Coalition of PMOs	Democracy in US	Courage	External threat
	Civilian casualties	Sacrifice	Foreign policy: Wrong	Human cost: Class	Freedom	Fear	Human cost: Nation
	Gulf War	Victim	Global democracy	Human cost: Domestic	Gandhi	Grief	Security
	Palestine/Israel	War on terror	Global justice	Human cost: Gender	Human rights	Hope	Scapegoating
	Pretext		Leadership: State	Human cost: Race	International law	Love	Threat not real
	Sanctions		Militarism	Identity politics: Class	International opinion	Manipulation	Unilateral policies
	September 11th		Multinational corps.	Identity politics: Gender	Just war	Pain	Unilateral violence
	State terror		Oil	Identity politics: Race	Martin Luther King, Jr.	Pride	WMD

(*Continues*)

Appendix. *Continued*

Anticipated Source:

Policy Position:	Empirical Credibility	Experiential Commensurability	Narrative Fidelity	Identity Appeal	Moral Authority	Emotional Resonance	Threat Salience
	Torture Two wrongs Vietnam		US Imperialism	Identity politics: Religion Oppressed Patriot Relief work	Non-violence Supported Religion Trust United Nations Violence condemned	Revenge Terror Condemned Victims	