

# Advanced studies in media

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Page 103 To what extent would it be fair to say that mass media had no choice but to report what the government wanted it to report during the Falklands war? Using evidence from sources 3a, 3b, 3c and 3d, it can be seen that there is indication which shows that the government did in fact control what was reported in the Falklands war. It can be seen that the government did make it difficult to report events from the war, which is presented in the fact that there was no photos in the first 55 days.

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This long delay in media involvement was controlled by the government, clearly expressing the influence they had. This idea is further backed up in source 3c, which compared the Falklands war (1982) to the ‘ Crimean War’ (1853) while concerning the topic of media involvement. However, even though it is clear to say the government controlled the media involving the Falklands war, did it result in the mass media only reporting what the government wanted it to, or not?

There is clear evidence which suggests that mass media had no choice but to report what the government wanted it to, but to what extent was this? As can be seen in source 3d, the government clearly, and to a heavy extent wanted to control what was reported in the media involving the Falklands war, this can be seen in ‘ the remoteness of this war... facilitated media management’. This suggests that the location enabled the government to easily control what was being portrayed in the media.

This idea in source 3d is backed up through my own knowledge which proposes that the location made it difficult to report events of the war, as the

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geographical location and technological collimations disadvantaged reporters. It strongly suggests that the media had no choice but to report what the government wanted it to in the concluding sentence, which states ‘the British government... practised deception and media manipulation’. Also, it must be accounted that source 3d contains strong credibility. Written in 2009, it allows the writers to have a clear overview of the whole war.

Also, being established historians, the writer would possess objectiveness, which results in a more reliable judgement. Using source 3c in conjunction with source 3d brings a strong extent to the idea mass media was controlled by the government. This is because source 3c, written by Julian Barnes explicitly suggests that the government hid the truth from the public, meaning they controlled what was seen in the media, this idea is seen frequently in source 3c. The live reporting of ITV, of the deportation of the British navy was ‘the last sunny, honest, unspun images’ seen in the public eye.

Also, as seen in source 3c, information was frequently leaked from the government- whether good or bad. This can be supported by my own knowledge, which showed that the information of the reposition of south Georgia wasn’t received by the British audience suggests that both good and bad news was hidden from the public, or leaked via the government, still showing their involvement. However, it must be remembered, that the source was written in 2002, the 20th anniversary of the Falklands war, in The Guardian.

The guardian is a left wing newspaper, meaning they will support the labour government. Seeing as Margaret Thatcher, the prime minister in office

during the Falklands War was conservative, it would seem that he would be subjective towards the labour government, and be critical of the conservative role. Using source 3b along with 3d and 3c brings significant strength to the idea, that the government controlled the media. This can be seen in the idea only 16 reporters were taken on the Taskforce vessel to make it easier for the government to manipulate their reporting.

However, the reporters are also described as ‘gung ho’ in source 3b, this would suggest they were involved in the spirit of war, and were reporting the war through a patriotic view, which wasn’t inflicted by the government, suggesting maybe the media wasn’t wholly controlled by the government. There is evidence which does in fact suggest that the Media could report what it wanted to during the Falklands war presented in the sources. In source 3a there is a slight disagreement to the fact that media could report what it wanted to.

It can be seen that even though the original headlines of, ‘gotcha’ seem to show chauvinistic views, towards Argentine death, the headlines were then quickly changed to ‘Did 1200 Argies drown’? From my own knowledge I can add that the use of tabloid language, such as ‘Argies’ would have dehumanised the War, which would have been welcomed by the government, but not inflicted by them. This suggests that the Media did have a choice in what to report, but may have reported certain things to please the government.

The idea that the Sun soon changed the original cover implies that the media was able to self-censor its own exuberance, contrasting the suggested governmental influence regarding the report of the War. Source 3b also

suggests that the media could report what it wanted. This is shown in the way Patrick Bishop, a newspaper reporter from the Falklands War suggests how they weren't influenced by any 'stimulus from the military'. This implies that the reporters could in fact report what they want.

However, it does suggest in the source, that if a reporter wasn't feeling 'patriotic or positive', the military would have to 'lean on them'. I can add with my own knowledge that all media representatives were controlled by the armed forces that censored reports, and were keen for no negative broadcasting. This idea suggests that maybe there were some pressures faced by the reporters to report patriotic and celebrative views from the war. It must be remembered that the source has high credibility, as it was published in 1982 it has the positive of hindsight and can weight up information from the whole of the war.

Also, being from the journalist Patrick Bishop, who was there at the time, he is more likely to be representative of the whole truth. In conclusion, to question how extensive the government was in regulating the reporting of the Falklands war, it can be seen, by using the sources that the government had a high controllability involving the mass media coverage. This idea is commonly presented in the sources. However, it must be remembered, that in some circumstances the government had a limited control on what the mass media published about the Falklands War and what was reported from there.