MYTH IN CRISIS: PRESENTATIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND CONTESTATIONS IN THE MEDIA DURING THE COAL DISPUTE AND FINANCIAL CRISIS.

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Abstract

This thesis examines how print media outputs use myth to render explanations of crisis circumstances authoritative and legitimate. To do this, it explores press accounts of two recent crisis situations in recent British social and political life: the coal dispute of 1984-5 and the financial crisis of 2008-9. These cases are used to consider how political myth might shape social understandings of major events in the public sphere. Foregrounding myth enables a questioning of normative, everyday knowledge claims about each crisis, and provides a useful complement to expected economic, political, and material analyses.

A critical discourse analysis approach provides an underpinning for a thematic study that explores how myths develop and sustain dominant social and political narratives in times of difficulty. The functions of myths are studied through a theoretical framework of four interlinking mythic themes which organise and analyse how myths work in each crisis situation. *The myths of history, continuity and change, the myths of choice and agency, the myths of legitimisation and delegitimisation* and *the myths of reputation, heroism, and villainy* work together to support an overarching myth of each crisis. In the coal dispute, myths were developed proactively to construct the overarching image of the wrong-doing of an outdated collective resisting necessary change, validating the emerging neoliberal hegemony of the Thatcher administration. For the financial crisis, myths were constructed reactively, focused on individual excess rather than structural problems which defended sector stability and preserved the status quo.

Drawing on these thematic insights, the thesis concludes that mediated political myths act as a flexible resource of persuasion, operating through ambiguities to sustain the legitimacy and authority of state projects by shaping collective judgements and naturalising public understandings of events. The study of myths in public life can therefore provide important insights into our understandings of socio-political continuity and change in our contemporary world.

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Chapter one: A case for myth analyses in crises

Introduction

The role of myths in media outputs is one way that political ideas gain coherence and traction, become accepted explanations for events, and part of a contemporary society's legitimised knowledge base. These outputs also provide insight on how political operatives use media to promote their own standpoints and gain advantage. This is not simple explanations of media imposing distorted pictures of political ideas and interpretative strands upon inactive citizens, nor of systemic feeds from some elusive elite (see Davis, 2006:603) but the way political stories are mediated in the service of continuous legitimation for action in public life.

Crisis scenarios are one important way that the roles of myth presented by media outlets become visible. Myths mediate representations of rising antagonisms and support political legitimation in the public sphere. Here the media have a transformative capacity in breaching organisational and political silences, (Clemente, Durand and Porac, 2016:436) and shaping public understanding of issues. As noted by Phillips and Hardy (2002:69), moments of crisis "reveal discursive moves that might otherwise be taken for granted and hidden". Whilst comparative studies of crisis situations are less common, they can provide useful insights into the active production of consent in different contexts.

 This thesis therefore undertakes a thematic case study of media outputs on two crisis situations in British socio-political life, the coal dispute of 1984-5, and global financial crisis of 2008-9, making the case for a greater role for myth analysis as complement to existing scholarship of political media reporting in each. Sub-considerations include the functions myths serve in crisis situations, and how print media organise and perpetuate these myths through narrative patterns to create authority and legitimacy.

Legitimisation activities around political and social institutions and choices in ideological language that present certain options as favourable or common-sense are less explored in crisis reporting than material, economic and political factors for stasis or change, despite being key to binding and stability in social systems (Mills,

2000:31). This is despite the continuing role of the media in manufacturing critique or support for political activity and approval through the narrative stories they sell. Part of the challenge is that socio-political institutions are in themselves assumed, normative and naturalised through myth, (Barthes, 2009:152-4). A related issue is that storytelling aspects are seen as distracting from critical thought rather than integral to it, (Midgley, 2011:1). A third problematic assumption is that analysis of myths and their meanings belong in anthropological traditions, based on studies of pre-writing societies such as the work of Lévi-Strauss (1995) [1979], rather than as modern tools of persuasion, (Charteris-Black, 2005:209). Therefore, contemporary mythmaking is often relegated to a secondary function in political analyses. One way to foreground these myths is to look for the events and environments where they are most visible, such as crises.

Furthermore, interdisciplinary interest in production and dissemination of political narratives as mediated knowledges of public events is less common than that circulating around general theories of myths (Flood, 2002:3). Thematic and repetitive stories from media outlets are central to both political authorities in framing legitimacy and citizenship in confirming it. Less attention here in favour of material analyses is particularly surprising in relation to crisis events where ambiguities, assumptions and threats drive insecurities and provoke emotional responses from those in public life. In crises, media stories aid citizens in managing complex change and adjusted relationships with a State which both benefits and threatens depending upon when it is "us" and when it is "them" (Edelman, 1970:1) Whilst modern societies might define their crises as events that have potential to change social and political systems, their reporting through press outlets as mediated political myths gives credence to actions of the state in resolving them.

Much potential insight from adding to expected material analyses of comparative crisis events is therefore possible by considering the integration of complementary discursive and symbolic forms such as myths into the ways that we consider press outputs. The notion of myth used here is not then the assumed and normative common use of the term nor misplaced interpretations of legends. It is rather those "foundational descriptions of the world in a narrative form" that provide

meaning and direction for societies (Christensen and Cornelissen, 2015: 133) where real events are threaded together in particular ways to influence voters. This thesis therefore considers interactions between crises and myths in political life as mediated by press outlets.

There are four main aims for this introductory chapter. Firstly, an overview of press purposes in society, including a brief historical context for development. Secondly, a general introduction to aspects of media outlets specific to those comparison crises by exploring their conditions of operation. Thirdly, the chapter offers a brief overview of myths and mythmaking in public life before the topic is explored in greater depth in chapter two. Finally, the introduction closes with a guide to subsequent chapters. Together these aims create a frame for the thesis, binding what is in and out of scope, before entering a more detailed discussion on the sites of mythmaking in chapter two and building on crisis analyses in chapter three.

Changing press coverage

Few institutions in modern society are as visible as media as producers and disseminators of political stories and in confirming legitimacy and authority for those in elected office. As argued by Dailey and Browning (2014:24) ideas circulate and become accepted through narrative repetitions. However, existing understandings of how different media narratives frame social functions and crisis events have developed over time and according to platform. In terms of the latter, analysis has become much more complex recently with the explosion in digital formats, online providers, and social media interactions for online news providers. In this case, online news sources have been excluded from the corpus as these were not available during the earlier period studied.

This thesis will therefore concentrate on the plank of print media sources to trace output patterns of public mythmaking. Print media coverage of both crises is extensive, and whilst circulation numbers fell significantly during the period between the two, large daily sales make for a sizeable possible corpus. (See Curran and Seaton, (2018:175) for statistics; where National Daily circulation ranges from 14,886,000 in 1980 to 9873,000 by 2010). Whilst television coverage of both crises

is substantial, and a worthwhile angle for a future study, its addition here as source material would make unmanageable datasets. Additional complexity in using television sources also stems from changing regulations around impartiality and balance in public service broadcasting (see Wahl-Jorgensen et al, 2017). However, where contributors have undertaken complementary work into discursive strategies and framing issues for broadcasters during these crises (e.g., Philo, 1995; Berry, 2012), their insights will be included where they add to press evidence.

Political myth; history and purposes of the press

Changing ideas around press purposes in delivering political legitimation to a modern society carry their own myths. At its heart is a perpetual contestation around opposing press legends; whether press outlets provide an authentic instrument of social representation, or whether journalism has been covertly or directly co-opted as an institution of hegemonic governance. The juxtaposition is highlighted by Curran and Seaton (2018:4), who polarise myths of the democratising and representative "Fourth Estate of Whig legend" hallowed in press circles against indoctrinating "'rotten boroughs' dominated by oligarchs" of current academic critique. Curran and Seaton (2018:5) also critique the accompanying myth of free press development through history, raising the critical position that press history reflects social relations of the society producing it. Their approach complements this thesis in terms of considering conditions for production and social functions for promoted myths in crisis situations.

Conceptualising media as a form of social representation revolves around its role in manufacturing and maintaining legitimacy and consent to govern in a society, where it provides linking mechanisms between government and citizenship. Whilst conditions for initial development of the press in a liberal public sphere is not within the scope of this thesis, a brief historical context of press development is helpful. This adds insight to how media outlets could come to provide a guide to policy processes and be accepted as a barometer of, or proxy for public opinion.

The story of press evolution is accounted for in historical and sociological terms by Habermas (1989,[1962]:75-82). He distinguishes the development of a public

sphere for debate and consultation which is as different from the private. Emergence and subsequent evolution of the press as one historical facet of State legitimation and contestation are studied through citizens' rights to consultation in a developing public sphere. He writes of how, "only publicity inside and outside the parliament could secure the continuity of critical public debate, and its function, to transform domination, as Burke expressed it, from a matter of will into a matter of reason", (Habermas, 1989:100).

Reason, however, is a condition of *whose* will and *whose* reason, and concentration of media ownership may result in limited expression (Flood, 2002:61) and confirmation of dominant ideas depending upon the historical period studied. Until the internet, select media controlled distribution of the overwhelming majority of current political information in modern Western societies. As the media write their own narratives and enact their own interpretations of public sphere activities, choices made by media outlets in terms of ideological shaping and bias to certain ways of political seeing are categorised in three ways by Puglisi and Snyder (2011:932). *Explicit* political behaviour (e.g., endorsements), *implicit*, (by language choices and sources selected) and finally, by choosing not to report, or actively suppressing information. Such choices are the breeding grounds of myth, where events are presented in particular ways, or not presented at all. Cohen (1963:13) comments: "if we do not see a story in the newspapers (or catch it on radio or television), it effectively has not happened so far as we are concerned...the press...may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think *about."*

Reason or gaining of legitimacy and consent is partly built via media narratives through what Hall (1998:85-90) terms the dialectical process of consent production, where ideas and ideologies work to "promote and coordinate the interests of a group" (van Dijk, 1998:24). Hall discusses how much a society might gain from this continuous production of consent but highlights how the winning of credibility and legitimacy involves marginalising alternative constructions and dominated groups. He also raises important questions about the social role of the media if it were not reflective of consensus but reproduced "those very definitions of the situation

which favoured and legitimated the existing structure of things", (Hall, 1998:63). Philo et al (1977:13) consider this role of consent production as an illusion of balance. Reported views have differing statuses and legitimacies, "in a very real way, only one set of statements make "sense" in that we are systematically given the information necessary to understand the explanations and polices which they represent".

Through this theoretical and idealistic role of ensuring public debate, of mediation as movement of meaning (Fairclough, 2003:30) media historically received their mandate. Their role, along with other institutions that judge legal, social, or ethical responsible actions within society are identified as "social control agents" by Pollock et al (2016:240). Weick (2011:144) discusses this process of action legitimation in the context of justification: "discourse that introduces legitimacy and stability into social action". Media stories are then a constituent part of established rituals of process that serve to mediate public decision-making processes.

However, the central issue analysed by Habermas of the press as one form of *vox populi* is also a part of this thesis, as it implicitly conveys accompanying obligation. Readers have a right to the information they need to fulfil their own civic responsibilities as voters and social actors. This information is conveyed through press stories, some of which pass into our everyday narratives and play a role in voters' decision making. Such knowledge and the right to act upon it provides one means for the generation of consent and legitimacy.

Press and free-market societies

In free-market conditions, freedom for publishing and distribution alongside competitive struggle for readership (Chalaby, 1996:691) should theoretically reflect broad ranges of social opinions with a wide assortment of possible narrative options available to the public. This position is successfully disinterred by Petley (2012:3) in his submission to the Leveson inquiry. He notes that owners and politicians agree that a "marketplace of ideas should be treated and should function in the same way as the market for any other product or service". However, mythical

representations of what a free market is and does obfuscates legal and structural underpinnings facilitating it. Petley goes on to note how efficiencies in the market favour advertisers, shareholders, and dominant interests (Petley, 2012:4). Economics of media production align with the purposes of their political stakeholders.

Conceptions of free press principles also downplays simple structural concerns that capitalist need to sell papers will always overcome what Walker (2002:108) refers to the journalists' occupational myth; "where a lonely battle is fought for honesty". He draws on Margach (1981) to explore gaps between a mythic journalistic vocation to "write the 'first draft of history'" (p.103) and the realities of power and influence to own political truth. Petley (2004) also picks up this detached journalistic observer image as a key press myth, noting mutual and increasing reliance between journalists and politicians. Asking a question and writing a report are noted as political actions in themselves and thus news stories are the joining of reporters and political operatives.

Ebb and flow of journalist and political actors' mutual reliance depending upon prevailing conditions is another key part of contestation between perceptions and purposes of the press. Other studies have seized such metronomic polarities of democratic representation or hegemonic dominance as lenses for discussions on power. This might be the power of the media industry itself in either shaping agendas or affecting outcomes, or the power of elites to control it. Both those perspectives have produced excellent scholarship. However, focussing on aspects of power tends to produce work focussed on individual behaviours, corporate practices, and high politics. Observations about who does or does not have power in a situation tend to be less concerned with output products of contestation and dominance such as news articles.

In terms of public receipt, whilst outcomes from the dialectical relationship between media output and reader are important, in terms of how media language affects "attitudes and opinions through the way it presents people and issues" (Bell, 1994:4), the focus here leans towards Fairclough's (1996:25) conditions of

production, rather those of interpretation. Whilst both are important, for space reasons, this thesis focuses on the former.

Press environments in two crisis situations

Before discussing roles of myth in mediating political activity, this following section looks at press history in more detail close to the case study environments to set the context of reporting conditions. Whilst a detailed press history (see Conboy, 2004) and its political and social evolution is not within scope of this thesis, it is important to set the context of production to understand its purposes. Whilst others have considered these contexts to consider sites of power relations from material outputs of the press, this thesis chooses instead to focus on mediated political myths at times of crisis as a source of legitimation for political action. This brief overview opens up media contexts ahead of later empirical analysis in chapters five and six, serving as a springboard for case comparison during chapter seven. A view on key press themes also helps understand the journey from social democratic production prior to the first crisis window, through to current integrated and mediatised environments.

Press under the Thatcher government: introductory overview

The Thatcher administration saw ideal conditions for shaping myths at the intersection of press and politics, as during this period, Britain experienced huge expansion in the media industry, (Curran and Seaton, 2018:350). Platform launches such as breakfast television and enhancements of satellite technologies facilitated new interactions with government and cycles of audience consumption. The era also shook any life from historical views of media as a straightforward linking mechanism between government and populace which have long since fallen away to current understandings of active contributor to policy agendas (McBeth et al, 2018:796). This administration actively fostered such links; reciprocity and privilege became increasingly visible, documented, and consolidated. Just as post-war consensus politics gave way to neoliberal ideologies, so too did ideas of simple mediation of information from politicians to press.

Amalgamations in media ownership were significant here. The ensuing long-standing Murdoch-Thatcher alliance is identified by Eldridge, Kitzinger, and Williams (1997:34) as an "axis", citing Shawcross (1992:210) on a "symbiotic relationship" of mutual reinforcement and encouragement. This was demonstrated through Murdoch's acquisition of *The Times* and non-referral to the monopolies commission. Jones (2009:86) comments on how expansion and consolidation had "a profound effect on the way news was reported" and a major impact on industrial relations. He uses a coal dispute example in illustration, connecting vested interest in NUM defeat for Murdoch helping prepare the ground for anticipated conflict ahead of production movement to Wapping in 1986. Eldridge et al (1997:37) label it a clear demonstration of proprietor power against the unions.

Bernard Ingham as Margaret Thatcher's press secretary provided another significant contribution to changing relations at the axis of politics and press. Under his tenure, rising interest in public relations capabilities was fashioned into governmental "'orchestra'" (Harris, Routledge and Smart, 1988:15) of synchronous messaging. *The Authorised Version* highlights his "hidden hand" in political operations, and the man himself as "the most successful, most powerful and most feared civil servant ever…". The authors note increasing interferences with media sources alongside raising their discomfort over civil service direction, "increasingly seen as a political tool rather than an impartial institution".

Interventions from "political hit-man" Ingham and his protegees (Harris et al, 1988) and continuous, active support of press barons were a critical element of sustaining Thatcher, projecting Conservative policies as normative. Curran and Seaton, (2018:121) cite overt partisanship, active intimidation and weeding out of dissenting journalists such as Donald McIntyre at the *Sunday Times* for his support of union collectivism. They note visible alignments to Thatcherism via the appointment of Andrew Neil and Murdoch's accreting empire as significant alongside Jones (1986:2) who identifies preoccupation around requirements of media presentation as greater priority than negotiation during the strike.

Jones (1986:128-30) also raises direct interferences from media proprietors during the strike, this time from Maxwell. Having purchased the *Mirror,* he offered himself

as intermediary, as allegations of his own reports written under correspondents' by-lines in direct support of the government emerged. Jones also notes (1986:87-90) reactive agency of printworkers on two occasions; firstly, from the general secretary of *The Express* printworkers demanding right of reply on behalf of Mr Scargill to a report on a theoretical speech he might be about to give. Secondly, refusal of printworkers to handle a front-page photograph captioned *Mine Fuehrer* from *The Sun* (15 May 1984), reporting the government as "indignant" at printworkers coordinated efforts. Behaviours ranging from political influence to wholesale manufactured stories of financial corruption continued beyond the strike, (Milne, 2014;169-214).

Contemporary documents demonstrate not only cooperation and patronage with partisan media suppliers, but direct government intervention to ensure preferred appointments. Philo (1995:205) discusses Thatcher's interference with the BBC board, quoting Stephen Hurst (advisor to the Director-General) that "governors were more likely to be appointed for Conservative sympathies…" than other reasons.

Media outlets were not unaware of shifts in the game. Packaging Margaret Thatcher forms the subject of a concurrent piece of reportage in the *Daily Mirror,* (Haines, 1984:16-7), identifying deliberate fostering of election uncertainties in 1983. "Secret and intense" personal marketisation was developed alongside bringing the election forward to capitalise on the Falklands victory. Haines draws on Cockerell et al, (1985) showing how these techniques were freshly brought to British politics, as successful adaptations of Nixon's campaigns. He concludes they "took their product to market and the voters bought it". Chapter seven develops implications of introducing marketing approaches to public information during this era.

Press developments mirrored other 1980's cultural changes; consolidating media ownership accompanied a rise of individualism and a push back on social democratic frameworks, again considered in chapter seven. The impact of direct media collaboration with government during this period was such that Gamble (1988:217) remarked that, "under the Thatcher government the British press has

been more one-sided in its partisanship than at any time in the history of British democracy". These comments concur with former Tory MP Ian Gilmour (1993:23) that the press could "scarcely have been more fawning if it had been state-controlled". Philo and Miller (2000:831) report this time as a "high point in the development of news management and of state and business public relations". It is this *news management* and the evolvement of mediatisation in the intervening period between the two crises considered next, before discussing the context of news in the period up to the financial crisis.

The intervening years – from mediation to mediatisation

'Mediatisation' as an idea has drifted into the common academic lexicon of late and is becoming popular in theoretical contributions. Its mutual framing proposition about how media and political communication purposefully shape sociocultural developments is not necessarily considered problematic, but its impacts remain widely contested. Livingstone and Lunt (2009:706) claim that not only are media changing "but so too, in tandem, are their wider effects on institutions and practices across society". Deacon and Stanyer (2014: 1034) however, critique loose definitions in the field, and casual invocations of a portable and growing concept. Similarly, Liu (2018) raises concerns about how the term, and its assumed implications of media-centric approaches can overlook dominant logics. Recent ubiquity of a still-smudgy concept is problematised by Corner (2018:83), who critiques adoption via "broad process of slow transformation" rather than vigorous debate. He discusses the work of Flew (2017:51-2) in exploring this phenomenon, where relations between media and political, economic, and social institutions are increasing in interdependence towards a new age of political communication.

Herkman (2010:701) by contrast, separates term adoption issues from explanations around practical consequences of mediatisation. He identifies a series of standpoints from 'neutral' descriptions of increased public relations professionalism to critical analyses of a declining public sphere. The latter is interesting in this context, as closer bonds between press and government, centralisation, and professionalisation of PR functions all flourished in the Thatcher era and continued to do so thereafter as part of developing neoliberal governance. Miller and Dinan's

(2000:6) account of public relations as one of the "mechanisms by which power and influence are won and lost" sees its rise as a key part of transforming western political life. By the turn of the century, Boggs (2000:162) identified ongoing media spectacles and "reinforced state-corporate networks...of control". Livingstone, (2009:6) concurs, writing of media annexation and subordination of "previously powerful authorities of government", including church, education, and family as part of mediatisation processes.

Koller (2005:205-6) maps the outcomes: a chain of controls, noting how elites use preferential access to journalists, directing settings, topics, participants (and their contributions), turn allocation and sequencing. Recipients, as "peripheral constituencies" see corporate discourses exclusively via secondary lenses and are excluded as outgroups where they do not share underlying values. Happer and Philo (2013:322) explore press production as acting to mediate and sense-make policymakers for audiences, promoting certain knowledges as privileged, and thus authoritative and truthful.

Potential impacts of closing media-political dependency are clear by the time of financial crisis coverage. The outcome of Berry's analysis (2012) that the overwhelming majority of crisis commentary for the *Today* programme were from City or political sources was hardly surprising. Even the appearance of traditional Habermasian mediation of accountable decision-making from a variety of sources had been sloughed away. Happer (2017:439) outlines an endgame where executive and political elite activities are beyond media debate, with information fed via PR agencies into media production. In summary, media content becomes "increasingly produced based on calculated assessments of its likely commercial viability and ratings potential, rather than any distinct normative evaluation of its potential to enhance the quality of the public sphere" (Phelan, 2018:541).

Media during the financial crisis: introductory overview

Mediatization trends accompanied digital news growth, adaptations to production controls and cycles, journalistic skill sets, and the way that the public consume news media. Such changes were fully underway during the financial crisis window.

In terms of production, Bivens (2008:115) highlights early proponents of digital news were hopeful of breakthroughs in terms of "weakened capacity of elite groups to influence news", citing McNair (2006:4). This change would have enabled recipients to share dialogue rather than being precluded by existing monologic outputs. However, she reports adaptation rather than change, and no real transformation of political news, citing "traditional power structures, with ownership control and elite political power restricting the limits of permissible debate and preserving narrow news agendas" (Bivens, 2008:126). This is whether attached to traditional formats or digital. Fenton (2010:10-11) concurs, pointing to digital platforms increasing "unverified, de-professionalised gossip" rather than rich veins of "citizen journalism" (Harcup, 2011:27). Giraud (2015:124) identifies this shift from digital technologies seen as emancipatory to co-opted over time by capital.

Robinson (2008:127) considers impacts of these changes on the professionals rather than the public. She researches journalistic discussions on active and passive audience roles, textual privilege, and 'hedging' the online world in a news organisation. Here she raises an active "myth" of interactivity where newsrooms retain authority through talk of reader relationship, "but not much actual policy work that exercises it". Reasons for dissonance are summarised by Blumler, (2010:439) for *Journalism Studies,* identifying two distinct, yet interrelated crises facing the profession which are still going on today. The first is a recent crisis of financial viability. This was largely brought on through digital developments and which we will see directly affecting news journalism immediately prior to and during the financial crisis in chapter six.

Financial struggles, cost-cutting, and the "parlous" state of US media as reported to the US Senate are key discussion points for Chakravartty and Schiller (2010:670-5), who highlight parallel neoliberal emphasis of current journalism on "features and entertainment at the expense of hard news". Their examples from US chains report mass industry layoffs, how the *New York Times* now needs front-page advertising and *Newsweek* moved to cheaper editorials and features. The article considers ubiquity and normalising of reporting on financial matters as one contributory

factor in legitimising risks before the crisis. Hill (2016:18) discusses a similar British picture, raising management cost-reduction drives as responsible for syndicated, agency, and feature material and less hard news.

In a related area, Guerrera (2009:45-7) highlights underfunding impacts on professional journalism, along with self-censorship and risk management as responsible for journalists failing to inform the public of impending crisis. He also comments how financial strictures forced outlets to use generalists rather than specialist reporters, contributing to slow coverage and acceptance of lies they were told. Routledge (2008:159) concurs, considering specialist correspondents an "endangered species". Online moves also brought specific concerns to traditional formats. This includes digital media putting longer term independent investigations and local news at financial risk, (Downie and Schudson, 2009), as academics tackle the question of the impact of digitisation on "papers of record".

The second crisis raised by Blumer is "civic adequacy." This more complex problem of what the media is *for* in terms of future social function is addressed by Curran (2010) in the same journal issue. He notes insider warnings about future journalistic quality, countering these worries via challengers who consider the demise of the press an opportunity to remove long-standing defence of existing interests. Curran considers possible alternative futures; some of the ways that these have come to pass are debated in chapter eight.

In relation to consumption patterns, online news changes are outlined by Schifferes and Coulter, (2012:231). They evidence higher audience shares online, but changing viewing habits, reporting that users tend to only frequent news sites occasionally, and stay a short time skimming. They also note episodic patterns in major news cycles, concluding a pull to trusted sites during times of panic. However, whilst analytics data can consider audience engagement online, there is much less possible information on legacy media consumption styles, with authors such as Thurman (2014) adopting proxy tools such panel-based surveys to approximate reading time. Complexity in analysis is increased by growing concentrations of media ownership worldwide, alongside fusing of old and new platforms (Herkman, 2008:147) where outlets produce interchangeable legacy and online stories.

The impact of online news outlets and social media in interaction with traditional formats as game-changers for public and democratic debate has therefore been mixed. Technology enables capacity for instant responses and commentary, as opposed to delayed, and edited letters in traditional one-to-many publications. Audience engagement with new, legacy, and fused media has also impacted on the nature of societal definitions of what is public and what is private, with digitisation reshaping ideas. Thompson (2011) uses the MPs expenses exposé in the *Daily Telegraph* as a useful case study of changes to the understanding of the public sphere of media. He works with Arendt's ideas on visibility of the *space of appearance* to discuss evolving terms of control. These problematisations relate directly back to Blumler's (2010) questions around "civic adequacy" and invite questions on what future roles for media outlets might be.

Those viewing digital media positively in terms of potential contribution to demassification and re-personalisation of messages (Vaccari, 2013:112) have rather been lost to recent critique around now familiar conditions of "fake news" and "post-truth" (for a detailed discussion see Rider, 2018:27). Fotaki, Altman and Koning (2020:8) note how accelerated communication has become bound up with fragmentations of social meanings, referring to "coping" mechanisms for a post-truth era of blurred boundaries between production of truth and lies.

The pace of digital change is such that what was deemed "new" media even at the time of the Financial Crisis is, at the time of writing, just media, with traditional formats recently termed "legacy" media (Metzgar et al, 2011:779). If now the sole consumption of print media is, by definition, historical, with the ephemera of digital sites current, this raises important questions. These include theoretical points about what the decline of a traditional fourth estate could mean for governance, legitimacy, and future production of social consent. Attempts to consider how social values are changing through challenges and opportunities presented by technologies are considered by Harcup and O'Neil (2017).

Changes through combinations of these three conditions are fertile for the development of myths. Underestimation by policy makers of public engagement as both critical of and duped by and via digital tools is deliberated by Norval (2012).

These issues are represented in a recent MORI poll (Chalmers, 2019) finding a consequence of these developments that "there is an issue with trust, if not a crisis, particularly focussed on digital platforms". Here Barthes (2009, 153-4) insights assist: from this perspective it is the reader of myths who determines their function, whether received as presented, critically or via naturalisation as compromise.

In summary, these developments support concerns of Curran and Seaton (2018:411-5) who comment that media industries everywhere are adapting or disappearing. They consider capacities for questioning local issues without partnering local press scrutiny. They centralise British media and its unique ecology to our individual and collective identities, pulling developments in the media into their wider debate on concepts of a nation state and political legitimacy to govern. In this way, the media are considered a part of the integral fabric of our "collective condition" (Curran and Seaton, 2018:412). It is this creating of national narrative through political myth that underpins the central tenet of this thesis, using crises as a lens to surface these aspects of analysis.

Overview; media and the functions of myth in politics

Whilst empirical questioning of the means by which political actors proclaim and sustain authority and legitimacy is challenging, the role of mediated narratives during crisis situations can shed productive insights into processes of affirmation and critique.

Although in everyday talk, the notion of a myth is that of a traditional story, perhaps a folktale, or allegory that gives a quick explanation for the way things are, have been or might yet come to be, this conception has only limited use in terms of media mythmaking. Sometimes seen as the preserve of primitive thought and quite separate from rational analyses of current events media outlets purport to convey, Segal, (2002:xi), disputes such categorisations as limiting. He argues against conventions that often reduce roles that myths play in organisational, social, and political life. Similarly, Ingersoll and Adams (1986:365) propose that modern ideas

of rationality deny myth its contribution to condensing complexity in social and political discourses.

However, as will be explored more fully in chapter two, those who worked within anthropological, philosophical, linguistic, or historical traditions (e.g., Lévi-Strauss, (1979), Barthes, (2009), Midgley, (2011) consider myths one of the continuing critical underpinnings for public and social organisation (Christensen and Cornelissen, 2015:136) and the conveyance of legitimacy. Western Enlightenment dichotomy and its associated downplaying of myth is problematised by Midgley, who in arguing for the recognition of myth, presses the case for our understanding of how these concepts shape shared social thinking, (Midgley, 2004:xiii). By accepting understandings of myth as present in a variety of forms in modern public life, its legitimating function through the medium of press messaging has a living, modern presence.

Edelman (1970:5) sees the uses of media myths in mediating between "politics as a spectator sport and political activity as utilised by organized groups to get quite specific, tangible benefits for themselves". He notes the moving panorama of a world that the public does not generally touch, but either fears or cheers, participating only occasionally, most often ritually, at the ballot box. The functions of myth in political life legitimate the state and its actions, influencing the electorate and making the case for social adjustment. As Edelman (1977:xvii) notes, political authority "rests on the "consent" of the governed", which he defines as acquiescence to political and economic relationships and their structures,

Bouchard (2017:90) considers conditions for the creation of myths of state and governance. He includes links to social archetypes, adoption by powerful social actors and the need for connection with anxieties, challenges, and control. As such, mythmaking is a collective enterprise: stories are shaped and linked to other stories relevant to the context by individuals looking for the right outcome, but also received, modified, and relayed by others such as via media outlets. Whilst these may also appear as conditions for the creation of ideologies, myths should be recognised as distinct. Bouchard (2017:34) usefully conceptualises myths as the *engines* of ideologies, this, by implication, suggests myths come first. Whilst then

mythmaking is an important element of ideological design, ideologies are constructed to appear rational, coherent, and complete from an insider's point of view. Both are driven by purpose. A more nuanced explanation is provided by Charteris-Black (2005:13) who considers myth, ideology, and metaphor as sharing common purposes. He argues that the three "share a common discourse function of persuasion…they differ in the extent to which appeal is made to conscious cognition or to unconscious association". He goes on to distinguish ideology as appealing through conscious beliefs and myth appealing to emotions, unconscious beliefs, and values. Metaphor mediates between the two in legitimation. It is this idea of shared spaces for myth for purpose that will be explored in chapter two.

This thesis argues that mediated political myths help render policies normative and acceptable during times of stability and pragmatism and provide legitimation for political action and helpful shortcuts to sensemaking in times of difficulty or crisis. Myths are tools for active retention of authority in situations of "cultural trauma" (Bouchard, 2017:83). Kertzer (1988:13) notes how such narratives and ritual practices of their production are a "major means for propagating…political myths". Lance Bennett (1980:167) raises the role of political myths and rituals specifically to "guide the processes in which policies are made and public opinion is formed"; he uses the analogy of myths as lenses – not the things that people see, but the things they see with, as conditioning.

Myth functions is amplified during crises, where debates can become elastic or dogmatic, and more visibly shaped by mass media. Crises are times where there is potential for change, and the confinements of expected patterns of reporting may be disrupted by alternative group interests and new mediations of events as offered by myths. Lance Bennett (1980:168) further comments, "Myths underwrite the status quo in times of stability and they chart the course of change in times of stress".

This introduction has set project parameters as comparison of two recent crises through the lens of media myth production, the following section provides a brief overview of the chapters:

Chapter summary

Chapter two: *An analytic review of myths and mythmaking* undertakes three main functions. Firstly, it provides a wider exploration of myths through a series of discussions on its interrelationships with folk tales, histories, and ideologies before funnelling into the specifics of political myths. It then considers the various terrains that those myths occupy, from the informal narratives of personal storytelling via the formal and official myths encountered as part of organisational and corporate life to the production of political myths through the institutions of public life.

The chapter closes by conceptualising a framework for discussing production of political myths in print media outlets as the basis of empirical work to come. The overarching myth provides the core narrative, and the supporting myths the flexible containers of stories that help create, develop, and sustain it. These supporting myths are defined as: *myths of history continuity and change, myths of choice and agency, myths of legitimisation and delegitimisation,* and *myths of reputation, heroism, and villainy.* These mythic themes are developed as archetypal storytelling frameworks that help problematise taken-for-granted assumptions around mythmaking and the notion of immaterial aspects of crises as complementary to their economic, political, and material counterparts. (A summary myth table to complement these themes is available in Appendix 1). It is argued that as crises increase visibility of language choices and selective reporting, these myths are used as tools for managing political ambiguities into rationalities, with mediation processes key to maintaining legitimation and the management of consent.

Chapter three: *Britain in crisis; critical review* introduces specific applications of the myth framework to mainstream debates on media outputs in the literature of each crisis. Each crisis receives a general introduction, followed by a discussion on overarching myth, and subsequent supporting myth themes in relation to existing contributions. Whilst the media studies field is well-established and popular, and analysis of press contributions to both crises are plentiful, myths and mythmaking are not a common feature in the crisis reporting of these events. Where myths do appear in analysis, they are often presented as secondary arguments or in passing. Overall, the literature reflects the subsuming of analyses of immaterial aspects of

crisis events in terms of stories, symbols, and ideologies in favour of more material concerns around harder economic and political outcomes. Using the framework in this way enables a greater identification and synthesis of ideas that help overcome challenges of working with such a field and support the claim for a greater role for myth as an accompanying aspect of crisis analyses. The chapter concludes by noting the root cause purposing of myths as facilitation devices for dominant and vested interests in public life.

Chapter four: *Methodology* sets out to bridge the preceding analytical review chapters and the subsequent empirical studies of each crisis. There are two main parts to chapter four. The first half theorises and justifies congruence from a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to media texts during a myth study, particularly conditions of production set out by Fairclough (2001:35). It opens with a problematisation of the interdisciplinary nature of myth study and explores options in choosing a compatible method for analysis. Drawing on seminal approaches to discourse approaches such as from Alvesson, Hall, Fairclough, and Van Dijk, part one adopts the premise of CDA which grounds discourse within social structure and practice as an appropriate tool for examination of media outputs during crisis events. Having set the frame, part two undertakes explanation of the practicalities; describing study design choices, method used, and composition of case study datasets. It explores limitations in using two distinct frames for analysis and constraints of different archival techniques. The chapter also provides a rationale for empirical approaches, recognising that author purposes shape research design narratives and that the management of rhetorical and analytic choices and other ambiguities in a researcher's text present aspects of myth in themselves.

Chapter five: *myths of the coal dispute.* This chapter presents the first empirical study where the case is put that this was crisis by design, demonstrating how media sources were used purposefully in active service of government narratives. Using the myth framework to identify and explore key aspects of naturalised logics, the chapter therefore discusses discursive management of the strike through the press. Whilst acknowledging a wealth of ongoing political, cultural, and economic analyses relating to how the levers of State were ranged against the miners, the main

premise put is that myth analysis provides complementary insights on government ideologies. The chapter firstly explores the overarching myth: that of the wrong-doing of a misinformed collective, led astray from necessary social change by their outdated ideals of community and continuity, and facilitated by a powerful demagogue with dangerous and extreme ideas. The supporting myths demonstrate how existing negative New Right narratives around socialism and union activities were bricolaged effectively around practical and legislative measures, providing the Conservatives with material outputs for ideological change.

Chapter six: *Myths of the financial crisis.* Unlike State offensives discussed in relation to the miners' strike, this chapter posits manoeuvres here were primarily defensive in nature. Whilst again examining discursive management of crisis through a myth framework, this chapter demonstrates how myths were flexibly utilised to help manage the banking sector through disaster. Once established, archetypal myth narratives serviced the transition from a shocking event as an exhibition of excessive greed to one that positioned the majority of the industry as sound and worth defending to support the economy. Subsequent outcomes of such discourses contributed to successive narratives of a profligate public sector as forerunner to austerity politics. In this crisis, stories shifted from collective wrongdoings created in coal dispute press articles to a metanarrative collage of individual failures. The overarching myth emerges with banking leaders depicted as the epitome of greed and irresponsibility, unrestrained by the ineffective collective of acquiescent boards and lax regulation and facilitated by hero-centric workplace cultures. Use of myths as analytical framework demonstrates how systemic problems were downplayed in preference for populist explanations of individual failings and behaviours as hero gone wrong, facilitating a return to business-as-usual media narratives.

Chapter seven: *Comparing presentations, representations and contestations* pulls the two strands of empirical study together alongside prior discussion of myth-work and the role of the press in the public life of British society. This is facilitated in three sections, firstly via a contextual session, summarising prevailing mythic conditions prior to each crisis. This enables a threaded tour highlighting ongoing

mythical frames for understanding in our society from social democracy, club governance and the rise of Thatcherite ideologies through privatisation, the Big Bang, and the long-boom.

Having set up this narrative arc, the second section looks to link specifics from chapter five and six into this series of wider contextual themes. These axes demonstrate how crises impacted on existing public nodes of reference through three key headings: *ideological change and defence, collectivism and individualism*, and *traditionalism and modernity.* Finally, the thesis proper is drawn together by revisiting the framework and its generalised uses in naturalisation and normalisation in the public sphere. It summarises how crises narratives are rendered, and solutions presented in the interests of State legitimation and renewal. It revisits and justifies how myth analyses can challenge and complement existing naturalisations of material and critical approaches to crisis events.

Chapter eight: *Conclusions: New myths for old?* This brief chapter provides an opportunity to cement the case for myth analysis alongside speculation outside the formal confines of the project's narrative histories. This is both by looking back at some previous convenient mythic paradigms and peering forward to possible political myths facilitated by events and ideas propagated during the financial crisis for a future hyperconnected world. Developing myths of rising populism and diminishing public criticality might lead future analysts to conclude that financial crisis impacts were still underway through twin antagonisms of poverty and rising elite wealth.

Closing this introductory section, the thesis now moves to chapter two, with the introduction to myths and mythmaking as its main conceptual argument.

Chapter 2

Introduction and definition of myths in use

Defining myths is difficult. In everyday use, the term covers many ideas from traditional stories and histories to religious explanations and exaggerated misrepresentations of events. To help overcome this, academic critique has made high-level distinctions between the fluid uses of the term in everyday talk and scholarly exploration of the topic, (Bouchard, 2017:23; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2015: 133). Flood (2002: 31-2) notes that studies, "almost invariably open with the *caveat* that the reader should not confuse the popular, pejorative term" with its academic usage alongside the general recognition of validity of myths for social groups that believe in them.

However, in academic circles, there are also a wide range of differing and contradictory approaches to the constitution of myth and its varying terminologies which contribute to a series of acknowledged difficulties for those wishing to work with them. In terms of the conjunction of political myths and the role of the media in crisis situations these difficulties come from a variety of sources, including both that myths are often used as supporting analysis rather than primary focus, and that authors often use terms ambiguously. Challenges also arise from changing academic contexts. Evolving socio-political developments and contestations range from earlier twentieth century modern approaches to reality through unitary perspectives to what Christensen and Cornelissen, (2015:134) label as a multiplicity of competing language games from subjective approaches add to complexity.

Myth is therefore a moving target. As noted in chapter one, one approach that acknowledges that variety of contradictory and blurred positions on mythmaking whilst accepting interrelationships and difficulties in disentangling terms comes from Charteris-Black (2005:13). He considers that myth, ideology, and metaphor share a functional undertaking of persuasion. In this space, metaphor mediates between consciously formed beliefs of ideology and unconscious associations from myth. Whilst this is valuable insight, this thesis contends that in a contemporary context political myth commonly interacts with two other, closely-related

functional spaces for persuasion. The first of these other shared spaces relates back to the common usage of myth, and the need to unpack applications of myth via media sources from other sorts of social narratives such as fairy stories, folk tales, and other sorts of storytelling that seek to convince their listener. The second area relates to a shared space between history and myth, and where myth has been co-opted as malleable tool for "writing the present as history" (Mills 2000:146).

To facilitate further exploration, this chapter is organised into four main sections. The first section revisits these functional spaces of persuasion as sites of meaning: Myth, fairy stories, folk tales, and other social narratives, myth and history, and myth, ideology, and metaphor. Work from these three sites and layers that myth inhabits is then synthesised into a discussion of political myth that draws on all three as a function of public life as the second section. Thirdly, these sites of meaning are considered in terms of their applications to the different terrains that myth inhabits, the personal, organisational, and public sphere. Finally, the chapter closes with a section describing the theoretical framework that provides the basis of later empirical study.

Shared space one: myth, fairy stories, folk tales, and other social narratives

This thesis adopts perspectives raised by Tatar (2014:5-6) who notes a typological divide between fairy tales and myths, whilst recognising their "shared repertoire of motifs", human creativity, and ability to "take up powerful questions" of life and death and judgement in social exchange. She draws on the work of Joseph Campbell (1991, 2008 [1949]), who distinguishes the former as told for entertainment purposes from folk tales and myths that contain a functional mission to guide and inform. Whilst this pigeonholing of fairy tales as entertainment only, rather than as working tools for social and community mores has been contested, particularly by feminist scholars (see Duncker, 1984), this is not within the scope of this thesis.

Campbell considers (2008 [1949]: 330) that modern takes on mythology from a wide range of scholars and religious institutions include interpretations of primitive thinking about the natural world, repositories of allegorical instruction,

representatives of archetypal constructs and God's revelations and sacred truths. He argues mythology is all of these and considers the function of myth to be determined by the needs of the individual, the society, and the time. This idea of functional mission is useful in distinguishing myths from other social narratives as it gives a myth a status as having truth and value to the social group that accepts it. Flood (1992:32) updates the point by noting that this allows scholars not to dismiss a myth, despite being outside its experience, whilst keeping the distinction between empirical truth and that which is "relative to a particular belief system".

Similarly, ideas of function as part of the shared space between folk stories and myths is another area worth exploring, although this is again much contested. Scholarship of function in folktales stems from the early twentieth century methodology of Propp and other Russian literary critics, who designated characters' actions as functions in what Propp termed "wondertales". Literary devices from this perspective were not dependent on history or cultural variation but could be approached scientifically. Propp argued that plots were "based on the recurrence of functions and that all wondertale plots consisted of identical functions and had identical structure" (Propp, 1984: 69-70). These functions allow stories to appear as sequences of significant actions for "narrative progress" (Propp, 1984:73) and create an arc of beginning, middle and end.

Liberman, (1984:x- xix) notes how the dissemination and circulation of Propp's ideas alongside Western scholarship has been mixed, initially due to a thirty year delay in translation, although critique from Lévi-Strauss (1984 [1960], 167-89), raised their profile. Liberman considers the vagueness of definition in forms of structuralism and competing approaches from sociologists, anthropologists, literary scholars, and linguists to have contributed to widespread contradictions in the field. In his reflections on Propp's structural analysis, Lévi-Strauss debates the non-separation of tale and myth. He notes that "folktales in one society are known to be myths in another, and vice versa" (p.176) and that in his view the tale has less need of logical coherence than myth, and can be narrated at any time, rather than subject to prescription according to social belief. There is a great deal of nuanced

discussion that follows between that critique, rebuttal and re-joining postscript that is beyond scope of a political study.

For a summary, Dundes (1997:43) excellent attempt to mediate the territory notes "two scholars talking past one another" from different disciplines. Whilst for him, both sit under a structuralist umbrella, as a folklorist Propp is concerned with "empirically observable sequential structure", as an anthropologist, Lévi-Strauss primary interest is in underlying paradigms, particularly where they demonstrate oppositional binaries in overcoming contradictions. Propp's focus is on syntax; Lévi-Strauss perspective considers meanings behind structural choices (Champagne, 1990:105). Dundas goes on to explore this second insight of difference that Lévi-Strauss, "is not so much describing the structure of myth as he is the structure of the world described in myth."

In terms of taking insights from this space into empirical work, folktale ideas of loosely strung but repetitive motifs such as wicked stepmother, seven-league boots, or cap of invisibility (Lieberman, 1984: xxviii) do have some common ground with the media myths discussed in this thesis. These are largely related to ways that journalists actively craft a story to entertain and inform their readers, threading myth through real events. One way this happens is when repetitive tropes circulate around persons of interest as noted by Fowler (1991:111); discussed further on p.101, and often appears through the theme of *reputation* in the empirical chapters. Such ideas are congruent with ideas on archetypes reported by Moxnes (2013:640), who states that "despite an infinite variety of events, costumes, and settings present in world mythologies, myths essentially depict only a restricted number of responses…." Similarly, uniformity and recurrence of theme and structure are noted as patterns in stories and folktales as well as by historians of religion and mythology where various characters undertake identical societal functions, despite changing contexts (Propp, 1958:19). According to this perspective, myths are universal social story containers, with contents and frame adapted to suit the teller.

By way of a final point in this section, genesis of fairy and folk tales as oral stories is also problematised by Tatar (2014: 8). She raises instability and indeterminate

history of such texts, so that modern understandings of them essentially orientate toward social and cultural conditions and processes of interpretation, whilst conditions of authorship and production fade from view. As such, their history cannot be seen, ensuring focus on function. For oral stories that predate the development of capitalist conventions such as copyright (Hafstein, 2014:31), sources tend to be registered as collective, incremental, and distributed in both space and time. From this perspective of distributed creation, myths are an important part of human-centred knowledge and experience, and key to sensemaking. This is significant for modern sensibilities, although it presents a source of difficulties, as ideas of authorship in themselves convey authority, and ideas of purpose. In modern life, oral stories of indeterminate origin have less perceived authority than formalised and monologic myths presented in close spaces between authority holders as political, journalistic, and editorial actors in contemporary news sources.

Shared space two: myth and history

Interactions between history and myth are directly relevant to studying media roles in crisis situations; their importance is such that they form the basis of one of the key themes of the empirical chapters, as outlined below. The topic relates closely to links made between history and myth for current purposes explored by Mills (2010:157), as mythmaking about the past in the service of political advantage is one way we account for social change.

However socio-political changes present their own difficulties for analysis. Earlier generations of scholars conceived mythmaking in different contexts than our own and seek to explain transformations between myth and history in relation to the problems and ways of thinking characterising their own eras. As such histories of thinking about myth belong to varying intellectual traditions. These range from studying other societies approaches and exploring myths' oral contexts variously: as explanation of reality; through enlightenment orientations to myth as 'just' legend'; or its co-option in the modern age in creating socio-political advantage and the lived experience of sloganeering as part of consumer persuasion. Whilst this thesis

is largely focused on the third of these four perspectives, this section offers a brief temporal overviewing of some of the most influential theorists exploring this area.

The structure used by Cassirer (1946) in *The Myth of the State* is a useful starting point for considering the modern development of thinking on the relation between myth, history, and politics. By organising his thought temporally, he considers differences of how traditional and modern usages of myth came to pass. The Enlightenment schism and corresponding challenge of the Romantic movement are placed as a pivot before his work culminates through examples of then contemporary Nazi Germany as a basis for extreme uses of myth for purpose. His work is extensively recontextualised for today's readership by Flood (2002:257) and Charteris-Black (2005:209). The latter summarises by depicting two very different states, noting how in traditional societies, crafters of myths experience it as part of reality in explaining how the world works. In modern societies, for Charteris-Black, it is a "sophisticated, self-conscious activity" orientated to the manufacture and circulation of a product or an idea, in the example case, politicians themselves, through use of rhetoric.

This idea of different states is difficult for contemporary thinking, as once traditional conceptualisations of myths and their explanations are no longer agreed assumptions, their explanations of a "total understanding" (Lévi-Strauss, 1995:17) of the world are as other, and impossible to reconcile. To rational approaches, these mythical shortest routes to understanding look unconvincingly complete and suspiciously lacking in ambiguities. For Lévi-Strauss (1995:6) the necessity of schism for science to establish itself, and to flourish in Western thought was important. It also reflected his own position as external observer of these societies. Images of difference also enabled him to set up those tensions and binary oppositions of mythical understanding such as the tale of the legitimate and illegitimate twins (1995:27) that repeatedly feature in his work. To Lévi-Strauss (1968:229) mythic purpose provides "a logical model capable of overcoming contradiction".

Mythical ideas of time change once history enters written records, as demonstrated by Lévi-Strauss in his oppositional contrasts of clan stories. He notes that myths as told through traditional stories are static, and all-knowing, aiming to overcome

contradictions. Clan histories are not as we understand history through recording, as they are repetitive, and structurally similar. He writes of how, "we find the same mythical elements combined over and over again, but they are in a closed system….in contradiction with history…an open system" (Lévi-Strauss, 1995:41). Flood (2002:35) positions this closed state as both a model *of* and *for* reality that integrates shared meanings. As argued by Ricœur (1967:5), for modern sensibilities myth is *only* myth because we can "no longer connect that time with the time of history as we write it…nor can we connect mythical places with our geographical space". He argues that rather than seeing myth as false explanation, we should instead recognise its "exploratory significance" and symbolic function as a valuable dimension of thought.

However, the advent of the modern world and organised politics resets traditional ideas, and the history of thinking on myth reflects that reconceptualization. For Lévi-Strauss, much of his anthropological fieldwork was focused on people whose times and practices were fading. We can see this through their moves to write, publish and therefore preserve clan accounts (see 1995;40-1); their mythic images were already passing, and past-facing. Lévi-Strauss noted the impossibility of setting the historic contexts of myth and the inaccessibility of myth origins (1984: 178). The applicability of such traditional frames to current understanding of myths as studied through media sources is only useful to a point. These might include capturing the linking of events through creating stories as a universal human activity, in the repetition of circulating tropes as stereotypical descriptions, and binary divisions separating 'us' from 'them' between societies.

Returning to ideas of myth for purposes of political advantage, Cassirer (1946:3), notes it as a distinct (then novel) phenomenon, rising between two world wars. In this period, we see historical development of the modern political myth in Western society starting to take shape and morph into ideologies, as traditional modes of life fade, then disappear as they are replaced in hierarchical and bureaucratic industrial societies. That ebbing of traditional and immaterial from public life in the West forms one of the tenets of Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976[1930]:72), as he writes of the domination of modern capitalism and its

liberation from its former supports. Parsons contemporary discussion on the development of National Socialism, (1942:159-61) contextualises Weber's analysis to comment that patterns of rational-legal authority institutionalised in modern Western society have strained its development. He sees this "emancipation" from traditional social structures as producing tensions, in what Lough (2007: xii) terms as a taken for granted retreat of the immaterial from modern public life by social scientists. Parson's analyses have latterly been considered as developing coherence and homogeneity at the expense of Weber's expressed provisional and partial thoughts (see Burrell, 1999: 388) But the long reach of such interpretations has privileged unified organisation theories.

This differs from other cultural approaches that may have been more accepting of complementary roles for myth. For example, in Russian philosophy, Western centralisations of individual and rational are exchanged for that of the collective. The language recognises two overlapping concepts of truth, *istina* for immutable truth, and *Pravda* as truth through construction of the human world (see Bakhtin, 1993:37). Losev, (as discussed by Marchenkov as translator, (2003 [1930]: 21) contends that myth is not incompatible with rational-scientific, but that they have differing functions – myth "posits reality", whereas science seeks to explain it.

However, using hierarchical frames from between the wars to consider myths in public life through media sources might now be considered a historical approach in itself, as resets of approaches to our own thinking about myths evolved both in the post-war period and with the rise of neoliberal political administrations (see chapter seven). Barthes publication of *Mythologies* (1957) is by date of publication on the same temporal window as Lévi-Strauss anthropological perspectives. But Barthes' journalism covers different ways of living through his collecting of 'little monthly mythologies' as vignettes on *what-goes-without-saying* and the "falsely obvious" (Barthes, 2009:xix). Rather than looking from outside in as observer, Barthes offers the lived insiders experience of mythmaking, with his aim of considering topics "suggested" (Barthes, 2009; xviii) by current events, as an exposition of how meaning was invented in daily activities (Champagne, 1990:34).

The title of his cumulative theoretical essay, *Myth Today* (p.131-187) signals an attempt to systematise and reflect on the preceding essays, but orientates toward the here and now, commenting on currently inhabited and manifest structures. This is not the contextualised outsider's scholarship offered by Lévi-Strauss. Rather than binary ways of thinking as exemplars, here myths are presented as opaque and negotiated meanings, with focus on micro-interactions and statements as key (Sayers, 2018). Myth, for Barthes (2009:169) is "constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they once were made." In *Mythologies,* Barthes positions myths as developed from first-order language signs as "material which has *already* been worked on" (p.133) for communication purposes. Expanding on Saussure's semiological methodology (p.136-8), Barthes sets myth as a second-order system, drawing from previously existing first-order systems and their existing meanings and combined in new ways.

Champagne (1990:35) considers evolutions from *Mythologies* through Barthes later work to be complex and challenging. Barthes is positioned as a "transitional" figure, representative of wider contestations in academic thinking, and Champagne offers a detailed explanation of the stages of Barthesian thought which is outside our scope here. In the later, 1970 edition of his text, Barthes himself attempts to shed light on the evolution of two distinct "attitudes" (Barthes, 2009: xvii). He distinguishes between an early exploration of myths as sign systems and later contributions embracing the challenges of semiology inside the linguistic discipline. At this point, discussion would depart what is relevant for a political economy analysis of mediated political myths without straying into equally valid, but quite different concerns from linguistics or cultural studies perspectives where the focus might settle on the life of the text, and its conditions of interpretation. Here, the focus stays largely with production (Fairclough, 1991:25), and structural approaches to myth analysis rather than evaluation (Storey, 2012:113) of myth adoptions in communities.

Shared space three: myth, ideology, and metaphor

As outlined earlier, current argumentations around myth have also come to share a space with metaphor and ideology as per Charteris-Black's (2005:13) arguments on

how political rhetoric is constructed and disseminated. His discussion argues all elements share discourse functions of persuasion, before concentrating on metaphor as primary focus. His explanation of ideology as designed to appeal to consciously formed sets of beliefs, whilst myth appeals to emotion through unconscious beliefs, attitudes, and values is a useful starting point. It is congruent with Bouchard's position of myths as the *engines* of strategic ideologies (2017:34). It permits myth to be conceptualised as a liminal staging-post between single metaphors used to describe an event or a person, and a sedimented ideology as a set of systematised political beliefs developed, accepted, and reciprocated amongst followers over time.

However, ideology is another concept that has evolved over time and through fashions since the early twentieth century (Thompson, 1990:2); and therefore, offers many competing meanings and usages. Corner (2011:140) points to no clear agreement on the term beyond "group belief" and "political perspective". He also reports its fading recently in favour of the more accommodative term of "discourse", which he also considers problematic. (The impact of such trends on studying two cases in is discussed in chapter 4, p.112-5.) It is helpful in this instance to consider the production of ideologies as presented via channels such as media sources as distinct from their diffused acceptance in communities. Storey (2012:2) slides varying interpretations of the term on a continuum. This runs from systematised collections of political, economic, and social ideas that belong to productions of ideology, through the muddying processes of distortions of reality and the way that ideology conceals hegemony and domination from those without power, to interpretations of particular images of the world in cultural forms such as film and television.

Storey considers associations of ideology in Barthes work separately from his broader descriptions. In this discussion he deliberately converges ideology with myth, writing that, "Barthes argues that ideology (or 'myth' as Barthes himself calls it) operates mainly at the level of connotations, the secondary, often unconscious meanings that texts and practices carry, or can be made to carry" (p.4). He explores this further to note attempts to legitimise what has been produced by passing it off

as natural, offering examples such as a 'black journalist' as other, an inferior version of the standard category of journalist via qualification. Convergence here is not unreasonable based on Barthes own position in *Mythologies*, where the introduction considers conflation of Nature and History as "ideological abuse" (p. xix). This statement is explored later in *Myth Today* through the protracted example of the visit to the barber where an everyday experience of being given a magazine becomes a political encounter. The *Paris Match* black solider saluting the flag (p.139-54) is a popularly analysed example of Barthes thinking, as it might convey either messages of simple nationhood, imperialism, or a reflection of then current tensions with Algeria. The producer (p.151) is motivated to convey the former whilst recognising the latter and can be separated from the receiver (p.152) who may either feel the *presence* (p.153) of imperiality or as critic /mythologist, recognise the *alibi* (p.153) and the distortion of political messaging.

Storey's convergence works well in terms of conditions for interpretation, where the text takes on its own life and audience perspectives change over time and according to context; "How does he receive this particular myth *today?"* (Barthes, 2009:153). However, when focusing on *receipt,* conditions of *production* can fade. Whilst dissemination and subsequent reception of myths may be inevitable, this thesis is an attempt to explore intent. Therefore, in crisis situations, where political operatives and their journalistic counterparts are working in a liminal state, the retention of distinctions between myth and ideology are important in surfacing agentic purpose and attempt to shape outcomes and will be retained in this thesis. Journalists' working as producers may intend to report events as they happen, but they may also be consciously partisan or credulous as receivers, (Philo, 2007:177). Systemic bias from system structures and corporate ownership also limits their scope and power of expression (Flood, 2002:61).

Political myths

Having established three overlapping sites for myth above, this thesis funnels in to analyse the melting-pot of modern political mythmaking which may draw from each site depending on purpose and context of political operatives.

Bottici and Challand (2006:317) consider myths via their continual working and reworking of narratives, also noting that it has taken modern outlooks to recognise myth as a political force, despite its role as an operative force in the daily life of a society (Segal, 2002: xi). Similar points are made by Flood (2002:3) who argues there has been a lack of attention to the specifics of political myth in comparison to general myth theory. For the purposes of this study, political myth is then defined as a narrative or set of narratives which is proposed, developed, and invested in (by an individual or group of individuals) to communicate explanations of events for the purposes of legitimation in public life. They become ideologies when shared, accepted, and reciprocated outside with recipients such as the public.

By drawing contributions from three sites together in a working analysis of political myths, this thesis develops initial proposals by Della Sala (2016:8) for a stage-gate approach of three distinct phases to Bouchard's sociological ideas on evolution of successful myths. He labels the first as diffusion, where actors organise events in narrative form, awarding them structure and consistency and contextualisation with existing representations. The second is ritualisation, where the myth enters official discourse and practice and can enter part of decision-making processes. The third is what Della Sella refers to as "sacredness"; the myth becomes normalised and part of established identity and recognised history of the political community.

The idea of myth as process is particularly useful in terms of news analysis and the role of the press at the diffusion and early ritualisation stages. However, there are three problems here. First, as argued in this thesis, the coal dispute of 1984-5 demonstrates a break from existing representations as an act of hegemonic purpose. Second, the idea of consistency implies that there is always an element of design and intentionality to political myths, rather than a default or reactive position, which enters into the discussion of the financial crisis case (Flood, 2002:58). Finally, there are also issues with using the term of sacred as a necessary condition, and therefore the term 'normalised' will be used instead.

Flood (2002: 41) debates this final issue, separating sacred myths from political myths and ideologies. He notes that sacred and political myths share similar categories including stories of origin, stories of heroism, rebirth and renewal, and

destiny, but they differ in that "political myths do not have sacred status in secular societies". For Flood, there is a shared similarity for acceptance as fundamentally truthful and authoritative by an identifiable group. He argues that political myths are ideologically marked in some way, carrying explicit or implicit imprints of assumptions and values. This approach is explored through further discussion, (p.56) that producer(s) need not have conscious intention. Though myth may have intent behind it, it can also emerge as a by-product of ambiguities, through accident, or collective diffusion. As the core idea is congruent, the thesis adopts the idea of a staged process for myth adoption, using diffusion and ritualisation, but the less problematic term of normalisation for the acceptance of a myth into the polity.

Crisis situation aspects are also important considerations for increased presence of active political mythmaking at times of stress and change. Bruner (2004:697) adapts Burke's pentad to establish necessary conditions for these story structures – agent, action, goal, setting, instrument, and *trouble* – which he identifies as the breaching of cultural legitimacy. These breaches may develop into a crisis situation, which, if unresolved, lead eventually to a new legitimate order. Here, Bruner develops Turner's (1982:10) anthropological insights to explore how breaches might result from real feeling or from calculation, as accident - or by design. Peace and/or resolution for Turner are sought through what he refers to as *redressive machinery*, either through complementary judicial or ritual means.

Cassirer (1946:77) argued that crises could provoke societies to forsake rationalities for myths; Charteris-Black (2005:209) concurs, as anxieties rise, there is greater gain to be made from sloganeering, distortions, and charisma over reason. Myths may be amplified during crisis. Edelman (1988:65) considers their attraction, as attempts to order, and give meaning to a "bewildering political universe" in the face of economic, military, or other threats and opportunities. Myth and metaphor, for Edelman, intensifies some perceptions, screening others from attention, (p.66).

Terrains of mythmaking

Having established political myths as funnelling in elements from the varied sites myths inhabit, the following section looks at its accomplishments; whilst

storytelling may be a universal activity, its purposes are not. Informal personal stories told by individuals may reflect private interests. These might be oral stories and have more in common with the functions of folk tales as everyday guides rather than grand strategies or ideological design. However, individuals also relate personal issues to major events in the course of their daily lives. Whilst they may not have a systemic orientation to different social groups or a consistent approach to their citizenship, they absorb politicised ideas from social and workplace activities and media sites (Flood, 2002:8) and it is this area that the following discussion relates to. Therefore, this section turns to the arguments about the sociological imagination set out by Mills (2000:8) along a continuum between 'the personal troubles of milieu', and 'the public issues of social structure'.

The role of mythmaking in the 'personal milieu'.

Informal personal stories and narrative myths of self as constructed by individuals, and spontaneous oral stories of social groups operate within the range of *troubles* identified by Mills. Individual narratives cement the specific and the local to ideas and events of state related by media sources. For Mills (2000:3-4) the purpose of stories that people tell is to establish an "intricate connection between the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history". The universal nature of such self-told narrative life stories that mesh as part of a wider community, or tapestry of life stories are described by Bruner (2004:694-6). He refers to these narratives as *becoming* - as selected selves which evolve through culturally shaped processes that guide and structure events and perceptions. These are not imposed, but a "cognitive achievement", (Bruner, 2004:692), of relating the self to wider society. These are interpreted as "weaving between" what is present and material and the reach of their imagination (Gordon and Radway, 1997:4). Whilst people may not consciously systematise issues or identify consistently with ideas or groups, they do absorb from family, work, education, and media sources (Flood, 2002:17).

Oral storytellers invite the recipient to engage with the story itself, rather than lists of material facts (Gabriel, 1995:481). Narratives provide speedy sensemaking during difficulties and establishing common interests through co-creative interaction and affirmation, (Gabriel and Connell, 2010:508). Barthes (2009:131-2) offers further

insight on to the infinite possibilities afforded by such narratives, commenting on how any object "can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society". Narratives do not emerge fully formed through traditional beginning, middle and end (Gabriel, 2004:72), but develop in instalments, over time and according to audience. In social contexts, recycling renders stories fluid, with Gabriel helpfully distinguishing between "plastic" and unmanaged narratives that test and redraw group and societal boundaries, and more official, "sponsored" (Gabriel, 1995:478) and normative mythologies.

Boje (2001:1) offers an important idea for the way these narratives develop, whether in the private sphere or publicly. He proposes as *antenarrative*, "fragmented, non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted and improper storytelling", preceding narrative which adds coherence and closure to storylines (Boje et al, 2004:756). He develops these ideas in later work, differentiating along the temporal axis between widely studied *retrospective* narrative sensemaking, and relatively overlooked *prospective* sensemaking, exploring ideas on antenarrative as transformational, "picking up and jettisoning context as it moves", (Boje, 2008:2). Whilst written about individuals' stories, Boje's work is equally applicable to the way a journalist, or editorial team might work on a developing news story.

Models of institutional mythmaking

The meso level of organisations as "working models" (Mills, 2000:44) of larger institutional order provides a stepping-stone for the process of relating political myths to the personal sphere through the antenarratives and oral stories related above and the operation of myths in an integrated wider society and economy. This can be considered in two overlapping ways; the way we think about activities that go on in and around organisations, and the way they might be conceptualised for acceptance as rational ways of undertaking activities.

At the individual level, organisational studies mine neighbouring fields to myth study such as via identity work and the construction of provisional and alternate selves according to situation and context, (see Ibarra, 2005, Ybema et al, 2009, Clarke and Knights, 2015). At group and organisational level, sites of myth

development shift along a continuum between spontaneous stories, gossip, and jokes as organisational folktales and those generated, marketed, and imposed through official channels (Gabriel, 1991: 872) which more directly lean towards shared spaces of history and ideology and how political myths are manufactured. Gabriel, (1995: 484) notes whilst both sorts of narratives inform individual and group perceptions, the informal space of the *unmanaged organization* receives less attention in organisational studies fields than its managed, tangible, and official counterpart as organisational ideology product. He notes that the managed organisation of power practices, official myths and strategy generation is seen, and on record, and so therefore assumes precedence and afforded legitimacy, both internally and to external observers. News stories printed in media sources might be seen the same way to the public on the outside of political discussions.

Aspects of myth as social function at informal and formal levels are also noted by Christensen and Cornelissen (2015:133) who define myths not as false understandings but rather narrative descriptions "aimed at producing meaning and direction for a community and its members". Here the authors draw on Midgley, who places the role of myth "not as a distraction from our serious thinking but a necessary part of it" (Midgley, 2011: xii).

In moving towards more official institutional mythmaking, the role of managed organisational narratives as conscious tools for social control come closer to political myths as sites of history and ideology in timbre. There is congruence between myths as political outputs in the press and organisational strategies of why given practices and procedures are the "only way" organisations can function effectively (Boje, Fedor and Rowland, 1982:18). For Barry and Elmes (1997:434) organisational myths necessarily work a dialectic of being both believable and novel enough to influence employee perceptions. This concurs with historical thinking from Meyer and Rowan, (1977:345-6) who consider constitutive ideas around managed myths in and around modern institutions as distinct, pervasive, and necessary for legitimacy. It is in this managed space that adaptive assumptions of myths work towards more conscious, prescriptive ideologies, with the extreme example of "corporate cultism" at Enron depicted by Tourish and Vatcha (2005).

Dawson and Buchanan (2005:849-50), identify competing narratives linking antecedents, actions, and consequences in organisational life as political processes. Ideas of multiple and competing narratives are used to explore how powerful individuals and groups are able to consciously manipulate and reinforce positive elements from their own perspectives to dominate, noting how disruptive elements to agreed storymaking are suppressed, downplayed, or ignored (Dawson and Buchanan, 2005:853). Potency of interpretative framing and ability to suppress dissenting stories as necessary means to legitimate power through mythmaking is an important political skill. Brown (1994: 870) uses a case study for how a small senior group gained acceptance for apparently irrational decisions. He identifies success via ability to present a "psychologically and sociologically compelling" rationale for actions through a myth of conforming and logical action. In this way narrative: who gets to relate their narrative, and whose is heard, is directly linked to exercise of power and legitimation in organisations and society. Recipients of such narratives are assumed to gain related knowledge differently depending upon their own history, context, and purpose and whether they hold in or out-group status.

According to Alvesson and Deetz (2000:85), presenting official rationales through narrative and mythmaking is one way of demonstrating the practical mechanics of how "particular sectional interests are often universalized and treated as if they were everyone's interests". Using Gramsci (1971), they explore the conception of hegemony as supported by economic arrangements enforced by reward, by command arrangements enforced by policies, and by cultural arrangements enforced by the advocacy of specific values. It is in the interaction of the latter two sustaining the legitimacy of the first that myths are accepted in organisational life.

"Living in Mythical spaces"[1]

Other writers consider organisations in themselves, rather than just the activities that go on within them, as a mythic category constructed for political, social, and economic convenience. Alvesson and Deetz (2000:34-5) claim organisations, "born in conditions of struggle and domination" as creations working in service of vested

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[1] See Starbuck, (2007)

interests. They see applicability from organisations seen as political sites to theories of decision-making in a public sphere. Organisational nurturing of myth is raised by Starbuck (2007:21) who links commonalities of function between institutions such as church, army, and government agencies as part of modern industrial development in the early years of the twentieth century, recalling Cassirer's ideas of myths for purpose. Questions around fictional bases of social structures and their ontological status for individuals, groups and society are centralised in recent scholarship by Savage, Cornelissen, and Franck (2018:978) who refer to the real power of narratives to "shape how people make sense of organizations and are thus rather than derivative or secondary impressions very much the *essence* of organizations."

Jenkins (2014:203) considers mythic features of rationalised organisations having striking similarities with anthropological studies of pre-modern societies, noting rituals and myths of organisational life to be ubiquitous in drip-feeding established ideas. This is congruent with the ideas of Ingersoll and Adams (1986: 367,377) who consider the rational-technical axis of organisational design to be a self-denying myth in itself, arguing that organisations are not necessarily rational identities but a product of rationalisation as successful justification and legitimisation. How this might relate to political myth is addressed by Brown (1994:863) who notes how historical backcloth and social values are wielded by institutionally powerful actors through micro-politics within "culturally approved communication rituals" in service of institutional action.

Myth, rhetoric, and leadership

In the section above, narrative activities of certain organisational actors were noted as having potential to create and control myth. This idea can be related to others in leadership studies. Whilst this thesis does not intend to contribute to this field, it is useful to note how certain individuals are awarded increased legitimised ability to facilitate mythmaking and can provide cues for group behaviour due to their formal status as leaders. This idea is one that potentially links all sites for mythmaking. Because it relates closely to traditional and folktale stories where a leader or hero

can serve a transformative function for a social group, it also draws into organisational histories and can serve as a function of ideology.

Moxnes (1999:1428) notes a tendency to superficiality in this area, citing insufficiency in rational approaches to leadership for understanding the collective psyche. He adopts role archetypes for group situations that have familiarity both with fairy and folk tale stories in describing patterns of behaviour. Building upon the work of Gabriel (1997) within his discussion of archetypes, he identifies the roles of God, Devil and Clown as potentially *transformational* to a group. These ideas are later revisited. Moxnes and Moxnes (2016:1520-1) recontextualise anthropological work from Lévi-Strauss to demonstrate how simple, traditionally-shaped narrative processes with identified plots and stable, archetypal roles are utilised to resolve human problems in modern life.

In terms of leadership studies, the epic hero's Journey (Boje, 2008:80; Campbell, 2008) is another that links all sites of mythmaking. Early trait and great man theories have evolved to recent interest in transformational leadership models (Burns, 1978) which parallels development between a traditional and modern form of myth in industrialised societies. Downsides of conceptual frames of transformation are problematised by Tourish and Pinnington, who identify the coherence of corporate cultism, notions of universally held values and discouragement of resistance as dangerous. "The conception… is clearly one in which the leader is liberated to act as a maverick, while limiting the ability of followers to behave in an equally uncontrolled fashion" (Tourish and Pinnington, 2002:150). Impacts of "larger-than-life heroic conceptualization", and its converse (or potential outcome), destructive leader behaviour, are defined and empirically evaluated by Thoroughgood et al (2012:230). This also correlates with Conger's (1990) propositions for dark leadership. Residual effects of behaviours that enter the mythic sphere are discussed by Gabriel (1991), who empirically reports stories outlasting a former leader by a generation.

Mythification processes for the hero's journey are designed to create empathy for an individual or social group and create partnering opposition to a villain. One way that leaders consciously construct such emotional response and subsequent in-

group/out-group status is through formalised rhetoric; using "interrelatedness" of "persuasion, rhetoric, metaphor, ideology and myth" discussed by Charteris-Black (2005:4). In his study of specific politicians and their associated myths, he notes how linguistic analysis offers insight "into the nature of how power is gained and maintained" (Charteris-Black, 2005: xi-xii).

"Public issues of social structure", collective myth and the public sphere

This final terrain for myth considers institutional structures in relation to the public sphere, and how these might work as levers of state legitimation. These might include the law, religious, educational, and medical institutions as well as the media. Each carry political messages to the masses. They promote continuance and stability as normalised functions of the state, which is not passive in maintaining the status quo (Gamble, 1988:185) but reactive and transformative, and continually experienced via such institutions. Each institution is understood through its own language, sedimented stories and ritual as part of continuing political legitimation.

Bruner (2002:12-3) uses the law as an example. He describes how convention through legal stories is evoked to highlight considered deviance and render authority. As Emerson (1970:209-11) notes, normality is constructed in reference to agreed social frameworks. What is consensually decided as "nothing unusual" is often made via claims of expertise; Emerson illustrates this through a medical setting, a patient might consider their condition unusual, but staff experience reassures. Legitimacy and order are sustained in ambiguous situations where something unexpected seems to have occurred, via negotiation or enforcement.

Brown, (2003: 95), discussing how public inquiry reports are constituted as authoritative, explores how specialist function texts are authored to elicit verisimilitude, and thus "depoliticise disaster events, legitimate social institutions, and extend the hegemonic influence of dominant groups". He goes on to explicitly link legitimacy, power, and hegemony through consideration of the case of the Cullen Report into Piper Alpha as a useful "public discourse myth", (2003:108) drawing on Barthes to categorise how certain versions of reality are purified and made innocent through myths. Where myths are normative, unquestioned and

operate only at a tacit level, they become, in effect, taboo to challenge (Argyris and Schön, 1978: 58).

Having established such narratives as ubiquitous, Bouchard (2017:3-4) asks why Western society does not pay more attention to these powerful representations and structures that we live by, citing British civil liberties, property rights in the US and equality in France as ongoing examples of normative and unchallenged ideas. He raises the issue of social science "spurning" the study of myth which is sustained through narratives and used as leverage in political, social, and economic life.

This section has mapped the varying terrains that political myths inhabit, from the local environments that individuals traverse in their daily lives, to myths at organisational and societal levels.

Summarising the role of political myths

Previous sections undertook initial explorations around the blurred and messy concept of myth in general terms to the specifics of political myth sources and the terrains of social life that such myths inhabit. Closing down conditions for myths in modern public life, this final chapter section first sets out a brief overview of how media stories build political myths before setting out a conceptual framework for myth analysis in crisis situations as the basis for empirical analysis.

Whilst media representations are important tools for both the production and the construction of public understanding, Philo (2008:542) argues contemporary interest in polysemic audience reception of their messages has led to neglecting the former dimension of report production. Therefore, this thesis compares representations in two very different contexts for information dissemination through myth production. Conscious promotion and rationalisation of a particular set of governmental interests in removing social democratic frameworks and political union activities in reporting on the coal dispute (see chapters five and seven) is contrasted with confused defence of the status quo in the financial crisis. By use of a myth framework, the thesis also explores how, (though crises might be explained in different ways by different media outputs), reporting serves a common

goal as legitimation device for public activity, and that myths are one way these goals are attempted.

How media stories build political myths

Whilst media stories represent only one arm of state legitimation levers, they have their own distinct attributes. There are important variations between stand-alone closed discourses such as public inquiries and legal judgements (although they themselves may be the subject of media reporting) and ongoing media outputs of major stories unfolding during a crisis situation. Moxnes and Moxnes (2016) raise this type of aggregated storyline and layering through their comments on how social turbulence fosters mythical imagery, and hence creation of mythmaking.

Daily instalments of big news stories present much like antenarratives proposed by Boje (2008:2). Contributions come from a variety of outlets, journalists, editorial and ownership perspectives, complemented by commentaries from politicians, influencers and invited experts. Completed story arcs are rendered visible in hindsight through reportage, and subsequent historical interpretations. Alternate versions and other interpretations of events can be lost to posterity due to the permanence of print, and official, accepted storylines. The media ability to frame and reframe and extend discursive applications of political thought is, like the state, continuous, presenting as serialised mutable instalments rather than cohesive whole.

Daily reporting conditions may be particularly effective for developing political myths. Stories are integrated with prior, recycled and often familiar texts and tropes and reinterpreted via what Fairclough (1992: 288) terms "intertextual chains", and folded into subsequent news cycles. Porter (1986:41) sees this borrowing of "traces, codes and signs" as both inherited from, and an inevitable part of, the social context. Taking this further, once coherent narratives develop, seemingly unrelated ideas, stories and narratives can be gathered, generalised, and developed into schematic forms, or myths that shape transition. Bouchard (2017:35) sees them extending their influence on entire societies through the end of a protracted promotion process. Happer and Philo (2013: 323) comment, "news

may appear as a sometimes chaotic flow of information and debate but it is also underpinned by key assumptions about social relationships and how they are to be understood."

As time passes, social change renders transitional myths invisible (Barthes, 2009:133). Hindsight allows deconstruction and evaluation. Some are retrospectively viewed as particularly successful; one specific example is provided by Hay (1996:267-8). In his article on the discursive construction of the Winter of Discontent, Hay considers a process for the bricolage of primary narratives of individual stories which works through secondary mediation and abstraction to meta-narratives typifying crisis. His analysis of rhetorical and linguistic strategies concludes that in this instance, simplified and flexible media narrative processes denying "specificity and complexity" proved a decisive political intervention and hegemonic moment for the New Right. His paper explores a specific instance where tangentially-related stories were bundled and abstracted to great effect with a long-standing and durable impact, but it does not examine thematic, flexible tropes working together to constitute what he terms as meta-narratives – i.e. myths.

Thomas (2007:264) develops and extends Hay's ideas, positing how since 1945 British politics was shaped by two meta-narratives: 1930's myths that legitimised the post-war centre-left consensus, and right-wing myths emergent from the late 1970's when economic difficulties facilitated an ideological challenge from what became Thatcherism. The success of this successive narrative was such that New Labour chose to accept the premise of the myth. Its ideological consequence is what Thomas refers to as a "mistaken perception among both political elites and the general public that historically there really was no - or only a limited – alternative to Thatcherism", (Thomas, 2007:280). Thus, in Barthesian terms, myth here transformed history into nature (Barthes, 2009:154). No viable alternatives were presented for neoliberal ideas. That despite the financial crisis and temporary State investment in the banking sector there has not yet been a sustained discursive change against this model (see Blyth, 2013:204) is partly testament to the power and adaptability of this longstanding myth.

A framework for discussing myths

In the sections above, myth production has been explored sharing space with stories, history, and ideologies at all levels of social organisation. Myths have been considered through a number of contradictory and evolving lenses, whether as structural thinking advocated by Lévi-Strauss or specific to the conditions of a social group (Castoriadis, 1975:163). In this study which problematises (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011:254) their functions in political life and the work of the press, this thesis funnels to their workaday context as productive outputs that convey political legitimacy. Their use as narrative bricolage, liminal and flexible in promoting shaped public understanding of crisis events, and in merging "diverse perceptions and beliefs into a new and unified perspective", (Edelman, 1988:6) is the subject of the forthcoming empirical work. To do this, creating a frame for myth themes that might coalesce to create more durable patterns of thought during crisis situations is required.

Durable, is, in itself contestable: both Hay and Thomas point to the persistence of the myths of the Winter of Discontent as scaffolding for neoliberal legitimacy, however, these may pass with ideological change. As Barthes (2009:132) writes that, "some objects become the prey of mythical speech for a while, then they disappear, others take their place and attain the status of myths…". Warner (1995: xx) writes of Barthes fundamental principles that myths are not eternal, but historical compounds, which "successfully conceal their own contingency, and changes and transitoriness so that the story they tell looks as if it cannot be told otherwise…". Bouchard (2017:86-7) offers more prosaic explanation for mythic lifecycles. He cites four factors; changes to social contexts, the myth itself having deleterious effects to previous promoters, social actors who promoted particular myths relinquishing power, or the myth becomes misaligned to praxis. He also discusses how myths helpfully fade as new myths take their place.

Chronology and temporality are then particularly important factors in discursively managing tensions and limitations between studies undertaken on myths as sociological mechanisms we encounter today and inside written histories and those studies focussed on traditional oral folk tales and myths. Hence, whilst specific

myths pass, the work of scholars such as Moxnes (1999;2013;2016) centralise durability of types of myths. Dawson and Sykes (2018) raise important questions in another closely related area, of how conventional and linear conceptions of temporality constrain conceptual work. By thinking in this way, we can place media myths as demonstrating similar social functions whatever the context – stories and crises happen both once and repeatedly through repeated, flexible themes. In this case, the Financial Crisis relives the 1930s Great Depression, the Miners' Strike of 1984-5 has the potential to revisit Heath's capitulation.

Myths specific but flexible to selected crises

The conceptualisation below creates a simple architectural distinction between overarching myth as a shorthand core narrative of each crisis (developed from the pyramidical *master myths* posited by Bouchard, 2017:112-119), and secondary myths working flexibly to support it (what Bouchard refers to as *derivative* myths). Different terms are used in this thesis as his ideas imply a more formal structure than the flexible approach to political myths adopted here.

In terms of the distinctions of crisis set out by Turner, overarching myths posited from this thesis are that the media myths of the coal dispute were largely myths of calculation from a government maximising its "opportunistic purpose" (Adeney and Lloyd, 1986:79) – hence a media crisis by *design.* The financial crisis by contrast, created initial myths by *default,* as generalist journalists struggled, along with the public, to understand specialist knowledge and economic implications. Myths were pressed into service to *defend* vested interests and the status quo.

So, whilst similar mythic types serviced the press, they were deployed flexibly to different outcomes in establishing an overarching myth of each crisis. A proposal for each crisis as presented in this thesis is thus:

o *For the coal dispute* – the overarching myth presented by the media is the wrong-doing of a misinformed *collective*, led astray by outdated ideals and facilitated by an unrestrained powerful demagogue as epitome of extreme ideas.

o *For the financial crisis* – the overarching myth presented by the media is the wrong-doing of powerful *individuals* as epitome of greed and irresponsibility, unrestrained by 'supine'[2] and ineffective boards, lax regulation, and permissive cultures.

Having established ubiquity of myths as part of legitimating political behaviour, the final section of this chapter briefly outlines supporting themes. The flexible way these myths worked together as narrative bricolage in the service of the state during each crisis is explored in turn during chapter five and six. Chapter seven takes the opportunity to connect the two recent episodes of crisis, exploring thematic similarities and differences in each context. As identified in chapter one, recent work is only just starting to link these two crises, the seeds of the latter being sown partly in policies and decision-making enabled by the outcomes of the former, alongside other changes underway during the intervening period such as the growth of professional PR, and consolidation of ownership of media outlets.

It should also be noted in the discussion below that none of the frames for categorisation of myth work in isolation, and, as can be seen, frequently interact together for greater effect in service of the overarching myth of each crisis.

Myths of history, continuity, and change

The **myths of history, continuity, and change** utilise Bruner's (2002:15) argument that conceptualises a narrative as a dialectic between what was expected, and what came to pass. There are two different stories within this thesis as a result: for the financial crisis, the story is the "something unforeseen", whereas for the miners' strike, it is a story "long foreseen". Thinking about crises in this way is useful in terms of how myths develop in the press. During the miners' strike myths evolve in a measured way in service of the overarching myth, the financial crisis sees more haphazard understanding emerging. Both, however, draw on the myths of history to establish common crisis shorthand. This is compatible with ideas of a microclimate for myth enhancement as described by Barthes, (2009:177.) Marx

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[2] *Financial Times*, (2008a)

(2017:3-4) reflects on how and why previous stories are recycled to serve new struggles, writing that:

> "man makes his own history, but he does not make it out of the whole cloth…the tradition of all past generations weighs like an alp…at the very time when men appear engaged in revolutionizing things and themselves…do they anxiously conjure up into their service the spirits of the past, assume their names, their battle cries…"

This framework was therefore selected to examine which ideas are called upon from the past to organise and legitimise thought and action during each crisis, utilising Mills (2000: 144) malleable organised memory. Gordon and Radway, (1997:viii), consider how conditions and circumstances in the past banish or marginalise certain ideas and individuals. In this instance, their idea is transposed to see how history can enable and engage and be pressed into service in either the conscious or unconscious development of myth. As remarked by Sykes, (1965:330) who parses mythical time as eternal, "from the point of view of the mythical consciousness the past has never passed away; it is always here and now".

Barthes, (2009:132-3) considered historical foundations for myths necessary. For him, human history "rules the life and death of mythical language". He argues that whilst very ancient myths are possible, none are eternal, as they are predicated on speech itself – both as output and condition. Hence myths have varying durability, "some objects become the prey of mythical speech for a while, then they disappear, others take their place and attain the status of myth".

The Myths of Choice and Agency

Myths of choice and agency have been selected as relevant in two main ways. Firstly, enabling consideration of transition between the former as a key tenet of Thatcherite policy making, and the latter as one of its outcomes with public scapegoating of bankers' agency and responsibility during the financial crisis.

Choice produced simplistic and encapsulating packaging for Thatcherism and its ideas (Hall, 1988;48-9). It assisted the creation of a hegemonic project in rejection

of consensus politics as seen under the Heath administration and socialist agendas. Phillips (1996:234) develops these ideas in her empirical study of the term in Thatcherite rhetoric, concluding it *the* dominant discourse in British policy of the time. Its value as signifier for particular meanings of consumerism and free-market ideas was significant, reducing complex economic, social, and political ideas to simple myths of personal choice. In this way neoliberalism was proposed as natural economic imperative rather than active political and economic strategy.

Choice also involved an evolutionary step-change away from myths of State-as-responsible to individual-as-responsible. Its development and naturalisation over a generation and hence myths of individual and group *agency* are particularly rich and visible in the financial crisis literature. Thus, narrowing of debate during the financial crisis and subsequent acceptance of austerity was enabled by myths of agency. A safe industry such as banking had been subject to rogue individuals; but also, as consumers, individuals took on additional risks and as such were persuaded retrospectively as partly responsible for the crisis. Glynos et al (2012) construct bankers' media representations as simultaneously super-clever and incompetent but also position the public as both ignorant marks and "knowledgeable agents" (Gioia, 2012:17) who make choices.

This is demonstrated in Barthesian terms via explanations of producing, reading and deciphering myths, the individual 'chooses' how to consume the myth. The myth can be read as is, in what Barthes terms as innocent fashion (2009:153), or if it is "seen" then it is "nothing more than a political proposition, honestly expressed". The third, dynamic face of myth, that of living "the story at once true and unreal" can be reserved for those who set the terms of the myth, either as its creator through rhetoric or reporting, or deftly repurposing events to their own ends.

Secondly, myths of choice and agency relate strongly to individual narratives and organisational archetype stories discussed earlier in the chapter, often via official narratives of public rhetoric. In the writing of our history, narratives such as press stories often privilege the role of individual, nominated decision makers, even when their decisions are part of wider incremental changes. Hence, in crisis situations, their roles become even more pronounced in mythmaking.

Myths of Legitimisation and delegitimisation

Myths of legitimisation and delegitimisation have been chosen for how media tools provide platforms for justifying rule and moral symbols of authority. Mills (2000:36-7) writes of how these central conceptions, or legitimations in Weberian terms, may refer to gods at the societal level; "the vote of the majority", "will of the people" etc, and their relevance comes from their use "to justify or to oppose the arrangement of power and the positions within this arrangement of the powerful". On the individual level they can become the basis for adherence or opposition.

Charteris-Black (2005:22) refers to such political legitimisation as "not a rational process", and many of the factors in selecting this theme heading of legitimisation and delegitimization work in support of this statement. Often these appear as dialectic processes within the media, as claims of legitimacy often require creation of the Other, as less-legitimate, or illegitimate. Much of the basis for these ideas is to be found in the work of van Dijk (1988; 1993) who studies polarisation strategies via focus on emphasis and mitigation of good/bad in-group and out-group properties and actions. He specifies in later work how during ingroup talk ideological beliefs may be presupposed, whereas with outgroups beliefs may be censored or modified (2006:124). Using examples from media sources he points to co-production of ideologies and shared values through powerful institutions such as the press, with editorials as direct "mouthpieces" (p.138) of owners.

Charteris-Black (2005:22) continues by considering hostile outgroups of successful political myths. The importance of this existentially threatening "other" to effective narratives is noted by Müller (1999: 76). However, it is Cohen's (1987:9) analysis of how "a condition, episode, person, or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests...presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media", that forms the main tenet of the approach. Charteris-Black (2005:89-90) provides empirical examples of how such arguments are built through dialectic processes, demonstrating the vitality of conflict rhetoric to Thatcher's success. This was constructed through identification of the enemy and creation of the group Other, often via metaphors that evoked negativity, such as

socialism as illness or original sin (Charteris-Black, 2005:24). This dialectic of conflict was often replicated in the press during her tenure and is a key part of chapter five.

This case for exclusion and gaining political legitimacy through creation of an illegitimate, threatening other myth is also discussed by Bouchard (2017:97); who identifies two benefits; servicing the function of helping define in-group boundaries and raising message awareness. This style of legitimation is explored in chapter six, noting how the banking sector assisted delegitimisation and demonization of a few key individuals to save its own reputation during the financial crisis. For the public, purging was for their own illegitimate spending habits. Barthes (2009: 40-1) raises the public inoculation against the ills of institutions (Church or Army) via, the "little 'confessed' evil saves one from acknowledging a lot of hidden evil…" Here then we see media and political elites publicly defending themselves against one of their own. Similar principles are retrospectively noted for the miners' strike; exorcism from the social body is successfully encapsulated within the oft-repeated "enemy within" speech, (Travis, 2014) identifying miners as threatening Other.

Myths of Reputation, Heroism, and Villainy

Myths of **reputation, heroism and villainy** provide the more individually-orientated companion to those of legitimacy above; they often work together. In some ways, these myths are the most adaptable of the groupings, as these types of narratives most closely match traditional oral folk tales and organisational hero stories explored above, and are also applicable at the individual, group, and societal level. Moxnes (2013:639) conceptualises stylised archetypal influences in organisations as "templates", (2013:642). This line of enquiry is also useful for considering myths of reputation in the media; referred to as political "schemes of simplification" that reduce cognitive dissonance by Kertzer (1988:84). Edelman (1971:83) writes of political myths that permit the replacement of one "complicated empirical world" with another where "men hold to a relatively few, simple, archetypal myths, of which the conspiratorial enemy and the omnicompetent hero-savior are the central ones." He goes on to add that charismatic leadership helps manage ambiguities and provides a source of stability in spite of failures.

Reputational motifs present clearly within the press – often media narratives focus on high politics that circulate around named individuals, particularly in relation to peripeteia. Kertzer (1988:92-3) explicitly links what he refers to as ubiquitous political rituals where "public enemies are identified, denounced, or cast out", as defining "us and them", hero versus fiend. Edelman (1988:46) points to the highlighting of talk and actions of leaders and aspirants by the media, and the reinforcement of the premise of the central value of leadership rather than historical or material conditions to events. He writes of how the press, "thrive upon heroes, villains…and especially upon the evocation of leaders with whom people can identify or whom they can blame…."

Ideas on archetypes of heroes and villains also help draw out Barthes (2009:151) writings on how myth "prefers" to work with incomplete images. It is for the reader to paint detail on the stereotype. He particularly identifies caricatures here, earmarking press daily undertakings of such mythical signifiers. He describes these caricatures as ready for a signification, offering a number of examples of French imperiality through images including the French general decorating "the one-armed Senegalese", and the nun who gives the cup of tea to the "bed-ridden Arab".

Closure

This chapter offered conceptualisations of the shared spaces and terrains that myths operate in and how production of political myths works through press outlets. It closes with a discussion on the myth framework that will be the basis for empirical work to come. In chapter three, this framework will organise and support the analysis of selected crisis literature.

Chapter three: Britain in crisis; critical review

Introduction

As already noted, the myths of public and social life as presented via media sources are often downplayed at the expense of more material analyses. Despite political myths being a central part of the ecosystem of our shared social lives and providing a safe space between competing tensions of social values, and cohesion they remain fundamentally slippery. Chapter three now builds on this general condition of myth to consider application to each crisis via the literature.

It adopts the angle that the political myths of the great crises of latterday have shaped current British public identity issues, as outlined in chapter one. This is an emergent idea. Much early contrast justifiably tends toward material considerations, whether via political economy analysis (Kirkland, 2017), or perhaps focussed on the impact of ideological aspects such as the journey of neoliberalism (Guénin-Paracini and Gendron, 2014). Both these considerations will be explored further in chapter seven. This chapter, however, aims to justify partnering intimations of immaterial aspects of crisis presentation. Myths are surfaced through analytical review, whether as the main focus of academic discussion, or, more commonly, as part of supporting frameworks. This is helpful in critique of analyses where what is not said and who is not included is highlighted as important as what is discussed, e.g., Berry's (2012) examination of the *Today* programme during the Financial Crisis. It establishes where mythmaking has been utilised in strategic and reactive policymaking; where successful ideologies are accepted without explanation, and fading counterparts are sustained through myth renewal.

As summarised in chapter two, the overarching myth of the miners' strike was constructed around the wrong-doing of an errant, misinformed collective, led astray by outdated ideals, and led by a dangerous communist demagogue. During the financial crisis, the overarching myth is constructed around the shaming of powerful individuals, unrestrained by ineffective collectives of supine boards, lax regulation, and perpetuation of permissive 'hero' cultures.

The chapter is thus organised into two broad halves which cover each crisis in turn; each event receives a general introduction, before a discussion of the overarching myth as central to ambiguity management during the reporting of both crises. The four secondary myth themes outlined in chapter two are then used as a storytelling frame to organise analysis of journalistic coverage of key debates in each crisis. During each section, the chapter reviews existing contributions around the role of print media in each crisis, utilising primary and supporting myths for each as scaffolding. It recognises these themes as only a small part of vast wealth of literature available on the coal dispute of 1984-5, and continually burgeoning scholarship on the financial crisis, and so begins each section with a short summary of what is in scope for each.

The general approach to the critique considers how, in both cases, the media coverage reflects, promotes the interests of, and supports outcomes on behalf of the dominant narrative. The dominant narrative is not, in itself, independent, as it serves dominant interests. The chapter therefore posits that affirmative coverage in the media during times of difficulty is about recognition of developing narrative, and capacity to shape it. It explores where academics have sought to challenge the normative nature of these reproductions and accepted legitimacies through critical appraisal and analysis. It also considers what remains accepted through under-exploration and overgeneralisation, and how myth analysis can help unpick assumptions. Therefore, having set the question of exploring mythmaking via media in two crises, the review below offers perspectives on each ahead of empirical material during the second part of this thesis.

In summary, this chapter has three main aims in considering what contributions existing literature might make to ideas of mythmaking in the media during these crises. Firstly, as mythmaking is rarely the major argument of a piece of crisis research, salient parts of these analyses are presented by myth headings to better identify, organise, and synthesise relevant ideas. Secondly, where myths and mythmaking have been explicitly referenced, it then aims to analyse the contribution of the piece. Where ideas of mythmaking have been presented tacitly, the aim is to foreground their contribution to exploring the normative nature of

debate. Exploration in this way supports the shaping and presentation of later empirical work within the overall frame, which follows these headings.

General introduction to literature on the Coal Dispute of 1984-5

Many aspects of dispute literature focus on the material, economic and political aspects of the struggle, and are meshed with adjacent areas discussing the policies of Margaret Thatcher's premiership and the rising tide of neoliberal discourses. Applicability of the strike to many fields of change underway at the time was articulated as early as Gibbon (1988), who usefully categorised rising special interests around the strike including feminist perspectives, community histories, and police scholarship. It reflects the impact of the strike as a symbolic and important representation of change to many aspects of British public life and social identities. However, it also promotes recognition that media analysis and the effects of mediation are only a small part of the huge number of different contributions on the strike.

Evolving fashions in scholarship have seen ideas develop from macroeconomic perspectives, through discourse ideas, to recent interests in personal narratives such as the oral histories of South Wales miners chronicled by Leeworthy (2012). Many earlier studies were undertaken via political economy lenses, and via Marxist approaches in the shadow of Hobsbawm's (1978) seminal, *The Forward March of Labour Halted.* Centralisation of the coal industry to the developing context of labour history is problematised by Berger (2005:1), both in acknowledging the contribution of alternative perspectives and in integrating local and micro-narratives. All recognise the and-after-that-everything-was-different watershed of the strike. These personal narrative contributions are particularly conscious of clichés around strike stories as the turning point for the labour movement in recent history (Leeworthy, 2012:829). As such, they offer ripe testimonials on social fixations and the endurance of mythical stories to life stories and identity.

Other useful angles for revealing contemporary myths continue to emerge from strike histories, production of biographical material and memoirs and the emergence of Cabinet papers under the 30-year rule. Where authors such as

Beynon (2014), Phillips (2014) and Arnold (2016) have focussed on the reveal of hard evidence of strike management from government meetings, the gap in presentation to the soft narratives and supporting myths offered by contemporaneous media sources is yet to be widely considered. This gap is demonstrated via the evolution from contemporary analysis, where Adeney and Lloyd (1985, 71) sniff government involvement, to Darlington (2005:79) who notes a necessity for "systematic denials of government intervention". Since the release of key evidence, Phillips (2014:117) is able to openly explore "jarred" differences between government private discussions and the "fiction" (p.128) of public insistences of non-intervention along with "unambiguous evidence" (2014:120) of removing effective unions. Myth analysis allows exploration of how this gap between public distancing and private interference was managed in practice.

Whilst thematic myth analysis of the coal dispute hasn't yet directly featured in the literature, wider media studies of strike coverage are a continuing and populous field and can offer significant contributions to mythmaking analyses. These include contemporary considerations of media reporting and approaches to the strike from Jones (1986), Barker (1988), Cumberbatch, Brown, and McGregor (1988). The strike coincides with the initial burgeoning of discourse analysis techniques, and some early work considers the value of content analysis of media reports. With the benefit of hindsight applied to academic debate conducted in *Media, Culture and Society,* it is Barker's (1988:108) argument around agenda-setting in terms of media not telling the public what to think, but rather what to think about, that remains resonant. It is, however, the contributions made by the Glasgow Media Group to both media output and audience receptions during the strike that offer most insight for this chapter. Philo (1995:38) reports how ten years after the strike, respondents sampled had little idea of the largely boring nature of picketing, many interviewees believed the focus of continuous violence promoted by media outputs.

Recent work by Hart (2017:5) recognises a compatible gap in scholarship around media narratives during the strike. He writes of "very little discourse-analytical research into media representations" as yet conducted, and no systematic study made of metaphor as a framing device in media discourses of the strike. In a

detailed, small-text sample discussion he demonstrates how emotive language from an article captioned *The Charge of the Blue Brigade*, serves to "reduce a complex situation to a simple scenario", (2017:26). This study takes these ideas a step further to argue that a highly complex crisis was largely reduced by the media to a simple (yet flexible) set of nested and repeatable narratives that both proved effective at the time and have endured over a generation in the public imaginary. Discussion below on overarching and supporting myths demonstrates how they were put to work by a largely "pliant and partisan" (Phillips, 2014:32) media working to support government anti-union agendas.

The overarching myths of the coal dispute

Prevailing conditions immediately prior to the strike were to prove incredibly fertile for state mythmaking. As discussed in chapter seven, circumstances in the late 1970's from a poor economic outlook, recession and stumbling American foreign policy provided a suitable vacuum for a successful hegemonic initiative. Gamble's articulation of the Thatcherite ideology is a reshaping of institutional frameworks, with the free economy seen "as a prop for a strong state instead of the other way round. The authority of the state is all-important" (Gamble, 1988:35). Rather than difficulties in the world economy being targeted as problematic, social democracy with its acceptance of immigrants, feminism and threat to white patriarchal values was identified as a far more likely target (Gamble, 1988:15).

The overarching myth of the miners' cause was therefore set up by the press in opposition to the New Right for optimum effectiveness. It presented an opportunity to create dialogic antagonisms, both in presenting their strike as wrong, but also strengthening the Government's position, materially and ideologically. Darlington (2005:79), writes of how "Thatcher saw the NUM – and Scargill in particular – as the embodiment of all she held to be endemic in Britain's economic decline…" It then can be argued that from the Conservative perspective it was necessary for Britain's economic recovery to actively smash the myths of previous post-war administrations and create fresh narratives.

This was tackled in two main ways: firstly, promoted myths that were crafted around the general dangers of Leftist identities, with miners presented as a particularly intractable and dangerous group able to topple governments, (Heffer, 1985; Darlington, 2005:71). Crick (1985:12) contributes to this directly, writing of how: "In left-wing mythology the miners have a reputation as the 'shock troops' of the labour movement – the most militant section of the working class, able to inflict the most damaging blows upon the capitalist system." The phrasing is similarly echoed by another media man, Goodman, (1985:17) who refers to the "Coldstream guards of organised labour". These were long-running mythic narratives since the General strike, some sympathetic, mostly not; refreshed and revitalised for 1984.

Second, existing myths around *The Plan for Coal* were downplayed and obfuscated during the strike itself. Potentially an albatross for free-market principles; it only received limited coverage from an obliging press. Its inception remained as a hangover from previous administrations, hastily pressed back into limited service during the government climbdown of 1981. It had since been used as a diversionary tactic during interim government preparations before drifting away again.

Arnold (2016:93) revisits its problems, calling its 1970's promises and upbeat image a "false dawn" during oil crises after years of contraction as documented by Ashworth (1986:324). North Sea oil and its subsidisation, an improving economy, the 1983 election result, and post Falklands jingoism made its affirming manifesto and negotiated peace unnecessary. For the Conservatives, once its initial job was done, it needed to be treated as anomalous to sensible economic trends. The very presence of the Plan lent legitimacy to Scargill's arguments, and therefore it needed discrediting or ignoring, as necessary.

The strike therefore represented "represented highly symbolic confrontations between labour, capital and government" (Arnold, 2016: 95). The argument posited here therefore explores how media accounts were used to present an overarching narrative of wrong-doing by a misinformed (and, dependent on source, hostile) *collective,* who had been led astray from individual self-interest by outdated ideals of community and traditional industrial life. Their description as "lions led by donkeys" by Eric Hammond (see Lloyd, 1985:6-7) facilitates their role as largely

honourable stooges in thrall to Scargill as an unrestrained and powerful demagogue who epitomised extreme ideas and presented a hardcore Red threat. This is illustrated through Geary's (2005:43) myth of the radicalised miner as 'archetypal proletarian', resulting in the "death of sympathy" in 1985. Similarly, Alexander (2005) quotes Thompson's (1980:66) *Writing by Candlelight* to position miners clinging to "unscientific notions such as "justice" and fair play". This narrative of a misled and ignorant collective action amplified the presentation of the secret national ballot as the only approved course for legitimacy, which concealed government activity and obfuscated the scale of closure plans. It stigmatised by social tribe, reputation and supporting cast, and is the focus of empirical work in chapter five.

The success of such myths has clarified over the passage of time. While contemporary sources can be critical, they do not attribute the full active agency of government. Crick, (1985:109) writes that: "Unfortunately for the strikers' cause, the arguments over union democracy and picket-line violence enabled the Government, the Coal Board and the media largely to ignore the issue behind the dispute – pit closures". The above statement is true to a certain extent, but it demonstrates the success of the myth in positioning these arguments neutrally. It is not that the government "ignored" the issue, but they successfully managed it out with their alternative.

The difference that hindsight has brought is demonstrated by Arnold: (2016: 91). He writes how the Conservative party felt confident in not just dismissing the miners cause but turning it on its head. He cites occupational hazards as a prior source of sympathy and admiration adapting to key evidence of obstinacy and a refusal to move with the times. The following sections discuss how supporting myths worked as scaffold:

The myths of choice and agency of the dispute

By the outbreak of the strike, the trope of "choice" was an already well-oiled Thatcherite discourse (see Phillips, 1996) so its inclusion in congruent media stories was designed to tap into the zeitgeist. The aim was to further affirm Tory voting

readership and Other what were positioned as militant ideas and behaviours. In this way press rhetoric offered a binary choice; from state-subsided and inefficient nationalised industries stymied by self-serving trade unionists contrasted against their up-and-coming privatised, and individually-orientated peers.

Such free-market initiatives were rising since the 1979 election victory, (Towers, 1989:166-9). While the initial commitment was compatible with traditional Tory abstentionist approaches to industrial relations, government actions during the strike were part of wider, gradual moves to more interventionist strategies and the purposeful subordination of labour laws, (Dorey, 2013:47). Confrontation with organised labour was therefore inevitable; Lloyd (1985:6-7) goes a step further, positioning the NUM targeted as the "last great obstacle" to Conservative economic policies.

The baldness of the binary choice discourse was mythic in itself and presented in stark ideological terms. Morgan, (1990:139) raises the delivery of free markets positioned as inevitable and via there-is-no-alternative (TINA) discourse. This either/or dynamic is explored via the literature in two main ways. Initially, careful selection of pit closures designed to provoke either confrontation or compliance, and secondly, once industrial action was underway, via the divisive ballot issue.

Academic thought has been somewhat divided here; whilst Beckett and Hencke (2009:50-6) consider events as almost accidental, recent releases of Cabinet papers and the confirmation of the *Stepping Stones* strategy (see chapter 7) support the view of Helm (2004:15) who refers to the "red rag" of closures in Left strongholds. Beynon (1985:4-5) classes the Cortonwood closure as a "deeply provocative act". Whilst assessment of the extent of deliberate government strategy are not directly evaluated in these contributions, their outcomes were the same, and local agency provided the small stones for NCB executive choices.

This analysis is in line with Helm's perspective that whilst Scargill played his hand badly, "he didn't really have another hand to play" – his binary choice was capitulate or fight. Wilsher, Macintyre and Jones (1985:40) offer a sympathetic but pithy assessment of an underlying strategy offering a "challenge which they could

not refuse…in circumstances and on terms which had been carefully tailored to ensure that they must inevitably lose".

Once the walkout was underway, the subsequent amplification of the ballot as the only legitimate and democratic course open to miners obscured the scale of the Government's closure plans. It stigmatised by tribe, further fostering area schism with Nottingham. Beckett and Hencke (2009:63) confirm this with the comment that the ballot's relevance was for the media, the Government, and the NCB. Allen (2009: 282) further explores this angle, demonstrating how the ballot was used as a distorting tactic, "converted into a media and political vendetta against Scargill. It was portrayed as if he were personally responsible for not holding one."

This is an important consideration, as it not only engendered contemporary hostility toward Scargill and encouraged polarisation, but downplayed local activism, as further painted through Allen's interview with Jack Taylor who reflects he would have been 'murdered' for attempting to stop men voting with their feet. This downplaying or ignoring agency from rank-and-file miners raises a number of other important considerations around the privileging of what Phillips (2009:156) raises as 'high politics', focussed on key individuals. Its use in the press enhances the demonization of Scargill and presents ordinary miners as mired in blind followership rather than as active and knowledgeable agents.

These ideas of choice in the strike ran alongside similar themes at the broader societal level, designed for the dismantling of post-war consensus politics, and can be seen in parallel contestations around teachers, Greenham, Liverpool, and the abolition of the Greater London Council. The success of such narratives is discussed by Hall (1988:196-7) who points as much to the failure of Labour to form a credible alternative narrative in the face of authoritarianism as key here. Familiarity and repetition rendered them particularly effective as part of the mythmaking of strike reporting.

The myths of legitimisation and delegitimisation of the dispute

The ballot issue raised above also featured prominently within myths of legitimacy propounded in the media. Darlington (2005:80) notes how "the NUM was subject to an intensive ideological offensive by the media, notably in a campaign for a national ballot." That the Tories sought political benefit from an inflated ballot issue was recollected by both Neil Kinnock and Mick McGahey; the latter is quoted as describing the media having "ballotitis" (Beckett and Hencke, 2009:75-7). However, there was more than sport and electoral advantage to be made from discomforting Labour. Media distraction around the ballot issue operated in two main ways:

The first was to create a clamour that allowed the government to promote its own legitimation strategy: a sole focus on necessary market efficiencies that was congruent with core policymaking. Commentators have reported on its mythical claim of only moderate pit closures; Jones (2014:22-3) analyses 1984 Cabinet records to report on the MacGregor plan to close 75 pits. He writes of how the cover-up was so effective that it was never mentioned again in any other sources, and there was no hesitation from Thatcher in authorising advertising to, "tell the country that Scargill was lying." The effectiveness of this market efficiency distraction strategy is illustrated in a quote from Crick (1985:98). "Many in the NUM believe that the Coal Board deliberately tried to provoke a national strike, at its convenience". The success of the government positions of legitimate efficiency and arms-length strategy was such that only the NCB was mentioned here.

Strategy, misdirection, and concealment were made even more effective via twin prongs of simultaneous Government *de*legitimisation strategies coupling the ballot issue (symbol of legitimated industrial action) with picket line violence (symbol of illegitimate mob). Reicher and Hopkins (1996: 357) note these themes were "used to debate basic issue of how Britain should be run", casting the public as either for or against Tory governance. Leeworthy (2012: 829) considers how here Thatcher "conceptualised" striking miners as a direct antagonism to British democracy.

In a situation where both sides claimed sole legitimacy and given that the strike would come to define a future for what trade union legitimacy meant (Adeney and

Lloyd, 1986: 289), it is surprising that few have since explored legitimacy rhetoric during the strike. Crick (1985:102) offers a detailed discussion on the Rule 41 issue, as well as the relevant rulebook extracts. Chapter five discusses the paucity of media attention given to the legitimacy of area-based strikes in Rule 41, and how instead the need for a ballot for a national strike (Rule 43) was promoted instead. Crick (1985:119) also considers "misleading" media coverage that Nottingham was against the strike per se, rather than insisting on taking the time for a ballot.

What is frequently discussed instead is post hoc evaluation of what Beynon (1985:10, 183) considers the tactical error of not holding a ballot given its recently accepted orthodoxy within the Labour movement, what Taylor (1993:294) calls a "haunting" mistake. Whilst these statements make a reasonable argument, they do not discuss the root context that the ballot issue was a largely constructed one. By accepting the premise of the issue by focussing on evaluating the ballot itself, literatures are then drawn to a strike then considered "illegitimately imposed" by NUM leadership (Phillips, 2009:152). Area strikes were a legitimate course.

More helpful for myth analysis is Darlington's (2014) alterfactual consideration of the ballot decision and media assumptions that it would not have succeeded. Myth analysis allows the alternative perspective that ballot contestation was not a media *assumption,* rather a Government *promoted* position. Certainly, there were many benefits to be gained for the Conservatives here. No ballot meant that Nottingham continued divided, and the strike could continually be constructed as illegitimate. Were miners' leaders to concede outside demand for a ballot and lose, there would be no strike. Darlington (2014:146) also posits that any scheduled ballot would have seen a concerted "vote no" campaign promulgated through a willing press.

The second delegitimisation strategy of violence, public unease and contestation is contemporarily discussed by Wilsher et al (1985:64). Legitimacy of government action in facilitating a national police force via the Reporting Centre was widely contested in left-orientated outlets such as *The Guardian.* Whilst discomfort was less evident in *The Times* (see chapter five) early on, by the time the *Insight* team were undertaking reportage, concerns were mainstream. They comment that it soon became controversial due to scale and reach, and obscured accountability,

"widely seen, especially on the left, as the unacknowledged beginnings of a kind of national force to handle riots and civil disturbance."

Post-event analyses openly question attempted government legitimacy here, largely around the demonstrable apparatus of State institutions such as police and law courts. Metaphorical descriptions illustrate how not only miners' historical image was under siege during the strike, but the police too. Beckett and Hencke (2009:82) describe a move from friendly local bobby to "ferocious figure with horse and a lethal truncheon". Williams (2009:15) intensifies such imagery; "the image of the thin blue line was replaced with that of the beefy paramilitary with the thick black truncheon and riot shield". The success of this particular dual strand of mythmaking cannot be overstated. Beynon (2014) is able to conclude that with emphasis on hard Left danger and Arthur Scargill personally, the government successfully misdirected attention that should have been focussed on employment issues and a balanced energy strategy.

Hindsight has brought other challenges to deployments of police and law as illustrated in the press and other media outlets. A joined-forces approach between television framings and news reports of picket violence was extremely effective. Williams (2014:11) makes explicit connections between "relentless portrayal of picket line violence" and the publicly accepted suppression of information on police activities and the subsequent Hillsborough disaster and cover-up. Residual effects of such legitimating and delegitimating strategies are discussed in depth by Philo (1995) who uses long-term public perceptions of television news as a case study around media accounts of the strike. He writes of how the majority of respondents to his study believed most picketing was violent, and that the media was responsible as many were convinced that the news images that they saw were typical. Such connections proved both powerful and long-lasting, causing long-term issues for police image as well as expected negativity around collective action.

The myths of reputation, heroism, and villainy of the dispute

Reputational myths remain a visible symbol of the strike today, with the history of the strike pitched as Thatcher vs. Scargill (Helm, 2004:7) in many accounts. Mythical

and stereotypical representations of opposing figures with accompanying supporting cast are attractive for the media. Neil (1985: xi) writes that the strike "matched a Marxist revolutionary, against the apostle of market forces". Less considered is press twinning of Tony Benn with Scargill as legitimate and illegitimate faces of militancy, of party and union, respectively. This pairing receives a brief acknowledgement from Adeney and Lloyd (1986:300) where parallels are drawn from their non-acquiescence to Toryism and harassment from media outlets.

As for Scargill himself, his long-standing reputation as professional agitator is largely based on his successful tactics and stand-off at Saltley (Routledge, 1993:70-3) during picketing in 1972, as well as known early links to Communists and Russia. Crick (1985:69) writes of how, by 1974, he was already a "hate figure" for the right-wing press, citing the *Sunday Times* (17 November 1974); "ask for the miners' offices, and if they don't know that, just ask for Camelot." Crick (1985, 128-9) also considers personal demonization here too, and Scargill's own reflections that "when I look at the *Sun,* the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express,* I don't like me either".

Extensive local literatures cover evidence for national media making the strike about Scargill personally rather than grass-roots protest. This is particularly featured in the work of Harcup (2011:32) who in interview with the *Leeds Other Paper* hears from a local journalist that "The mainstream press concentrated on Scargill and what he was doing, but when you went out on picket lines he was rarely mentioned. It was their struggle rather than his". This dismissive two-dimensional view of "Scargill's gullible foot soldiers" from national outlets (Harcup, 2009; 65-6) tells the story of a local press role giving voice to those whose agency would otherwise be denied. Phillips (2009) also covers the importance of local perspectives; his paper scours Scottish archives to counter the predominant view of the strike as a top-down phenomenon. This separation is useful as it demythologises Scargill from the hostile and dangerous charlatan perspectives put by the national media.

The nationals and the Government got their mileage from this caricature. In terms of benefit to the media of mangling Scargill personally, part of the draw was that Yorkshire TV had already "created" the public persona of Arthur Scargill as the voice

of the Left during the 1970s (Crick, 1985:50). As such his figure was negatively mythologised. Jones (2009:71) discusses media intent to create public enemy number one, commenting that while mutual antipathy from some quarters contributed to his demonization, Scargill's distrust of the journalist piranhas of the article did not allow him to recoup any ground. The problem had been successfully moved from managing a dispute over closures to "a strategy to restrain a militant trade unionist whom, it seemed, was intent on toppling the Prime Minister".

From Government perspectives, Scargill's election to president had not been entirely unwelcome. This is commented on by Arnold (2016: 105) who refers to a Policy Unit memorandum saying, "even though Scargill may be the ideal NUM figurehead, the fact remains that miners are seen to be (and most people with any direct contact would say they are) the salt of the earth". He discusses how this memorandum goes on to recommend steps to undermine this image. Their success was predicated on the formation of two distinct groups: miners as misguided and uneducated traditionalists, and Scargill as radical and dangerous leader. Beckett and Hencke (2009:107) quote directly from MacGregor of the strategy to "exploit fully in the media in the hope of alienating Scargill from the rank and file miners and from public sympathy generally." That this became accepted right-wing mythology regardless of inconvenient facts is highlighted by Dorey (2013:182) who refers to Ridley's memoir of Margaret Thatcher "foreseeing" this battle, where an ostensible industrial dispute would prove an attempt to overthrow her government. Dorey points out that Ridley's "recollections" precede Scargill's NUM premiership.

Results of the separation strategy enacted in the media were threefold: personal demonization of Scargill as villain nullified the accuracy of his central point on mass pit closures and allowed him to be positioned as the main figure of blame. Secondly, the Conservatives were able to continually create simplifications and myths around contested and complex situations by attributing them to him personally. Phillips (2014:132) comments how Peter Walker was not able to give any explanation for the violence at Orgreave except for the "'presence of Mr Scargill'". (Myths persist here with the continued withholding of national archives.) Separation was also helpful during the strike and for subsequent industrial relations

repair. "Scargillism" had become synonymous with a wider broad left culture (Buckley, 2015:420) and the subsequent othering of such nomenclature was helpful in dissuading other unions from industrial action. This had a secondary benefit for the government in fostering divisions in both the union and the wider TUC.

The myths of history, continuity and change of the dispute

Myths of history and permanence in the literature work on two levels. Those used concurrently as aid to understanding, and those reinvigorated and reworked in subsequent analyses. Much of this layering of myth has been discussed in chapter two, in discussion of Marx (2017:3-4) "spirits of the past". Some of this is nostalgic, for example, Nettleingham (2017) romanticises how the miners have now become symbolic figures of their age. There is a collective sense of lost past and lost past choices in the oral stories presented by Leeworthy (2012: 832) – via nostalgic constructions now identified as the lost futures of hauntology. He cites the Welsh Council for Civil and Politic Liberties observing that the struggles of the Welsh mining communities today can only be compared with the desperate days of 1926". Philo (1995) demonstrates how memories of the strike and memories of strike media were affected by respondents own personal histories, and how feelings and recollections became more entrenched over time.

Some mythmakings of history are allegorical. Dorey (2013:173) quotes Nigel Lawson recalling a situation "just like arming to face the threat of Hitler in the 1930s". The recall is of a British (Conservative) shared identity under fire and is chosen to illustrate the mythological status of the battle Government ministers believed they fought. Others use a sense of history to look forward. Jones, (1986:186) surveying the aftermath of the strike, recalls how former striking miners wished they had agreed to a supposed settlement in July 1984, but that Scargill had argued that there was no alternative. As fifteen closures were announced within four months of the return to work, Jones writes that "Mr Scargill was convinced that history would vindicate the strike".

The two most common references to history utilised in analysis include the General Strike of 1926 and Saltley Gate in 1972. The former is drawn on heavily by Phillips

(2014:126) who discusses the context of Nottingham strike-breaking in 1926, but also instrumentality of the area in the establishment of fracturing area incentives during 1977-8. The myths of history here are both important for analysis and in establishing the existing "otherness" of Nottingham to 1984-5 dispute politics. Phillips (2009:161) also chooses McGahey's likening of the 1981 situation to that experienced under Baldwin, that the government would avert an outbreak until the administration was ready to break a strike.

Saltley Gate is key to personal mythologizing of Scargill from both sides. Crick (1985:52) covers the events in detail, referring to it as "part of trade union mythology". He quotes Douglas Hurd (then political secretary to Heath) saying: "The government is now wandering vainly over battlefield looking for someone to surrender to – and being massacred all the time". Wilsher (1985:12) reports how the incident projected Scargill to "national notoriety". Resultant public perceptions were miners and their leaders could topple governments. That this mythology was sustained by both Left and Right is part of discussions around the 1981 government "swerve" (Scargill, 2009). That closure plan is recorded by Arnold (2016:104) as a symbolic humiliation for the government. He cites Allen's historically evocative response in *Marxism Today* (Allen 1982:17), "Even the Thatcher government has bowed before the miners". Steber (2018:62) disinters such symbolism, referring to the "ghosts" of Heath's failures haunting Thatcher.

Concluding remarks on the coal dispute

Through the section above, we can see a complex pyramid of myth and supporting myths have been built as the State mobilises and redefines itself through the crisis of the strike, both in support of change and in seeing off a challenger to a stated direction. In this way the media are the instruments of both reactive myths in defence of legitimacy and purpose, but also myths of *design* via deliberate mediation, as the Conservative government builds its agenda. For the government, the strike thus provides an *opportunity*.

General introduction to literature on the global financial crisis.

Similar to the discussion above, iterative analytic retellings of the financial crisis are occurring over time. More than ten years on, there is still mass media interest in its events, due to long-term consequences and effects (Gittleson, 2018). Frenetic output of literatures of and around the crisis has somewhat compressed such retellings with areas relating to media coverage no different. Gupta (2015:293) helpfully divides contributions between those regarded today with a sense of retrospection (up to 2012) and those seen as ongoing. This is a useful heuristic for analysis of media coverage between live studies exploring themes of blame, responsibility, and potential solutions, and those focussed on aftermath, consequences, and notions of acceptance. A post-2012 framework also gives time for considering alternative representations of events and methods for understanding, such as multimodal sensemaking and more theoretical orientation presented by Höllerer, Jancsary and Grafström (2018).

In terms of myth analysis specifically, this division is also helpful, as early outputs tend to demonstrate former successful sector narratives as either under threat or collapsing. Many of these media narratives focussed on blame discourses, although those presented in the UK press, with its predilection for rotten bankers (Glynos, Klimecki and Willmott, 2012) were different in narrative perceptions than those emerging in Europe. Bickes, Otten and Weyman (2014) use a metaphor analysis to demonstrate how the German press fixated on Greek economic troubles, in contrast to the UK where risks about the EU were promulgated. The two tranche framework is also particularly useful in aiding the visibility of those processes of defence, renormalisation, and a return to business as usual. It shows how elements of crisis discourse meshed with adjacent areas of emergent government policy, resulting in the austerity discourses that Britain currently inhabits. Gupta (2016:276) goes a step further in defining terms of a subsequent proliferating sequence of secondary crises around immigration, the EU, ideals of what a nation state should be and even the very legitimacy of the democratic system.

Gupta's work is also helpful in considering approaches to 'storying' the crisis, and how its explanations to the public involve both slippage and tension. He presents these tensions particularly around the challenges of translating specialist jargon into everyday language (2016:283) which tends to focus on key protagonists and may be led to serve elite interests. It is through these developing patterns of establishing stories that the issue of the crisis became *owned* by the media (De Bruycker and Walgrave, 2014: 91). According to their findings, whilst media coverage was not the only source in helping establish blame, ownership, and responsibility, its oscillating nature impacted on public opinion.

The myth frames below consider how the media role has reproduced analyses "in thrall" to financial representations of the world, (Glynos et al, 2012), a long-term resilience of neoliberal discourses, (Guénin-Paracini and Gendron, 2014) and ideas around an infallible market (Happer 2017). Happer considers ideas around the "naturalisation of finance" and financial logics in some detail, considering how broader social and political issues became bound to values of finance. She notes how the public have become metaphorically manoeuvred into construction as financial subjects, holding "personal responsibility for the public debt" (Happer, 2017:441). Davis (2012:241-2) points to such trends of financialization as destabilising, having "sucked the resources of States and ordinary individuals into financial markets".

Overarching myths of the Global Financial Crisis

As in the first half of this chapter, the myths of the financial crisis can be divided into primary and supporting myths. The overarching myth this time circulates around powerful individuals portrayed as the epitome of irresponsibility and avarice, unrestrained by supine boards and permissive corporate cultures. During the crisis, this myth had the effect of promoting scapegoats and detracting attention from regulatory issues (Glynos et al, 2012). Press and wider media complicity are defined through not asking hard questions both in terms of the breaking story and in retrospect around how the rescue would be paid for (Guerrera, 2009). Whereas the coal dispute presents myth by *design* and

opportunity as discussed above, financial crisis myths are devolved from initial *panic* and *incomprehension* and latterly, *retrenchment* and *nostalgia.* This contributes to the earlier divide where initial discourses for change and a re-evaluation of regulatory values and temporary nationalisation (see Crouch, 2011:120) give way to retrenching former ideas and austerity in search of a fictitious prosperous past (Wolf, 2018).

Sinclair (2010:95) offers a way into competing discourses, commenting on how we understand the causes of financial problems has a major effect on who gets blamed for them. Whether the market is considered exogenously as an efficient allocator of resources or the crisis is constructed endogenously as beginning within finance itself shapes both understanding and potential solutions proffered. These difficult and contested discourses are often explored through stories, as outlined by Whittle and Mueller (2011:115) in their analysis of moral storying during the 2009 Treasury Hearings. They conclude that narratives that individualise responsibility and attribute blame to a few rogues take the focus away from failures in regulation and oversight. The direction of public anger toward individual wrongdoing then keeps the grand narrative of neoliberalism intact. They quote Stiglitz (2010:6) that "bankers acted greedily because they had incentives and opportunities to do so…". One of the ways that Whittle and Mueller undertake their analysis Is through exploration of discursive devices as social activity for sensemaking and achievement of purpose. Similar constructions of elite framing and rhetoric is usefully explored by Riaz, Buchanan and Bapuji (2011).

That there are significant consequences for positioning culpability as individuated is noted by Hay (2013) who argues that whilst convenient, such a perspective is unlikely to address underlying pathologies in the system. Society may have moved on, but the paradigm reinforcement that Hay refers to creates its own myth (that of *atonement*). Similar ideas are problematised around the associated theme of *hubris* by Tourish, (2020:90). He writes of how in the case of failure, emphasis on individual pathologies rather than systemic problems can be "taken to imply that systemic organisational changes are unnecessary".

These ideas are attested to by the empirical findings of Stanley (2014:896) who discusses the victory of the "interpretative battle" in claiming successful settlement narratives. This happens through the narrative sensemaking of everyday economic talk and dialogues. Stanley demonstrates how austerity discourses are extrapolated and legitimated via personal experience as sensemaking of state decisions. The speed of acquiescence to these 'common sense' discourses that legitimated austerity is discussed by Blyth (2013:210) who comments on the "deftness" of how a crisis of finance was reconstructed as a crisis of profligate state and public.

The success of such misdirection resulted in two quite distinct public moods reflected by the media. Subsequent public disaffection with bailout terms and ensuing austerity programme resulted in a boomerang of interest back to politics and use of public funds in times of difficulty. Temporary nationalisation of the banks moved corporate practices back onto the table of public interest. However, the incoming Parliamentary expenses scandal made a mockery of such rhetoric as "we are all in this together" (Cameron, 2009). Thompson (2011:67) reflects on this perception and disaffection with supposed moral leadership and experts: "Politicians, it seemed, were not much better than the fat-cat speculators in the City".

The second mood reflected the grim acceptance of likely long-term austerity with a wish for a rescue from difficulties and a nostalgic return to profitable times as discussed by Bloom and Rhodes (2018:153) in the context of the speedy rehabilitation of the CEO. From these sources we start to see how the Thatcherite myth of meritocratic advancement, personal and economic control proved highly resilient in the post crisis environment, providing the ideological vacuum for rising populism discussed in chapter eight.

The myths of choice and agency in the crisis

Following the initial shock and panic at the fall of Lehman and subsequent Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) meltdown, the US and UK rescue deals of 'last resort' (Dobler, Gray, Murphy and Radzewicz-Bak, 2016) were not only widely accepted

but welcomed with abject relief by the press. There appeared little alternative, and governments relayed that there had been no choice but to step in. The sudden crisis had its largest absolute losses in the UK, where a number of banks came within a few days of bankruptcy, and the costs of not bailing them out were considered insurmountable (Bell and Hindmoor, 2015: 462-3). The shocking nature of events, speed of action required, and the rapid adoption of the prescient "too big to fail" titles (such as Stern and Feldman, 2004) meant other potential narratives were then closed. Closing down happened in two phases, initially as justification for the bailout which was accompanied by a symbolic cull of "bad leadership". There was then a short window of liminality with a number of options available to shape the medium-term for the sector, but the appointment of a coalition government in 2010 set a course for austerity politics and a return to business-as-usual.

During the first phase, City voices were demonstrated as vocally supporting the bailout, with little critical commentary provided by the media. Reporting downplayed just how often interviewed experts were either from the City or in associated roles. This was ably demonstrated by Berry (2012) in his analysis of the *Today* programme. Here thematic analysis of explaining contested issues (present and absent) showed high numbers of political and City voices. Union leadership provided just one of 233 sources in the sample. Proposals for longer-term nationalisation such as outlined by Stiglitz (2010) were largely ignored in the rush for resolution and repair, just as had previously identified pre-crisis warning balloons.

Post-event rationalisations dismissing Cassandra-like croakings from those raising concerns are analysed by Hindmoor and McConnell (2013) who note systematic ambiguities and hindsight as muddying perceptions here. Sensemaking narratives made assumptions that there were clear signals, and blame was needed to be apportioned so that choices could be made, and things could return to normal, ably supported by media pathologies. Hindmoor and McConnell skirt round ideas of mythmaking, noting both the durability of the myth of light-touch regulation, efficient markets, and policy makers attachment to rational decision-making. This prevented reading the tea-leaves of impending crisis. Such narratives were also key

to the speedy appearance of resolution, as without post-mortem examination of previous myths, they were easily resurrected.

The second phase of the closing of choices centres around the normalisation of the value of the City to the UK economy, (Glynos et al, 2012). Rhetorical vigour used by financial elite agency to shape post-crisis ideologies is also noted by Bell and Hindmoor (2015:457). They draw on analysis of lobbying power and potent narrative resources of dominating elites by Johal, Moran, and Williams, (2014:419). Happer and Philo (2013: 326) point out a lack of demands for choice and change and alternative solutions to the crisis, citing a YouGov poll to tax the wealthiest 10% described as "cloud cuckoo land" by the BBC. They note how public debate is framed and shaped by powerful groups, and bankers and other financial advisers' easy access to media outlets to present their 'expert' (p.325) opinions. "In the face of such structures of power, the media acts more as a release for frustration and discontent rather than a forum to explore potential alternatives", (Happer and Philo, 2013: 326).

A recent lack of public intellectuals to explore different ideas is also discussed by Hoskins and Tulloch (2016:13) who discuss the importance of broadsheet journalists' contributions at such a time. They also draw on Harvey (2011) to note a lack of subject, of "capitalist agency of choice" in reporting on alternatives to neoliberalism in discussion of subsequent protests, (2016:111). The contributory role of economic journalists in the interplay between crisis events and business news media is roundly critiqued by Chakravartty and Schiller (2010:671). They focus on public distraction from economic matters via the emphasis on "features and infotainment at the expense of hard news". Such soft narratives are concluded to give an ill-informed public little understanding of the choices being made on their behalf by elite agency. Whilst they are not alone in criticising media outlets for non-investigative journalism at such a time, the insider's analysis of a declining industry and proximity to City influence provided by Guerrera (2009) goes a long way to explaining lack of choice options. He demonstrates how the media did raise problems, but bankers excised their right to reply via "nothing to see here" complacency (Guerrera, 2009:48). He mitigates journalistic responsibly for the crisis

by reporting how bankers were not challenged due to ignorance around deregulation, risk, and non-attributions of responsibility.

The myths of legitimisation and delegitimisation in the crisis

This mythic theme has a long lead in terms of the legitimacy of the banking industry itself and its perception as largely self-regulating and independent of State interference. This is bound up in the history of the marketplace in the UK following the Big Bang in 1986. A rolling snowball of changes included: international impact from the repeal of Glass-Steagall, the rise of mergers, growth of expertise with legal changes to permit commercial and investment banking (Tett, 2010:84) and the rise of sophisticated technical tools. The legitimacy of complex risk models in use was taken as both known and symbiotic between banks and regulators (Nelson and Katzenstein, 2014:376). Individual leaders' personal expertise was legitimised within the system from *Forbes* type profiles and heroes' leadership discourse discussed below.

The story of the crisis when it came went from existing industry narratives of legitimate and rational self-interest, followed by rapid delegitimisation and abasement, atonement as discussed above, and then a quiet rehabilitation and re-legitimisation. Some commentators have discussed why the narrative did not result in paradigm change following delegitimisation, e.g., Blyth (2013). The long boom had previously facilitated easy dismissal of warning signs and contraindications, and much of the initial defence of the industry came from management of mythic perceptions that actors could and should behave any differently when there were no obvious signs of trouble ahead. Blyth (2013:208-10) concludes that thirty years of pseudo-stability had dissipated any forces for change. Other listed factors for failure of a transformative paradigm included that of time as beneficial for maintaining the status quo, and perceptions and authority rather than actual facts that mattered. Blyth's study offers the benefit of hindsight from early analyses such as Crotty (2009) who recommended that the financial system would benefit by contraction and aggressive regulation.

Such early insights were not readily addressed, despite some publicly-reassuring regulation and publicity (see BBC business, 2013). Martin Wolf's (2009) delegitimising proposition that modern finance had transferred risk from those best able to manage it, "to those least able to understand it" remains the case. This lack of understanding and subsequent public manipulation is congruent with Žižek (2009:9), who provided early commentary that the surprising element of the crisis was not the crisis itself, but the ease of acceptance of it happening as an unpredictable surprise.

When the abruption came, an immediate restoration of legitimacy for banks and the banking sector was necessary to maintain the industry. Much reparative work undertaken by governments was couched by the press in metaphorical terms, both for ease of explanation away from the technical and in conferring legitimacy on State actions. Disease metaphors for banks appropriated a surgeon's expertise on those handling the problem of restoring financial prudence. Elimination of disease is metaphorically associated historically as legal and legitimate act of State (Charteris-Black, 2009:98).

Horner (2011) is one contributor who picks up different metaphorical groupings presented in the press. She explores Stiglitz (2008) insights from *USA Today* calling the rescue bill "a massive blood infusion….it does little about the source of haemorrhaging, the losses from the loans…". Other metaphors considered by Horner include Chairman Bernanke framing responses as fixing the plumbing - another attribute of healthy State defence requiring expertise. Implications of these disease metaphors are considered by Wigan (2012:121). If Bernanke implies that the system is fundamentally sound, though compromised through infection, then the regulatory response "confirms subjugation of public authority" to private power. Wigan concludes that the path of crisis management provides a demonstration of the "unprecedented social power" of finance. Whilst this would not be clear at the time of writing, the paper illustrates future successes of the re-legitimation process.

For such discourses of blocked plumbing, disease, or bad apples to work, individual legitimacies needed to be overturned in the service of the State, leading to

necessary scapegoating. Stiglitz (2010:6) comments that "bankers acted greedily because they had incentives and opportunities to do so…" Previously legitimised and applauded "expert" speculation narratives in a controlled environment that brought capacious rewards were rapidly flipped to out-of-control gambling discourses resulting from hyper-masculine culture (Prügl, 2012). Griffin (2013:10) makes similar arguments that understanding bankers' behaviours should move away from "abstraction in contemporary neoliberalism" to include "the culture of privilege, competitive success and masculine prowess that contemporary financial discourse has created and sustained".

Her observations around the centrality of risk to narratives of financial discourse and associated technical expertise as depoliticizing are important, as are the points made around the "sociological, governmental, and industry-led efforts to "mystify" finance" (Griffin, 2013:13), via a closed community of language. Tett (2010: xi) also raises arguments of mystification of processes and a "climate of silence" around the industry. Legitimisation had previously been gained from such auras of expertise; Davies and McGoey (2012:66) critique such mythic perceptions, highlighting the extent of crisis roots originating in "varieties of ignorance masquerading as expertise". Their article explores a "double value" of ignorance, social silence enabling profitable activities to continue despite unease, and subsequently, such silences mobilised to absolve earlier inaction. They go on to explore how economic authority became lost between actors who were then able to appeal to the legitimacy of their own ignorance, (Davies and McGoey, 2012:70).

Normalisations of such responses to the crisis are discussed by Seabrooke (2010:57) who argues for how behaviours and justifications were lent legitimacy by the actions of ordinary actors. Although he makes the case that elite actors have their place in framing and swaying public opinion, he comments that the system is legitimised and therefore functions through individual compliance and confidence. In this way, individual acquiescence to the bailout and subsequent austerity reflected State values and the bankers' own recovery manoeuvres. Bell and Hindmoor (2015:458) evaluate this post-event legitimisation and recovery, discussing how banking regulation became dragged from the "informal and

cloistered" world of "quiet" politics described by Culpepper, (2011) and away from its prior reputation of market efficiency. Despite central stage for the sector, impetus for change slowly seeped away with rising austerity discourses after the 2010 general election, bolstered by defenders such as Johnson as then London Mayor (Wilson and Aldrick, 2010). Discourses of a return to lost paradigms of banking success were amplified alongside those of a need for taxpayers to accept a share of responsibility through legitimation of austerity politics (Stanley, 2014).

The myths of reputation, heroism, and villainy in the crisis

Reputation, particularly via leadership studies, is a well-documented and organised field, where metaphorical insider and media narratives feature clearly. Mythic and Jungian representations around individual leaders are easily identified, and bankers' behaviours have provided a rich data seam. As raised in chapter two, they provide folklore style narratives of heroes, villains, wizards, and fools. The suddenness of crisis in a lauded industry caused existing heroic values of key figures to be spun on a sixpence. In this way, previous "hero" reputations went hand in hand with legitimacy discourses; heroes crossed a boundary and were seen as dangerous, Other.

The former celebrations of Fuld the risk-taker associated with Lehman's thriving during the 9/11 attack and aftermath had been widely lauded in *Forbes* style profiling, (Morais, 2003). Stein (2013:287) works through these differing manifestations of leadership and its perception both before and after the crisis in his discussions on *King Richard,* whilst Kerr and Robinson (2011:153) use an elite field as their conceptual lens. They demonstrate how organisational dysfunctionality can potentially be attributable to the "cult of the transformational/ charismatic leader" and draw on Pareto (1901) to discuss a concentration of power through circulation of elites. These ideas on traits and leadership models are highly sympathetic to a myth lens, and their paper touches on the theme, with McKillop described as "in thrall" to Goodwin (Kerr and Robinson, 2011:163).

Kerr and Robinson (2011:153-5) offer rich zoomorphic imagery in their analysis of the contribution of banking leaders to the crisis, utilising metaphorical

animalisation of a Darwinian theme. For example, the leader "preys on the corporation", capturing "corporate rents for private consumption." This is readily associated with a demonically associated "cult" of dysfunctional transformational leadership, drawing on Dey's (2007) depiction of an Edinburgh "tartan mafia".

Similarly, Stein's (2013:287-8) treatise on Fuld as narcissistic leader draws on insider commentary from Tibman (2009:29) describing the "Biblical Consequences" of Fuld's incapacity to make the necessary judgement call to sell Lehman. Behaviours are explained through close news analysis such as via Partnoy (2008) and White (2008) in their respective animalistic analyses of Fuld described as the Gorilla, "wresting power through sheer acts of will", baring his teeth "like a dog snarling". Stein weaves publicly available behavioural tropes to demonstrate mythologies of constructive narcissism wielded positively, and how such personal assets can turn negative in difficult times.

However, just like previously ignored warnings around market confidence, these figures also attracted prior subtle undercurrents of hubris and egomania. Whilst Kerr and Robinson (2011:160) quote Reid's (2007) rhetorical question, *"Is this man the world's greatest banker?"* verbatim alongside their description of Fred Goodwin as the youngest ever CEO of a FTSE company, the original article raises minor disquiet. Reid asks whether the acquisition of ABN Amro may be "the deal which will finish him". Once the crisis was recognised it suited politicians to amplify these negations, allowing key individuals to take centre stage in blame attribution. They of course, were having none of it, and a public airing of not-claiming responsibility then took place in the press. Bankers aimed instead to present themselves as compliant to both institution and sector; Herzig and Moon (2013:1879) demonstrate "institutionalised" irresponsible practices in banking discourses.

In this way, leadership in the sector appears paradoxical, both blamed for the crisis, but heralded as the antidote, as per the findings of Liu, Cutcher and Grant (2017:697) who go on to note how romanticism fuelled the industry but also concealed its abuses. Similar themes of contradictory discourses of subjectivity and certainty that shed further light on this paradox are raised by Knights and McCabe (2015:207) who conclude that self-fulfilling knowledge and practice could go

unnoticed during business as usual. However, the size of the crash "enables us to identify not just the flawed assumptions" but reproductions of destructive representations of reality.

With the abruption of the crisis, long-standing leadership myths were blown open ready for re-working into fresh narratives. Much of the ensuing action from industry leaders was then about reputation management and rehabilitation. Returning to the work of Davies and McGoey (2012: 64) the crisis was "experienced and reflected upon as a crisis of knowledge". Their discussion hinges on the role of mediated "strategic ignorance" following the 2009 prosecution of Bear Sterns investors. Their commentary that actors were "able to claim just enough knowledge to retain power within the system, but just enough ignorance to evade responsibility" (p.73) predicated their survival on the suggestion that risks were unknowable.

Through the work of Tourish and Hargie (2012) themes of blame avoidance and their relative success with political and public audiences appears particularly relevant to attempted rehabilitation for individual bankers. They discuss Goodwin's claims of following prevailing wisdom, and the apology focussed on the turn of events rather than owning personal responsibility for decisions. Recovery of reputation is attempted via passive agency, with bankers portrayed as victims too, through self-serving bias. The authors reflect on these practices as expected; "well documented that attempts to diminish responsibility and shift blame to others are common strategies in the face of crises", (Tourish and Hargie, 2012:1064).

The idea of the (non) apology as responsibility avoidance is also addressed by Hargie, Stapleton and Tourish (2010) who problematise this with particular focus on Goodwin. Their conceptual argument starts with Goffman (1971) in distinguishing the "bad-self" from the good, and the concept of face as public self-worth. These ideas are important to discussion on reputation myths and management, as the paper demonstrates through its discourse methodology how bankers attempted to disown responsibility and thus create valuable distance between themselves and their decisions. In Barthesian terms, this is the "little confessed evil" (Barthes, 2009:40-1) of owning up to following the crowd that saves the "acknowledgement

of the hidden evil" of many lost jobs, and taxpayers money diverted toward rescuing their institutions.

Detailed transcript analysis of Treasury hearings undertaken by Whittle and Mueller (2011) illustrates the interplay of characters in competing crisis dialogues, as bankers aim to recast this narrative of villainous behaviour for one of subjection to the metaphorical tsunami caused by the crisis. Devices explored include third-party nominalisation or passive voice, externalisation, and a shared identity of blame (Whittle and Mueller, 2011:127) which eased the path to normalisation once "show trials", (Engelen et al, 2011:36) were over.

However, it was not just bankers who were aiming to manage mangled reputations. Scapegoating was a necessary media tool for the recouping of a status quo and the resumption of public calm by the State. The relative effectiveness of reputation flipping narratives is a pivotal dialectic of the crisis, and its effects appear mixed based on ensuing commentaries, with Guénin-Paracini and Gendron (2014) commenting on the effectiveness of scapegoating a few individuals. Froud, Moran, Nilsson, and Williams (2010:30) posit that the peak of democratic assault against Goodwin turned out to be a key defence against reform, as it fostered the development of an important narrative of good and bad bankers. Sinclair (2010) also points to the relative normalising effects of such scapegoating which contributed to the diminishment of alternative debates.

One contributory factor that lent scapegoating mythical strength was through the schadenfreude delivered to the public via the press. Guerrera (2009:47) comments on the need for the story of the crisis to be sexy; "wrongdoing, scandals and other malfeasance" are necessary ingredients for a scoop. Glynos et al (2012) make powerful and enjoyed scapegoating of the bankers a key tenet of their paper. They comment on how it was so effective in narrowing the debate that it stifled any mobilisation for change, and that pre-crunch ideologies of "no more boom and bust" were rapidly replaced by ideological narratives to renormalize financialization. Their discussion on common scapegoating themes explores apparent dissonance between bankers' public perception as "super-clever masterminds" as well as "incompetent wreckers of the entire economy" (Glynos et

al, 2012:306). Whilst they do not discuss myth stories directly, their analysis of framings that complete restorative logics to "affirm the social value of finance" (p.308) is key to the effectiveness of the narratives that managed the myths of reputation and atonement of bankers.

The myths of history, continuity and change in the crisis

Whilst historical analogies of the South Sea Bubble and Great Depression generated a great deal of press attention in the early weeks, much of it was tied up with legitimacy discourses on whether future histories would bear up State defence of the banking industry, rather than say historical validations of bankers' actions and subsequent justifications. There was little discussion on long-term impact of events around the big bang of 1986 (Glynos et al, 2012), on the mythical context of City deregulation under Margaret Thatcher, with its accompanying logics of financialisaton, deregulation, competition, and eventual outcomes. Moral hazard and systemic origins of the crisis as scarcely raised by the media is discussed by Harvey (2010:10) in his analysis of the neoliberal history of privatisation of gains and the socialisation of risks. Harvey positions that the state of defending capital institutions and accompanying elites is unchanging. What differed this time was the degree of intertwining of capital and State, with the commodification of even the political sphere into financial value (Harvey, 2010:219).

This 'unchanging defence' above is important when considering the dominance of "historical analogies" noted by Brassett, Rethel and Watson, (2010:1), who cite the insistence of Bernanke on referring to the Great Depression in his approach to crisis management. They consider these constructions as justified, but that their inference "places unnecessary and unhelpful restrictions" on understanding the particularities of the subprime crisis. They assert that such links suggest that the crisis is "merely a moment" of instability in a well-ordered system and that the status quo is easily recoverable. The word suggest is redolent of mythmaking in action, and thus such constructions imply a sound system experiencing a glitch rather than the cyclical crises of capitalism as understood via Marxist analyses such as Harvey (2010). By tying historical analogies to such implications, it creates a sense of overall control from those in charge. A similar point is made by Luyendijk,

(2015: 41-2) on assertive work undertaken by financial PR lobbyists in exerting the crisis as a "black swan" event. Such normalisation could be seen to be effective without consideration of previous unforeseeable and unique events, and he draws on previous deal makings from investment bankers and the bursting dot.com bubble in the 1990's to illustrate his remarks.

Memories of other events from the 1930's and 1970's as presented by the media are also explicitly covered by Hoskins and Tulloch (2016). This is one of the few studies to undertake this work, and to examine journalistic looking back and forward framed around the search for a successor to Keynes. They discuss how the Left was slow to capitalise on the crisis situation, and no attractive contextual alternative was presented during the ideological vacuum produced in 2008. This can be considered against the contribution of Thomas (2007), whose work on late 1970's politics demonstrates the readiness and preparedness of the New Right in promoting their then alternative ideology.

Concluding remarks on the financial crisis

Through the section above, we can see a similar pyramid of myth and supporting myths have been built as the State mobilises to defend itself and its interests through support for the banking sector. Rather than a mobilisation in pursuit of change as with the Coal Dispute, myths are deployed to cast out errant individuals, and to re-legitimise a vital industry following times of trouble.

Concluding matters

This chapter has considered what academics identified as media contributions to constructing and discussing both crises via the lens of pyramidical myth themes. It provides the companion piece to its predecessor as analytic review of myths in considering myth in action through specific events.

Empirical work in this thesis demonstrates how mythmaking contributed to daily press outputs in both cases, and what these narratives say about the role of media in State and society. We have seen here root cause purposes of myth as facilitation device and as expressions of new public and political identities. During the miners' strike it helps get the public over the hump of resistance to industrial and political

change. In the financial crisis it secures public acquiescence to both a return to normalcy and the rising austerity discourses considered necessary.

Chapter four provides a bridge between these analytic frameworks to shape empirical work to come.

Chapter four: methodology

Introduction

Choosing a topic such as media roles in crisis situations offers a myriad of possible frames suitable for analysis dependent upon researcher interests. Relationships between warring ideologies, or ideas based on radical approaches to governmentality, power, politics, and social constraint could all potentially yield productive lines of enquiry (see Foucault, 1977; Lukes, 2005). Similarly, examination of democratic purpose and fitness for future purpose for media outlets could provide helpful insights. Each might in turn fit well with flexibility afforded from an interdisciplinary application such as discourse analysis that has been chosen here. However, as set out in chapter one, this thesis has opted instead for the side-streets of myth themes as a lens for the production of political meaning-making during two recent crisis situations in Britain. These were considered theoretically and in application during analysis of each crisis during chapters two and three.

Chapter four therefore aims to function as a bridge between the contextualisation and critical analyses of the chosen topic of mythmaking in crisis situations explored in the previous pair of chapters and subsequent empirical work of the later sections. The purpose here is framing the forthcoming investigation in two main parts. The first section offers both aims and justification for pairing myth study with critical discourse analysis (CDA) approaches based on author stance. The second considers the practicalities of that pairing, and subsequent processes of transformation: how a series of (un)connected texts were collated under a thematic banner, analysed, and organised to create outputs.

Part one of this chapter therefore opens with a problematisation of the interdisciplinary nature of myth before leading into a discussion of benefits (and potential pitfalls) of partnership with discourse analysis as method. Studying myths as metanarratives helps traverse the difficulties of a gap of relevance and applicability between the close, small-set text-based analyses typified by some of the seminal approaches of Van Dijk or Fairclough and those grand theories worried

at and critiqued by Mills. The aim, as invited by Gane (2012:5) is in the forging and adapting of conceptual tools as aid to "present-relevant" sociological analysis, used as heuristics for insight rather than in avoidance of complexity in empirical analysis. The discussion of current evolutions to "fake news" and the repurposing of the media for maximum commodification value away from a perceived traditional investigative role undertaken in chapter one suggests the need for such conceptual developments. Insights from an immaterial turn in considering the myths of our political and social lives is one such avenue to be explored.

The section goes on to acknowledge the thesis itself as yet another textual layer in myth production. It picks up arguments presented by Alvesson and Deetz (2000:112) in consideration of academic texts as "literary products", considering aspects of the researcher's own active interests and choices and their implications for research design decisions. Whilst acknowledging value from developments in analytical approaches discussed in previous chapters, the section aims to position the forthcoming empirical work congruently with the myth framework chosen.

Part two offers a straightforward retrospective rationale of study design choices, providing a guide through the practicalities of method used for the reader. It considers the composition of two distinct bodies of empirical data taken from the press during two recent crises to explore scoping, framing and decision pathways undertaken. It highlights how differences in density, production, consumption and even archiving method of print media during both crises affect the constitution of output.

Adopting the preference of Alvesson and Deetz (2000:113) for the term "empirical material" as rather more compatible with discourse analytic ideas than "data collection", the section refers back to part one in recognising dependency on social and political orientation in data selection and framing. It therefore provides a post-hoc "story" of ongoing design choices made through archival news research, and the implications of those choices for eventual analysis, based on project aims from chapter one.

A note on terms in use

With increasing richness and diversity in approaches since inception, discourse analysis has prompted a proliferation of terms and forms, so a note on terms in use may be of assistance. This is in concordance with Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:1) who note a preponderance of vague and indiscriminate usage in practice. This chapter therefore adopts the widely accepted definition of a text as one product of wider processes of discourse (Fairclough, 2001; 18-20). Similarly, for the purposes of a thesis considering print media outputs; Phillips and Hardy's (2002:3) definition of discourse as "an interrelated series of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception" is adopted. This specification additionally enables the acceptance of social reality as explained through discourses. Myths are then defined here as a part of the persuasive function of such discourses as seen in press outputs. Much as Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 9-10) were able to use systematisation of metaphorical concepts as grounding for mutual social meaning exchange and shared understanding, myths perform similar functions for groups of associated discourses and ideas in public and social life.

Part 1: Problematising political myth studies

As discussed in chapters two and three, myth is a less popular option for crisis analysis. No widely accepted or common pathway options are available for "doing myth" in research design. As an approach, its multi-disciplinary constitution through taking on stories and storytelling in political life could lend itself to inclusion of contributions from many fields. Media texts are one sort of such story, built up from combinations of political outputs and journalistic reporting. They depend on active reader reception. However, dialectical exchange of reports through contextual media readership is problematic for analysis, as intended meanings and interpretations are both active, dependent upon background, experiences and other influences on both writer and reader, (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:47-8).

Public myths layer from production, interpretation and subsequent reproduction of active discourses colonising the political, economic, and social life of a society. Whilst this thesis is focused mainly on their production via media texts, they

provide a necessary, though often assumed part of societal thought processes and problem-solving (Midgley, 2004: xii). They work as outputs based on their fuzzy mediation of shared values and experiences, they persuade through naturalisation and are rarely justified. Barthes, (2009:169) refers to *myth as depoliticised speech,* not denying things, but appropriating and simplifying them. "Cultural assumption, values and attitudes are not a conceptual overlay which we may or may not place on experience as we choose", Lakoff and Johnson, (1980:57). For example, during the financial crisis, an obscure reference to capitalism as "red in tooth and claw" surfaces in *The Guardian* and then *The Sunday Times* two weeks later. Both are unattributed to Tennyson, but the metaphor communicates shared understandings of current economic straits and naturalisation of cycles of capital, journalistic shared stories, and an expected cultural capital from in-group readership[3].

Theoretical judgements around textual independence and interdependence levels and individual motivations of an author, who may or not be "present" (see Golden Biddle and Locke, 1993) in any future analytic analyses are not the focus of this thesis. However, awareness of rhetorical design and understanding of how texts are positioned to convince within context are important for surfacing and challenging myths. With both producers and consumers of textual artefacts contributing to montages of meaning generation (Burrell, 1996; 24) interpretations are neither linear nor fixed, and as such open to influence. These ideas around montage as a way of thinking about media development of news stories over time are helpful, albeit constraining in that they could be deterministic in terms of approaching how narratives build. Burrell goes on to depict such non-linear approaches as "medieval streets" of human life and organisation. Such a description allows for a neutrality, and organic temporal development of stories as one sort of approach. His subsequent points around the vulnerability of textual montages to unfixed and unstable meanings that "may often be exploitative and imprisoning" is useful for a

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[3]*The Guardian*, (2008) US Financial rescue: Freddie, Fannie and Friends, 9 September, 34
The Sunday Times (2008), It's the ordinary folk who carry the can, 21 September, 20
The actual quote is from Alfred Lord Tennyson, In Memoriam A.H.H (1850), referring to "Nature, red in tooth and claw".

focus on political myth analysis. The approach also permits interpretation of myths by design.

In terms of developing further what might be considered purposeful and exploitative around these meaning montages, Hall's (1980:159) summary of texts as producing "a representation of the real" provides guidance. For Hall, the attempt to fix a floating meaning is an attempt to privilege potential meanings into a preferred one (Hall, 2001:325-6), defining the nature of political myth. Fowler concurs, arguing that conversation styles have an ideological function in naturalising the terms of representations of reality (Fowler, 1991:57). Whose representations of the real are then presented as valid or legitimate is part of their function of persuasion.

However, for such preferred meanings to work effectively as myths, they need to operate on a variety of levels dependent on function and audience. Barthes, (2009: 152) produces three different types of reading of such narratives. He talks about how myths are received as duplicitous, how the reader must reveal their essential function for themselves, in context, and via interpretation; "How does he receive this particular myth *today*?" [author italics]. He offers three possibilities for receiving the myth as consumer – as innocent, as cynical, or as dynamic – "living the myth as a story at once true and unreal". Revisiting the example of the saluting solider explored in chapter two, Barthes posits how the image can be *received* simply, or as political proposition – or via ambiguous presentation to the reader of the myth as the presence of French imperiality – transforming history into nature. However, they may also be *produced* ambiguously, aiming to persuade as part of design for change, or as retrospective explanation or defence.

Ambiguities intended or not are then important here, and they leave the researcher with a difficult space to traverse. Personal choices in terms of topic selection, narrative and framing of themes also become stories, presenting some aspects of the myth in themselves as the writer argues to convince. This is whether conniving with the dominant myth or attempting to knock it down. Such ambiguities are not always empirically comfortable, and hence a reflexive awareness of approach toward the data and construction choices is a necessary aspect of this chapter. This

is the case both for proposed methodological consideration of analyses and the practicalities of method choices.

Returning to Alvesson and Deetz (2000:112) and their conceptualisation of research texts as "literary products" is worth holding in this context, as layering of storying is used in the development of the central argument of mythmaking in crisis via thematic myth threads. The first chapters have demonstrated how rhetoric of politicians, political agents, bankers, and other newsworthy individuals seek to convince, and are cited within news stories shaped for their readership in turn. Subsequent archival research adds further purpose to their text in selecting and framing news discourses analysed. Via selection of supporting material, and following conventions of thesis design, this study aims to convince of the importance of considering immaterial concerns to crisis situations.

The political nature of social science itself as value-laden, reflective of ideological identifications and temporal and spatial concerns is also noted by Alvesson and Deetz (2000:131). They draw on Burrell and Morgan (1979) to argue that social science is either based on assumptions of, and therefore providing impetus toward either "regulation or radical change", claiming that management studies in particular tends to confirm dominant interests. For them, the political is therefore identified as not only an object 'out there' but as part and parcel of the project and inseparable from it and the researcher. The epistemological premise affects not only data selection but framing and binding. Study itself is not a neutral concern; it creates choices of seeing, and not seeing, (Phillips and Hardy, 2002:16) of necessary judgement and evaluation. As argued by Pugh and Coyle (2000:87), discourse analysts cannot make exception for their own work whilst engaged in pointing out how language shapes understandings of the social world.

Approaches to discourse analysis ideas

Faced with analytical uncertainties around approaching media myths, their legitimations and normalisations, a congruent approach to making sense of empirical material was needed. Political myths are part of the dialectic relationship between public rhetoric, news reporting and citizens' understanding of events.

Therefore, a discourse analysis approach to these mythmaking themes was adopted as compatible and relatable, with social constructivist approaches enabling foregrounding of the conditions and processes of production (Fairclough, 1996:25).

The starting point for approaching discourse analysis is highly sympathetic with myths and mythmaking, i.e., that ways of talking and writing are not neutral and are part of the constitution of our social and political world. As commented by Phillips and Hardy (2002:2), discourse analysis "includes the academic project itself within its analysis; with its emphasis on reflexivity…. using language, producing text and drawing on discourses, researchers and the research community are part and parcel of the constructive effects of discourse". This reflexive approach brings its own implications however, with constitutive questioning replacing the disciplinary object in research, (see Roitman, 2014:91).

There are wide varieties of applications available under the discourse analysis umbrella which contribute to complexity. Commonalities are defined by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:5), as critical approaches to taken-for-granted knowledge, historical and cultural specificity, links between knowledge and social processes, and knowledge and social action. Fairclough (2013b:181) compacts these complex ideas into an effective précis of how all approaches to discourse consider interactions between language and agents, objects, and events. He uses this basis to argue that any academic analysis of social processes and change requires a discursive turn. Strengths of using discourse analysis approaches include interdisciplinarity and flexibility, and this has been compatible with considering equally malleable themes of myth and meta-myth.

Less usefully, flexibilities in approach have led to substantial criticisms raised in relation to vague and arbitrary positioning of discourse analysis approaches in empirical work. Whilst some of this can be obviated by clear definitions of terms in use as above, further difficulties are helpfully problematised by Alvesson and Karreman (2000:1126). The theoretical framing of their article notes a major issue arising from two quite different standpoints, one approach that highlights everyday interactions, and the other focussing on social reality determined through

"historically situated discursive moves". "Muddled thinking and postponed decisions" (p.1128) then lead to failure of differentiation in research practice.

To assist conceptualisations in empirical work, Alvesson and Karreman (2000:1133-4) provide a continuum of four categories for researchers to identify their work with. These are termed as close-range micro-context approaches, (local and specific context), via meso and Grand assembly as integrated frame to ideas of a Mega-Discourse around universal vocabularies. The concerns they present are akin to the scale problems for sociologists explored by Mills (2000) as discussed in chapter two. They draw attention to the difficulties and possible rewards of working and maintaining relevance on multiple levels, illustrating tensions between what Fairclough and Hardy (1997:150) categorise as the level of discursive practice and its "totality". This is where each discursive event owns a particular set of conventions, discourses, and genres, set in its wider context.

Similarly, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:19-21) adopt this idea of a continuum of approaches to make another useful attempt to overcome looseness in definitions around discourse analysis. They posit that this continuum would range from more unstructured discourse theory as advocated by contributors such as Laclau and Mouffe and Howarth, through critical discourse analysis as developed by Fairclough, Wodak, Chilton etc., and then to the contributions of discursive psychology.

Working with media themes orientated around macro-political ideas of rational and naturally presented ideologies and attempts at hegemony (see Alvesson and Deetz, 2000:84), this thesis sits comfortably with its myth framework supported through the critical discourse analysis tradition. The process of interaction between the two is described by Fairclough (2005:927) who articulates how discourse analysis works in dialogue with chosen bodies of theoretical frameworks to yield insights. One key benefit of this type of partnership is in the continued recognition of the material aspects of crisis from CDA (see Fairclough, 2013b:177), which anchors the immaterial aspects of mythmaking, also helping to avoid above critiques of arbitrary empirical work. As noted by Fowler (1991:89) such approaches propose that linguistic tools, in association with "relevant and social context, can bring

ideology, normally hidden through habitualization of discourse, to the surface for inspection". CDA, according to Charteris-Black, (2004:29) increases our awareness of social relations "forged, maintained and reinforced by language use in order to change them".

By focussing on print media outputs, the thesis restricts the approach to a 'real' social setting via empiricism, (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000:110). As they acknowledge, one of the main criticisms of alternative postmodern insights is a shortage of extended studies, and an overreliance on the text itself, rather than set within its accompanying context of production as offered by CDA approaches. It is this key idea of "production" which is noted as instrumental to critical news analysis as noted by Philo (2007: 181), that is the main focus of this thesis as it discusses how news articles are designed to confirm legitimacy and authority of political activity.

However, in terms of postmodern ideas, this thesis is open to potential supporting benefits available from that "tension-laden but productive relationship" proposed by Alvesson and Deetz (2000:109-10). It therefore includes insights available from micro-political approaches where relevant. An additional benefit to working with Fairclough and other critical discourse analysts is that unlike some discourse theory literature, practical guidance for empirical textual analysis is offered, such as in *Language and Power* (2001: 92-3). It is hoped that the use of the myth framework that 'binds' the individual text to wider metanarratives of social and political life will be helpful in overcoming both problems of scale and that context of media reporting in crisis situations.

Critical discourse analysis, media texts and framing choices

In keeping with perspectives above, this thesis operates under assumptions that language choices in media texts are part of the enactment of political, economic, and cultural ideologies, and provide shared symbols and artefacts of social frameworks. Fairclough (1996:55) writes of how such texts can be analysed as facets of wider social and cultural change, through shifting discursive practices. He considers discourse to represent aspects of social life, encompassing both the "processes, relations and structures of the material world" and those of the

immaterial world of "thoughts, feelings and beliefs" (Fairclough, 2003:124). Media language choices help us to constitute how we know what we know about the world. Fairclough's work is rich in linguistic technicality, demonstrating for example how ideas such as collocation (2001:95) might contribute to ideological understanding, power relations and legitimacy.

Skilled and detailed applications from linguistic orientations to close text analysis work well for discrete, framed discourses of formal political and organisational rhetoric and ritual such as speeches or reports, as typified by Charteris-Black (2005). However, they present scale difficulties for media analysis in practice. Whilst they are appropriate for analysing small samples of media outputs such as for a stand-alone event, their strengths do not easily translate to longer running issues or crises. Analyses often suffer scalability problems, and hand-coding limits researchers' scope (McArthur and Reeves, 2019:1006). These constraints are noted by Fairclough, in identifying the need to link specific examples studied to wider macro analyses of power relations (2003:16). However, outward-facing generalisations can also be problematic in identifying change and flux, such as distinguishing one-off events from patterns.

One common approach used to tackle scalability is using a specific "case" to illustrate media practice, which can work well, however, accuracy at the micro-level can lose a sense of effectiveness of what a group of texts might achieve in collaboration. It is also easy to get lost and end up presenting summaries of a series of quotations as examples or aspects of linguistic features such as metaphor, and these pitfalls are particularly marked when working with larger datasets. Antaki, Billig, Edwards and Potter (2003) critique under-analysis and stand-alone quotes divorced from wider issue context. Using themes (in this case, myth) as organisational framework for specific examples alongside sympathetic applications (such as metaphor) helps obviate these issues without excessive exposition or sacrificing narrative to constructions.

A wide variety of analytical approaches for dataset discussions via media studies applications are also available to researchers. Some of these are long-standing, others continue emerging driven by political shift and facilitated by technology. As

discussed in chapter one, the purposes of print media have shifted over the intervening thirty years of each crisis window, from being one of the main ways people received news, to one amongst many available outlet options. Academic analysis has evolved alongside, with Bell (1991:84-5) chronicling the path of media research through several phases from early interest in the effects of media on recipients, to what people do with media, through to analysis of the power of mass communications. His analysis picks a path through major theoretical contributions underway at the time, pointing to Van Dijk's (1988) application of discourse frameworks as a critical development for the field. Significant contributions to the development of the way we consider the self and public image of the press from the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies and the Glasgow Media Group are also noted by Fowler (1991:2).

More recently, difficulties specific to media-based analyses are problematised by Philo (2007: 175). He argues for textual analysis to be undertaken alongside complementary contextualisation of social structures, including analysis of what is present and absent, and representations of social interests. He illustrates his point via work from the Glasgow Media Group that considers three processes of production, content, and reception for a fourth phase system of analytical approach (2007:194). These ideas have been developed and used productively to demonstrate increasing closing out of the public through self-referencing consultative groups (Dinan and Miller, 2008), but also engineering of public acquiescence to news stories. Happer (2017:443) notes a lack of alternative sources or direct audience experiences during the financial crisis that made media messages particularly powerful.

Returning briefly to Bell's (1991) classifications, problematisations in studies of the media are now entering what might be considered as a fifth phase in analyses, with a journey from mediation to mediatisation currently underway. These allow academics to consider the purpose of media outlets through to considerations of fake news issues as discussed in chapter one. However, whilst providing an important critical context for analytical framing of news stories, the above work so far does not consider patterning of news stories from wider social and narrative

traditions that we take for granted as exemplified through mythmaking. This can explain a part of how stories gather traction and, in some cases, become dominant and remembered in particular ways, and other narrative attempts fail, become grass-grown and rapidly forgotten.

Corpus approaches and ideological framing

As discussed above, this chapter has presented the case for congruent adoption of CDA approaches to mythmaking in the media during two recent British crises. With the influence and platform of media outlets becoming ever more varied over the course of the neoliberal project, media discourses are one important way of understanding what socially changes and what stays the same. Back in 1995, Fairclough commented that "media language should be recognised as an important element within research on contemporary processes of social and cultural change" (1995:2-3). He writes of the "focal position" of both media outlets and their language to social systems, and of a growing shift towards consumption and marketisation (p.12). A generation on, with a journey toward marketisation and commodification visible across social functions, the contribution of media outlets to its normalisation and naturalisation should not be underestimated. Similarly, development of discourse analysis ideas to broader uses than their linguistic beginnings can assist with interdisciplinary application.

Central to both myth themes and supporting CDA approaches to media studies are ideas on ideology. As noted in chapter two, this also presents something of a shifting perspective in academic thought between the first and second dataset. Whilst CDA approaches were in infancy during the earlier period studied, (Wodak and Chilton, 2005: xi-xviii) it is, at the time of writing, a popular interdisciplinary concern applied over a wide variety of fields. However, during the same intervening period, specific ideological frames for analysis have declined (see Fairclough, 2013a:25). In this account, Fairclough convincingly argues for continuing ideology as a central theme of Critical Discourse Analysis, as a way into critique of assumptions around power, elite behaviours, and normative societal functions. However, his accompanying assertions around parallel salience of class relations as main cause of decline retrospectively appear as under-analysis. A more complex interaction of

factors is emerging in recent academic debates, largely via *Media, Culture and Society*. These have argued for a conceptual renewal of ideology as a form of critical analysis, (Downey, Titley, and Toynbee, 2014; Phelan, 2016; Corner, 2016).

Downey et al (2014) revisit Hall's (1982) seminal essay, *The Rediscovery of Ideology* in media studies as a starting point. They note a parallel lack of resurgence in explicit ideological critique post-financial crisis as surprising. Seeing the construction of assent to austerity as offering similarities to Thatcherite restructuring away from manufacturing, they consider trends in identity politics, an over-use of power as intellectual scaffolding (Downey and Toynbee, 2016:1266) and evolving theoretical vocabularies as explanatory focus changes. They call for a coherent response from the academy for the side-stepping of public conversations about the nature of financial institutions, where democratic systems have been 'hollowed out' by neoliberalism (Downey et al, 2014:882). Their analysis is developed by Phelan (2016:277) who notes Hall's place in a particular historical moment defined by Thatcherism, stating that what was fresh at the time is now expected rather than revelatory. His view, and that of Corner (2016) is rather of changing nomenclature that would fit with Hall's central tenet of *rediscovery* rather than that analyses of domination and legitimation have gone away.

However, whilst accepting the validity of the above arguments, this thesis is also written on the supposition that ideological frames for media analysis have gone underground partly because media entities are no longer bothering to pander to purposes of public consultation as raison d'être. Because of naturalisation, consolidation of ownership, political public relations and commodification of output, mythic persuasions that ensure public acceptance of policies not in their best interest as established during the 1980s are no longer contested. With greater diversity in both media platforms and audiences alongside reduced political and social structures it is much easier for decisions to be made privately and confirmed publicly. The historical "public sphere" of Habermas and the freedom of a fourth estate to critically evaluate political contestations have given way to PR and closed, self-referential groups talking to each other rather than the public, (Davis, 2018:77)

Print media exists to legitimate itself, and self-proclaimed "papers of record" provide largely dominant voices, with others stories either ignored or given lip-service as token balance. The fitness of this long-standing definition is itself currently under question for online criteria (see Kapel and Schmidt, 2018). Academic fashion has subsequently drifted from unsatisfying analyses of "infotainment" (Chakravartty and Schiller, 2010) of apparently apolitical and dumbed down reporting (Davis, 2003: 669) to develop more productive lines of enquiry. These instead are often focussed on specific groups or actors, adding to growth in identity and agency work and power relations. Here, myth themes follow both stories around individual actors as well as those of wider legitimated and delegitimated groups to see how these themes support normative smoothing and public acquiescence during crisis situations.

Part 2: dataset construction

Data conditions; the composition of press articles

Empirical chapters of this thesis have been constructed from two distinct sample sets. Archival searching was conducted under two very different sets of conditions for news journalism. Early piloting that analysed compositions of press outputs from *The Times* and *The Guardian* yielded quite different print media contents between 1984-5, and 2008-9. Whilst these composition differences were not a focus of this study, they indicate shifts in conditions for news presentation happening during the intervening period, potentially providing an interesting option for further study. These shifts included:

- o Greater numbers of columns dedicated to "people of interest" during the latter period. These might indicate the following factors: readership more interested in individuals, a trend to safer opinion pieces, or more contributions from "features" writers' written and banked in advance. Examined against the wider idea of a Habermasian public sphere of a civic society it also may be an example of what Herkman (2010: 703), citing McNair (2000: 2-10) refers to as the tabloidization or "dumbing down" of

political journalism. This is further evidence for infotainment arguments presented by Davis (2003) and Chakravartty and Schiller (2010).

o The *density* of news articles and the amount of material contained within each is also much higher during the 1984 sample set. Some of this trend can be explained by changing uses for print media. For example, when Parliament is sitting in 1984, *The Times* provides a daily digest on page four. This contains verbatim quotes from selected sessions as well as a precis of the following day's business and is often accompanied by a reporter's summary. It provided one of the few quick ways ordinary readers could find out exactly what was said. By 2008, whilst *The Times* still provided Parliamentary summaries, there are no verbatim quotes. Interested parties could simply watch the Parliament Channel or look at online *Hansard* records if required.

o Journalistic input direct from English regions was much more prevalent in the earlier period. Correspondents often identified themselves as eye-witnesses during local events in 1984. By contrast even general reporting of other news items away from global financial centres during the Financial Crisis was far more London-centric. This partly reflects the dwindling role of local news outlets and centralisation of the industry, as does the more frequently varied titles for journalists such as *Labour Reporter*, or *Political Correspondent* during the earlier window. However, lost local outlets do not seem to explain the full London-centricity of stories, which may be closer to Berry's (2012) critique of closed reference groups evidenced in crisis reporting. Whilst during 1984 Liverpool and London were more individually politically voluble, regions were still an active issue during the financial crisis, as were the location bases of some of the affected institutions such as the Bradford and Bingley, Halifax, and Northern Rock. Yet these perspectives did not generate a great deal of comment, apart from one column in *The Guardian* (2008a) which noted how London-centric events were starting to impact on "lost jobs in Halifax, in Newcastle and indeed, in Bradford, and in Bingley".

- Scotland provided a notable exception to focus generalisations during the later period, probably due to the centrality of the RBS to the crisis. However, papers such as *The Scotsman* and the retaining of Scottish editions from some print media outlets guarantee a voice for Scottish interests. Therefore, the press did take time to include stories such as "Scotland's short-term economic future that looks bleak" (Fraser, 2008c, 19 October). Recognition of Scotland as an active financial stakeholder in the UK following devolution contrasts with the subsuming of Scottish perspectives at the expense of English news during the miners' strike as highlighted by Phillips (2009).

Data conditions; sample sizing and selections

Differing conditions for research in the collection of two distinct datasets were also present, which necessarily led to quite different search methods. Whilst both sets of archive material were accessed from digital collections, these were quite different in storage conditions, organisation, and presentation. For the financial crisis, ubiquitous digitisation of recent media outputs meant that *Factiva* delivered a single, fully-searchable, automated, and highly accurate tool for dataset construction. Coal dispute coverage by contrast, had to be accessed via a variety of tools, such as by individual PDF photocopied pages for each newspaper that were held in their own archives. Some, like *The Times* via Gale Cengage, were reasonably searchable such as by digitised headline or keyword, although fuzzy matching of text was not always accurate, depending upon original print quality. Others, like *the Daily Mirror* via UK Press Online, offered no tool dexterity for researchers other than simple zoom functions. Following trial and error with early data, it was decided to scour each edition manually during the period covered to ensure consistency.

The sample set was chosen to include a traditional ideological representation of print media outputs: during the miners' strike, *The Guardian* provided a broadsheet Left representation and *The Times* the Right. *The Daily Mirror* was also included as a secondary left-leaning source, given tensions between the elected Labour party and union activism during the strike. Broadsheets offered more in-depth coverage and material available for analysis (Mullen, 2018:5). A much greater reach of analytical

tools available during the financial crisis period enabled a wider range of broadsheet and tabloid formats to be considered, with seven print outlets coverage considered as below.

In terms of final sample size, this thesis adopts guidance offered by Phillips and Hardy (2002:74). In their discussion of creating sample frames, they consider how to put a "natural" limit on collection, giving the example of a closed time period. They note how researchers do not seek to exhaust categories, but rather generate them for discussion purposes. For media analyses, with a huge and open-ended amount of source material available, their approach to dataset management is helpful. They consider saturation as an elastic idea, closure coming not because there isn't anything new to say or information to find, but when there is enough to legitimate and justify arguments presented.

Coal dispute dataset

The Times, The Guardian and *The Daily Mirror* were manually and systematically searched via each edition to the paper for references to the strike, and named key personnel involved from 1st March 1984 – 31st May 1984. This yielded a set of 963 articles, 245,372 words.

Financial crisis dataset.

The Times, The Financial Times, The Guardian, The Daily Express, The Daily Mail, The Sun and *The Daily Mirror* were searched for references to banking and named key personnel involved using a *Factiva* search from 1 June 2008 – 21st May 2009. This yielded a set of 1,980 articles, 310,176 words.

Data choices and limitations

As this thesis is an exploration of political mythmaking from printed media presentations during crisis, it is this constitution of text that will be the main focus of interest. Proponents of discourse analysis have come to consider that "naturally" occurring speech and text provide a very different environment for study than formalised settings such as interviews. The latter in particular have shifted with the development of discourse analysis from perceptions of neutral interactions to

complex and vivid artefacts with their own trajectories (see Potter, 1996). Taylor (2001:27) clarifies what might be classified as natural speech; typically covering informal conversations but also including structured institutional situations unaffected by observation or recording, such as a courtroom or medical consultation.

Media discourses are somewhat of a hybrid if differentiation is considered on a continuum, partly due to the journalist's own choices in recording, transcribing, and reporting. Less natural than the micro-narratives of everyday speech, although sometimes including them as quotations, articles contain some natural elements as communicated by the writer, rather than set out and bound by subsequent academic researchers. However, constraints are also enacted by the rituals, conventions, and boundaries of the field. Media articles have narrative rules from internal convention: compositional constraint, editorial and ownership direction and decision making, and purpose to inform and entertain (see Bell, 1991). They also have externally imposed conventions such as purpose to sell copy, and communication of others mediated stories. Whilst written article formats can be accepted as examples of what Phillips and Hardy (2002:71) define as "language in use", accompanying arguments around preferences for "naturally occurring" texts in discursive construction needs a little more caution in this case as discussed above. In this thesis the premise is adopted that media texts are designed to accomplish things, whether for the benefit of the producer, audience, or other featured actors, therefore "natural" appears as a normative choice.

Such an approach to print media texts fits with what Phillips and Di Domenico (2009:549) call "common interest in exploring how elements of social reality are constituted through talk and text". Their definition (2009:550) commences with a general focus on public speech, widening to "sets of ideas and ways of expressing them" before expanding to include a special focus on written texts and how their grouping develops cumulative meaning. They develop this understanding to three main dimensions, pieces of talk or text, social context, and the body which gives them meaning. This fit well with mythmaking via collective groupings of individual articles as a meta-text with purpose.

Texts then, as formalised, and often legitimised embodiments of media discourses represent one part of our shared social stories that were discussed in chapter two. Kress (1995:122) refers to them as sites of social meanings, "that record in partial ways the histories of both the participants in the production of the text and of the institutions that are "invoked" ….", depending upon structural relations of power. Chalaby, (1996:686-88) considers texts as the material manifestations of discourse, as interconnected, interrelated and evolving, which is particularly useful to analysis of media discourses at times of change as noted in chapter one.

Whilst his discussion raises the then difficulties of sociological functions for discourse due to its historical attachment to the linguistic sphere, the intervening generation has seen greater clarifications of terms. Discourse analysis has come into its own as a multidisciplinary approach. With all such developments in the field of media studies, there is also rich opportunity for new insights through undertaking textual analysis of historical datasets using recent approaches. For example, Hart (2017), in his article on metaphor as framing device during the coal dispute highlights that no systematic study has been made of metaphor featuring in media discourses of the strike, whether visually or linguistically.

Limiting and constraining media sources

Whilst other choices such as broadcast media were available for study of social stories it was decided to focus on print media articles. A high reliance on linguistic frames (apart from supporting photography and cartoons), and storytelling skill for the purpose of selling copy made it singly appropriate for a study of mythmaking in the political sphere. For the reduction of complexity this thesis adopts Fowler's acknowledgement of dynamic interactions between typographical choices, graphic and technical composition formats as outside of scope (Fowler, 1991:8).

In terms of other potentially rich textual sources available, as online media were neither contemporary for the miners' strike, and are also potentially ephemeral, it was decided to limit the defined universe (Bell 1991:10) to print formats. Online texts also present other problems for political analyses, in that they may not necessarily be visibly authored or sponsored, and it can be much more difficult to

work out who is financing them. They also present volume issues. Similarly, as the thesis was already sufficiently complex in conception through using two datasets, it was decided to retain UK-centric approaches to media sources. However, it was noted during data collection that a comparison of coverage between UK, US and European press outlets would provide further interesting study, particularly during the financial crisis.

Approaches to the text

In terms of the practicalities of dealing with the corpus body of texts, three broad stages for critical discourse analysis were undertaken as per the process outlined by Fairclough (1996: 26-7). These were an initial description briefly summarising what was in each text which was carried out for each article. These were then tagged into two categories based on expected usefulness. It was clear from initial summary readings that some articles would provide significantly more evidence of important moments of intent in production of texts and the uses of language in serving particular purposes in each crisis situation. Some articles provided very distinctive vocabulary choices that expressed certain values attributed to actors and events threaded throughout, such as oppositional dialogues around values of militancy and moderation during the coal dispute (see p.142). These were considered key to myth building and dissemination. Other journalists utilised expected textual conventions of describing what happened, what caused the event, and what effects resulted to portray events to project common sense assumptions (see Fairclough, 1996:4) that were generally in favour of dominant interests.

For those articles screened as potentially useful for exploration in the empirical analysis chapters, these were selected for the subsequent stages of interpretation and explanation of context for production. This was undertaken following Fairclough's procedures set out in *Language and Power* (1996, p.109-139). A worked example of this stage of the process for an article from each crisis is offered in Appendix 2 (p.299).

As part of this close reading and sifting process, themes began to emerge (as discussed below.) Rather than presenting analysis of each of every text in turn, the thesis uses themes that emerged from the case study samples as a whole.

Organising material into mythic themes and undertaking corpus analysis

This final section of chapter four offers one more narrative: a journey account of creating the tenets of the thesis. As outlined above, different approaches to managing data searching were employed based on "digital storage" conditions of the sources. Having got both datasets into a platform-readable format on *MS Word* these were close read again for initial idea generation, likely usefulness and gathering into themes. The approach to creating the corpus body was based on the premise set out by Charteris-Black (2004:31); that data was not produced for the benefit of the model, rather that the model would emerge from the representative sample used. But how were myths settled on? Initial frameworks were developed in looking at the ways that journalists described political events through their word choices such as descriptions of key actors and contexts. These first-generation ideas were initially clustered around media story framing and how these might be collated into meta-narrative collages.

What simultaneously emerged via the literature, was whilst there appeared wide consensus that crises held both constructivist and material elements (Kirkland, 2017:1), the majority of quality scholarship tended to privilege the latter in analysis. Understandings of narratives produced during crises tended to focus on their application to ideas or outcomes generated from material events, rather than on the patterns of *how* those narratives were told by the press and what was accomplished by that. This behaviour is explained by Roitman (2014:39), who posits that crisis is an observation that produces meaning through its elements, e.g., a crisis of – capitalism, economy, neoliberalism, politics, finance etc. These elements are brought together as we make sense of apparently disconnected information via narratives. As explored in chapter 2, political myths are the product of clustered persuasive functions of storytelling in public life. These adapt and mutate over time but are a part of how societies catalogue important events.

Whilst both press and academic research terms in use during the earlier period were historically situated, so are terms currently in vogue. Both, as commented on by Alvesson and Deetz (2000:44) were, and are, "filled with the preferences of dominant groups at its time." Their following comments were particularly apt for research covering different periods in British history; that "people and societies concerned with individualism and control organize experience differently to those interested in the community and fate". However, whilst different concerns around the organisation of experiences were raised, similar patterns for how these concerns were aired in each crisis were noted. Discussion on the practical effects of temporal differences in terms of media reporting will be returned to as one of the key frames for chapter seven.

It was therefore important that the myth framework developed was flexible enough as an overall container to enable both historical and more recent ideas, whilst cohesive enough to explore common storytelling threads without unduly forcing fit. For example, reputation as a concept tended to be more formal and status-bound during the miners' strike study. People at this time were reported as behaving as per collective expectations (or not), such as by office held, or political affiliation. This had evolved by the time of the financial crisis, that individual bankers and politicians were held up by their own stereotyped individual heroic virtues or villainous sins. Similarly, *Choice* as a ubiquitous and binary Thatcherite ideal, encouraging voters to break from collective identity tethers, has succeeded as hegemonic project in that it is no longer a current contestation. More nuanced agency of individuals populates our current research ideas and appears far more natural and unproblematic today. In terms of the overarching myths, these too needed to be both coherent enough to encapsulate in a short statement and relatable to each other in demonstration of the ability of myths to work together in montage in service of a story.

Choices made around mythical themes in themselves also bound the researcher to the data and vice-versa. Two very different contexts for reporting were important

for creating myth stories, pattern-making and building narrative analysis for each crisis. *Myth as history* provided the first insight - during both events journalists repeatedly and heavily drew on past events to create narratives and understanding for their readership. Much of this was part of the process of defining and labelling crisis. This patterning was particularly stark in the suddenness of events during first weeks of the financial crisis, as demonstrated in chapter six; often used as journalists struggled to quickly understand complex financial ideas and how they might go wrong.

Following that initial idea, the *myths of reputation* quickly followed as media stories of key players in each crisis appeared akin to those noted by Fowler (1991:111) in his characterisation of "terms of abuse and of endearment" by the press. Here he talks of "spectacular public myth making" around the emulative (and not) models of British princesses. Similar explicit conferring of social values appeared underway as narrative shorthand for the behaviours of key actors in both crises. These instances were strengthened via intertextuality and knowledge of existing paradigmatic conditions and those myths of history, with readers increasingly able to draw on expected frames of dangerous Communists and bad bankers, respectively. Players appeared to follow the sort of organisational Jungian archetypes proposed by Moxnes and Moxnes (2016) in that news reports carried elements of different stereotypical roles. These were often explained through the types of metaphors proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), although metaphor provided only one of the pieces by which reputation was managed. Other supporting conditions in relation to *overwording* and ideologically posed relations such as synonymy and antonymy (Fairclough 2001:92) were drawn in to support analysis.

Myths of legitimation followed, as necessary output of reputational contestation or affirmation applied to wider societal groupings during a crisis situation. Finally, ideas around *myths of choice and agency* evolved as a journey of social transformation in the way we understand behaviours in public life, as per differences noted by Alvesson and Deetz above. This was developed in the press from the simple, binary Thatcherite *Choice* idea from an incoming neoliberal project

to more complex conceptualisations around identity and agency understood in recent scholarship. For example, Gabriel (2015:27), explores issues that "previous generations viewed as matters of birth, fate and social rank now become areas of choice" in discussion around the illusions of consumerist ideologies.

Having decided on thematic myth groupings, these were coded as two separate datasets using qualitative analysis software *NVivo10*. After iterative reading, each article was tagged where it might best fit with one or two myth themes. Detailed excerpts were then mined from keyword searches and word-clouds using query wizards (as per Silver and Lewins, 2014).

Conclusion

The chapter above explores the process of choosing a method compatible with the awkward and contested terrain of myth production during crisis events. The premise of CDA that grounds the active role of discourse within social practice, change, and ideology is highly relevant to a thesis of media outputs during crisis situations. It allows both flexibility in pursuing how news stories are constructed to convey authority and legitimacy, but sufficient structure and recognition of reality to ground the forthcoming empirical discussions with more material counterpart analyses in chapter five and six. These will offer an analytical approach to the daily production of narratives and the building of myths in public life.

Having set up both mythmaking as a frame partnered by CDA principles as structural support, this chapter's final step is in revisiting initial aims from chapter one before embarking on empirical work. These are summarised as:

- *The presentation of a case for a greater role for myth analysis as a complement to material analyses in media scholarship*
- *The functions that myths might serve in crisis situations*
- *Narrative patterns present in how print media organise and perpetuate myths*

Crises prove good environments for study of myths in public life as they foreground fluctuations and extended affirmations of dominant narratives which enable

greater visibility of the functionality of myth and the power of normative storymaking. It is through the bricolage of daily and repetitive print media reporting patterns that the thesis turns to consider each crisis in turn. Chapter five is given over to the study of myths in the miners' strike, and chapter six to those of the financial crisis, before the two are brought together for comparison during chapter seven.

Chapter five: Myths of the coal dispute

Introduction

This offers the first empirical chapter as analysis of ideas presented in the press about each crisis. This chapter identifies and considers deployment of four nested mythical themes of the miners' strike of 1984-5: myths of legitimisation and delegitimisation, choices and agency, reputation, and history and identity. As outlined in chapter two, each of these derivative myths is bound together and linked under a cohesive yet flexible overarching myth. This 'master myth' (Bouchard, 2017: 112) of the miners' strike as presented by the media is that of the wrong doing of a misinformed *collective*, led astray by outdated ideals and facilitated by an unrestrained powerful demagogue as the epitome of extreme ideas. It considers how the strike was proactively managed through levers of State – legislature, judiciary, adversarial parliamentary rhetoric, and sympathetic press to Government benefit.

The central argument here is in exploring less-considered discursive management of the strike, as a necessary ideological complement to well-researched tangible Government preparations such as increasing coal stocks and successive Employment Acts since the 1981 climbdown (Helm, 2004: 8). It explores primarily how early weeks of strike reports created a path dependency of tropes through othering of the miners' case in the everyday talk of the press, promoting government strategy by proxy. This complemented existing Conservative narrative mobilisation about proactive change for Britain, where mining and other heavy industries were rendered obsolete, (discussed in chapter seven.)

Media evidence supports secondary ideas of governmental ability to create and exploit gaps between historical public ideas around miners and their presentation as relics of an outmoded industry undertaking 'futile labour' (Powell, 1984)[4]. Whilst many studies have debated the self-appointed role of the press to "openly and vigorously" (Hall, 1988:20) defend the 'centre', at the time of writing, none have

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[4] Enoch Powell, former Conservative MP, and minister.

empirically considered how the miners, identified as a threatening group, were identified and persistently othered "through the mechanism of the moderate /extremist paradigm".

In the case of the miners' strike, this process of proactive management through interrelated myths is more easily demonstrable through segmenting press representation of government management of the year-long strike into three strategic phases (see Phillips 2014). These are expanded here as: early distancing and containment, isolating and open conflict, and the enactment of a return to work discourse, (Jones, 1986: 146, 181).

This chapter focusses on the processes enacted in mainstream British print media during the 'distancing and containment' phase, where the government publicly stated refusal to intervene in what they referred to as management investment in economic mines (*The Times*, 1984c). Dissonance between those public statements and what was actually going on privately had been long suspected. This is described concurrently by Adeney and Lloyd (1986: 207) as "the stage of denying involvement without lying too much". However, Phillips (2014) uses then recently released Cabinet minutes to ably analyse that 'non-intervention' was in statement only.

Whilst accepting the spirit of Adeney and Lloyd's (1986:79) assessment of opportunistic purpose to describe Government strategy in relation to the miners, recently released Cabinet and other papers such as the *Stepping Stones* report have confirmed the opinion of those who considered it deliberate. Arnold (2016:106) demonstrates the clarity of these Government objectives and the need to manage ambiguity from a study of Policy Unit documents[5], quoting: "The government needs to counter a public tendency to sympathise with the miners, based on the history of the mining industry…". Dorey (2014) analyses the *Stepping Stones* programme to similar conclusions of long-term strategic planning at work.

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[5] CPRS (Central Policy Review Staff) Study of the NUM/NCB problem, July 31, TNA, PREM, 19/541, available via The National Archives, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ (accessed 18 05 18)

Implications of wider initiatives for change are the subject of chapter seven. This chapter, however, focusses in on mythologised media outcomes of this strategy during the early part of the strike. The 'distancing and containment' phase is taken to run from the closure announcement of Cortonwood in March 1984, up to the end of May 1984, just before the Battle of Orgreave on 18 June where open conflict (phase two) could not be denied.

Use of mythmaking as a tool helps render visible how language choices provided by media legitimised the Government position and emasculated the Labour movement through selective amplification and obscuration of ideas, enabling a discussion of *whose* legitimacies and *whose* choices were promoted in the press. The chapter takes the position that the Tories gained a two-fold benefit from the early weeks of the dispute through managing myths and othering of striking miners.

This was both through active discreditation and delegitimisation of the miners' cause and via a "credibility gap from the imprint of militant on the Labour party", Steffen (1987: 421). These twin strands were enacted via General Strike metaphors and 1970s discourses of the "shock troops" of the Labour movement (*The Guardian*, 1984a). Conscious conflation of the two is expressed in *The Times* (Smith, 27 April 1984):

> "…. *fear was linked with two names, Benn and Scargill: one representing militancy within the party, the other militancy with the unions. If Labour is to win next time the bogey of militancy needs to be laid in both directions*."

Later scholarship, using titles such as *Shafted* (Williams, 2009) claims an opposition stance to powerful political narratives that are only now, after 30 years, starting to unwind. However, without analysis of these enduring myths and exploration of why they convinced, any attempted reclamation of terms (e.g., the militant as moderate who got off his knees from Terry Fields, MP[6]) perpetuates an oversimplified position rather than insight.

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[6] Hansard, HC Deb, 24 June 1983, vol 44, cc263-327: Industry and Privatisation 307, 12.52pm: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1983/jun/24/industry-and-privatisation#S6CV0044P0_19830624_HOC_61 (accessed 27/05/18)

Ritual tropes of low-key, persistent othering partnered with directly confrontational journalism meet conditions for a retained function of mythmaking in modern societies (Bouchard 2017). This idea of a lifecycle of myth for complexity reduction via stereotypical portrayals that illuminate, yet obscure is also met in Barthesian terms (2009:133).

Considering how the Conservatives actively managed ideological presentations for change is particularly relevant now. This is due to a variety of historical-facing factors such as new insights available from the release of Cabinet papers pertaining to the strike, as well as recent challenges to long-standing stigmatisations from the era (such as with the publication of the Hillsborough report). There may also be relevant insights available on how governments or political groups use myths to shape public opinion. This would include questioning over the eventual future of neoliberal ideas as the longer-term outcomes of the financial crisis recovery become clear as well as future-facing ideas about the rise of populism and the role of myth that are the subject of chapter eight.

Dispute context overview

Before embarking on thematic discussion of myths presented in the press, it may be useful to provide brief contextual introduction of key actors and institutions. (A wider context of linking histories between two cases is developed in chapter seven.)

Agreed dimensions of the coal dispute tend to sit between industrial and workplace analyses of economic restructuring and change, and high politics of ideological struggle between the labour movement and the governing Conservative administration (Phillips, 2012:7). Many analyses converge on the strike as a pivotal moment of ideological struggle (Darlington, 2005:72) for employee relations. Its impact is often considered key to subsequent considerations on the "balance of power between capital and labour" (Beynon, 2014:216) in the UK.

The strike took place over the course of a year from 6 March 1984 in response to pit closures enacted by government agency via the agency of the National Coal Board (NCB), led by Ian MacGregor. These closures were hotly contested amidst allegations that the government intended to close the industry and abandon its

associated communities. Retrospectively, that was proved to be the case, with the government having undertaken significant preparative moves including stockpiling coal and pre-emptive legislation, (see p. 130.) Whilst the dispute officially started from spontaneous walk outs (Hart, 2017:4), miners were supported by their official union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), led by Arthur Scargill. Contemporary media analysis and subsequent summaries of the strike frequently focus on polarised opposition between Scargill and Margaret Thatcher, then Conservative prime minister, with media sources retrospectively seen as a major source of misinformation and distortion on behalf of the government (Hart, 2017:4). Eventual defeat for the miners was accompanied by rapid shutdown and complete dismantling of the mining industry in the UK.

Overarching myths

Whilst it is the case that the strike was hugely significant, presenting a material, political and cultural struggle (Adeney and Lloyd, 1986), it was rather the spearhead of a series of visible domestic ideological oppositions that played out during this period. These include the rise of Militant in Liverpool, the abolition of the GLC, Greenham Common, GCHQ, Section 28, etc. All of these contestations required public management of moral and political ambiguities and legitimacy of action for the Conservative government. This chapter argues that one way that the Government successfully managed these contestations was through polarising representations and mythmaking via the press as proxy (see van Dijk, 1998: 33), creating what Cohen refers to as moral panics (1987:9).

The myth of the wrong doing of the collective of organised labour was particularly effective during this period, following successful interventions by the new Right in constructing narratives around the Winter of Discontent. Britain had been constructed as "under siege" from "militant trade unionists" (see Hay, 1996: 254) and recent "Red scare" phenomenon (Hall, 1988:20). Precipitating conditions of recent industrial history were then deliberately compared with a Conservative ideological future of individual self-reliance, market orientation, and the strong State. All the above oppositions could then be lumped together as socialist

archetypes, the "loony left"[7] as "conspiratorial enemy" and hostile outgroup (Charteris-Black, 2005:25) responsible for Britain's decline.

Fairclough (2001:156) discusses how successfully Margaret Thatcher was able to build upon 'accumulated capital' of this type of fixed discourse trope in his analysis of a 1985 BBC Radio 3 interview. Phillips (1996) draws similar conclusions on the success of oft-repeated themes in her analysis of the *choice* discourse under Thatcher. With routines of othering outgroups well established, Hall (1988:20) writes of "no extreme prod" needed to deliver "totalitarian Marxists" to the front pages. In this way, coverage of miners' actions is consistent with previous media mythologizing about dangerous union behaviour, and thus more effective.

Whilst this study uses the specific lens of the miners' strike to consider mythmaking and othering of dissonant ideas through the media during the period, it acknowledges its locus within wider theoretical contributions of such as Hall (1988), Hartman (1979), and Glasgow Media Group (1976) on macro aspects of the Thatcherism pro-market and individual *choice* project. (A wider discussion on the evolution of these themes is presented in chapter seven.) This assessment of how dominant interests were promoted by the media in a proactive and managed way also became reflexively acknowledged by the industry itself, with Brian McNair writing for *The Guardian* (McNair, 1984) on media neutrality as "an old-fashioned relic of the pre-Thatcherite consensus."

Purposeful governmental handling of the strike and indeed the wider debate on the future of the coal industry in general can then be seen as successfully processing political management of an existing *public issue.* Rationalising and then ending a long-standing industrial and social way of life through the closure of pits was an attempt to make it both economic, and *private* (see Mills, 2000:187). *The Guardian* (1984d) provides an illustration of this process. Writing of how the Government's "chosen front line" is to "bring down to size… arrogant, undemocratic, politically motivated union leaders, bent upon either subverting the government and the rule

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[7] See McWilliam, R., (2017) Labour in the 1980s: not the disaster we once thought, *The Conversation,* December 20, available via https://theconversation.com/labour-in-the-1980s-not-the-disaster-we-once-thought-89250? (accessed 27/05/18)

of law…. all rational economic policies." Their next paragraph considers the price of victory: "human misery and economic dislocation."

Normative presentations of pit closures as simply rational and economic, and indeed positive for miners, is amplified in the creation of the overarching myth of the strike; that the *collective* is misinformed, that the government wish to invest in the industry in an economic way. *The Times* (1984c) reports directly from Parliament, quoting Energy Secretary Peter Walker:

> "*I am not going to intervene in what is basically a clear-cut management position of a management that wishes to invest more in economic mines and cut out the burden of uneconomic mines and do it in a generous way…* ".

The Times explicitly supports this economic rationalisation position on 12 occasions during March 1984, and Ian MacGregor's plans are applauded via the editorial column:

> "*it is high time the uneconomic pits were closed, for the immediate benefit of the taxpayer and the long-term benefit of miners. If Mr MacGregor does not have a "hit list" then he should…*" (*The Times,*1984c).

Margaret Thatcher's comments are also reported verbatim from Parliament "…There is a great future for a productive, profitable and well-paid mining industry…" (*The Times,* 1984a). This style of reporting presents cuts as not only modest, but amplifies a myth of closure for better economics, and presenting opportunity rather than just closure, obfuscating the realities of differing conditions and job prospects by region.

The overarching myth of ill-advised and misinformed collective action is strengthened by reports on spontaneous strikes in the early weeks and cemented by the lack of a ballot later. George Bolton (Scottish Vice President) is quoted as saying "Miners throughout Britain will be voting with their feet…" (Pattinson, 1984a), thus strengthening images of an undemocratic and unmanaged union. That

the leadership is misguiding its membership in allowing this ill-thought step provides the second part of this master myth. Felton (1984a) reports:

> "*Mr MacGregor, who was attending a Coal Industry Society lunch in London, said outbreaks of violence in the industry were "rather sad because they indicate there are problems within the union that are not being dealt with by the people who run the union."*"

This central idea of a misinformed collective was successful here on two main fronts. By promoting industrial action as *misinformed* because of Government investment plans via the press, it encouraged existing divisions between working miners and those on strike, whilst still offering an ostensibly friendly hand to any wavering strikers in the hope of encouraging a return to work. It also created division between rank-and-file miners who the public might support as legitimately defending jobs and what was promoted as conscious wrongdoing and political ambition of their leadership.

The sale was made to the wider public as continued legitimation for union membership supporting an individual to work and in work, but that politically, unions should stay in that lane (Dorey, 2014). This enabled the ideological separation of union activity in the private sphere (acceptable) from that on the public and political stage (illegitimate). Jones (1986:102) offers an instance of how that was enacted in practice through a series of NCB adverts in the national newspapers during July 1984. The adverts referred to miners misled by their leadership and aimed to persuade them to re-examine what they had been told, each saying "it is the strike – not the Coal Board – that could butcher the industry." These ideas were supported by secondary myths, as explored below:

Myths of legitimisation and delegitimisation

Preparing for legitimation

In the case of the miners' strike of 1984-5, legitimisation of the Government position and delegitimisation for striking miners occurred in three timeframes as explored below:

From the longer-term context, the late 1970's political sphere had seen a shift in public logics and a significant drift in popular mood to the right (Hall; 1988:40) which provided necessary conditions for unwinding the post-war consensus and change from a more traditional Conservative mindset displayed by the Heath government. Public drift to the right was facilitated by economic improvement, the wake of the Falklands conflict and accompanying triumphal discourse, as the general election landslide of 1983 awarded the Conservatives a significant mandate for domestic change. This mandate was both public and within the Party, as policies shifted overtly to privatisation and competition.

That this was openly articulated as ideological change is demonstrated in Margaret Thatcher's own words; "we got rather a good consensus at the last election – a consensus behind my conviction", (Aitken, 1984a). In this way a defeat of union power could be constructed as required for making Britain competitive, "if there is anything to be said in favour of Mr Arthur Scargill…it is that he has made people think back to the early 1970s. They were not the most glorious years…" (Congdon, 1984).

In the medium term, the government had materially prepared for conflict with the miners since the 1981 'swerve' (Scargill, 2009) and public climbdown. Groundwork strategies included the stockpiling of coal, North Sea Oil subsidies, and redundancy offers, complementing successive Employment Acts in 1980 and 1982. The explicit nature of strategic preparation is documented by Thatcher, (1993:141), "cut our losses and live to fight another day, when – with adequate preparation – we might be in a position to win". Similarly, practicalities of work underway in anticipation of the strike are reported on by Lawson (see Dorey, 2013) in bellicose nostalgia as

"just like re-arming" for Hitler. Whilst a long-established part of memoir discourse, the exact nature of these material and economic preparation strategies, along with the extent of the pit closure plan, was only fully demonstrated with the Cabinet papers release in 2014 (Phillips, (2014) provides a comprehensive analysis).

Tangible preparations and their political presentation are extensively covered in both specialised literature as well as general strike histories (Helm, 2004; Beynon, 2014). What is less discussed is the extensive legitimation of ideological preparations underway. This type of analysis has been facilitated by released Cabinet documents, and declassified reports such as *Stepping Stones,* which are discussed as ideological frames in chapter seven. As far back as March 1983, explicit reference is made to the Government strategy of manufactured distance in relation to the mining industry. This was to be through using the NCB as mouthpiece, with a clear articulation of the Government's "public stance" (and clearly intimated private action) and its confinement to statements that closure decisions "were a matter for the NCB". (The National Archives, CAB/128/76/7: 5). The success of strategic disassociation via proxy and obscuration via myth is illustrated by pre-2014 general history evaluations. Helm, (2004:6) writes "in what sense and at what stage Thatcher actually 'wanted' a strike is unclear…." Deliberately so. The role of the media for the successful dissemination of the dissembled messages was key.

Having extensively laid the groundwork, immediate conditions as the strike broke out following the announcement of the Cortonwood colliery closure, provided both risk and opportunity for the Government. Continued reassuring claims of a limited closure programme, described by Ian MacGregor as "modest" (Felton, 1984b), putting the industry on a "financial basis" (Harper, 1984a) accompanied descriptions of Arthur Scargill's supposed exaggerations of closure figures as the product of a "vivid imagination". In Barthesian terms we can see here the little confessed evil of modest closures from the government, (Barthes, 2009:40).

The Guardian take a critical stance on NCB pronouncements stating that "most union leaders feel that Mr Scargill's long-held opinion that the board is systematically closing pits at an increasing rate held up to scrutiny" (Harper, 1984a). *The Daily Mirror* goes further, ascribing governmental agency by stating that a

strike "would be doing what the government wants" (*Daily Mirror,* 1984a). *The Times* coverage during this first week of strike action is, however, largely partisan toward the government, reporting that "a rising tide of coalfield militancy was predicted…. strategy being adopted by militants…. came from Mr Michael McGahey, Communist president of the Scottish miners…." (Felton, 1984b).

Path dependency of early weeks legitimacies

Early weeks set the tone for dispute management and much path dependency of public opinion. Support for upholding the law and demonization of NUM leadership was determined here. Political micro-statements of othering provided by the media enabled the Tories to successfully present legitimacies for closures and provide rationalisation for visible leverage of State management tools during the crisis. Low-key repetitions, and everyday talk of the press proved less contestable, and possibly more successful in presentation to middle-England voters than more overt stigmatisation offered via *The Sun* and *The Daily Express.*

The apparatus of governance (Foucault, 1994: 221) was enacted via media proxy in two main ways – via the Law and the Church, and often claimed for legitimacy under the proclamation of what did (or did not) demonstrate *British Values*. The claim by Mr Ian MacGregor, phrased as a warning to the miners of a "fight to the finish" and threat of High Court action is justified by saying that picket line violence was "un-British" (Pattinson,1984b). Charteris-Black (2005:102) notes these twin metaphors of rule of Law and Church values as key to established Thatcherite rhetoric, whilst Crossley (2016) notes her positioning of religion as individual and democratic, in opposition to Marxist collectivism. Successful Conservative presentation of legitimacy and moral authority during the early strike was abetted by prevarication and internal division within the parliamentary Labour Party until late April when the party formally came out for the miners.

Media representation then presents a key pivot of legitimacy for parliamentary affairs during this period of the strike. *The Times* generally peddling governmental agendas, and *The Guardian* adopting mainstream Labour party values and a qualified sympathy, if not active support for the miners. Articles in *The Mirror* offer

a more wholehearted support, not necessarily for the strike per se, but for the predicament of ordinary miners forced into the political arena; "They have a case on closures, but they are playing into the Government's hands. The civil war of the past few days puts both their unity and their union in peril", (*Daily Mirror,* 1984b).

Legitimacies of the police and the Law

As outlined above, media discussion on the visible apparatus of State power during the strike is often presented along mainstream party values, with the roles of pickets and police and the law contested in this way. During April, *The Guardian* invokes debate on civil liberties eighteen times, referring to police, arrests, and roadblocks as well as parallels to Czechoslovakia in May 1968 via the letters page (Phal*,* 1984). Similarly, in March, concerns about a paramilitary police force are raised on seven occasions in *The Guardian,* and on three in the *Daily Mirror,* but only once in *The Times.* Numbers of deployed police and their tactics is intensively reported by all papers studied, reflecting a mythological building of the strike as not just an employment dispute, but bound to ideological questions of state, state identity and the boundaries of state power.

One dominant narrative in *The Times,* however, is constructed around the Attorney-General's role and his public exhortation to the police to act "*vigorously and without fear or favour*" (*Times,* 1984e). *The Guardian* contests this discourse, reporting him having to "*defend his assertion*" of police powers, when claiming "*the whole British public will support the police*" (Wintour and Pithers, 1984). *The Guardian* also report personal unease on necessary police powers from affected constituency MPs and Labour leadership. On 30 March, *The Guardian* and *The Mirror* report from the Commons how arrested miners were questioned by "*very frightening*" (Dodd, 1984) plain clothes officers questioning how they would vote between Conservative and Communist. *The Times* Parliamentary report (1984h) minimises this story. Their article also builds perception on legitimacy of police behaviour as necessary by reporting on Margaret Thatcher's stated belief that "*the overwhelming majority of people in this country, except perhaps the Labour Party, are behind the police in the excellent work they are doing*".

Press sources also note the SDP-Liberal Alliance mustering a conscious attempt at intellectual reason in opposition through noting and attempting to separate conflation of Conservative values with police values in Parliament. They also make political capital out of the difficulties the strike has produced for the Labour party. The reported speech below demonstrates how oppositional logics become bound up in debate around national identity and core British values thrown up by the dispute. Brown (1984b) reports Dr David Owen speaking:

"'no doubt…a very dangerous and damaging development if polarisation of British politics ever gets into situation in which the police can be identified with either of the old political parties...they represent every single citizen in this country.' To Tory cheers.... he said if anyone should be in the dock it was the NUM leaders: Mr Arthur Scargill and Mr Mick McGahey. 'And if there are any accomplices, it is the total silence from the Leader of the Opposition and Labour's front bench spokesmen.'"

Wallington (1988:3) concurs, referring to a virtual impossibility of attempts to separate police and Government objectives during the strike, citing the influence of media and Government emphasis on violence. The impact of this amplifies lawless behaviour on the picket lines, whilst downplaying how the full leverage of the state, via the police, and subsequently the courts (and, later on, social security) are being brought to bear against striking miners.

Amplifications of violence come through clearly via the language choices for Parliamentary reports during early weeks where Conservative statements on the illegitimacy of miners' actions are repeated by sympathetic media. Home Secretary Leon Brittan's remarks to the Commons and in public speeches are frequently cited, "horrifying…mob rule" (*The Times,* 1984d). The paper repeats the phrase "mob rule" on six occasions that day. Other associations of illegitimate action sanctioned by Labour are made by Brittan later in March. Webster (1984) quotes from a public speech where Brittan accuses Labour of "perpetrating "the big lie" that it was the police and not the pickets, who were challenging principles of freedom and democracy, and that it was from the policeman who uphold the law, rather than the criminal who broke it, that the threat to the public came…" The paper goes on to report Brittan's remarks that this "big lie" would always be attractive to

"unscrupulous politicians". His reasoning is reported that "repeat what was manifestly untrue and often enough, their thinking went, and the public would believe you". This indirect attribution to Goebbels is fudged by *The Times*, but broadsheet readers would in the main, be expected to pick up the insinuation.

Brittan claims the police as defenders of the State, as per *The Times* (1984m):

> "*They are servants of the law – bastions against those who seek by force to impose their will on their fellow citizens…no one in the country could have the slightest doubt of the clear intent of the militant miners' leaders.*"

Debate in Parliament on the role of the police in response to strikers' actions is also widely covered. *The Guardian* refer to Mr Gerald Kaufman's rejoinder to Mr Brittan that remarks were "deliberately calculated to inflame a situation that requires conciliation" on twelve occasions over several days (*The Guardian,* 1984b). These are only indirectly reported once in *The Times,* paraphrased as the Home Secretary reportedly stirring up "difficult situations" (*The Times,* 1984d).

Parallels between print media coverage of picket line violence and policing issues have been extensively studied in relation to simultaneous televisual coverage and audience reception (Cumberbatch et al 1986; Philo 1995). They measure the success of governmental approaches as reported in the media. Philo (1995:38-41) demonstrates how mythical presentations persist via both pictures and language. He reports that whilst over half of interviewees in a sample taken five years later "believed that most picketing was violent", "people who had been there described it as being very boring, nothing happening at all for hours on end…"

The related issue of manufacturing and mythologizing violence for the cameras is also considered extensively in the sources. Television is acknowledged as a contributory factor in picket-line confrontations, duly reported in the press. A Northampton policeman on picket duty relates:

> "*If there is a television crew present you can be sure there is going to be vigorous showing. At Scunthorpe it was like Monty Python: police and pickets rested on opposite sides of the road until the camera crews showed*

up and then we got up and did what we were expected to do…." (Dean, 1984).

In effect, with print and television coverage converging, cumulative output made it difficult for the public to gain alternative perspectives. Evidence of sporadic violence rather than "nightly television news reports of violent confrontations" as amplifiers of government messages (Williams 2009:36) is empirically considered by Wallington (1988). His account of the legalities of policing during the strike considers that *"as a whole,* [author's italics] this was not a violent strike". This is in the context of three deaths and 9000 arrests in the context of 200 workplaces over 250 days (Wallington, 1988:5). His view is that the police change from peacekeepers during the 1950's and 60's in response to 1980's urban riots, and the "unpublished accretion of central government influence" led to approaches adopted during the strike, subsequently damaging public relationships.

Legitimacies of the church

Whilst not as frequent as with the Law, the identity of government policy with Church and Church values is also important during the strike. It amplifies the bounding of church and state as a mainstay of then Conservative rhetoric, what Hall (1988: 42-48) terms "authoritarian populism", as mix of traditional Tory ideals, combined with aggressive individualism, patriarchy, and state directive. Crossley (2016: 146) identifies mythic themes of Thatcher's Bible as about "individualism, freedom, tolerance, rule of Law, and English or British heritage". Powell is also cited as an architect of linking post-imperial English values to Empire, and its precursor in the Holy Roman Empire (Crossley, 2016: 146), via Parliament and a subservient Church, as his widely mediated spat with the Archbishop of York illustrates below.

Powell's accusation of "religious bankruptcy" (Brown, 1984c) is levied at the Archbishop for stepping outside boundaries deemed acceptable for his role in coming out in support of "his flock's fight to save their pits" (White, 1984a). This perceived partisan action, "a willingness to picket the Pearly Gates" (White, 1984a) is widely reported in the samples. *The Guardian* publish a detailed extract of the

speech as part of the ongoing row (Powell, 1984). Here Powell comments on the Archbishop's intervention in contentious terms:

> "*immorality is to attempt – by ecclesiastical authority on His Grace's part, by physical coercion on the miners' part – to compel our fellow men to waste their brains and labour*".

The Times presents Powell's admonition as appropriate: "Mr Enoch Powell rightly pointed out yesterday….". The Archbishop's plea to keep pits open is labelled as "well-intentioned but ill-considered*"* (The Times, 1984o). The resulting reply from the Archbishop via *The Guardian* letters page (Ebor, 1984) expresses both discomfort at the publicising of a private letter and at the missing of his point in wishing for a balance of all the factors "human, economic and long term…." The clearly expressed irritation from the Archbishop at having a private discussion publicly misconstrued is reflective of Government policy to amplify economic points at the expense of social consequences. Placing a rejoinder in *The Guardian* suggests the Archbishop seeking distance from any future selective framing of his words via *The Times.*

Legitimacies and illegitimacies of association

Whilst levers of governance legitimacy present the enactment of active government ideology via the media, the confrontation process also encourages interaction with taboo groups as contrast. This presents as overt othering of striking miners as a hostile group by a manufactured affiliation process with known undemocratic groups from *The Times.* On 2 April, they are obliquely connected with the IRA:

> "*The miners and their allies appear to be forming themselves into a "provisional" wing of the labour movement, leaving the "official" TUC on the sidelines in a guerrilla struggle with the state…"* (Routledge, 1984c).

More direct comparison with a fiercely contested issue at the time was written by Bruce-Gardyne (1984) for *The Times.* A former Conservative MP, previously serving in the Foreign Office, he wrote to conflate Arthur Scargill's leadership of the miners with the historical role of overseers within the South African apartheid regime:

"By this evening we should have a clearer idea of whether the miners of the Midlands and North-west have been brought to heel by the crack of Mr Scargill's sjambok. If they have…we shall be shaping up for a head-on collision between elected government and unelected union warlords…"

Ordinary miners are also politicised through this sort of rhetoric, not only are they contentiously positioned as Black South Africans; their presentation is conflated with ill-advised Russian values. *The Daily Mirror* reports a scare that militant councils are indoctrinating children, with a headmaster quoted as protesting against striking miners lecturing in class by local authority permission …." I work in the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire." (Lyte, 1984). Scargill is promoted as using the "strong arm" of the miners to assist socialist revolution (Butt, 1984). *The Times* (1984i) also draws a direct path to sympathetic links between miners and the USSR, describing correspondence from *Izvestia* citing a British miner's warning that "England is turning into a police state".

In relation to other known hostile groups, Thatcher's rhetorical associations between the miners and the Falklands conflict have already been studied in some detail in relation to the oft quoted "enemy within" speech to the 1922 committee[8]. Whilst Milne's (2014) contribution, *The Enemy Within: The Secret War against the Miners,* is probably the best known, others have studied this connection. Whilst its July date takes it outside the formal thesis window, Collins (2014) analyses a later speech draft expanding the theme prepared for the party Conference in October 1984. This speech would have made explicit linkages between Labour, "what she regarded as militant mining communities to General Galtieri", Liverpool and other local authorities.

Recurring and hostile analogies had been reported on as early as late March. Goodman, (1984a): "…as determined to win this fight as she was against Galtieri and the Falklands. To her it is a kind of industrial Falklands…" The same association is also reported from Parliament during April 1984, with Tony Marlow (C,

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[8] Document 105563, 19 July 1984, Available via The Margaret Thatcher foundation, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105563 (accessed 03/06/18)

Northampton North) describing Arthur Scargill as "Galtieri of the coalfields" (Brown,1984a).

The path dependency of these links can be viewed as early preparations for later developments around the legitimacies of the news stories covered by Milne (2014) in relation to Roger Windsor's links to Gaddafi. They demonstrate conscious conflation promoted to the public of legitimate government activities pitted against a crowd of hostile Others – miners, Russians, socialists, Argentines….

Myths of choices and agency

The context of 'choice'

The wider trope of *choice* has been extensively explored as an existing Thatcherite discourse (Phillips, 1996) and is a key feature of capitalist and market-driven Conservative ideology during the period. Its promotion as right-wing myth disguises that individual freedom and personal 'choice' is limited by context. Hall (1988) explores how choice presents as one of a series of disparate (and often contrary) strands promoted by the Government. These include commitment to law and order and the church (moral discipline and patriarchal values) enacted through defence spending and regressive policy making (such as Section 28) allied with free markets and minimal state intervention via privatisation.

By the time of the coal dispute the binary myth of choice is already robust and consistent with Government policy. Hence its extension to miners' choices; to ballot (or not), to work (or not), and to be part of a British future (or not) requires little effort to be effective. In this way, those taking strike action without a ballot can be positioned as part of past post-war consensus and rejecting new, go-getting Britain with its promotion of individual rights over the collective. By othering the 'militant' collective with conflated Soviet values (see above), all strike activity is unnecessarily politicised, downplaying a reality of ordinary men defending jobs and local communities.

The issue of the ballot

A key tool presenting miners *choice* is the media treatment of the ballot issue which is promoted through all press excerpts studied. Pleas for a national ballot are widely represented in samples; during April, discussion on calls for a ballot appear on 89 occasions in *The Times,* 150 in *The Guardian,* and 51 in the *Daily Mirror.* These calls far outnumber discussions of area strikes, which was the union executive position. "Militants like the Scottish president, Mr Mick McGahey, believed that this would bring a "domino" effect" (Ardill and Hetherington, 1984), when Mr McGahey is quoted in early March as saying that "it would be up to each area to decide", (Harper, 1984a). The factual legitimacy of area-by-area strikes is only mentioned on two occasions in the dataset (see Crick, (1985:149) for extracts of the NUM rule book) and the subsequent refusal to hold a national ballot is posited as, if not illegal, then as a withholding of *choice* via membership rights and subsequent coercion.

Wider Conservative mythological language of the undemocratic and *conspiratorial enemy* of British democracy (see Charteris-Black, 2005:25) is evoked against the miners' leadership through repeated promotion of the miners' "choice" to hold a ballot and "denial" of their constitutional rights as union members by the National Executive. Routledge (1984d): "the miners could be deprived of a secret pithead ballot…by senior level manoeuvring…"

The NCB, as represented by Mr Ian MacGregor, strongly adopts this lack of choice meme. Felton (1984d) writes MacGregor "appealed to miners yesterday to defy their union and resume work….". In a piece entitled *Defy Your Union,* MacGregor is quoted: "the board believe that now they have been denied the chance of an early ballot….", and the strike would collapse with a "steady drift" back to work. The same story is reported by *The Guardian,* again directly quoting from Mr MacGregor's statement; "Men who resent being denied the chance to vote…. (Ardill, 1984). This development of a denial of choice discourse is in direct opposition to the spontaneous walk-out following the announcement of the Cortonwood closure.

Mythical obfuscation of what choice in the face of redundancies means was further facilitated by the early reluctance of Labour leadership to commit themselves to supporting the strike, and later to statement on their preference for a ballot. In this, *The Guardian* tend to follow the mainstream Parliamentary Labour approach. Having come out in support of the miners during late April, Roy Hattersley gives a party interview (White*, 1984b*) supporting a ballot, and identifying with a muddied 'centre' ground. Hattersley is quoted as a "self-confessed moderate, tarred and feathered with the moderate brush*".*

In this interview we can see the Parliamentary Labour party trying to reclaim political momentum from earlier prevarication, and counter open discourse that the strike is being spoken about as a "political opportunity to destroy the trade union movement". White makes it clear that this is the considered view of the Party front bench, writing how this reflects both the view of Eric Heffer as the Chairman, and Neil Kinnock as the Leader. However, the impact of earlier indecision, and party schism around the core identity of Labour on trade union rights furthers the Government's cause, satisfying conditions for the polyvalence of the 'choice' myth (see Bouchard, 2107:96).

Both political parties here attempt to claim a "moderate position". For the Tories this is miners who want to ballot, and then vote to return to work, as exemplified by their claiming of the Nottinghamshire pitmen. For Labour, those who want to vote, and abide by the outcome. This enables a discourse output for the media where the un-balloted "militant" is not just on strike, but constitutionally lawless, not just within British law but even by their own union democracy. The legitimacy of the area-by-area strike strategy is obscured and the 'moral authority' of the secret ballot is given further resonance through more measured opinion pieces. Reid[9] (1984) writes that although he wants the miners to win, he expresses concerns that public opinion is alienated by perceptions of,

> "*strike imposed on many miners against their will. This might not be true,*
> *but no one will really know until all miners have been given a vote…only a*

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[9] Jimmy Reid, shop steward who led the Clyde 'work-in' in 1971.

majority in such a ballot can give miners' representatives the moral

authority..."

As noted above, whilst there is a legitimate story that Nottingham miners would favour a ballot, this is obscured. Reasons for regional differentiation include area incentives, relative job risk and seam quality which received little coverage, never mind analysis. The outcome of non-discussion on the legitimacy of area strikes created a stereotypical binary perspective of Nottingham miners as moderate, and striking areas as militant, as discussed below.

That this was a poorly constructed misdirection is indicated by the rapidity of Crick's (1985) analysis that Nottingham wanted to take time for a ballot, rather than were against the strike per se. It is only with hindsight that a clearer picture of area politics emerges. Roy Hattersley's post hoc analysis (2004) includes comments on Scargill's surety that Nottingham would defend its own future at the expense of their more vulnerable colleagues. Hattersley reflects that he did not articulate his own convictions for the value of a ballot and the reasons for them at the time. However, obfuscation and misdirection in the press fostered internal area tensions in the union which are welcomed by the government.

The choice of militancy or moderation

In this dataset emphases on militancy or moderation are often bound up with the ballot issue and offered dialectically to present conflict, and via simplistic, either/or choices to the reader, in a number of ways. This may be a simple presentation of strikers' activity presented pejoratively and contrasted against a favourable interpretation of 'moderate' behaviour.

> *"...after reaching a "no-go-area" deal with militant Yorkshire pickets — they*
> *will strike for the day to hold a pithead ballot in peace. The vote among*
> *traditionally moderate Nottinghamshire miners...."* (Routledge, 1984a)

These contrast types are presented 79 and 69 times via *The Times* and *The Guardian* respectively during March 1984, whilst decisions are being made area-by-area about strike action, and confusion about ballot issues is widely promulgated in the press.

In *The Times*, a number of substitutions to one or other of these words also repeatedly appears, explicitly conflating a moderate (i.e., non-striking) stance with right-wing beliefs, and claimable by the Conservatives. Hence:

"movement of pickets from the traditionally left-wing areas of the union… officials of the traditionally moderate area… (Routledge, 1984a)

"Moderates dampen left-wing hopes of all-out pit strike" (Routledge, 1984a)

From early April onwards however, as the strike starts to become embedded, whilst *The Times* continues to promote this militant/moderate discourse, a substantial change of language toward the strike is implemented by *The Guardian*, reflecting the (qualified) support of the Labour leadership of the strike during this month. Less contested and judgmental poles around mainstream political orientations are utilised, (Harper, 1984b):

"while the conference could not call a national strike, leftwingers in the NUM argue that it would help them maintain the dispute… Mr Trevor Bell, a leading rightwinger on the exec, said last night….

Binary 'choices' of behaviour presented are also regionally situated e.g., *"moderate Lancashire and Nottinghamshire*…" (Felton, 1984c). Little explanation is offered to readers of the nuances of a federated union with differing regional traditions and cultures, which would have aided public understanding of the strained situation in Nottinghamshire; Ray Chadburn as local president is quoted from a "*besieged*" Nottingham (Winter and Pithers, 1984).

Stigmatism is also regionally situated, as with the concurrent situation in Liverpool, (Butler, 2020). Traditionally Labour voting Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire are othered as lawless: "*hundreds of militant miners from Yorkshire poured into Nottingham*…" (Routledge and Clement, 1984). One of the few commentators to explicitly explore a conflation of mining and Northern values and the othering of industrial workers political activity in the dispute is novelist Ferdinand Mount (1984). He draws upon an Orwellian dystopia of a "*Southerner's picture of the miners as violent and lawless*" and the strike as visible dissonance to comfortable

class mythology of "*warm and simple souls, much given to community singing, manly in both their camaraderie and their hatreds*..."

In these ways, presented as simplistic choices of good and bad behaviour and values, right-wing, and, by proxy, Conservative, values are conflated with moderate behaviour, and socialist as othered, and feared, militant. In his description of the pathological forms of Stalinism and Fascism, Foucault (1994: 328) writes that it is not necessary then to extend the mechanism, a metaphor of (remembered) threat suffices.

Whilst systematic othering of those who "voted with their feet" (Routledge, 1984b) proved particularly effective during the strike, this polarising of behaviour by the media was not new. Other researchers have covered long-standing right-wing media tropes of left-wing threat, particularly through the small-set approach (TUC, 1979; Hay, 1996; Thomas, 2007). Hartman (1979: 264-6) offers another example of this, empirically linking public preoccupation of "left-wing militancy" as causing strikes through media emphasis. Hall (1988:20) proposes a more causal relationship of "Red scare" dependent upon "skilful orchestration of politicians and the press." Whilst all of these studies predate the publication of the *Stepping Stones* report, they document the role of the press promoting anti-union rhetoric and increasing middle-class hostility to union activities. However, it is Hall's insight of purposeful orchestration that is now most obvious with hindsight.

Whilst there is no specific study addressing media adoption of the term 'militancy', and normative values around the term 'moderate', questions on the appropriateness of polarised terms chosen are indirectly raised in a number of studies. Adeney and Lloyd (1986:47) discuss the election of Scargill, noting Union "moderates" just giving up. Similarly, Buckley (2015: 419) refers to destroying 'militant' trade unionism and Jones (2014:66) describes a Cabinet meeting and MacGregor's complaints about lack of arrests for "militants". Helm (2004:77) goes further into binding ideology with personalities, referring to rivalries between "'Gormleyite moderates' and Scargillite militants'". However, the implications of unarticulated questions (by using inverted commas around the terms) provoke important questions.

Through press conflation of the discourses, therefore, the 'moderate' rightwinger is positioned as rightly wanting a ballot and the militant socialist is amplified as having wilfully abandoned due process. 'Militant' threat becomes homogenised as part of the developing and simplistic 'choice' discourse and solidified as part of a system of differentiation through state apparatus (Foucault, 1994:344). The government path can then be amplified as 'moderate' and appropriate, as demonstrated through positioning of the contested ballot issue. Having set up a *choice* discourse, this in turn, promoted myths of a monolithic dispute where political militants chose (or sleepwalked behind) a dangerous demagogue.

Myths of reputation, heroism, and villainy

Set in the mythological rousing of a lawless, militant, and insurgent workforce as explored above, archetypal personalities grew to provide a distilled epitome of the problem, replacing the need for complex analysis. Hartman (1979:256) writes of the media "persistent tendency to explain industrial conflict in terms of personalities and personal motivations…", and it is this shorthand that provides conditions for myths to flourish in place of nuanced reasoning. Moxnes and Moxnes (2016:1520) point to turbulence and conflict fostering archetypal images and roles in society. They posit metaphoric roles make it easier for people to organise and conceptualise reality during difficult times.

Given that this period of political history is particularly noted for mythmaking and rhetoric as part of ideological change (Charteris-Black, 2005) it was unsurprising that the Thatcherite myth (Phillips, 1996) spawned a taboo counterpart for the press in the form of Arthur Scargill. Milne (2014, 13-14) makes the case for a mythology encouraged on both sides. There is certainly evidence for tribal displays within the sample. Football analogies are particularly common, e.g., "closing time heroes" with media reports of strike members "regarding the dispute as something between a crusade, Custer's last stand and a cup final celebration" (*The Guardian,* 1984f). Within these oppositional descriptions "King Arthur" is a popular pejorative media motif, particularly in *The Guardian:* "Congress House is not even allowed access to King Arthur's ex-directory phone number" (*The Guardian*, 1984e). Descriptions at a rally refer to both sides of Scargill mythology, and *The Guardian*

(1984f) write of "…significant minority…regard "King Arthur" with a mixture of fear and loathing" alongside narratives of those who "broke through police ranks…to clasp his hands or kiss his cheeks whilst the crowds sang those quasi-religious football songs." *The Mirror* also refer to Scargill in these terms on four occasions in March, although this is evenly pejorative, "The bitter showdown: A fight to the finish between King Arthur and two-gun MacGregor" (Goodman, 1984a)

Adeney and Lloyd (1986:29) comment on the heroic values relationship of "King Arthur and his knights", writing: "…the heavier the establishment fire upon him, the more he was caricatured and lampooned and thundered against, the more those who threw their lot with him drew closer to him…" Their analysis explores how he "expressed their best" and did not become part of an establishment which his followers, "felt, rightly, excluded them, or condescended to them, or sought to buy them off."

However, media evidence above indicates more nuance than Milne's oppositional perspective of simple myth and taboo from the Conservative Government, and Adeney and Lloyd's somewhat nostalgic class politics position. Pejorative personal comments around Scargill's 'pretendership' within *The Guardian* reflect the political bind of the Parliamentary Labour party not to deny its history and core identity by diminishing a relationship with the miners. This was compounded with Neil Kinnock's reported reluctance to end his "honeymoon" (Linton, 1984) along with "developing paranoia in the Kinnock camp over Labour's inescapable identification with the strike" (Aitken, 1984b). There would also be concern amongst Kinnock's supporters that the parliamentary party might schism over the strike should Tony Benn choose to make it so (Adeney and Lloyd, 1986:300).

Othering of Scargill and McGahey as individuals also indicates a wish to support rank-and-file miners defending jobs (protecting traditional voting blocs) and separate any association with the miners' left-wing leadership whilst dealing with the Militant tendency issue rising in Liverpool at the time. This is explicitly articulated by White (1984b) in his interview with Roy Hattersley. He writes of Hattersley's endorsement of the cause "while keeping his distance from the political aspirations of Mr Arthur Scargill." Adeney and Lloyd (1986:28-9), debating

whether the strike would have taken place without Scargill, refer to a "common belief" that he raised the stakes through "sheer personal force" and place the defeat as personal, that "*he* [authors' italics] was the embodiment of the enemy within".

This statement of what is known, public and normative about an individual expressed in this way expresses the naturalisation of the myth of "public enemy No. 1" (Jones, 2009:71). Whilst the 'legitimate left' of the Parliamentary Labour Party might dislike Scargill personally, a certain amount of romance and party nostalgia at the ability to recruit to and sustain a cause persisted. The myth here then exists from the moment of transformation into a natural state, not by its motivation. (Barthes: 2009:154)

Development of reputation via political attributions

During early March, in the first few weeks of the strike, there is little systematised demonization, and personal comments on Scargill himself circulate around specific journalists rather than by publication. This is supported by various biographies and memoirs, e.g., Routledge (1993), and Jones (2009:70), who separate public hostility to journalists as a "calculated act" from strike leaders and distinct from private relationships. Jones' account recalls his own drive between Llandudno and Brighton with Scargill, finding him good company in private, away from his public hostility to the media. Within a few weeks, however, patterns of demonization become uniform, reflecting growing tensions and political influences.

The Mirror takes an openly dialectical approach for readers in recognition of divisions within the union and the political base of its readership (1984c) [bold type paper's own]:

> "**Scargill's right.** *Everyone is so quick to blame Arthur Scargill. But what about fascist Thatcher and foreign-import MacGregor, who have craftily divided the miners? It really upsets me that the miners put Arthur Scargill in power, yet won't back him now. He's a good man…. **Scargill's wrong.** …. I'm dismayed that Arthur Scargill shouts about union tradition but lets bully-boys intimidate men rather than honour our eldest tradition – the ballot box…"*

However, by April, a dominant discourse of "the most disliked and feared of all union leaders" (Smith, 1984) has emerged and remains an important feature of the dispute. Jones (2009:69) memoir from June 1984 writes of "a near-unanimous view of the press" of personal danger to the State from Scargill. He is identified via Marxism, Communism and active links to Russia by the press, including a fictitious interview with *Trud* claiming the start of class warfare *(The Times,* 1984k). These include direct personal comparisons, e.g. *The Times* (1984c):

> *"…even the most socialist-minded miner must see Mr Scargill's insistence*
> *that there are no uneconomic pits as no more than Stalinist newspeak…"*

Media debate on links to the Soviet Union are a mirror of those in Parliament, with Mr Geoffrey Dickens MP (C) directly quoted in *The Times* (1984l), ""Mr Arthur Scargill is a confessed Marxist, surrounded by communist aides and advisers, and, much more serious, support for him is coming from the Kremlin." Wider statements that offer additional bonus swiping at Labour also associate Scargill with Russian values,

> *"at every station along the line the Communists have been with him. It*
> *cannot be wise for the Labour leadership to keep such company"* (*The Times* 1984o).

In this particular article, "*The company they keep*", *The Times* refers to Mr Scargill and Mr McGahey by Communist affiliation on seven occasions, including another implication of undesirable external influences, "his campaign has been fully orchestrated by Communist Party spokesmen". Mr MacGregor by contrast, is awarded heroic values and attempted independence from Government: "Mr Ian MacGregor, in spite of many attempts to portray him as a politician's hatchet man, is clearly endowed with impressive qualities of industrial leadership". Collocated descriptions here emphasise an outdated collectivist approach in the workplace, amplifying MacGregor's purpose in making the "NCB a vigorous, forward-looking industrial enterprise in the highly competitive world…" and completely obscuring plans for closures. The secondary benefit of such a shell article is that oppositional archetypes between Scargill and MacGregor allows Mrs Thatcher to operate

unobserved in the shadows. The article winds up asserting the Parliamentary Labour Party is also being manipulated:

> "*Mr Kinnock and his colleagues have been skilfully manoeuvred into following the militants rather than leading the party away from militancy. They now share a platform with the Communists though that surely cannot be what they intended.*"

Othering by association with outdated and dangerous Soviet ideals is further strengthened by contrasting approval of the "right-sort" of persuadable union leader. This is notably evidenced through Bill Sirs[10] distancing from miners at Ravenscraig, and the widely reported quote on not wanting to see his members "*crucified on someone else's altar*" (Clement and Routledge, 1984). Closer to home, Scargill is contrasted with predecessor Joe Gormley: "*Moderates, who enjoyed an unassailable authority during the 10-year presidency of Mr Joe Gormley in the 1970s and early 1980s…*" (Routledge, 1984c). *The Times* also hark back to previous Marxist leaders Will Paynter and Arthur Horner, who are set up as models, via a description of despite being "out-and-out Communists" as respecting "realities". There is also a countering presentation in *The Times* of an acceptable face of socialism. "The inexorable advance of the left has now bought to the leadership a decent man of the legitimate left, Mr Neil Kinnock, who can welcome neither Mr Scargill's ends nor his chosen means" (Butt, 1984).

In this way, the broadsheet media successfully message through techniques of low-key othering (for differing purposes) where overt statements might have been publicly contested as libellous. One instance where an overt tabloid statement provoked issues in the printing industry, was the blacking of the *Sun* headline '*Mine Fuehrer*', (1984). Another was the move by printworkers union Sogat '82[11] to ensure Arthur Scargill's right of reply to a fictitious speech in early May that the

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[10] General secretary, Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC)

[11] The Society of Graphical and Allied Trades was an amalgamated union which underwent a series of mergers throughout its history. At its height it represented some 200,000 members in the print, paper, and media industries. Its format during this crisis had been agreed in 1982, although it continued to undergo changes and amalgamations following declining memberships and is now part of Unite. (source: University of Warwick Industrial Relations Archive centre, via https://mrc.epexio.com/collections/featured (accessed 11 05 21))

Daily Express say he might have given (see Wintour, 1984). Wintour, who writes for *The Guardian,* is explicit in his discomfort at the *Daily Express* approach to the miners:

> *"on April 19 – …the paper hit a peak. Under the front page headline "Scargill's Red Army moves in", Michael Brown, chief reporter wrote: "the militant Red Guards responsible for most of the pit strike violence will attack again today when Arthur Scargill attempts to rewrite his unions' rules."*

Wintour goes on to report how, in the same edition, readers are "warned of the similarities in the fascist techniques of Mr Scargill and Adolf Hitler." Despite the apparent juxtaposition of holding Scargill as both redolent of communism and fascism, this is not a new link. Analogies about fascist behaviour have already been made by the National Coal Board; the *Daily Mirror* comments (Goodman, 1984b):

> *"Last night – for the second time this weekend – National Coal Board bosses accused miners' leaders of behaving like Nazis. Commenting on claims made by Mr Scargill in the TV interview, a board spokesman said: "This is the Goebbels technique."*

Whilst *Daily Express* techniques appear an attempt to see which extremes carry the most hostile traction for readers, rebuttals from other journalists demonstrate their own personal codes as professional industrial correspondents. Defending themselves as a valid Fourth Estate, ludicrous comparisons between Scargill and Hitler, as well as reporting on a fictitious speech are visibly challenged.

Overt statements and paired rebuttals tend to focus on the large events during the strike. Hart's (2017: 13) small-set sequence analysis using the metaphor of *war*, explicitly raises how visual metaphors of Arthur Scargill accompanying anchoring text were used to frame a military 'dictator' at the 'battle' of Orgreave. Whilst this examination of key events in the strike is effective as analysis of personal framing of Scargill and the strike as a war, it also illustrates a second, complementary activity of strike event as media spectacle (Kellner, 2005) that directs the reader, alongside persistent, low-key stigmatisations.

Reputation as unfit for office

Aside from political barbs that might be anticipated during a major industrial dispute, the press promote a number of attacks on Scargill's personal honesty and legitimacy to run a union, e.g., risking investment funds: "Miners' pension fund 'hazarded by Scargill'" (The Times, 1984g) and purported unnecessary extravagance such as having a driver (Desborough and Palmer, 1984). Scargill's personal awareness of how media sources reported his expenditure is covered by Jones (2009:74) who relates the story of how Scargill would not stop for food on a long road journey. He did not want to be photographed enjoying a meal whilst miners' families were queuing at soup kitchens.

Stories around possible illegitimate expenses accompany more reasoned discomfort around sanctioned coercion and bullying, particularly around the intimidatory nature of picket lines, and application of the rule book for area strikes, *The Guardian,* (1984c)

> "*militant areas encouraged to bully moderate areas into striking against their will. Such cynical manipulation of the rule book to dodge democratic decision-making plays into the hands of those who argue most aggressively for legislation …."*

However, fear is ramped up through description of tactics used by strikers as unnamed and othered followers of this dangerous individual, and the myth presents a natural association with both private army and demonic force, rather than strikers in an industrial dispute. "….allow Mr Scargill to concentrate his army", (Wintour, 1984); "Scargill's hordes at the gate" (Fleet, 1984b). Comedic and derogatory attributions as lampooning are also used to depict Scargill as unfit for office. This is often presented in the main narratives of articles, and as low-key aspersions, such as "antics of Mr Scargill" (Fleet, 1984a), "if Mr Scargill is still on the rampage…" (Congdon, 1984), and "in Mr Scargill they have an authentic radical ranter…" (*The Times,* 1984n).

Myths of history, continuity, and change

There are two illustrative purposes of calling up historical examples in the media by journalists during the strike. The first is the use of immediate history to help set the direct context of the dispute from earlier events. Common examples here are details from the previous Heath government handling of their miners' strike and understanding of how the Plan for Coal came about. "Reginald Maulding, Home Secretary 12 years ago, bore the scars of Saltley but refused to reconsider his view in the end, the Heath government was powerless", (*The Times,* 1984f). The second is as an aid to understanding large scale industrial disputes, such as reference and analysis via past events such as the General Strike of 1926. Renshaw (1984):

> *"Unions and the Labour party alike were punished by a victorious Tory Government and the financial link between them weakened by the "contracting-in" clause. General strikes were declared illegal, government workers forbidden to join unions… if some of this sounds familiar, it is. At a time of chronic unemployment, the present Government is pursuing policies not unlike its Tory predecessor of the 1920s…."*

Both purposes are called into service in terms of explaining seismic contestations in British identity going on during the period. They are however, largely experienced as what Barthes classifies as 'innocent speech' (Barthes, 2009: 155). Examples from history are often rationalised and naturalised according to political motivation and add legitimacy from referencing. In Mills (2000:157) terms, history here is "myth-making about the past for current ideological uses".

Ideological forwarding is apparent through retrospective recognition of the strike as a symbol of change within Britain. Discussions above illustrate how the identity of Britain and its governance going forward is contested through the media with debates such as on the kind of police force considered appropriate, the balance of State safety with civil liberties, and a plea for ownership of what is identifiably British from both main political perspectives. McNair, (1984),

> *"…as the long running battle between Tony Benn and British broadcasting journalism continued on Monday last, the issue again appeared in most of*

the media as being one of an eccentric crusade by the "loony" Left against a Great British Institution."

Public appeals for support through myths of history and national identity

There is a further underpinning element to mythmaking present in media uses of historical reference material during the strike, and that is through selective reporting on rhetoric, speechmaking and allusions offered by key actors in claiming the future. Reports from Parliament, calling on historical references from both political parties, as well as NUM leadership and Coal Board executives represent part of contested debate on national identity and core values of being British as enacted through the strike.

All parties were engaged in narratives that this was an industrial dispute that would determine the future of British democracy, with the sanctity of State at stake (Bouchard, 2017:130). Legitimacy of position is aided by historical reference, conjuring up those "spirits of the past" into service, (Marx, 2017:3). Through the use of mediated output, attempted collocated appropriations of British and democratic values are combined with appeals for public support. Often these are interlinked with historical figures and are resonant of the links made by the *Daily Express* and the *Sun* to the spectre of fascism as explored above, possibly amplifying audience perceptions that Britain is facing her biggest crisis since the Second World War.

For example, for the NUM, Arthur Scargill is quoted as demanding the combined forces of the old working class prevail. "The miners, said Scargill, were fighting "the social and industrial Battle of Britain,"" (Jenkins, 1984)**.** Under the heading of "Scargill's picket army is ready to march", Law (1984) quotes Scargill's appeal to the "whole trade union movement to join us to demonstrate to the British people the justice of our cause."

In terms of the government, appeals to history are made to contextualise and rationalise the current strike problems as only one in a series, e.g., "Mr Hugh Dykes ((C) Harrow E) called on Mr Walker to assess how much of the dispute was due to

miners' genuine grievances" and how much due to the "demonic and relentless ego trip of the most mischievous trade union leader in British history." (Brown, 1984d). There is also a move to identify miners as hostile enemy and long-standing troublemakers, alongside their retrograde socialist agenda. "For left-wingers indeed, any variation in this lifestyle is regarded as a softening and a corruption. The news of miners with mortgages or motor cars is deplored, with as much sighing for the past as the sight of a Navajo Indian in a pinstripe suit…. the history of the miners' union –…. – is spotted with violence" (Mount, 1984)

Other political actors are reported as using historical imagery to legitimise their actions, such as Mr Eric Hammond (EEPTU) acknowledging his role in defending his members, stating that the power workers would not support the miners. His speech discusses not removing "the muzzle of the law from these hounds" and that the dispute "reminded him of General Hindenburg's description of the British Army of the first world war: "lions led by donkeys." …." (Harper, 1984c).

There is, however, acknowledgement at times that these representations through history and permanence are weighted in favour of the government. Both Tony Benn and Roy Hattersley attempt to raise the non-objective objectivity of media sources in relation to the strike, as part of longer running concerns over governmentality under the Conservatives. Langdon (1984) writes of Hattersley's accusation over the government claim of rights to protect individual freedoms. It is reported as an,

"organised operation to manipulate the presentation of news by offering rewards to sympathetic newspapers. He attacked what he called the ruthless management of news by this means, and the way in which, he claimed, the Govt has harassed its critics in the press."

Media as outputs of mythmaking discourse

Awareness of these mythmaking narratives, what Barthes refers to as deciphering the alibi (Barthes, 2009: 154) is occasionally acknowledged in media sources. Jenkins (1984) writes of the stakes in the dispute and how "so much history is involved, because the miners themselves are so charged with the symbolism of class struggle". He skilfully amplifies the myth of Arthur Scargill's own political

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history and "reputation made in the campaigns of 1972 and 1974" and how he "could not allow a Tory government to expunge those victories". The Government's position is mythically juxtaposed for effect:

> "...the shackles of history and myth make it impossible, unthinkable, to fight and lose again to miners. Thus no chances have been taken. Police power has been deployed on a massive scale. Liberties have been taken with civil rights...."

Similarly, reflexive awareness of role of the media itself as an instrument of State is acknowledged by commentators. In *The Guardian* (Reid, 1984) comment is made of overly right-wing media that "scars British democracy". However, these remain scattered references amidst a series of layered mythologies; the government perpetuating a line of non-involvement, and media sources a line of objectivity. Andrew Neil (editor, *Sunday Times*) reflects in July 1985 (Wilsher et al, 1985: xii)

> "Our views were kept to where they belong in a quality newspaper: the editorial column. For us the miners' strike was above all a massive reporting and analysing task to give our readers an impartial and well informed picture of what was really happening".

Longer term perspectives on myths of history and permanence

Such is the power of myth to be appropriated, and in Barthesian terms (2009: 154) to *naturalise,* the endurance of the myth that an industrial dispute could determine the future of democracy in Britain has proved persistent. Norman Tebbit (2009, for the *Daily Mail*) was still able to claim unchallenged how a governmental defeat would have been "the death of democracy". It is only now, with parallel stories emerging from the Hillsborough investigations, and the release of Cabinet papers pertaining to the strike (Phillips, 2014) that the full extent of government involvement, and its consequences for Hall's (1988) *renewal* can be sighted.

Recognised by the TUC at the time as a watershed moment (Felton, 1984e) "...the last strike we would fight for decades...", the impact of Government victory was political, material, and economic in defeat of the strike and managing the legitimacy

of the closure programme. However, it was also ideological in removing potential for a traditionally-orientated Labour party from government contention for many years.

In this way, the evidence above has shown how the Conservative government were able to present their arguments for legitimacy and permanence during the early weeks of the strike through the press and through the creation of a series of myths. It should be noted, however, as Jones (1986: 201) remarks, that NUM leadership did not cooperate with the press, and were highly hostile, contrasting the success of the Conservative approach to working the media against the naivety and lack of PR resource of the NUM. He cites Howells (*Journalist, Jan* 1985) writing of how NUM officials expected "truth to fall out of the sky" and feared the media "as primitive tribes feared and hated malevolent gods". Whilst the myths created were highly successful, this backs up Jones' assertions that the media was not managed by the miners. It appears it was not even successfully contested, thus handing the government another successful front.

Conclusions

In this chapter, media presentations of four nested myths under one overarching myth in relation to the miners' strike have been explored. Each myth is interlinked, complementary and consistent with its fellows, providing many of the conditions for longevity, acceptance, and resonance in social thought. The ideas are presented as naturalised, (Barthes, 2009:155) as part of everyday, low-key language choices, offered as innocent speech and causal. Myths are built as part of a conscious ideology. By these logics, miners are unionised, therefore they are socialist and militant, and mythologised as a homogenous enemy, as part of a group of homogenised enemies, along with their oppositional leadership.

Through the ways discussed above the Conservatives were able to explicitly link "macro processes of social and cultural change and micro-processes of everyday language" (Phillips, 1996:209). In this way we can see consistency as the common denominator. The crisis of the miners' strike emerges as a crisis by *design.* Media outlets are tools of a deliberate strategy to defeat the strike and draw the teeth of union activity as part of a wider process of ideological change. In turn, the myths of

the dispute feed into wider discourses of privatisation of social assets, (see chapter seven).

The task in this chapter has then been to present the language of change through contestation and defeat of the post-war consensus through the lens of dispute, and how the language of legitimacy for change was shaped and developed through politicised media narrative. The focus of the next chapter will be the second event window, and how the financial crisis bookmarked the end of uncritical public acquiescence to this group of ideas and necessary conditions underway for new social settlements (see Coates, 2018).

Chapter six: Myths of the financial crisis

Introduction

This chapter considers the previously developed media myth framework applied to the financial crisis of 2008-9, where flexible myths of legitimacies, choice and agency, reputation and history contributed to building an overarching pyramidal myth to the public. On this occasion, media stories shifted from *collective* othering as with the striking miners of the previous chapter to myth themes that created a metanarrative of the wrongdoing of powerful *individuals* from the banking sector. Banking leaders came to be depicted as the epitome of greed and corporate irresponsibility, unrestrained by an ineffective collective of 'supine' boards (Burgess and Mackintosh, 2009), aggrandising and hero-centric workplace cultures and lax and insider-orientated regulation.

Whilst the miners' strike was one outcome from state offensives gearing towards privatisation, in this instance the significant political manoeuvre was defensive. With the retreat of social democracy, a collective of transgressors was no longer handily positioned by the media as threatening other impinging against the rights of that state. A more plausible narrative in a crisis of a neoliberal environment was created through a stated need to defend from a threat from a number of individuals to the stability and future prospects of the Market. Unlike in 1984, this was not a crisis bound largely within a nation state, but through its international reach had attained what Spector (2019:149) calls a master narrative, with a "global organising story line under which more specific, localized narratives will fit". This depiction is sympathetic to the production of archetypal myths, with the specifics of UK media orientations discussed here.

The main argument offered then in chapter six is in exploring how an emergent collection of myths amplified the immediate spectacle of a shocking event, enabling a presentation of an intrinsically sound industry worth defending, albeit requiring effective pruning and future restraint. This narrative was effectively managed through public scapegoating of a few senior banking individuals as greedy and toxic and thus separable from the majority of "good" bankers (Glynos, Klimecki and

Wilmott, 2012:301, 305). However, consequences of such an arresting narrative in the press downplayed contributory factors such as successive government roles in reducing industry regulation, closed knowledge pools and the "social silence" of "quiet politics" and influence, (Culpepper, 2011). It also downplayed inadvertent complicity of media outlets in not persisting with hard questions and sustained investigation as an effective fourth estate when told "nothing to see here" (Guerrera, 2009:48) during early warning signs. These narratives also helped foreclose debate on longer-term questions of consequences to the benefit of those individuals and corporations enjoying the status quo.

The chapter posits the ramifications of minimising alternative or confrontational discourses around the immediate handling and solutions for the crisis encouraged shoring up of existing political and business models and acceptance of subsequent successful austerity discourses (Stanley, 2014:896). The role of the media in developing defensive narratives went a considerable way toward encouraging a public issue into the sphere of future private troubles (Mills, 2000: 187), as advocated by the incoming Coalition government, e.g., "we are all in this together" (Cameron, 2008). A promoted need for taxpayers to sustain terrible losses from the crisis in defence of the State is noted as a basic pragmatic principle of neoliberal outlooks by Harvey (2011: 10-11), who ties the continued success of the project to its ability to privatise profits and socialise risks. He draws on historical examples such as the Mexican debt crisis of 1982 to note nothing new from dissonance between theoretical non-interventionism of neoliberal stances and pragmatic approaches where state power defends financial institutions.

In this case, the medium-term outcome of the success of these defensive narratives and myths of no other alternatives is summed up by Blyth (2013:210). Namely that following the 2010 General Election, the Coalition government and subsequent Conservative administration were able to opportunistically utilise crisis aftermath for political capital. Practical measures made exceptional cuts to the welfare state whilst ideological changes were enacted such as the de facto privatisation of universities. His comments support the myth premise that it is the perception of the facts that is key where, "a crisis of finance was deftly constructed as a crisis of

the profligate state…". Recent scholarship is also developing longer term outcome ideas that austerity outcomes from the crisis wake were significant factors in the 2016 Leave vote (Fetzer, 2018).

Viewed retrospectively, the financial crisis and subsequent stabilisation and re-normalisation of the sector produced very little visible impact to surface myths of existing public rationalities and relative understanding of the roles of government and economy. Where the impact has been felt is socially, in austerity politics, decimation of public services, and rising inequalities and populism associated with politics of alienation and isolation. Wolf (2018) reflects, ten years on, how the fallout of, "persistent fealty to so much of the pre-crisis conventional wisdom is astonishing". He attributes one likely cause of continuing economic practice as inertia from the power of vested interests rather than lack of good ideas. Whilst this explanation of the persistence of neoliberalist ideas is accepted (Harvey, 2014: xi) inertia in material strategies to the benefit of the rich is only part of the issue. "Inertia" is an ambiguous term, transmitting ideas of acceptance to a prevailing state rather than critiquing active purpose from those unspecified vested interests. As such it is "fertile" ground for myth production in Barthesian terms, (Barthes, 2009:131)

This chapter will therefore discuss the role of the press in contributing to the state of foreclosure in crisis solutions and preparing the ground for subsequent inertia and return to business-as-usual. It aims to demonstrate how overarching myths of the crisis persist, partly due to missed opportunities for raising critical appraisal to the public through journalistic routine and at the expense of "infotainment" (Chakravartty and Schiller, 2010:670) during a state of liminality immediately following the meltdown. It will therefore explore mythologised media narratives in the UK during the peak crisis period, starting from June 2008, when concerns about Lehman Brothers started to circulate, through UK receptions to US State sanctioned bankruptcy in September 2008 and subsequent Capitol hearings, conjoined with the RBS rescue and Treasury Committee investigations in the UK. Narratives are followed over the course of a year until press focus shifts abruptly onto the

burgeoning MPs expenses scandal and a wider umbrella issue around trust in public figures with the incoming downturn.

Context overview

As with the previous empirical chapter, a brief context to note key actors and institutions is noted before undertaking thematic analysis.

Worldwide financial meltdown and subsequent recession from the rumbling credit crunch of 2007 that was precipitated via defaults in US subprime mortgages by the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in the US on September 15, 2008, has been explained in a variety of ways. These contexts are given further coverage in chapter seven. They include factors stretching back to 1980s sector innovation, excessive deregulation, financialization of everything and individual bankers' greed (Knights and McCabe, 2015:197). It is this final contributor that provided much media coverage of the crisis.

UK press reporting of the crisis took place over a year from early warnings during summer 2008, until the crisis and its aftermath largely disappeared from media sources following the Treasury Committee inquiry of 2009 (Tourish and Hargie, 2012), replaced by incoming austerity discourses. As far as media sources were concerned, negative reporting focused on those individuals who became symbolic representatives of profligacy once it emerged that the whole sector had been hours from collapse, (Berry, 2012).

Dick Fuld as CEO of Lehman became the first peripatetic figure of leadership failure; he was quickly joined by Fred Goodwin and Tom McKillop of Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) and Andy Hornby of Halifax Bank of Scotland (HBOS), alongside financiers such as Philip Falcone of Harbinger Capital. Government actions in trying to avert economic disaster were also encapsulated in individual agency, with much UK reporting centred on serving Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Chancellor Alistair Darling rescue deal with 'good' bankers (Glynos et al, 2012) such as Sir Victor Blank and Eric Daniels at Lloyds TSB who were contrasted with their failing counterparts.

Overarching myths

The crisis, its subsequent impact and the manner of its handling have been widely recognised and reported on as highly significant for British social, political, and economic outlooks. Over the intervening decade large-scale debt has changed hands; transferred firstly from corporate to taxpayer ownership and then subsequently to the personal sphere through rising household debts, reduced property value and salary stagnation, (Davis, 2011:252-3). Ahmed (2018) reports on austerity's "lost decade" of "low wages, public sector cuts and hard times", with Verity (2020) confirming Office of National Statistics figures of wages only returning to pre-crisis levels during December 2019. Despite the scale of the disaster and continued catastrophic effects, however, little damage to neoliberal principles appeared to be sustained either at the time or retrospectively, with the subject little questioned in the media. Crouch (2011: viii) goes further to remark that neoliberalism has emerged from the collapse "more politically powerful than ever." Therefore, the role of the overarching and supporting myths of the crisis in blaming toxic individuals in defence of the market, state and their existing mores may be judged to be remarkably successful in the short and medium term. Despite sustained public fury at sector extravagance and waste (Glynos et al, 2012:306) and aside from a limited number of protests around Occupy and G20 which quickly ran out of steam, public and political life largely returned to normal patterns once a rescue package had been agreed and implemented. (Longer-term outcomes are discussed in chapter 8.)

Swift media acquiescence to bailout logics and correlative hunt for culprits with accompanying blame narratives rather than sustained discussion of conditions for failure and alternative solutions occurred as a result of two main factors. Firstly, early reporting of crisis events created a sudden lacuna in expected news analysis. Unlike routine, rhythmic, and well-worn tropes exhibited during miners' strike reporting seen in the previous chapter which denoted sustained purpose, myth work from media sources was slow to coalesce into patterns in the first weeks. Much of this is attributable to panic and incomprehension and self-referencing

behaviour at the events they were facing from journalists, politicians, and the PR machine alike. Whilst there was a public-service need to convey both the size of the problem and the scale of potential resolutions, reporting patterns also reflect lack of will from the press to condemn the industry itself too soon, depending upon government choices in resolving the crisis.

Early confusion in media sources became expressed via popular disaster metaphors that were directly derived from the bankers' own alarm and quickly put together defensive strategies. Dick Fuld's description of the collapse as "financial tsunami much bigger than any one firm or industry" (Kirchgaessner, 2008a), or RBS analysts referring to Goodwin's expected handling as he "steers the ship through this storm", (Seib, 2008). These disaster metaphors created a passive outlook, "portraying events in terms of inanimate objects buffeted by outside forces", as described by Tourish and Hargie (2012:1057). Such non-agentic metaphors of natural disaster are a persistent feature of the early weeks and appear to offer safe ways of reporting that would not impact public perceptions of pending political decisions. They are also reflective of close supportive relationships between media outlets and the sector, identified by Fahy, O'Brien and Poti (2010) and Berry (2012). Widespread use left a temporary gap where myth narratives were able to swiftly replace potential analytic reporting.

Secondly, early natural disaster metaphors provided an ideal foil for legitimising government action that defended banking as necessary to the working order of state. They provided necessary public holding statements whilst private negotiations were underway. These statements were sometimes contested; Horner's (2011: 37) analysis demonstrates how in the US alternative rescue plans were metaphorically dismissed by Democrats as insurance for a house already on fire. In the main, however, they were quickly affirmed with the already well-established "too big to fail" (Dizard, 2008) discourse quickly tied to exhortations for the expected bail out "It is time for comprehensive rescues…" (Wolf, 2008).

Initial holding media myth of passive objects (Tourish and Hargie, 2012:1058) in the face of the crisis quickly dissolved in the UK once the RBS emergency package was secured and the immediate liquidity crisis resolved. This was an instance of how

something became the "prey of mythical speech for a while", before disappearing (Barthes, 2009:132) as another idea took its place. In this case, with job done, natural disaster narratives largely disappeared. A focus on how to repair the economy and search for those responsible quickly rushed to fill the vacuum as the press shaped the short-term public agenda; "...find out what needs fixing and who to blame…" (Treanor, 2008). This transition from confused and passive journalists still echoing banking insiders and the sound and fury of judgement-seeking is noted by Guerrera (2008b). "Borrowing metaphors from the Weather Channel and the Bible has a crucial advantage for Wall Street executives: it enables them to deflect the blame for the current mess…"

A media-sponsored mandate for emergency government action to resolve the crisis, defend the sector and its subsequent clean up at taxpayers' expense thus quickly led to a temporary attempt to rebalance appearances of control of the bankers. *The Daily Mail* (2008) leader entitled "*No More Ferraris: we are the masters now"* demanded that "ordinary Britons' interests are properly represented in the boardrooms". For this proactive defence that sustained the industry whilst downplaying the cost to "ordinary Britons" to succeed, a successful narrative that enabled separation of "good" and "bad" bankers (Froud et al, 2010:30) needed to be enacted. This further encouraged mythical representations of individual wrongdoing as at fault. Three major players stood to gain most benefit by such a narrative: the industry itself, the government, and the press.

Banks and financiers visibly embraced a public commitment to hanging out individuals such as Fred Goodwin and Tom McKillop at RBS and Andy Hornby at HBOS as part of rescue package and future redemption. "The finance world's most prominent figures yesterday called for a complete overhaul of regulation in the City and for the greedy fat cats behind the collapse of the financial markets to be sacked or resign", (*Daily Express*, 2008a). Sector sources willingly contributed to media scapegoating of selected senior staff, bringing out their dead to protect future corporate interests by public handwringing of bad practices sponsored by a small number of errant individuals. Their enthusiastic participation was a key element of the return to existing frameworks; they had particular reason to be grateful no

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other conditions for the bailout were set in advance other than rumours, "that suggested that "heads must-roll" strings had been attached", (Jones, 2008). For example, press sources were already well-informed of a lack of banking experience on the RBS board and this was quickly seized upon. "It's a shame there was no grey-haired RBS board member last year to stop Goodwin overpaying for ABN Amro", (Fraser, 2008a). Lack of industry expertise ensured speedy removal of lackadaisical "revolving door" (Miller, 2015:65) board members without insider skills such as McKillop at RBS as narratives of recklessness, greed and corporate stupidity emerged. "None of the investors or non-executive directors ever said 'slow down'," one executive recalls. "If anything they said, 'go faster'." (Larsen, 2009b).

Myths around wrongdoings of the toxic individual were therefore particularly effective during this period of economic liminality following successful intervention by the Labour government. They needed to be. For the government, transference of wealth, power, and decision-making from public to private hands via the market during the ascendancy of the neoliberal project (Miller, 2015:66) had accompanied a weakening of public sector institutional authority. Investment in the service industry at the expense of manufacturing had left the government with few other levers to pull other than to defend the banks. (This transition process is discussed in more detail during chapter seven.) Similar limited options for critical reporting existed in the print media, where due to underinvestment and dependency on generalists (see Guerrera, 2009) and overreliance on friends from the banking sector, journalists were ill-prepared to analyse the crash. Confused reports of panic and blame produced ideal conditions for myths of individual wrongdoing as opposed in-depth journalistic investigation and reportage of crisis causes.

Mythic "reckless vanity" of the few (*Daily Express,* 2009a) was further sustained and reinforced to the public in early February 2009 during the Treasury Hearings where headlines screeched, "*How the fat cats were mauled in a lions' den*", (O'Flynn, 2009). This new wave of furious headlines detracted attention from the rising costs of the bailout (see Lanchester, 2009). McAlpine (2009) identified that "we" (society) needed to focus our anger, and thus "demand a hate figure", as a banking system problem, "lacks the emotional resonance to boil the blood". Therefore, the hearings

became a "show trial" (*Daily Express,* 2009a) for effect and mythological displacement activity, referred to by Guénin-Paracini and Gendron (2014:345) as a "symbolic lynching". There was little that could be done about recalling Goodwin's pension except complain, so the symbolic issue of his knighthood revocation took precedence. Additionally, sustained blame narratives were ideal tabloid sensations, fitting the template identified by a previous *Mirror* editor, as a dramatic storyline with a "forceful impact on the mind of the reader", (Bolam, 1949; cited in Bingham and Conboy, 2015:15).

Again, this furore of displacement anger and short-term discomfort for individuals proved fruitful in practical terms. During the actual hearings there was little that bankers could do to stem the tide of public scorn. Their subsequent attempt to recall those passive object discourses and limited agency tropes from the early weeks of the crisis had "limited impact in terms of framing public debate", (Tourish and Hargie, 2012:1045). Other concocted and rehearsed storylines including their self-portrayal of suffering met with widespread derision. "They too had lost money. Oodles of money! Great mountains of wonga..." (Hoggart, 2009). Whittle and Mueller, (2011:121) refer to such pronouncements as a crafted bankers' storyline of a "global financial tsunami that they did not create, could not have predicted and to which they are themselves 'victims'". However, the practicalities of managing payoffs received little coverage, leaving Goodwin with an eventual quiet annual reward of £693,000 (Lanchester, 2009). Taxpayers footed the bill, and the story rolled on.

The hearings appeared as the last significant opportunity for public-orientated investigation, understanding and reframing of the crisis. However, path dependency of blame reports proved overwhelming. Shortly after, media narratives on banks and bankers abruptly disappeared as stories in their own right and were subsumed into the next set of mythic narratives; those relating to the serialisation of MPs expenses by *The Daily Telegraph* in May 2009. Thompson (2011) covers public outrage from that scandal, commenting on how the story quickly morphed into wider systemic distrust. "Politicians, it seemed, were not much better than the fat-cat speculators in the City", Thompson, 2011: 67). The implications for this shift

of news cycle as far as the overarching myth of the crisis was concerned was that corporate avarice and general "banker-bashing" (Larsen, 2009a) had become established as the fundamental pillars of social understanding of the crisis. That public opinion remained fixed on holding these individuals responsible is concluded by Tourish and Hargie (2012:1064).

Thus, the central mythic premise of individual wrongdoing is first created from a combination of ignorance, panic, and subsequent search for blame. It was fixed and amplified through State reversion to business-as-usual routines and closing down alternative analyses. This is summed up effectively by Glynos et al (2012: 311) who comment that "…. media representations have, for their part, reinforced, rather than questioned, political logics of recuperation. They have, in large part, reproduced analyses and prescriptions that remain in thrall to much of what finance represents and promises". The following sections will consider how supporting myths sustained this central narrative:

Myths of choice and agency

Myths of choice and agency as presented by media outlets during the financial crisis circle around a number of complementary and intertwined themes. These concern individual agency within a closed and elite culture of finance, and the outcomes of associated behaviours, followed by politicised media judgements on rational and appropriate choices within the industry. Secondarily, they cover temporal transition from how judgements and reparations levelled at individuals from the media become adopted as judgements and reparations for the public.

Closed culture, guilt, and rationalities

Crisis literature quickly brought to the fore problematisations focussed around the "closed culture of finance", Tett, (2010:300), Culpepper, (2011). Critical discourses provided post-event analyses of two established and mutually dependent myths from the finance sector that were widely judged to have contributed to the crisis. Firstly, the omerta myth; Luyendijk, (2015, 5-31) reports on a "wall of silence" from those within to those seeking to understand what went wrong. Griffin (2013) highlights active agency in this silence as complementary to previously ongoing

mystification processes of bankers' expertise. A further active element to silence is raised by Davies and McGoey (2012:66). They consider that financial actors gained benefit from what they term "strategic ignorance" as a resource, mobilising deliberate social silence as a key asset.

Outcomes of this agency of silence were in choosing not to share taboo narratives (Tett, 2010: xii-xiii) of prior troubles, and unwillingness to own responsibility afterwards. Denial of agency provoked irritation from the media at the time. Pratley (2008) asks "*Why no brass necks on the block?*" identifying this cultural issue as "the problem of modern bankers' unshakeable belief in their own genius". The theme of a lack of an apology or any sort of public explanation following the bailout is persistent and consistent throughout the coverage. Comments made by Hattenstone (2009) are fairly typical: "None appear to consider themselves accountable to the public, none have shown humility publicly, and none have put out a heartfelt apology." For Barthes, the myth hides nothing, the function is to distort, rather than disappear (Barthes, 2009:145), and bankers shared silence was an active gesture of disassociation and distortion both at events and responsibility. Expertise and knowledge of the industry spoke another language to those inside than out. Lanchester (2009) offers one explanation of this myth in terms of RBS company reporting, those who know say one thing, and we outside understand another.

The second myth within the closed culture dynamic is debated at length by Berry (2012). Developing contributions from Davis (2000:296) on existing workings of a "closed 'elite discourse network'", he discusses the roles of elite sourcing, and groups of bankers and journalists, "that share an almost identical outlook on the finance industry", (Berry, 2012:266). Prügl (2012:25) notes similar patterns, quoting a source who refers to "…always the same guys. Ninety-nine percent went to the same school, they drive the same cars, they wear the same suits and they have the same attitudes…" Berry refers to these closed frames and mutually beneficial sector soft stories as a structural constraint for investigative journalism. That this is a previously marked cabal of lauded experts and elite players that has been exempt from general mores is wryly acknowledged by journalists; Waller, (2008)

> *"RBS is a curious beast. Until the purchase of NatWest in 2000, its word went unchallenged in the incestuous Scottish establishment. You can bet that if anyone on an Edinburgh newspaper wrote in the above terms, the matter would be raised on the golf course with the writer's editor and his or her career would take an abrupt detour."*

Such shared and understood behaviours would actively conceal partisan commentary and close ties between individual protagonists.

Judgements from the press on agency and behaviours displayed by individual bankers fell into two broad categories; narratives mocking individuals characteristics that had previously been applauded and those that became a synecdoche for more general sectorial culture problems of banking excess and greed. In terms of the first group, these were often categorised through variations on metaphorical *guilty men* narratives. The epithet itself, which was repeated thirty-two times in the dataset holds its own mythic resonance for journalists where their own used an anonymised pulpit to call out the wrongdoing of government ministers. Cato's (2010;xi [1940]) indictment on appeasement opens with: "almost a decade of complacency and mismanagement which had brought the country to the brink of catastrophe and placed it in dire peril…" This statement provided the basis for many contributions on this mythic theme.

The first to exhume this powerful fourth estate myth was Fraser (2008b) for *The Sunday Times.* In an interview with "quiet assassin" fund manager Anthony Bolton he discusses how shareholders might successfully "oust" corporate scalps", noting that "the time has come for at least some of the guilty men - who could be said to include Lord Dennis Stevenson and Andy Hornby of HBOS and Sir Tom McKillop and Sir Fred Goodwin of RBS - to fall on their swords." Further traction for the phrase comes from Wilby, (2008), who in reflecting on the difficulties of changing dependencies and journalistic routines for critical thinking writes: "Unable to offer firm assurances on the imminence of revolution - and never, at the best of times, being much good on objective conditions - the press fell back on that time-honoured journalistic device: "we name the guilty men"".

Over time however, bankers' individual agency is manipulated into public agency, and the narrative of guilty men becomes subsumed into to a wider sense of coming responsibility of common guilt and reparation. Aaronovitch (2009) writes an intelligent critique stating that the "successful narrative is that we're doomed and its all the fault of the bankers…" has been co-opted to the developing myth of public responsibility: "We're doomed; Most of us are not greedy or profligate. Yet we insist on putting on the hairshirt and blaming ourselves for the downturn". His view is that public sentiment is malleable, that regained virtue is found by self-denial. Such insights lend further weight to the ready acquiescence to austerity. What started as somewhat of a journalistic in-house joke finds significant resonance with media sources. The guilty men myth both allows the press to express opprobrium and enjoy schadenfreude at the bankers, whilst still recognising that the country will have to pay a high price for their poor decision making. There is also an element of their own guilt here too, both as taxpayers, and from professional ignorance not investigating further from their privileged position. McAlpine (2009) demonstrates this media quandary, and the start of a widespread societal guilt, writing that:

> *"Until last October I had never heard of a credit derivative. Even now, I struggle with what business journalists call "complex financial instruments". I suspect it saves them the pain of explanation and spares the rest of us the effort of understanding. Some say this ignorance means there are no guilty men — we are all guilty."*

This acquiescence to shared ownership of the crisis is thus set up as an enduring post-event myth, and an important reflection on lack of impetus for change.

Mythic banking attributions

The second group of attributions that are given as typical of the culture convey breaking established myths of high performance and toxic masculinity. For example, the insiders' epithet "Masters of the Universe" appears on 340 occasions in the dataset, "In the two decades since Tom Wolfe described the investment bankers on Wall Street as self-styled "masters of the universe", that sense of

invincibility has only grown. Until now", (Teather, 2008). Levy (2008) describes Fuld: "no one believed the myth more". Such narratives are supported by flipped descriptive tokens, such as hubris, with 28 mentions in the dataset. "Executives who have presided over their institutions like personal fiefdoms driven by ego and hubris have turned out to be architects of their firms' downfall", (Hargreaves, 2008). Similarly, attributes such as arrogance (36 tokens), and bullying, (16 tokens) become collocated descriptors of bankers.

Judgements were supported by negative associations around artefacts of elite agency, such as the furore around Goodwin's private jet. Status symbols setting bankers apart as superstars were dredged up by the media as badges of excess. The social imposition of maintaining such individuals is noted widely in the press, "For a long time the public has gawped passively at the excesses of banks and their bosses…. emblems of banking omnipotence were everywhere", (Hjul, 2008).

Other aspects of wrongful banking culture were quickly shredded in media reports; much of it in relation to flipping what had previously been considered as rational strategic choice and was judged as senseless herding post-disaster. Key questions for journalists in the dataset rhetorically ask why financiers behaved in such a way, with media sources identifying common shoaling behaviour for the industry; Treanor (2008), in her list of *Usual Suspects* includes Charles "Chuck" Prince III "ex-Citigroup boss, now a director of pharmaceuticals giant Johnson & Johnson. He became famous for saying "As long as the music is playing, you've got to get up and dance...we're still dancing".

This bankers' own metaphor of being caught with valueless assets because of herd mentality rather than individual agency is echoed repeatedly by the media; "The day the music died in the world of high finance, it became apparent that RBS's investment bank was stuffed with toxic assets", (Dey and Walsh, 2009). Goodwin also refers to common-ground behaviour during the hearings, with Lyons (2009) quoting how he "insisted RBS simply got caught out "when the music stopped". In their analysis of bankers' attempts to diminish responsibility for the crisis, Tourish and Hargie (2012:1056) categorise this metaphor as "the wisdom of the crowd". Noting how "agency is simultaneously affirmed and denied"; they show how the

metaphor both affirms rational decision-making but denies outcome. A failed myth is then attempted for how as responsible agents, due process was followed, however, it was not possible to foresee and "nobody had expected the scale of the crisis" (Coates and Webster, 2009).

Agency myths of "rational-in-the-circumstances" are persistent and powerfully ameliorative for the sector. They were key aspects of blame reduction strategies and returning to normal. Whilst some of it is reflective of other myths such as the efficient market, the greater fool, or Gordon Brown's now infamous mantra of "no return to boom and bust"[12], occasionally it is used as a judgement on the parlous state of neoliberal capitalism and in a plea for change. *The Guardian* sometimes adopting this line; *The Leader* (2009, 27 January), remarks; "these preposterous figures are in fact rational actors in the economic system in which they find themselves". However, elsewhere, this story of misplaced rationality becomes part of transformative processes for public acceptance of straightened circumstances.

Sanghera (2009), interviewing Tesuya Ishikawa, who has written his memoirs as a credit banker, quotes his interviewee's defence that "these individuals ultimately did only what any other rational human being would have done in the same situation". The banker is, by implication, transmitting some responsibility for the credit bubble, as well as defying the reader to challenge this rationality. Once the behaviour is accepted as political truth, blame can be shared. Therefore, we can see here how media coverage of the agency of a few individuals drifted to that of the collective, a point illustrated most powerfully by Stanley. His concluding remarks that the success of austerity narratives was largely borne from previous base narratives of a required return to "moralised prudence and obligation" (Stanley, 2014:912) are fitting for the success of the myth here.

Myths of legitimacy and illegitimacy

As discussed extensively in chapter three, prior myths of legitimacies and illegitimacies for the banking sector during the crisis had a protracted lead time

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[12] See Summers, D., (2008) No return to boom and bust: what Brown said when he was chancellor, *The Guardian,* 11 September, *Guardian Unlimited* https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2008/sep/11/gordonbrown.economy (accessed 08 07 19)

going back through the long boom and increasing deregulation, centralising industry value within a successful economy. Making money is a pervasive language in conferring and maintaining legitimacy and such a long-standing position of success brought its own narratives of praise and complacency. Risk, the management of risk, light touch regulation and self-management of expertise was one core element of this legitimacy. The key myth here being that risk was sustained "only by those capable of managing it", (Crotty, 2009:564).

Broadly accepted arguments of the efficient market similarly conferred less legitimacy on prospective government interference, where the myth of transparency was held as more effective than that of regulatory supervision (see Bell and Hindmoor, 2015:460). Such self-satisfied narratives were brutally countered, slowly at first during 2007 with the credit crunch, and then rapidly during the summer of 2008 through damming opposition that securities and derivatives were new variants of snake oil (Akerlof and Shiller, 2009:87). Confidence collapsed. At the peak of the market, in February 2007, RBS stock had reached £6, by December 2008, its 91% fall earned Goodwin a *Newsweek* heading of "worst banker in the world" (*Daily Express,* 2008b).

In terms of the presentation of existential threat to sector legitimacies, the narrative analysis of the crisis unfolded in three distinct phases as relayed by press sources. Initial defence of long-standing and assured rationalities of self-interest and market freedoms from a lauded sector, a fall and rapid abasement, then acts of atonement, recuperation, and re-legitimisation, as discussed below:

Qualified legitimacies

Whilst during the months prior to the crisis, some experts already considered market values awry, wider sector legitimacy activities continued assured by a booming economy and continuing public spending. Davis (2018:117) notes rapidly inflating house prices and the multiplying derivatives market despite "wilfully ignored" standard accounting measures, experience, and trend information. Even as pressure mounted during 2007, social conventions promoted by the media

around respecting existing rationalities and expensive expertise continued to reassure, with legitimacy for risk taking assured through four key tenets. Firstly, those working in the system were not about to destroy their own livelihoods (Kerr and Robinson, 2011:152). Secondly, existing expert legitimacy such as held by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan postulated that the absolute complexity of modelling led to greater flexibility and resilience overall (Nelson and Katzenstein, 2014:370). Thirdly, the long boom itself created its own logics of continued success, and finally, thirty years of free-market governance had disengaged the public from finance as a political discussion point, (Froud et al, 2010:27).

Therefore, media narratives during uncertainties leading up to the crash are very carefully written. Continued sector legitimacy was vital for governments as well as the banks themselves. Rumours were starting to spread (see Tett, 2010, 269-273; Prügl 2012: 26) due to sustained issues in the housing market. Some insider knowledge and discomfort between market positioning, bankers' confidence and actual values are transmitted to the public, often directly via the bankers' own language, of a "vexing" and "challenging" situation (Guerrera and White, 2008). Following reported losses of £691m at RBS during August, Goodwin is quoted as referring to "headwinds…not abating at this point. But we see business out there to be done with caution." Shillingford (2008) goes on to quote results as "chastening" and that "much remains to be done".

Legitimacy in this brief window of increasing unpredictability is therefore qualified, rather than absolute, "greed-is-good confidence seem so last bull market" (Guerrera, 2008a). Existing and long-standing mythic rationalities are, however, difficult to shift. Much ambiguous narrative circulates therefore around justification of previously identified "rational" self-interest from the banking sector whist the situation is merely difficult. Despite a known bubble, it was "hard to fault Wall Street firms for wanting to make money" (Guerrera, 2008b). Commentary often includes "promotional" and myth-sustaining interviews with fund managers talking up industry and players, e.g., Stephen Schwartzman of Blackstone: "I have a lot of confidence in Dick Fuld…They're very alert and on top of funding issues and they tend to be very clever…", (Freeland and Sender, 2008). However, comments often

appear to aim for balance and reassurance despite journalists' personal unease or fractious relationships. "Executives who have worked closely with Sir Fred insist, however, that his reputation as an overpaying deal-junky and cost-cutter extraordinaire is unfair." (Seib, 2008).

Media outputs in this window also reflect their own internal power and legitimacy dialogues, as noted by Manning (2012:175). Post hoc analyses from journalists Guerrera (2009); Tett, (2010: xiii) add to this analysis by lamenting initial stilted media responses, both from a technical expertise perspective as well as not wanting to make a difficult situation worse. Wilby (2008) acknowledges the press as having been "torn" between talking down the economy and "not soft-pedalling" the big story. This unwillingness to reduce legitimacy by cutting to hard analysis early also proved critical in setting path dependency, making it harder to question events later.

Abruption and delegitimisation of the banking sector

Mixed and cautious media narratives, however, cease abruptly with panic at the fall of Lehman, and media sources complete their short-term turn from historically legitimised and applauded expert speculation to rapid stigmatisation of visibly wealthy aspects of the sector. The banking counter-myth is fostered through narratives and supporting metaphors for out-of-control hypermasculinity, greed and gambling. This latter metaphorical construction proves highly popular with the press. It confers the impression of conjoined status between work undertaken by finance experts and a slightly grubby and only reluctantly legitimate pastime, best only enjoyed occasionally and not a legitimate way of making money.

Symbolic criticisms of bankers illegitimately treating the economy as a game are explored through these linked metaphors. For example, Fuld is described having "rolled the dice…one more time", "with the clock ticking". Sender et al (2008) go on to write how "the odds were not good", "but he still felt lucky", despite a risky "bet…hardly out of character". Emphasis is layered through recycled corporate stories, casino imagery and narratives of "high-rollers" as inspiration. This concept of *Casino Capitalism* is recycled, drawn directly from Strange (2016 [1986]) who

used the metaphor during the 1980's to debate new relationships between state and market, drawing readers' attention to contrast between the sober, conservative traditional world of banking, and its sudden changes. What is different here is its mainstream application by the press to question sector legitimacies.

In the short term, this challenge to existing mores by focussing on bankers errant behaviours is also enthusiastically taken up in the political sphere. This detracts public attention from potential blaming of governments and provides an example of people in power who "get to impose their metaphors", (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:157). It is particularly visible during the Capitol hearings; Jim Cooper, (D) "Is this Wall Street or a casino?", (Kirchgaessner, 2008b), although it persists throughout the sample set. "Banking, far from being prudential, has recently been a casino, paying big wonga to wideboys on a winning streak. And ripping shirts off the backs of losers…", (Letts, 2009). Arlidge (2008) sums up gambling elements of the sector as corrupt and ignorant thus:

> "Bullshit…mountains of the stuff, in… casinos around the world: The City of London, Wall Street, Dubai and Mumbai. Myths were exploded faster than you could say "hot air". City eggheads, armed with their derivatives and rewarded with puffy bonuses, had not uncovered a new kind of financial alchemy. In fact, like the rest of us, they did not understand what they were doing."

This example of a media switching process is an example of what Glynos et al (2012: 305-6) note as, "extreme oscillation between incompatible positions or judgements", between "incompetent wreckers" and "super-clever masterminds". During this period, legitimacy for the sector enters a liminal state with banking's reputation swinging and visible public deliberations between what is acceptable practice and what is not underway. These are the antenarratives of the crisis developing over time as discussed by Boje (2008) and Gabriel (2004:72) during chapter two. Part formed and plastic (Gabriel, 1995:478), media stories during this period are developing, where this process acts as the first part of a search for what society will accept as worth retaining.

In this period, popular figures as nostalgic emblems for banking lost recur on 32 occasions: "…long time since the Captain Mainwarings of this world ran the banking show but what he has given way to seems more like an out-of-control gambler in the casino at Monte Carlo…." (Blackburn, 2009). Fictional judgements on individual CEOs facing the chop continues the metaphor through black humour with Phillips (2008) leading with "*You stupid boys!*". Nostalgia for both profitable times and banking as a safe industry comes to a head in the UK with the advent of the Treasury Hearings, and the beginnings of closure and pattern-fixing through moral stories and judgements of those "in the dock" (Whittle and Mueller, 2011:111).

Parallel legitimacies of state responses

Once crisis came, government, media, and the sector itself needed to work hard to supply as speedy a restoration of authority and legitimacy as possible in defence of continued running of the economy. It is here that we see medical metaphors developing in the press. As noted in chapter three, in the early weeks, metaphors of surgery are utilised as shorthand legitimisation of governmental action. Widespread condemnation of banking practices offered countervailing fresh legitimacy on proactive government interventions. Legitimacies of State defence against sanctioned gambling and excessive greed gone wrong is therefore raised as a contrast to parallel narratives of 'casino capitalism'.

Charteris-Black (2009:98) sees these diagnoses of disease in the body politic as claims for legitimacy for those that use them, with malaise elimination as right and legal for a return to a healthy state. Continuing metaphors confer the status of expert, whether as surgeon or plumber on political leadership, delegitimising previous perceived expertise of senior bankers. "The banks' self-inflicted wounds are starting to spread further poison into the wider economy" (Fraser, 2008), where the "best medicine" is prescribed for guilty men to resign. Such metaphors also have secondary benefits of clear public communication. For example, Horner's (2011:31-5) analysis of US media reception of Paulson's rescue plan covers economy-as-body metaphors in some detail, demonstrating how options were simplified for public consumption and presented as necessary to avoid wider catastrophe should "symptoms remain untreated".

Back in the UK, the part-nationalisation of the industry in early October receives qualified approval from media sources. Kettle (2008), writing for *The Guardian,* is cautiously positive of Gordon Brown's "good, if hardly new thinking", seeing the plan as, "a third way in the form of a controlling but flexible governmental stake in what remains fundamentally a free-market economy." The article closes on positive caution: "After the events of the past month, nobody now believes in unregulated markets or will do so again for a generation", cautioning "the danger now is that Brown's well-intentioned attempt to manage the current crisis will preserve rather than reshape the inequalities of today". *The Times* is more equivocal in its commentary around what it terms as the "Brown plan". Nugent (2008) writes of government representatives and officials seeming "curiously reluctant to accept plaudits" for the bailout and part-nationalisation, with one official reported to have joked: "if it works then it was probably someone else's idea".

This comment is redolent of the huge risk undertaken, inbuilt neoliberal expectations, and caution around the size of the government commitment. Once markets have stabilised, editorials here are more openly supportive. By January 2009, for example, Coates writes that "the Government has a profound moral duty, never mind a practical one, to avoid the risk taking of Sir Fred Goodwin", calling wholesale nationalisation and the break-up of RBS as a "bad" bank as "logical" (Coates, 2009).

One outlier to cautious welcomes for part-nationalisation is *The Daily Mail,* which is quite hostile to public ownership of the sector, and the ability of ministers to manage additional accountability within the political sphere as well defer to the concerns of shareholders. Some of this is ideological, set against previous nationalised industries such as British Steel under social democracy. Initially framing nationalisation as a "socialist indulgence" in his article on RBS ruin, Oborne (2008) writes: "wretched Goodwin may have wasted billions of shareholders' money at RBS. But the Labour government has squandered hundreds of billions of pounds in the National Health Service over the past 11 years." The article disinters New Right myths of the dangers of socialism and Keynesian economics practiced in social democracy both to delegitimise government actions, but also attempts to deter a

widening of public questioning about the role of banking in economy and society. Provocations include comment on Alistair Darling's youthful association with the International Marxist Group, references to British Leyland, Denis Healey's appeal to the IMF and expectation that "taxes will rise to levels not seen since the Seventies…"

Closing the window; the slow road to redemption

As with the myths of choice and agency above, discourses on legitimacy around crisis events become crystallised in the press as the UK situation steadies. Two interdependent discourses are sustained in media reports, the first is of continued legitimation of government intervention through relief that the economic world still turns despite some dissatisfaction on rescue terms. A widely accepted justification of state response as a moral imperative becomes normalised and democratic conversations about control and regulation of finance become part of everyday political dialogue. The success of this is partly secured through a second set of narratives which individualise responsibility to illegitimate acts of a small number of publicly "known" bankers, mainly Fred Goodwin.

There are two main mythologised outcomes from this divisive process; the first is that the majority of judged "good" banking practice can therefore slowly be re-legitimised alongside the process of bailout activity and ownership change. Prügl (2012:31) explores patterns of media sensemaking here as a morality play in three acts; fall, rise and redemption. The second outcome is that media outlets have a field day judging bad practice. We can see this dissipation of myths of illegitimate leadership and corporate greed through developing the example of the epithet of capitalist "fat-cats". There are 372 instances of this description during the dataset, mainly focussed on individuals, (explored under *myths of reputation* below). It is an effective delegitimisation tool, media sources openly acknowledge the functionality of the phrase in provoking charged societal response. Baker (2008) writes: "The capitalist fat cat has long held a treasured place in popular demonology…". He goes on to identify public experience of the crisis as stages of socialist grievance, with the

"inner Marxist" enjoying schadenfreude, "inner Stalinist" rage at injustice, and finally, the "inner Leninist", insisting that "Something Must Be Done".

Over time, press judgment on illegitimate corporate practices such as greed and perceived excessive perks evolves. It dissipates from focused collective disparagement of one sector, then blaming named villains, to a broader disparagement of elite individuals judged to be behaving badly or benefiting from others' labour. This assists relegitimization by widening the scope of blame. *The Financial Times* (2008b) provides a specific banking orientated condemnation of "spivs and speculators", alongside instigating a general rhetorical "war on greed" as a "prevailing political fashion".

This fashion quickly spills out into the wider arena of public life, with (judged incompetent) highly-paid individuals becoming a more general target irrespective of sector, "BT is at the centre of a new row over fat-cat pay…" (*Daily Express,* 2009b). Here the press develops a two-way discourse with the public; acceptance to likely austerity measures is growing with the size of the bailout, and press narratives reflect this mood. Such stories enter individuals' private discourses as a "logical and common-sense response to the UK 'living beyond its means'", (Stanley, 2014:895). This viewpoint is largely in sympathy with Seabrooke's (2010) analysis of how government and press justifications are legitimised by ordinary actors' compliance.

The "national mood of anger and blame", Finkelstein (2009) reflects how all groups can become open to judgement during universal experience of hard times. Whilst the MPs expenses scandal follows logically from a rising general mood of required political probity, the boundaries become fuzzy, and Orwellian. "Politician and banker have become one…", Jenkins (2009). Advancing austerity discourses also draw wider public sector spending legitimacy and stewardship of taxpayers' money into the firing line. Errant individuals are castigated alongside widespread questioning of delegitimised public "financial incontinence" (Cameron, 2009). This spills over into other judgements of public sector spending and perceived

incompetence. Finkelstein and Jenkins' articles both note unnecessary crossover condemnation of Sharon Shoesmith of Haringey council. Unrelated horrors from the Baby P case are slid into more general narratives of guilt, remorse, and senseless waste.

Therefore, in order to authoritatively manage discourses around curbing illegitimate individuals and maintain the status quo, few sectors are spared questions over individuals' legitimate earnings and perceived value of what different roles contribute. This reflects both perceptions around use of public funds in hard times, and increased attention on corporate practices with nationalisation of the banks. Press reports widely on rows over administrator salaries at the expense of nursing numbers (Butler, 2009), and the police are castigated for "gravy train" pensions, (Cameron, 2009). There is also conjoined political and media effort in calling for reduced BBC salaries (the director general earning £816K). "George Osborne…declared that no public sector fat cat would be allowed to earn more than the prime minister…" (Robinson, 2009). This shows the press engaging with moral justifications on state-led salaries. Barthes (2011:40) describes such public laundry airing processes as the "little 'confessed' evil" as saving one "from acknowledging a lot of hidden evil".

In summary, whilst Blyth (2013:210) does not directly attribute media contributions to perceptions of facts about profligacy and legitimacy, his insights on "deft" construction from a crisis of finance to one of dissolute and extravagant State is demonstrated here. The window debating the legitimacy of the banking industry as a collective whole is a brief one, allowing partner myths of *reputation, heroism and villainy* as bound within individual behaviours and ideas, to flourish.

The myths of reputation, heroism, and villainy

As outlined above, the partnering counterpoint to opening and then rapidly narrowing media debate on the legitimacy of banking is a protracted castigation of individual actors' malfeasance. This group of myths present the most visible and dramatic "switching" discourse within media narratives, often because of long-

standing and self-proclaimed hero stories associated with transformational leadership. As explored in the literature, leadership studies as a field contributes significantly to understandings of irrational, destructive and narcissistic leadership, and its impact on dysfunctional organisations. Financial crisis analysis has also contributed to considerations of how these behaviours are presented in public life.

Reputation itself is a popular subfield, and although myths of leadership are not generally directly articulated as such, there is much compatible material. Kerr and Robinson (2011:153) present predation, symbolic violence and self-work becoming dominant, explicitly attributing this to the cult of leadership. This supports Cohen's (1987:9) analysis of how in a crisis situation "a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests…presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media". Charteris-Black (2005:25) similarly notes the hostile outgroup in political myth; what Schmitt (see Müller 1999:76) calls the myth of the existentially threatening "other" in narrative.

In terms of supporting myths of reputation, heroism and villainy, there are several functions for negative narratives springing up around specific individuals. Just prior to the crisis and immediately after the story breaks, stories of individuals and their errant behaviours are used as representative microcosms of the 'casino capitalism' discussed earlier. Once the wider industry has been defended and secured through the bailout, wider narratives gradually dwindle, and negative media coverage of the crisis is sustained through focussing on individual wrongdoing and scapegoating. The value of such narrowing is partly analysed by Glynos et al (2012:307) who comment that a "fixed gaze" on personalities enables wider structural problems to be shuffled out of sight. A second benefit for the press is that archetypal representations replace the need for complex analysis of practical mechanisms for how behaviours had run unchecked by boards and regulators, and to fulfil interviews key actors were not likely to grant. Whilst the fact that presupposition of guilt was naturalised at the expense of analysis is covered in several contributions explored in chapter three (Happer, (2017) Glynos et al, (2013), Berry, (2012), Chakravartty and Schiller (2010)), these investigations largely focus on

normalisation from foreclosure. There is little discussion around the second function of snap judgement by mythological archetype.

The following sections therefore discuss varying mythic attributes of reputation gone wrong and presented as villainy by the press. These broadly present in three phases. Initial myths focus on all-too-human failings of hubris and arrogance. As public disgust and horror at excessive behaviours uncovered mounts, descriptions develop to include baser and less-human failings through animalisation. The final phase of demonization removes wrongful individuals from social standing as mythic evil once the size of financial recuperation becomes clear, as the full manifestation of scapegoat in its historic and literal form, (Myers, 2021). The myth here is at its most powerful as the centrality of scapegoating to the human condition provides both structure and concealment of cultural values (Girard, 2005:101). Whilst at times attributes clash or cross over, reflecting general confusion and emotional response by the press, they present sudden and public abruptions to a "shared fantasy" (Wilson, 2020:143) of neoliberal hegemonic leadership.

Hubris and arrogance

Much spadework on problematic leadership as hubris in banking has been undertaken by Stein (2013:283), who considers the Janus-face of narcissistic leadership using Dick Fuld as a case study. Stein posits attributes of constructive and reactive behaviour are inherent in the same people, depending upon their external environment. This paper concludes that whilst lauded, assured and self-aggrandising when the going is good, these individuals can be particularly troublesome in difficult times, due to exaggerated sense of their own capabilities. Whilst societal receipts through press commentary on such attributes are not the key focus of Stein's work, similar patterns can be seen in public discussion of the fall of bankers' reputations.

Symbols of prior reputations typically included accolades such as Goodwin's Businessman of the Year from *Forbes* for the 2002 NatWest[13] takeover. Such stories

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[13] Morais, R., (2003) Brisk and Brusque, *Forbes Magazine,* 6 January, available via: https://www.forbes.com/global/2003/0106/034.html#9005f6a7cde2 (accessed 18 06 19)

were often self-produced and had previously been self-sustaining within industry circles and without. This included, for example, widespread press awareness of Dick Fuld's personal mythmaking. "He likes to say that he bleeds green, a reference to the firm's corporate colour", (Teather, 2008) or the cited New York Times description of a "trader's trader", "athletic physique, intense focus and penchant for profanity." Fuld's capabilities in keeping the business going post 9/11 were considered part of the fabric of Lehman corporate narrative (Teather, 2008). Murkier stories and attributions from other cultural references also fed the myth, with Levy (2008) one of those recalling rumours of Fuld as inspiration for Tom Wolfe's "muscle-flexing" trader Sherman McCoy.

Previous would-be-heroic anecdotes were rapidly exchanged for discourses of villainy as the crisis broke. The very power of these heroic corporate stories that had been dutifully repeated in the media, via organisational stories and coffee-table cases amplified the perception of individual responsibly considerably. For example, within a fortnight of that *Guardian* profile exploring Fuld's plan to "steer Lehman Brothers through its current crisis" (Teather, 2008, 15 September), testimony from the Capitol demonstrates his ruined reputation. Congressman John Mica: "If you haven't discovered your role, you're the villain today. You've got to act like a villain," (Clark and Schor, 2008, 7 October). The whole sense of "acting" as a villain is key to the insubstantiality of the great man myth here which provides the sense of "trouble" in a drama (Bruner, 2004:697). "No one believed the myth more than Richard Fuld, known as The Gorilla for the profane and uncompromising way he goes about his business…." (Levy, 2008).

Goodwin's self-anointed heroic standing was similarly collapsed with his removal from RBS, "Goodwin had begun to believe in his own myths. As a result of his success…he came to believe that no deal was beyond his capacity" (Brummer, 2009a). His fury is reported as "incandescent", (Hall and O'Flynn, 2008) at Downing Street proposals, and "spitting blood" (Brummer, 2008) at personal loss of control from the proposed HBOS takeover. Emergent stories identify him as villain, facilitating the subsequent myth of the bad apple in an otherwise legitimate business. In terms of destroying Goodwin's reputation from exacting CEO to

illegitimate bully, these references include his "whimsical" referral to sacking 18,000 as "mercy killings" (Reade, 2009a), or meetings known as "morning beatings", (Dey and Walsh, 2009). Manic enforcement of inappropriate dress codes (Crabbe, 2009), along with other micro-management vignettes such as "upbraided staff about "rogue biscuits"" (Oakeshott and Foggo, 2009) are wedded to other stories of corporate waste; fruit flown in from Paris and sumptuous private offices dubbed "Sir Fred's Pleasure Dome". Lurid whistle-blower stories add colour to the myths of intimidation of non-executive directors by Goodwin, along with other "allegations of boardroom bullying and a "culture of greed"" (Treanor, 2009).

Greed and animalisation

Again, emergent reputational tropes around greed and animalisation came from twisting previous celebrated reputations. Prior to the crisis, Fuld's behaviours are considered an asset to both firm and industry. White and Guerrera, (2008): approve of Lehman, "… a widely admired Wall Street power, in large part on the back of Mr Fuld's aggressive, even pugnacious, leadership." Whilst Lehman is still a fighting concern, Bawden (2009) writes that he is "known within his brokerage as "the gorilla" because of his tough, no-nonsense approach to management", and that this should "serve him in good stead". References the day before the bankruptcy are of "the Gorilla, in reference to his reputation as one of the toughest guys on Wall Street" (Teather, 2008). The sudden abruption the following day to the *Daily Mirror* front page "*Gorilla of Greed*" (Manning, 2008a) demonstrates ambiguity and change; the former mythology of the celebrated risk-taker is now of feckless thug. Freedman, (2008), condemns Fuld as a brawler, "threatening to rip the arms off those shorting his company's stock." The long-standing nickname of gorilla pivots previously tolerated, even eulogised, behaviour suddenly seen as the epitome of bad practice. Seib (2009) summarises how, "The Gorilla has become the symbol of everything that was wrong with Wall Street".

Charteris-Black (2005:109) discusses invariable associations of negativity in animal depictions, either through attacks, as with the gorilla above, or insidious damage. This idea works well for Goodwin, whose early animal metaphors also communicate out-of-control behaviour to the public, often as runaway horse, or rider. Evans

(2008) writes of McKillop: "Under fire for utterly failing to rein in his gung-ho chief executive…" Whilst Goatly (1997:33) might consider the use of "rein in" as a tired metaphor in its conventional context, here it becomes reinvigorated through repetition and synonymy. Additional equine metaphors include "hell-for-leather" (Brummer, 2009b) and "Fred "The Shred" Goodwin galloped madly over the precipice" (Wighton, 2008b), and 12 other bolting horse depictions of Goodwin. Several outlets report David Cameron on Government mismanagement: "…It is not so much that they shut the door after the horse had bolted - they shut the door after the horse had won the 3.20 at Uttoxeter" (Chapman et al, 2009).

Animalisation can also be constructed retrospectively. Both runaway horse and dangerous gorilla are metaphors for active CEO behaviours, once sacked Goodwin's role needs to change. He is now the passive recipient of an (unwarranted) bonus and pension. Developing this conceptual idea, excessive greed in the sector and specifically around Goodwin is conveyed around the capitalist fat-cat metaphor, which receives 53 personal associations. "One of banking's fattest cats is to become the highest-profile casualty", (Chapman and Brummer, 2008). From the headline *"These Fat Cats must have their fortunes neutered",* Moir (2009) continues:

> *"FRED the Shred is the top cat of fat cats. Indeed, his behaviour makes you wonder if a fat cat like him could possibly get any fatter. Surely not, or else he would explode with sheer avarice, splattering his greedy guts over the country in a toxic shower of debt and hubris."*

Use of metaphoric language here conveys Goodwin as ostracised and outside acceptable behavioural boundaries. Other animal attributions develop existing shared metaphorical images. For example, *"Greedy Pig"*, (Sommerlad and Antonowicz, 2008) for Philip Falcone, whose gamble that HBOS share price would plummet reportedly earned him "hundreds of millions". Goodwin is similarly headlined; *"Snout on your ears"* (Manning, 2008b), alongside his description as a vulture (*The Sun,* 2009a) and by Maxwell (2009), "What a weasel!".

Whilst mixtures of active behaviours and passive receivers of wealth are intermingled in the media, they all convey the point from society of a "strong

tendency to regard animal behaviour as something for humans to avoid" (Goatly, 2006:15). They represent public distancing between a responsible society and these irresponsible individuals who are not one of us. This contrast is collocated by Toynbee (2009) who conveys Goodwin as animal and elite; "it's not his fault, it's a bad upbringing among grab-what-you-can and eat-what-you-kill predators. His feral overclass thinks it owes nothing to society….".

Enter the demonology

As the industry and economy stabilise following the bailout, mythic repurposing of these reputational tales develops again into the threatening Other in the shape of archetypal devil (see Moxnes and Moxnes, 2016). There are two functions to changing narratives. Firstly, to further enable separation of dangerous individuals from the recovery and re-legitimisation of the wider industry. Arlidge, (2008): "Reputations have been shredded. Sir Fred Goodwin bet half of Edinburgh… Lehman Brothers' Dick Fuld may have looked like Dr Evil but turned out to be Dr Stupid…. ", with accompanying photos captioned: "Biggest losers". Such archetypal readymade caricatures are ideal for mythification (Barthes, 2009:157), as evocative shorthand for complex empirical understandings.

In terms of the first function, separating dialogue provides public misdirection as corporate waste and the size of the expected recession emerge. Parsons (2009) title: "*Fury at the Fred Devil*" notes the convenience of demonization as valuable political capital "…some say there is a witch-hunt against the likes of Sir Fred Goodwin because their sickening greed detracts from the failures of the Government". Key individuals thus become "paradigmatic target around which to focus public expressions of outrage", (Glynos et al, 2012:305). The same faces are tied to forthcoming taxpayer burdens, e.g. "There is something curiously consistent about the rogues' gallery of banking executives paraded across the front pages whenever the R-word — recession — is mentioned" (Ahuja, 2009).

Secondly, as part of public acceptance of future spending cuts and austerity measures, people need to accept they have been duped. One way that narrative purposes are achieved here is through demonization of named bankers. The

demonization process informs society that they made a pact with a devil, and although they were in a way victim, they chose to dance, and the price must be paid. Deleuze and Guattari (2013:284) theorise a temporary alliance with the dangerous, exceptional individual that eventually causes ruin through using *Moby Dick* as extended metaphor*.* The outsider must leave the centre of society and either return to the border or (reputationally) perish for stability to return. Charteris-Black (2005:209) understands recourses to myth and magic as associated with inadequacies of human skill or rational knowledge to control the world, and states that it is "not surprising that their use should recur in times of crisis".

Having travelled the stages of human threat, through animalised behaviour, the threatening Other therefore receives its final manifestation of the crisis in the form of the demon, where the Treasury hearings in February 2009 bring this discourse to a head. Demonization is achieved by identifying named bankers in apocalyptic terms e.g. "Four Horsemen of the Apologies", (Hill, 2009a). Goodwin is variously cast as a devil or sorcerer who had us in his spell; now it is over, and his works are revealed as a "brand of snake oil", (Aitken, 2009) society must pick up the pieces. The flipped myth of Goodwin here closely aligns to the god/devil pairing presented by Moxnes and Moxnes (2016:1520), who note the importance of the archetype in instructing social organising. Hence, media sources offer eleven descriptions of Goodwin as fallen angel/devil in the dataset, along with a further ten describing him as a witch, or rightful quarry of a witch-hunt. City Minister (former banker) Paul Myners is also pilloried for "sneaking admiration" and "sympathy for the Devil" by Treneman (2009), who comments:

> *"…no doubt whom Lord Myners thinks is the Devil... At times he did all but put horns and a tail on Sir Fred and others at RBS. He even said it wasn't too late for Sir Fred to repent. I could hear the cackle all the way from Scotland on that…"*

In summary, during the crisis individual reputations of banking CEOs plunged along with the perceived legitimacies of their industry. Recovery is facilitated by separation - redeeming the industry, whilst keeping fallen angels fallen. "We are…world-beaters at the vicious art of kneecapping our heroes when they fail us",

writes Reid, (2009), who goes on to describe the magic wand, and miracles that "fed the myths".

Reputation management through counterweight heroes

As with the myths of legitimation above, one important way that individual bankers are successfully rendered as wrongful Other and assigned out-group status is through archetypal construction of mythic heroes as counterweights. In this case, heroes defend economy and society against the transgressor. These individuals are positioned by the media as voices of hope and are seen to champion "us" in difficult times. Collinson, Smolović Jones and Grint (2018:1641) note how turbulent times can produce a search for the "mystical edges of leadership" in the voting public and academic research; journalists too, seek narratives that affirm simplified and romanticised heroic images. Such figures are developed by the press in two main ways during the dataset, either as part of longitudinal values discourse, or as dramatic device during a particular event.

In the first group, Gordon Brown achieves spectacular temporary heroism from much of the press through his swift response and rescue package. He is quickly pitted in such terms against Goodwin as the villain of the hour, "If Brown is the hero (however temporarily), today's villain is Sir Fred Goodwin" (*Guardian,* 2008b). These media patterns fit Edelman's political myth of the contrasting valiant leader versus conspiratorial enemy, further developed by Charteris-Black (2005:25). He analyses how production of an initial discourse of legitimation provides conditions for emphatic response and emergence of the valiant leader. Alistair Darling and John Prescott also receive supporting role plaudits, especially Prescott for organising the campaign to revoke Goodwin's knighthood and pension. *The Sunday Times* (2009) writes approvingly of "that old Labour tub-thumper" catching the nation's mood, demanding Goodwin "sue us".

Brown's personal leadership myth becomes further strengthened by war and law-enforcement metaphors of affirmation e.g., "gunning for greedy bankers who created the credit crisis. He is determined heads must roll…", (Lyons, 2008) and "Mr Brown's crackdown" (Manning, 2008). These types of comments layer widespread

approval for decisive leadership and legitimate personal agency. *The Times* (2008) editorial commends his deal, saying he "acted intelligently and decisively", with Riddell (2008), opting for "statesmanlike". *The Daily Mirror* calls Brown's crisis handling "solid" (Beattie, 2008). Even *The Sun* (2008) leads with qualified positivity, "Despite claims that he has been doing too little, Gordon Brown has played a major role in creating an HBOS-Lloyds TSB superbank." However, as the immediate threat of financial meltdown dwindles, and the tide of public anger and negativity rises in early 2009, images of Brown's heroic rescue fade from press sources. Criticism from the media then turns to the Treasury hearings as a diversion from government failures, supported by opposition politicians, with *The Sun* reporting extensively on George Osborne's comments of "synthetic" fury against the banks which are "aimed at covering up their own failings" (2009b).

In terms of staged crisis events, the public hearings in the US and UK provide a media spectacle as dramatic device for tales of heroism and villainy. Whilst narratives of the bankers have been well covered in insightful discourse analysis accounts by e.g., Whittle and Mueller (2011), and Hargie et al (2010), a myth analysis enables further exploration of media devices here. Scapegoat is one popular metaphor during the hearings, with 18 tokens. Whilst Wetherell and Potter, (1992:157) note the generic social functions of a designated scapegoat, Guénin-Paracini and Gendron, (2014:329) develop conditions for mob punishment. Although castigation may be symbolic and verbal, it needs to *seem* realistic for the spectator, thus satisfying righteous anger. By use of the myth framework we can see how archetypal hero and villain are added to an event 'theatre' for dramatic effect, satisfying these conditions. For example, during the Capitol Hearings, Waxman is borne up as the defender of the everyman, Pilkington (2008) applauds how he "roasted alive" "the perpetrators of the disaster". Waxman "rounded up all the angry thoughts of the little guys caught out by the credit crunch and channelled them directly at Richard Fuld. "Your company is bankrupt, and our economy is in a state of crisis. Yet you get to keep $480m. I have a very basic question: Is that fair?"

In the UK Treasury Hearings, the spectacle is envisaged as a metaphorical boxing ring, "it's the bout the world has been waiting for: Sir Fred "The Shred" Goodwin

versus the Hard Man from Dumbarton, John McFall…, (Elliot and Webster, 2009). Similarly, George Mudie is championed as a synecdoche for societal outrage in the UK hearings. ""You're all in bloody denial" erupted one exasperated MP", (Engel, 2009) at reports of single malts at "working dinners", accompanying discourses of dysfunctionality between sales cultures and traditional banking caution.

As for other bankers, they too sometimes receive assigned archetypal roles from the press in establishing this mythic narrative and better displaying the hero and villain of the piece. For McKillop, his is the supporting cast stooge, lacking backbone and "in thrall" (Hosking, 2009) to Goodwin. Moxnes and Moxnes (2016:1525) ascribe this negative side of "material helper" as the "disloyal servant". They discuss how all archetypal roles have a light and shadow; using this taxonomy we can see how a facilitating role of "good servant" is flipped through crisis narratives. He is seen as to blame for his lack of banking expertise, for "cosy boardroom linkage" and "not keeping Sir Fred Goodwin…on a tight leash", (Hill, 2009b). Similarly, both boards at RBS and Lehman are described as "supine", (*Financial Times,* 2008a; Burgess and Mackintosh, 2009 respectively), with the Treasury report accusing directors of "operating in a 'cosy' and 'incestuous' cabal that failed to curb the City's culture of greed and recklessness" (Fleming, 2009).

Fleming also lists "cartel" individuals with "unmanageable portfolios", namechecking Lloyds and Barclays directors as well as the now-disgraced Phillip Green; these might be termed as "black sheep" according to the typology provided by Moxnes and Moxnes. If these typological roles are seen as part of the heroes' journey described in chapter two, there is also a moral tale of atonement available from the press, such as provided by Khurana for the *Financial Times* in its "judgement call" on banking CEOs. Here, Peter Wuffli of UBS achieves redemption for handing back his bonus. This is used to underscore the actions of the rest in the face of crisis and losses (Khurana, 2008):

> *"When it comes to voluntarily returning compensation, I expect that most will follow in the footsteps of Lehman's Richard Fuld, Countrywide's Angelo Mozilo, Citigroup's Charles Prince and Merrill Lynch's Stan O'Neal. None has indicated that he plans to return the bonus".*

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In summary, reputations of heroes and villains are presented in archetypal format during a crisis period, easy to summarise, understand and to reproduce. Their use as diversionary tactics from wider questions provides both welcome relief from distressing news, but also facilitates a quiet return for the rest of the industry.

Myths of history, continuity, and change

The final supporting myths discussed are those of history, continuity, and change, which are again flexibly purposed by the press during the developing crisis. Early on, they are used by generalists as knowledge filler for the missing skills of financial specialists as well as part of shortcuts to sensemaking discussed in chapter two. Once industry and economy are secured, they are pressed into service as part of blame assignation and political capital. Eventually, as society accepts events, they pivot to the future, partly to consider how the crisis will be viewed retrospectively and partly as nostalgia for a lost golden age of finance.

Whilst during both crises, historical myths set the political and economic context from immediately preceding events and used them to understand future changes through references to the past, their functions were quite different. During the miners' strike case study these myths were used in the service of change away from an existing social order. What is different for the financial crisis is that they are used here to defend and retain that order. A vignette from Reade at the *Daily Mirror* (2009b) illustrates this point. He notes on the anniversary of the strike that whilst miners' collective funds were sequestered despite families living on handouts, no individual banker's personal assets were threatened. He rhetorically asks about what the supposed economic liberation achieved, asking "Did Scargill cost the taxpayer £24billion and walk off with a £16million pension and a slightly rapped knuckle?"

Myths as knowledge filler and sensemaking

Shortfalls of prior warning and detailed analysis from specialist financial reporters as one of the reasons behind the rapid narrowing of debate and curtailed options for change following the crisis has been plentifully covered within the literature, often reflectively by the profession itself. Guerrera (2009) cites two other main

factors as responsible: long-term industry underfunding and reporters' self-censorship. Tett (2010:299) develops another reason for silence, writing that "most mainstream newspapers all but ignored the credit world until the summer of 2007. So did politicians and non-bankers. Credit was considered too "boring" or "technical" to be of interest to amateurs".

The myths of history provide another contributory factor for lack of critical analysis. Brassett, Rethel and Watson, (2010:1) open their article with the domination of historical analogies to media and political discourses, whereby measures of difficulty arise "from comparing the situation directly to other notable moments of financial meltdown". Whilst the authors consider comparisons justified, they note both restrictive capacity for analysis in these narratives, but also promotion of a cyclical understanding – a temporary blip in a generally secure environment. Whilst their argument then considers "what if" of crisis as the essence of normality for the sector, the unfledged point about reassurance for commentators and public is key for myth understanding. Reassurance of regularity of crisis downplays post-event recovery measures and fundamental acceptance of capital cycles such as discussed by Harvey (2010, 2011). Some journalists share the device. Pears (2009) writes: "ever since the credit crunch erupted 18 months ago, commentators have used historical example like a comfort blanket to cover the fact that they haven't a clue what is going on". In an article entitled *A very Victorian Meltdown…what can crises of old tell us about the present?* he goes on to write that "vain bankers, excessive risk taking and near financial meltdown are, if not normal, at least far from rare". For Pears, historical framing is, "a way of placing ourselves on a scale that runs from perturbed (if it is like 1990) to scared witless (if it is like the 1930s)".

However, Wilby (2008) alludes to another factor for seeking out reassuring historical parallels; downturns are bad for media sales and media ownership. It is not in the media interest to dial-up threats. Writing that "most economic commentators are fans of capitalism with typewriters and each new crisis generated by the credit crunch has taken them unawares", he too gauges the crisis as "really, really bad" from the raising of ideological concerns rather than simplistic and repetitive ""Meltdown Monday" headlines". He considers appearances of

ratcheted rhetorical headlines of "Is this the end of capitalism?", as "time to head for the hills", citing the shift to calls for nationalisation of the sector as a more reliable indicator of the scale of the problem.

Myths of History as blame assignation and political capital

Whilst all of the factors above mean that column inches are dominated by detailed analogies of previous financial disasters, they are a reminder of crises as potential for change. They offer both a very brief questioning of the value of the neoliberal order from selected commentators as well as an opportunity for political gain from others.

The most notable event for historical mythmaking is the Big Bang and Sector deregulation of 1986. Hutton (2009) reports it with the market as main agent: "What has happened to finance and the financial system since London's Big Bang in 1986 is an astounding story of ideology, greed and lack of restraint". However, others seek more obvious political capital. Brummer considers self-regulation from successive Labour administrations (2009c):

> *"Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling cannot escape culpability. Indeed, the new chairman of the Financial Services Authority…deplored the 'light touch' regulation - in truth, 'no touch' regulation - which rewarded bankers for adding trillions in extraordinarily risky assets to their balance sheets. In a devil's pact with the Government, their behaviour was condoned because the City's tax revenues funded Labour's huge expansion of the public sector."*

Milne, (2009), by contrast, seeks to ideologically question thirty years of market dominance via "wreckage of the neoliberal order".

> *"Even Nigel Lawson and Cecil Parkinson, the Thatcherite architects of the 1980s Big Bang City deregulation, this week turned their backs on the financial mayhem they unleashed".*

However, voices for change were in the minority, and without either purposeful political will such as in 1979, or rapid technological enhancement (see Froud et al, 2010:34) they were unlikely to gain traction.

Some politicians also made personal political capital from historical mythmaking, particularly Vince Cable. His search for historical precedent for suitable banker's punishments is widely picked up by the press. Parker and Thomas (2009) note the hearings as the modern equivalent of the stocks, quoting Cable that, "in the early 18th century, after the bursting of the South Sea bubble, a parliamentary resolution proposed that bankers be tied up in sacks filled with snakes and thrown into the Thames". Lawson (2009) picks up the demonology metaphor, referring to Cable as "that indefatigable witchfinder-general". Such are the frequency of references that the following day, *The Daily Mirror* reflects: "I suppose we should be thankful Minister for Doom Ed Balls didn't hark back to the South Sea Bubble", (Maguire, 2009). Political lessoning from the Bubble is fairly widespread, "the Chancellor of the Exchequer was thrown in the Tower, the Post-Master General killed himself, and the treasurer…fled abroad", (Williams, 2008).

Cataclysmic events of 1929-31 are also used as historical reference points to castigate agency of key players in ignoring warning signs of impending crisis. Brummer, (2009a). "amid the International Monetary Fund's warnings of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, his [Goodwin] self-assurance was unshaken… "Goodwin and his fellow bankers…saddling the British people with unimaginable debt…. Their sheer recklessness has contributed to the most severe recession since the Great Depression…" (Brummer, 2009c). The Great Depression is also readily used for frank discussion about possible resolution, with Kettle (2008) using Keynesian analysis, "trying to preserve the system's gains rather than cutting its losses and allowing parts of the financial structure to collapse". He goes on to quote, and apply Keynes directly:

> *""Banks and bankers are by nature blind," he wrote. "The present signs suggest that the bankers of the world are bent on suicide. At every stage they have been unwilling to adopt a sufficiently drastic remedy. And by now matters have been allowed to go so far that it has become extraordinarily difficult to find any way out." RBS take note."*

Kettle highlights parallels, opining that the situation is better this time, as governments have learned to react promptly, and have greater appreciation of

international coordination as key to recovery. Talking of, "times that would tax a Cromwell or a Churchill", he refers to "unknown territory" ahead.

These myths of history as blame assignation and political benefit are therefore searches amongst cultural references to find meanings for how we got here, that celebrated figures have crashed so hard. They amplify perspectives of human rationality in maximising personal gain, but also that we should have known that the boom could not last.

Resolving crisis and shaping the future

The same myths of history are repurposed during the acceptance phase, in what Barthes describes as a turnstile (2009:147), enabling comforting this-too-shall-pass discourses as well as attempting to predict future outcomes. O'Rourke (2009): "the free market has died at least 10 times in the past century. And whenever the market expires people want to know what Adam Smith would say". They also help entrench acceptance of difficult times to come in working our way through once it is clear that losses will be socialised. Sorrell (2009) writes, "Every era of financial or irrational exuberance ends with the shutters coming down. Tulip mania, the South Sea bubble, the panic of 1825 and the first internet bust were all part of the same ebb and flow". Whilst Pears (2009) cautions readership that history "can deceive as well as illuminate", advising against seeking out parallels and underestimating the current situation, others use historical examples to predict what may (or not) happen to financial governance.

During this final stage, media analyses turn to the myths of history to unpick what helped resolve past crises. Some commentators postulate a recession is what the system needs: "The inefficient, along with charlatans and fraudsters must be exposed" (*Financial Times,* 2009a). Whilst some analysts align their Great Depression analogies to the Hoover administration, "the orgy of speculation" (Kamm, 2008) and resultant perceptions of necessary tightening of monetary policy during the 1930s, others focus on Obama's policy echoes of Roosevelt's New Deal (Baker, 2009) and the "burial" of Reaganomics, (Baxter, 2009). McFall, (2009), as Chair of the Commons Treasury Committee, advises to "dust down the history

books", avoiding Japan's lost decade, and using the Atlee government solution: direct lending to the most needy and beneficial areas of the economy.

Other historical perspectives raise the long boom as the aberration, with discussions around the US coming off gold in 1971. Smith, (2009) writes of how the bull conditions of the 1980's "followed this abandonment" and positing that it is the conditions of the past quarter-century that "were far from "normal"". Similarly, there is a knowing nod to other previous legislation, including the return of the Glass-Steagall (US Banking Act, 1933). The *Financial Times* (2009b) contributes that "anyone trading in knowledge about the Great Depression is thriving".

In terms of shaping the future through the myths of history, media outlets turn to crisis consequences. Aftermath discourses are a mix of preparation for tough times ahead, and a reassertion of their own self-appointed watchdog role as active fourth estate. Their rapid adoption some six months after the collapse is another sign of the closing of debate as key figures are appraised in hindsight. Some of this reassertion is overtly political, taking the form of unwinding previous and recent myths lest they be established as a romantic story of crisis rescue. Chapman (2009) writing for the *Daily Mail,* is keen to peg back Brown's recent achievements, noting "intimate" relations with the financial industry, and excessive patronage, with 23 honours for bankers during the Labour administration. The much lauded "golden age for the City of London" speech is debunked, and attention is deliberately drawn to failures of light-touch regulation as responsible. Shrimsley (2009) writes, "…. having ascertained that they [banks] were run by men of principle they concluded that no further action was required." They envisage other FSA-style investigations. "We spoke to the Kray twins at their club during one of our regulatory risk visits and while carrying out very rigorous health and safety inspections…."

Individual bankers are also similarly denied any opportunity to quietly assuage legacies via their friends as part of great man leadership. A speech by Gordon Pell praising Goodwin for his "huge contribution" is widely mocked in the press. Gill (2009) quotes Alistair Carmichael MP: "His view that history will be kinder to Fred Goodwin than contemporary analysis shows just how out of touch our senior bank executives are." The *Daily Mirror* are even more damning, referring to Pell as "fat-

cat banker sparked outrage yesterday by defending his disgraced Royal Bank of Scotland crony", and quoting Labour MP Jim Devine, "It is very hard to see what 'enormous contribution' Fred Goodwin made when he took a successful bank in business for 200 years and ran it into the ground", (*Daily Mirror,* 2009).

In terms of difficulties ahead, historical narratives are widely drawn upon to predict future outcomes for Western economies in material and cultural terms. Much of this reportage happens later on in the dataset, with taxpayer burdens recognised and austerity discourses underway. Outputs discuss everyman anxieties "about a jobless, debtladen future" in the wake of the subsequent AIG scandal (Rayment, 2009). Harvey (2009) uses evocative language from Lazarus' sonnet for a lost American dream, reporting "huddled masses" gathering again in "tent cities" in California. In the UK, nostalgic returns for "community lenders like the credit union and the post office" (Kerby, 2009) are predicted.

Social behaviours are expected to change, with *The Sunday Times* reporting increased charitable giving during recessions, with Kay (2009) citing doubling rates of giving during the Great Depression, attributed to people seeing suffering close up. Bargains available to shoppers with financial security to take advantage feature heavily in the media (Hill, 2009) as does advice on "cheap comforts" (Sweeney, 2009) and make-do-and-mend (Goodman, 2009) that benefits both nostalgic well-being and cost-efficiencies for manufacturers. Similarly, new cultural mores are perceived rising in response to the downturn, with Allen-Mills (2009) attributing the return of zombies and vampires from their previous peak during the Great Depression returning to cultural prominence. "Now that many of the world's workers are raging impotently about the reckless excesses of overpaid bankers, zombies are back with a vengeance." Cultural memes provide safe metaphorical spaces to discuss fearfulness and common anxieties for the future.

However, there is also an association with myths of history and darker consequence from crisis and the growing recession. A potential rise of future populism from myths of the financial crisis and its historical associations is also mooted. Stewart (2009) reports quantitative easing from the Bank of England, remarking on trying to find "happier precedents" than Weimar. With a swift reference to *The Producers* in

"springtime for economic historians", the respective approaches of both Friedman and Keynes are evaluated, noting the 1930s offer no assistance to spending out of recession. Kamm (2008) expresses more direct concerns:

> "there is a disturbing undercurrent to the hostility to bankers…. Aversion to commerce is part of our history and culture…. The workers' movement condemned the accumulation of wealth that also produced, in Marx's words, "accumulation of misery, the torment of labour, slavery, ignorance, brutalisation and moral degradation". Yet the image of the financial predator is more potent still. The industrialist, after all, makes something tangible, and the entrepreneur takes risks".

Kamm goes on to worry about polarisation from simple views of "parasitic" bankers to ugly poisoning of the moneylenders' role from history, citing the Bible and Jesus in the temple, Shylock, and widespread historical objections to usury from Wesleyan to Islamic ethics. He writes how hostility to finance is, and has been, intrinsically anti-Semitic. Similar comments are also made by Brummer (2009d) who raises polls from the Anti-Defamation League reporting an upsurge in populist anger towards Jewish communities in the wake of the crisis. The outcomes of these initial stirrings are discussed in greater detail in chapter eight.

Conclusions

As with the previous crisis, myths are interlinked and complementary, promoting ideal conditions for longevity and resonance in cultural memory. Ideas raised are naturalised: the banking industry is presented as basically sound, although benefiting from its "rebalance" (Parker, 2009) alongside the economy, with practical and symbolic removal of its worst excesses.

Through the ways discussed above, the media presented a chaotic, yet cohesive bricolage of political myths that defended the industry. In this case, it resulted in renewing macro-processes of free market neoliberalism, through micro-processes of everyday language that marked individual bankers as at fault, enabling the legitimate bailout, and eventual austerity discourses. Horner (2011:33) identifies the ensuing position: "defense of private ownership as the best route to financial

recovery conceals the industry's ability to co-opt resources in the name of the public good." As commented by Fay (2009) recycling of stories and repeated tropes did not assist with analysis needed for recovery. Referring to an "equally sharp collapse in the value of the stock phrases and imagery beloved of economists", he goes on to remark that "the clichés, oversimplifications and painfully extended metaphors", are providing "sizzle, not steak", and hence a breeding ground for future mythmaking. Hence fixed incantations of rogue bankers made their own myth, diverting public attention and foreclosing debate, allowing a quiet return to normal for the wider industry.

Chapter seven will discuss key similarities and differences and approaches in each crisis.

Chapter seven: Comparing presentations, representations, and contestations

Introduction

At the start of this thesis, the proposed intent was to compare aspects of the public life of political myth as facilitated by press outlets during two specific crisis situations seen in recent British history. This was under the premise that political myths would flourish during uncertainty and ambiguity, where discretionary power and influence might increase, and social ideas might shift. It undertook therefore to explore assumptions that the ways society, and particularly those in authority might choose to constitute crises could direct and shape common and established social myths. It considered that crises produce a state of liminality (Turner, (2017) [1969]:94) which might provide either organic social shift or an opportunity to manage social shift. In short, that crises are what we make of them (Hay, 2013:23).

During chapter one, 'the media' and mediated political myths were positioned as institutionally integral to successful working dialectics between a modern state and its citizens. Despite the industry and reading public experiencing very rapid social change over some forty years, media retained a central role in the creation, manipulation and evolution of political myths that support public and political life. Hall (1993:290), acknowledging the importance of media contributions to social shifts, wrote of "the struggle both for advantage within the prevailing terms of discourse and for leverage with which to alter the terms of political discourse" as a "perennial" feature of political life. Therefore, media roles would be critical to consideration of how myths could be harnessed to defend a position or gain an advantage in fluid and difficult situations.

Chapters two and three saw an analytic approach used to explore fields of myth and mythmaking. Whilst there is recognition of the centrality of media narratives to the formation and sustaining of public opinion (Philo, 1995), and the role of supporting myths as intrinsic and necessary elements in shaping a working world view, (Midgley, 2004: xiii) investigating political mythmaking still yields significant insights into crisis investigations.

One way to foreground processes of political myth construction is through the development of specific dialogic themes as organisation for these patterns in and around crisis situations which were undertaken during chapters five and six. Greater accessibility to the roles of myths and their material consequences in the service of ideological authority and legitimacy was gained through empirical exploration of press outputs from each crisis window.

Political myths were surmised to provide persuasion for dominant explanations of crisis events and their resolution. Their assistance was particularly valuable for production of shared or aspirational values under conditions of ambiguity and change. Whilst Midgley's *Myths We Live By* (2004:6-7) contests ideas of rapid, "wholesale" myth and ideological changes as mused over by Descartes, this thesis offered a slightly different perspective. Gradual and evolving paradigm shifts that typify times of stability were quite different to concertinaed myths that were promoted to shape opinion in episodes of crisis. Whilst some of these were deliberate products of a single hegemonic strategy, others developed organically through the contributions of a variety of voices to political activity and decision making. Once crises are over, and stability returns, hindsight might reflect on resultant changes as normative common sense despite their transformative properties, whereas failed attempts to nurture and harness myths would be forgotten.

Concurrent news discourses demonstrate practical, rational, and material qualities of crisis management as well as their mythic complements that this thesis has focused on. It has argued that formulaic narratives are a vital part of promoted sensibilities during the uncertainties of crisis situations. These narratives foster collective introspection and questions about social conditions and perspectives on personal and national identities that seem less important when things appear stable, and as expected. This recognition of choices as far more political and value-driven than generally acknowledged as part of paradigm change or reinforcement is made by Blyth (2013:204)

Having then considered the detail of the mythic paradigms of both crises through the empirical work, here at the end, there is an opportunity to bring the two together in considering similarities and differences as follows:

Focus of chapter seven

The purpose of this chapter is connecting these two recent discrete episodes of crisis in British society. It will explore similarity and contrast from press reports of each using the themes of myth analysis that run throughout this thesis. The chapter will be divided into three sections to facilitate this analysis.

- First, a brief summary of prevailing political and social conditions immediately prior to accepted recognition of a crisis situation breaking out. This background will provide a *mythical context* to media reporting, assessing established myths and their relativity to any subsequent paradigm change or entrenchment.

- The second discussion looks at what was presented as different and the same in each episode. This theme will reposition specifics of the empirical chapters back into the wider context. Thematic shifts of *ideological change and defence, collectivism and individualism*, and *traditionalism and modernity* will be used to explore how crises threatened existing frames of public reference through media discourses. In the first instance, it provides a summary of how, during the miners' strike of 1984-5 a new set of state interests were facilitated through journalistic reporting. In terms of the financial crisis, similar techniques were used to defend existing state interests in shoring up the sudden and catastrophic failure of a privileged industry. In both cases solutions were promoted by the media as in the public good.

- Finally: In section three, the chapter revisits the myth framework conceptualised early on, and used as the organisational basis for empirical work on the strike and the financial crisis. Here, the chapter reflects on its uses in naturalisation and normalisation, so that crisis narratives appear rendered unambiguous, and resolutions legitimate. During both crises, this flexible nesting of myths was used for specific ends to achieve either State defence or renewal.

Part one: Mythical contexts: *The Coal Dispute*

Strategic trampling of prior social democracy myths was a necessary condition for the advancement of new state narratives of individualism, self-reliance, marketisation and accumulation (see Gamble, 1984; 9) propounded by the Conservative administration. Whilst alternatives to Consensus politics were started by the New Right prior to their 1979 election victory, it was facilitated through economic recovery and the Falklands war and cemented with landslide election wins in 1983 and 1987. Assisted by supportive media outlets, the miners' strike thus provided them with a practical opportunity to demolish what was left of previous ideological frames.

Histories and social studies of late 1970s Britain provide rich and diverse analyses of prevailing conditions, although detailed exploration of this much-documented field is well outside the scope of this research. However, an established metanarrative compatible with mythic frames would generally refer to a long-standing and stable political system equipped with the flexibility and pragmatism to undertake two World Wars and manage the subsequent peace. Establishment recognition of giving the people social reform to avoid social revolution[14] had sustained this position via a balanced post-war settlement. Some thirty years later, this was now under threat from economic stagnation, social tension, and rising unemployment figures. Keynesian economic policies were perceived to be failing (Skidelsky, 1979; Gamble, 2009a, 2009b). Simultaneously, Victorian "Club" governance (Moran, 2003:4) that had sustained Empire and World Wars was starting to fade with the erosion of acceptance of the corporate consensus partnership of State, Capital, and Labour (Hall, 1988:43-4). In these difficult and contested times, low productivity and industrial unrest contributed to Britain's international image as "sick man of Europe" (Norman and Toman, 1987).

Opportunity afforded by aging domestic myths was not lost on the New Right. Trade Unions in general and their associated wage claims specifically were duly

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[14] The Future Lord Hailsham, Quintin Hogg, (1943) via Blackie, D., (1995) Red flags and reluctant revolutionaries, *The Socialist Review,* issue 186.
http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/sr186/contents.htm (accessed 01 09 19)

appropriated as convenient scapegoats for economic malaise (Philo, 2007:177) by Conservatives and their media supporters. Thomas, (2007:271) critiques associated images of industrial strife and strangulating taxation around the Winter of Discontent painted as leaving Britain "yearning" for Conservative leadership as misleading. Instead, the party actively intervened alongside the media to manage transition concurrently *and* retrospectively.

Existing myths were challenged proactively through systematic repetitions of consistently negative depictions of socialism. Tropes of hostile association were an important element of Thatcherite rhetoric (Phillips, 1996, Fairclough, 2001:156) and were noted as including analogies to an unreliable person, a second-hand car or original sin by Charteris-Black (2005:24). Their replacements in the popular consciousness were through nifty soundbites such as "enterprise culture" and "there is no alternative" (Philo, 1993:407). Both these sets of marketing-style messages were then crafted to a promoted public discourse by sympathetic media. Hay (1996:261) considers this press influence as a "crucial" moment for enabling the Tories to seize advantage in 1979. However, whilst both Hay (1996) and Thomas (2007) submit compelling evidence behind the Winter of Discontent providing *the* "hegemonic moment of Thatcherism" (Hay, 1996: 253), underpinning strategic planning and proactive mythmaking are not the main focus of their studies.

It is *Stepping Stones* – the since declassified Hoskyns and Strauss (1977) report which provides a blueprint for understanding subsequent Conservative policy manoeuvres. Despite a lack of explicit reference by the Government (Dorey, 2014:114), the report provided a framework to both "signify and legitimize" future policy (Dorey, 2014: 98). All its proposals were subsequently legislated for. Through the report, hindsight shows how the Conservative government deliberately set out to change existing public myths through systematic attempts to alienate voters from union activity, particularly *politicised* union activity. There were also secondary benefits to anti-union policies, including reducing support for the parliamentary Labour party. They also drew the teeth from future attempts to organise opposition to ideas of marketisation, privatisation and personal rather than collective wage negotiations.

Linking of material disappointment with a feeling of "deep aversion" (S-1, 2.2) to the Labour Party and Trade Unions from voters was presented as a necessary strategy. Media were identified as central to achieving this aim, through educating the public via a "cumulative dose" of assembled information that should appear "dramatically and apparently spontaneously" from taking advantage of serendipitous events (p.36-8). The separation here of material results and voter feeling infers that explicit success stories from rational economic strategies need to be matched with promoted mythmaking to manage voter emotions.

Central to the report's plan to deal with the identified union problem was to assess relative values of union leaders to achieving Government aims. They were classified in three categories: positively as potential allies, more neutrally as persuadable and educable, or finally those to be publicly "isolated and discredited, unless their power can be reduced in some other way" (p.14). These classifications are considered as significant by Dorey (2014:99) as they permitted distinctions between members and leadership. This minimised dissonance for the Government in appealing to workers deemed "moderate" and potentially voting Tory whilst simultaneously enabling recourse against "militant" leaders. A secondary benefit of this separation undertook groundwork for delegitimising political union work (as opposed to providing personal workplace support.)

In summary, *Stepping Stones* provided strategic direction for functional delivery and practical facilitation to carefully chosen media outlets supplied by Bernard Ingham's growing PR enterprise. Hence, long-term preparations (set out in chapter five) for change were facilitated through this document. The mythical context on the eve of the strike can be seen with hindsight as clear and methodical private action. Intent was obfuscated through proclaimed neutrality and deliberate misdirection on a variety of fronts that was aided and abetted through opaque institutional power of unelected civil servants and a sympathetic press. Whilst others have persuasively argued for the events of 1979 to have provided the key hegemonic shift for ideological legitimacy of Conservative policy making, their management of events during the coal dispute delivered its material embodiment.

Part one: *mythical contexts: The financial crisis*

What we now refer to as the "extended boom" prior to the financial crisis had been confidently mythologised at the time as an ongoing state of affairs and recognised as such during crisis reporting. In 1999, then Chancellor Gordon Brown had declared an end to "boom and bust" and all its associated economic uncertainties, asserting shared "responsibility accepted by all".[15] In many ways, the abrupt end to stability provides an interesting counterpoint to extended stagnation and negative depictions of 1970s Britain posited as made good by Conservative governance and a generation of marketisation and neoliberal outlooks.

Prior to the accession of New Labour in 1997, successive Tory administrations had wrought major changes to what had been considered publicly owned under consensus politics. This was on a practical and ideological basis. Everything from utilities and communications to council houses and services under state stewardship had been appraised for suitability for hiving into private ownership. A move to a smaller state enabled by privatisation facilitated downsizing of the public sector, which in turn became subject to market-style audits of outsourcing contracts and value-for-money excising. Philo and Miller (2000:833) comment on ideological aspects of this new need for 'control' in the public sector, referring to its castigation in "New Right demonology" as "bloated and incompetent".

Windfall sell-offs of council housing stock, campaigns for share ownership (such as British Gas[16] "*tell Sid*") and the demutualising of some Building Societies (via the UK Financial Services Act 1986) bought public approval for privatisation measures. 1980 brought reduced restrictions to credit, and increased borrowing terms, facilitating potential benefits available for those able to take advantage. Resultant changes from these measures were rapidly subsumed and normalised, despite their

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[15] See speech to the Labour Party conference, reported on by Summers, D., (2008) No return to boom and bust: what Brown said when he was chancellor, *The Guardian,* 11 September, via https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2008/sep/11/gordonbrown.economy (accessed 01 09 19). Actual speech available via BBC Politics, (1999) Gordon Brown's speech in full, 27 September via http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/458871.stm (accessed 01 09 19)
[16] See BBC archive, (2011) British Gas Shares: Thousands 'told Sid' 25 years ago, 21 November, via https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-15792873 (accessed 16 09 19)

mixed results in galvanising the economy. Milne (2207) terms the eventual outcome as a "free market consensus".

The City of London became an integral part of these facilitative economic initiatives, and during October 1986 the "Big Bang" deregulation brought huge influxes of international investment to the Capital. Competition was increased from abolishing the historical separation of commercial and investment banking (Kerr and Robinson, 2011:158) as technological advancements provided significant economies for the industry. Savings available through automation led many banks to centralise operations, and traditional branch roles were converted into sales teams. This led to a reduction in financial expertise required, with older banking values of caution and prudence regarded as "out of touch", (Kerr and Robinson, 2011:158). Whilst the immediate period following the Big Bang had accompanied rapid oscillations of growth and downturn, this stabilised at the end of the 1992 ERM crisis, and the long boom for banking was underway (Tett, 2010:106-7).

During the intervening years, Britain had continued to shed the remainder of its industrial past to increasingly embrace service sector innovations, including financial services. The incoming 1997 Labour administration were enthusiastic in continued sponsorship of the City. Touted as a major emblem of "Cool Britannia", (see McGuire, 2009), the sector provided the financial net for Labour's reinvestments in public services. Direct employment figures were estimated as some 300,000 jobs in London alone (via Bell and Hindmoor, 2015:456). The twin benefits of dynamic fiscal services were in enabling the City to compete with Wall Street dominance, whilst back home supporting New Labour's economic growth and social investment plans through tax revenues. However, policies to reconcile inherited Conservative ideologies with a blend of incoming principles of social democratic governance in order to refurnish "Britain's fading welfare state" are termed a "Faustian pact" by Shaw, (2012;224).

A long and uneventful, though satisfyingly profitable boom meant accepted expectations of rational markets became of effective risk management via minimal intervention. However, that Brownian myth of "accepted responsibility", of self and light-touch regulation (Gamble 2009b: 458) gently pushed oversight of the financial

world into the technical and bureaucratic sphere, deemed as "low politics" (Froud et al, 2010:27) and as culturally "boring" (Tett, 2010: xii-xiii). Hence, for a working generation, little scrutiny of the industry had been undertaken by politicians, journalists, or the public.

Until the collapse of Northern Rock, financial sector logics and accompanying myths of infallibility were such that early warning signals around the 2007 crunch were generally dismissed as typically minor and self-correcting, as discussed in chapter six. For example, Gamble (2009b:454) highlights Alan Greenspan's perspective that the broad spreading of risk and system sophistication would ensure continued stability. Bell and Hindmoor (2015: 457) consider that in the UK much of the resilience of this myth of manageability came from "genuine" beliefs of mutual benefit between financial sector and economy and exchange of close ties between Government and City.

As seen in chapter six, startling panic from a quiet and hereto "privileged" (Bell and Hindmoor, 2015:455) part of UK business provided a blindside for a Government reliant on its income, innovation, and lauded expertise. Having a Labour administration undertake a rescue plan through a huge injection of taxpayers' money was paradoxical in several ways. Whilst necessary to prevent economic collapse, it was also uncomfortable in terms of scrutiny shone on regulatory and administrative practice. Shaming in terms of having to stand by a much touted and celebrated sector now abruptly and righteously vilified, and ideologically constricting in foresight of a massive deficit reduction to come. Any arguments about minimising of state levers from previous administrations privatisation schedules would hold no water after ten years of office. Loss of trust all round would also take significant investment in rebuilding, both practically and reputationally.

Certainly, government management of the crisis, whilst widely recognised as "heroic" but also acknowledged as "tough and bruising" (Byrne, 2015) left the Labour administration ideologically and physically exhausted, and unable to effectively plan for recovery and renewal. This enabled the Conservatives to proactively manage narrative space created through an inclusive-sounding

austerity-together myth, both in Coalition, and then under their own steam. In 2015, the incoming Conservative government took a second bite at depicting Labour as unable to manage the economy before the Brexit debacle ended Cameron's political career. For example, the infamous, "I'm afraid there is no money" letter left by Liam Byrne in 2010 was frequently brandished by Cameron at the stumps. It was revisited by Danny Alexander five years later, saying "sorry for the late reply – I've been busy fixing the economy" (ITV news, 2015). Wren-Lewis (2016:3-5) notes "clearing up the mess Labour left" as a "constant refrain" from the Conservatives and right-wing media during this period. He argues this is an example of what he terms a "politicised truth" – i.e.., a political statement left unchallenged by media outlets. He calls it a fatal mistake by the party to let such a myth of "profligate Labour" administration go. Similar conclusions about the skill with which the Conservatives have subsequently "pulled a fast one" in blaming Labour for the financial crisis are noted by Ussher (2015) who urges, "counter the myth".

Part two: Understanding the episodes of crisis

The following section undertakes comparison of both episodes of crisis through three thematic shifts, considering axes of similarity and difference in crisis construction, management and understanding via media sources. They are *proactive change and reactive defence*, *collectivism and individualism*, and *traditionalism and modernity*.

Proactive change and reactive defence

As demonstrated both through literature and empirical analysis of media outputs in chapters three and five, use of a myth lens shows the coal dispute emerging as the outcome of a great deal of political planning and execution over several years. As such, it is a much anticipated, proactively engineered, and managed crisis facilitating wider hegemonic Tory policy aims of free-market neoliberal logics.

Undertaken through a series of strategic manoeuvres, heavy lifting of State legislature, and proactive mythmaking, the Conservatives were able to produce a state of zugzwang for the NUM. Whereby actual events during the strike didn't really matter, as the long-term outcome would be the same: the closure of the

industry amid wider ideological change. This was considered and planned as necessary, as the NUM, Arthur Scargill and what unionised mining stood for were powerful emblems of what transformative Thatcherite policy was *not*. Darlington (2005:79) considers that Margaret Thatcher "saw the NUM – and Scargill in particular – as the embodiment of all that she held to be endemic in Britain's economic decline". When the Conservatives set mining against wider energy industry dynamism, particularly North Sea Oil, it appeared as old-fashioned and obsolete. Media outlets were able to promote government straplines that "customers not subsidies" (*The Times,* 1984p, 11 May) were the way forward. Mining was painted as hamstrung by tradition, monopoly, and nostalgia, and as dragging down a vital and economically vibrant energy industry. Meantime, industry subsidies for North Sea oil were largely ignored in the press.

This negation was an important counter to historical sympathies for injustices aroused by "blood on the coal" (Arnold 2016:98) stemming from occupational hazard. Miners were seen to be able to milk public empathy and provoke what Mount describes as "middle class guilt" (1984) via stereotypical and mythical images from *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *How Green was My Valley.* They provided visible representations of shared manufacturing heritage and their abilities in collective action were legendary. Arnold (2016:95) attributes much of this mythic status to their successes in 1972 and 1974 in toppling Heath's government, which "reinforced fears about their disruptive power".

Recognition of a potentially powerful adversary ensured vigorous advance and contemporaneous pulling of the levers of state authority in service of Government strategy. The Ridley Report (Ridley, 1977, leaked to *The Economist* in May 1978) offered grounds for material preparation including investment in North Sea oil, stockpiling of coal supplies, and refitting of power stations. Implementation was supported by an enabling legislative framework including both the Employment Acts of 1980 and 1982 and the Trade Union Act of 1984. These Acts facilitated potential sequestration of union assets, limited picketing rights and requirements for secret ballots for industrial action. Other supporting mechanisms included increased police recruitment (Darlington, 2005:71) and enhanced tactical training

(Wallington, 1988) and the new National Reporting Centre. These ideological measures were quietly carried out following the 1981 government climbdown, under cover of reaffirmation of the existing *Plan for Coal* (Helm, 2004:76)*.* Trusted personnel were appointed to key roles, including the nemesis of British Steel, Ian MacGregor, to the Coal Board, with Nigel Lawson as Energy Secretary (prior to the appointment of Peter Walker).

As outlined in chapter one, a largely right-wing media environment was also very favourable for the government, and manoeuvres received a largely positive reception. Curran and Seaton comment on how Thatcher was backed "to the hilt" by the press barons (2018:164). Much of this was due to the extension of their own interests from media owners, with Jones commenting on how the Wapping dispute broke out shortly after the end of the strike (2009:88-9). This did not go unnoticed, nor was it unanimously welcomed from parliamentarians seeing an independent fourth estate as vital to effective democratic function. In *Dancing with Dogma,* Gilmour (1993:23) notes "fawning" press coverage of Government policies. Press support was manifested during the strike through misdirection away from pit closures and likely impact on jobs and villages through focussing on picket line violence. Media outlets also diverted attention from government interference through projections of abstract assumptions on Communist affiliations, Russian interference, and stigmatisation of miners as a hostile, lawless tribe (see Edelman, 1988:106).

This proactive and measured instatement of an ideology through material victory over unionised activity provides a direct contrast to the frantic defence of State underway during the financial crisis of 2008/9. Preventing a collapse was the first business of government here, before eventually, existing vested interests engineered public discourse to ensure a return to the status quo.

The collapse of the system following the bankruptcy of Lehman during September 2008 was described retrospectively as "a matter of life or death for capital" as a process (Harvey, 2011:91). Capitalism "proclaimed itself in crisis" (Hoskins and Tulloch, 2016: 53) and the whole system came close to an abrupt and ignominious folding. Events were retrospectively described by then Chancellor Alistair Darling as

within hours of "the brink" (Martin, 2018) of a breakdown of law and order as cashpoints ran out of money. An immediate taxpayer funded bailout of c. £500 billion was provided, (Hosking and Seib, 2008).

Facilitating rescue, the government only had a limited number of options available, partly due to privatisation of national assets during successive Conservative administrations. The scope of government was just that much smaller. Evolutions from active government of national industries to private sector self-governance within regulatory frameworks contributed to the problem. Actions taken by the State were undertaken in two broad phrases, initial rescue and "wait and see", followed by proposals for longer term solutions, before the 2010 General Election brought a Coalition government and the implementation of Austerity politics.

Rescue talks undertaken with senior bankers were notable in media reports as being both rapid and negotiated in contrast to the careful and managed descriptions of the previous crisis. Whilst Routledge (2009:158) recalls the "juggernaut" of Conservative policy making during the coal dispute, Goodwin is described as eased out of office via a "golden payoff" (Lyons, 2008). Elite leaders were shown as attempting to dictate the terms of their own rescue, both through hubris and close relations with government officers. This is demonstrated by Nugent, (2008) who notes:

> *"Some of the names attached to the part-nationalisation of Britain's banks are familiar to the public. Others are rarely heard outside the corridors of Westminster… chief executives of the country's biggest banks were close to the negotiations, including the so-called Gang of Three: Sir Fred Goodwin, of the Royal Bank of Scotland; John Varley, of Barclays; and Eric Daniels, of Lloyds TSB."*

Goodwin's failed attempt to negotiate rescue terms is gleefully covered by the press. His parting riposte that the "whole affair smelt more of a "drive-by shooting…" (Hutton, 2008) backfires, with the media framing his departure as a kicking out.

Detailed coverage of wrong-doing of individual bankers provided a great deal of subsequent media copy, as disgruntled employees and other insiders rushed forward to share stories of tyrannous bullying alongside frivolous waste at senior levels. This left little room for detailed investigative reporting of wider systemic problems and potential resolution against general focus of blame and recrimination. As discussed in chapter six, public shame for the villains detracted from both understanding of the causes of the crisis, and potential alternative solutions. So, although media reports provided a key tool for managing public agreement to the bailout in the financial crisis, unlike during the miners' strike, this misdirection was not deliberate or planned in advance. Later, however, it was made the most of in terms of managing subsequent acquiescence to austerity.

There were three main reasons for descriptive coverage. As previously discussed, centralisation and cuts to media budgets as one output of technological changes in the sector left generalists untrained for specialist analysis. Secondly, swift government intervention and resolution offered no ongoing storyline. Having both provided a huge influx of emergency capital during early October and persuaded other global powers to do the same, there was little other reportable action available to journalists whilst the government tried to work out how to pay for it all. Narratives of decisive and heroic actions from Gordon Brown, "'Superhero' of No 10 looks to next stage" (Parker, 2008) were unlikely to fuel ongoing copy in the way that schadenfreude over Goodwin's "biblical greed", as "fat cat" or "bloodsucker" (Hjul, 2008) did.

Thirdly, pre-existing close relations between the media and the corporate world facilitated descriptions of problem individuals. Journalists are named as "professional witnesses" to the crisis by Hoskins and Tulloch (2016:53), but they were not detached, and neither were the sources they spoke to. Judgement on "dominant and overwhelmingly supportive" City contributors calling for the bailout is the cornerstone of Berry's discussion of the *Today* programme during the crisis (2012:260). This is comparable with the work of Fahy, O'Brien and Poti (2010:7) who analyse how Irish industry figures perceived that they in effect, 'owned' media financial pages.

Close ties between banking, media and politicians demonstrate a closed club where discussions on ideas such as nationalisation as an alternative policy would struggle for air. Davis (2018:73) notes these circular relationships, commenting on media produced by elites for elites. Continuing headlines on senior figures' disgrace, e.g., Hawkes and Pascoe-Watson, from *The Sun,* (2009), on "*Scumbag Millionaires*" therefore offered up named bankers as sacrificial victims for the longer term image of the industry. According to Glynos et al (2013:298) such foregrounding of affective dimensions around greed and profligacy led to marginalisation of contestation and narrowing of debate.

This theme of narrowed debate as defensive manoeuvre is recalled by Wolf (2018). Writing ten years later, he concludes that acquiescence to established norms and received wisdom combined with inertia at "the power of vested interest" directly led to a lack of change and a resumption of the status quo. He also posits another suggestion for a lack of entropy, as a collective wish to return to a "better past". Such nostalgia might indicate a dearth of successor frames as alternative to neoliberalism but is also important to current and future myths gathering in and around populist politics presented as an exciting alternative to the drudgery of austerity.

Collectivism and individualism

There has been widespread acceptance of arguments that the late '70s and early '80s saw Britain on the precipice of different socio-political framings. The period saw what Philo and Miller (2000:831-2) term a "ferocious struggle" for the Conservative Party in establishing acquiescence to their interests. Material changes such as utilities becoming paid-for commodities in private ownership accompanied an ideological change in their removal as one of previous generations' symbols of collective national good. They note resultant cultural shift displaying "increased emphasis on the values of individualism, interpersonal competition and material power," as the eventual outcome.

Prior to the miners' dispute, collective bargaining offered a significant barrier to the implementation of individualised pay negotiations in the workplace, and

subsequently to the ability of an individual to accumulate capital. A defeat for unionist practices, particularly a wholesale defeat, would be a significant enabler of free market logics. Miners were a visible symbol of Britain's collective industrial heritage, both via their rich lodge traditions and village communities.

Slow and careful enforcement of Conservative policies as discussed above showed a gradual evolution to individually-orientated industrial relations over time; during the dispute, these could be seen as a work in progress. An pragmatic view might be that they appropriated ideological flux as dissonance reduction in getting their objectives achieved without too much journalistic or public scrutiny. This pick-and-mix approach saw the Conservatives treating the miners as one homogenous union bloc during commentary around the ballot, largely ignoring federalised structures. There was little made in the press of the contributory effect of the recent divisive Area Incentive Scheme (1977) to politics in "moderate" and unthreatened Nottingham, which pitted profitable areas against more difficult seams such as in North Wales and Northumbria (see Buckley, 2015:421). Crick (1985, 107-8) explores this legislation in light of the national ballot conundrum, citing concerns that some miners would then have the right to vote others out of a job. For the media, labelling of miners and their areas as moderate or militant rather than safe or under threat further politicised the strike, detracting attention from issues about exactly which jobs were at risk.

Contradictorily, much was made of the NUM rule book statement of a ballot as condition for a strike, conveniently airbrushing provision in Rule 41 about area strikes. Ambiguities here therefore enables area strike action to be dismissed as "militant" and a "democratic façade" (*The Times*, 1984b). Labour politicians also muddied the waters over the ballot process which proved an important bonus for the government. For instance, Roy Hattersley interviewed in *The Guardian* (White, 1984b) stated that he would be on strike, despite a declared preference for a national ballot. His statement about being "a self-confessed moderate, tarred and feathered with the moderate brush" appear calculated to sit on the fence, allowing the Conservatives to seize further initiative around decisiveness in crisis.

Later in the strike, by contrast to bloc treatment above, individual, personalised letters were sent to striking miners encouraging them to give up. Jones (1986: 102-5, 181) includes analysis of WWI-style NCB campaign posters, "when are YOU coming back to work?". Steber (2018:66) evidences this new personalised approach through demonstrating how the Conservatives addressed miners as individuals, quoting Peter Walker asking every miner "to contemplate in the quiet of his own home what was on offer…". Retrospectively, Conservative plans and practical measures to reduce collective action in favour of individualised neoliberal polices are much clearer. This is considered by Daniels (2017), who discusses the recent declassification of files in relation to the strike. Evidence here demonstrates close links between the new Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) and government partners, and direct support for privatisation in mining from Roy Lynk as its Chairman.

Symbolically, the 1985 return to work provided the beginning of the end of a Collective as a significant political concern for sitting Governments. Trade Union leaders dwindled in number and relevance as contributors to economic policies, and in wider media discussions. During 1995, Philo (1995:216-7) was able to comment on media deference to City experts around the "economic miracle" wrought by Conservative policies. By the financial crisis, this journey to irrelevance appeared complete, with Berry's (2012) analysis of representation to *Today* featuring only one union leader, whilst politicians and financial service spokespeople represented some 70% of those opinions sought.

Political strategies persuading the public to invest in personal rather than collective identities successfully developed over the intervening period. Unions' collective voice dwindled in the milieu of workplace and family life, and membership levels declined[17] alongside a decrease in collective wage negotiation practices. Unions were no longer consulted over senior appointments or supported advice on strategic decisions such as outsourcing in private firms. Stated values of

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[17] See Office for National Statistics, (2019) *Trade Union Statistics 2018, Trade Union membership statistics 2018 tables,* Table 1.1: Trade union membership, Unions registered, listed or scheduled in Great Britain1, 1892 to 2016-17, via https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/trade-union-statistics-2018 (accessed 26 09 19)

individualism in the workplace flourished through cultural shifts that promoted the individuals' contribution over that of the collective, particularly at managerial levels. This fall in political participation by the unions accompanied a rise in the "decisive contribution to the conception and implementation of 'public policy'" by Conservative think tank contributors (Wacquant, 1999:323)

However, ideals of personal choice at work are also somewhat of a myth in themselves. Crouch (2007:233-5), argues that many of these changes evolved to the advantage of organisations, and that the use of the word "individual" with its implication of autonomy is a misnomer. He views concepts of "human resources", i.e., "workers as material available for deployment", as far closer to organisational practice under this philosophical umbrella. Certainly, recent scholarship that seeks to challenge the neoliberal normalisation of terms such as meritocracy (Littler, 2018) or resilience (Joseph, 2013) in the workplace as a personal rather than organisational problem demonstrates later contestation here. Ideas on what choice might mean were also transferred to the wider interplay between State, individuals, risk, and responsibilities, with McFall (2020:121) noting the reduction of social safety nets that accompanied greater scope for individual choice.

Many changes focused on individual rather than collective attainment are also reflected in the rise of transformational leadership styles, as discussed in chapter three in relation to reputation and heroic values. These discourses of individualism and meritocracy were also accompanied by the parallel development of significant increases to CEO pay in the West. Whilst statistics are readily available (Culpepper 2011: xi), Guy (2005:51) reports little analysis of why such elasticity of remuneration would occur. Looking at the UK specifically, he links Conservative tax reform changes during 1984 to modes of compensation offered to CEOs in share packages and the decoupling of executive pay from that of their workforces as key causal influences.

Whilst the above discussion briefly depicts general working trends in the UK at the time, the banking sector was a prominent example of an industry where individuals with specialised skills and notable attributes exemplified visible benefits of a neoliberal outlook. Post-event, widespread and condemnatory reporting from

journalists and academics on a heady mix of "narcissistic", (Stein, 2013) "narcotic" (Luyendijk, 2015: 194) and testosterone-driven behaviour attest to widespread cultural excess. Griffin's (2013:10) account discusses the way individual actors and industry norms fatally contributed to "the culture of privilege, competitive success and masculine prowess that contemporary financial discourse has created and sustained".

This promotion of individual voices at the expense of the collective in politics and in the workplace also accompanied a growing focus around individual stories in the press, as part of the changes to both media and audience explored in chapter one. It accompanied a parallel trend for celebrity and individually orientated "infotainment" at the expense of hard news (Chakravartty and Schiller, 2010), with the *Forbes* type profiles discussed in chapter six fitting this model. Culpepper (2011:153) demonstrates how executive pay and accompanying lifestyles had started to gather traction to mainstream reporting following the Enron scandal, but it was the financial crisis that really cemented the issue in public awareness.

However, this celebration of individual skill, technical acumen, and cojones as the epitome of neoliberal meritocracy discourse proved to have a flip side in a crisis situation. All these developments that focussed on the high-status, high-reward and high-risk individual and their place in society came together with dramatic effect during financial crisis reporting. Bankers' activities and associated remuneration became what Culpepper terms a "hot topic" (2011:147), as corporate control issues became newsworthy. A small group of previously lauded individuals went from the epitomic peak to abasement of their industry over the space of a few weeks.

Individual bankers expecting to frame themselves and their own personal agency as the centrepieces of their organisational success is compellingly demonstrated by Tourish and Hargie (2012:1064), who consider their failure to absolve themselves of responsibility in the public eye. Having successfully mythologised themselves as all-powerful, they were unable to overcome journalistic or public incredulity in presenting themselves as the victims of circumstance during the hearings. This later failure to share around collective responsibility and blame added further fixative to the established narrative that this was a one-off for a successful industry. Having

removed its 'bad apples', and through the public pillory directed anger toward 'rogue' individuals, (Whittle and Mueller, 2011:135) the industry quietly set sail for eventual return to normal, despite the growing recession.

Traditionalism and modernity

Another significant economic and social shift that occurred between the accession of the Conservatives in 1979 and the Financial Crisis was gradual transition from traditional interests of manufacturing and production to consumer orientation. These changes parallel the movements to individualism above, reflecting social integration of Thatcherite *choice* models, as well as an evolution from active government of state-owned industries to largely passive self-governance of privatisation. Crouch (2007:237) notes the preoccupation of Thatcher administrations with dismantling collective labour relations, and further weakening of collectivism via tied relationships between unions and traditional demand management models as key to changes in perceptions about the labour force.

One of the ways that the Conservatives were able to successfully manage this shift was through a combination of concerted attack and managed decline on traditional industries alongside promoting a modern service sector. There was an active choice being made here, as much of British heavy industry required significant reinvestment to remain competitive. The neutering of British Steel and halving its workforce following a strike and appointment of Ian MacGregor in 1980 (Deans, 2016) was one example of this strategy. By the time of the miners' strike in 1984, the fragility of British Steel operations fostered tensions between unions in terms of coal supplies to the "threatened" and "beleaguered" (Clement and Faux, 1984) Ravenscraig Steelworks in particular. Adeney and Lloyd (1986:137) comment on how debt was owed to the miners for their solidarity and support during the steelworkers' strike, but that any practical help would be tantamount to "suicide of their own decimated industry." Classic divide and rule. Whilst identified as a "moderate" union leader (Adeney and MacShane, 2015), Sirs comment that he was "not here to see the steel industry crucified on someone else's altar" (Pattinson, 1984c) should therefore be contextualised in terms of little choice in order to defend jobs, whatever his personal feelings about Scargill. Hence, in *Stepping*

Stones terms, the Government could also benefit from demonstrating Sirs as *persuadable* in the face of the alternative. Defensive measures from steelmen achieved only short-term respite, with Ravenscraig abandoned in 1992.

Other historic *Triple Alliance* partners from the General Strike of 1926 were caught up in transition between traditional industry and a government-sponsored market-service ethos. Whilst contemporary analysts Adeney and Lloyd (1986:133) were able to confidently refer to the "interlocking self-interest of the old heavy industries", in practice traditional allies such as the dockers were much reduced due to their own industrial closures. The rail industry situation was more complex, as the railways were an industry the government needed to support, but strategy again hinged on the idea of which union leaders were either onside or persuadable. Ordinary railmen were widely reported as sympathetic to the miners in refusing to remove coal, however, as reported by Adeney and Lloyd (1986:134-5) this was handled through a "soft line" by British Rail management. Staff were sent home for infractions in support of the miners but allowed to return to work the following day rather than garner sympathy and traction for industrial action. However, it is Paul Foot's multipage scoop for the *Daily Mirror* (Foot, 1984a) which demonstrates the full extent of active government interference in the rail industry. Commenting on how other likely sympathetic groups were systematically "bought off" (Goodman, 1984c) through generous pay rises, the *Mirror* reports on leaked Government documents. These confirm how railway workers pay negotiations were spun out to avoid a "second front" (Foot, 1984b) through collusion between BR chief Bob Reid and Ian MacGregor. In terms of a necessary and valued electricity industry, Adeney and Lloyd (1986:147) point out the necessity of active denials of a "cosy" relationship between industry and power workers, differentiating the industry with its shared "common commitment" rather than "licensed antagonism" as elsewhere.

Hence, the strike facilitated the Government in its push to phase out traditional, subsidised industries in favour of either modernisation or innovation. It created a dividing line for future investment choices between the profitable that could eventually be sold off via privatisation and unprofitable state industries that would either have to accept reduced terms or be closed. Whilst that sounds like and was

presented as good economic sense from a political small state perspective, the Government also obfuscated decision-making here. Energy was a growth area; however, large sums of money were pumped into North Sea Oil, presenting that as the 'only' choice. This was reinforced by a sympathetic press, who depicted the strikers "stand for industrial nostalgia and protection" as one also for "unlawfulness and intimidation", (*The Times* 1984j).

Voters were also encouraged to support transitions from traditional manufacturing that the government were unwilling to subsidise to more modern outlooks of effective free markets. Gamble, writing for *Marxism Today* during the dispute emphasises the skill of the Government in presenting two issues, social order, and market order, as one and the same (Gamble, 1984:14). He points out the readiness of the public to be rallied in defence of the former, whilst the importance of the latter in terms of defending financial policies for privatisation was far more critical for policy success. This explains the centralisation of presenting "industrial Luddism and revolutionary extremism" (Gamble, 1984:13) as common enemies of progress.

One indirect consequence of conscious separation of profitable sectors and the turn against reinvestment necessary elsewhere was its effect on the Northern English regions. As hosts of much traditional heavy industry, they became starved of funding (Berry, 2018:88) in contrast with a subsequent boom in the South and East with ready access to London investment. Like the management of the strike, whether or not this was a deliberate manoeuvre has previously been contested. However, release of Cabinet papers has enabled other elements of the 'managed decline' policy, such as in relation to Liverpool, to be convincingly analysed as strategic, see Parker and Atkinson (2020). Therefore, contentions between public versus private, traditional versus modern, and individual and collective were not universal or evenly spread. How far realities differed from "belief that Mrs Thatcher has changed the whole language of political argument" was debated by *The Guardian* editorial during the strike (1984g). The writer's conclusion was that whilst new discourses had successfully taken root in London and the South, they met with barren ground in the abandoned North. The article quotes Ian MacGregor's categorisation of a "little temporary problem on the other side of town" as

symptomatic of his insouciance – what it illustrates is how already traditional Labour-voting Northern English regions, Wales and Scotland had become separated from Southern-centric modern Tory Britain.

Banking provides a second chapter of this separation created between traditional manufacturing Britain and its modern service industries. Comments made by *The Guardian* journalist above provide an early indicator of how the process of establishing neoliberal values was taking shape in London and providing a welcoming environment for service sector developments in banking and finance. Conditions for innovation were set during this period, with the aforementioned "Big Bang" deregulation in 1986 providing an opportune moment for the Conservatives. Having politically and materially pushed back on traditional heavy industry, and inflicted a defeat on social democratic ideologies, state power could now be mobilised on delivering a series of widely-publicised initiatives, of which banking represented one key project.

Widespread international initiatives to liberalise the financial sector were actively underway at the time, alongside parallel developments towards a more global economy that were enthusiastically seized upon. Plender (1987: 40-1) concurrently describes an efficient and economical drawing together of the world's major financial centres operating through a "free port principle" as critical for change during the period. This sparked competitive deregulation internationally, encouraged by governments looking to their service sectors to provide jobs in poor economic climates. London's competing for international business provoked the removal of constraints on new financial instruments, reduced charging and provided "world-class securities" (see Lawson, 2006). An additional driver for the Thatcher administration was facilitating the rapid inflow of lucrative North Sea Oil revenues (Plender, 1987:41).

With widespread rewards via knighthoods for leaders of the changeover (Harris, 1986), visible symbols of the importance of key individuals to an innovative sector for modernising Britain were circulated by a welcoming media. "The October reforms of the London Stock Exchange, dubbed Big Bang, swept away traditions and set the stage for a technologically advanced, liquid and international stock market",

(Nicoll, 1986). Deregulation, competition, and technological enhancement drew a sharp distinction between traditional risk-averse banking and new models of sales and performance orientation (Storey, Cressey, Morris and Wilkinson, 1997).

From successful initial innovations here, the sector required reframing for compatibility with a subsequent New Labour Government. Peck and Tickell (2002:388) highlight general reconstituting of neoliberal outlooks into more socially interventionist forms during the Blair (and Clinton) administrations. They comment on new modes of social policy and re-regulation sold to the public to cover initial marketisation failures. For banking, this was undertaken through promoting institutions such as the new Financial Services Authority (FSA) which gave the appearance of public accountability and control, (see Froud et al, 2012).

What was also particularly significant for the UK financial sector is that popular regeneration initiatives from New Labour accompanied normalisation of neoliberal economic management into the technical area. Efficiencies bred reduced knowledge of banking working practices, with Tett (2010:116) remarking that the government "saw little reason to monitor" what banking entities were doing. This was facilitated by technological enhancements and automotive processes, and resulted in superficial depoliticization, and "privileged status" as taken for granted, (Peck and Tickell, 2002:388). A lack of political edge to issues such as interest rates contributed to poor awareness of implications from both public and journalists.

During the intervening years, parallel evolutions of neoliberal self-governance rather than workplace government were mirroring what was going on in the state. These are acerbically labelled by Wacquant as a "'pipeline' feeding the political and media elites" (1999:388) for more governance, masking labour deregulation and reduced social protection instruments. They are demonstrated by the adoption of ubiquitous modern frameworks such as New Public Management. However, the roll back of state interference, whilst positive for asserting the benefits of economic efficiency also enabled an erosion in designated social obligations to both employees and consumers and in financial strictures around executive or specialised pay. As with other sectors, pay bargaining in banking retreated from collective and public to individual and private. The shift of power from the state to

large corporations became intertwined with the shift from manufacturing to service and from traditional industries to their modern counterparts and long-term investment to short-term return models. Banking and finance were at the vanguard of this process.

The flourishing of banking and finance under New Labour provides a critical backdrop in accounts of the crisis. Tett (2010:83) writes of a "state of ferment" in the sector as technological change produced far-reaching transformations. Awareness around the speed of technological developments and social change in a competitive globalised context were long-standing motifs of party leadership (see Berry, 2011:72). This ensured continuing mutually beneficial congruence between Government and the City until the former was abruptly forced into the twin difficulties of managing the crisis and trying to establish a new distance. Measures such as the Treasury Hearings and the stripping of Fred Goodwin's knighthood were visible symbols of a government disassociating itself with former cronies. Dorey and Denham (2011:297) cite David Miliband's reflections on too much of a "love in" underway with finance, along with overemphasis on "technical managerialism" as key to Labour's difficulties here.

Myths as bricolage of crisis narratives

The sections above contrasted background framing and three thematic shifts of similarities and differences in crisis construction and management. This final section of chapter seven returns to the myth framework of the thesis to compare and contrast how *the myths of history, the myths of reputation, the myths of legitimation and delegitimisation,* and the *myths of choice and agency* were reported.

Myths of history, continuity, and change

The past, and the myths of the past are leveraged by the media in both crises to understand and naturalise events and promote palatable resolutions for the public. Paradigmatic meaning is drawn from previous texts, appropriating earlier works for adaptation into subsequent stories, (Maclean et al, 2018). Collective understanding of the past shapes collective interpretations of events and helps manage the future.

Historic myths embodied new ideological frames during the Thatcher administration; Hobsbawm (1983:2-3) refers to these as 'invented tradition'. They are "responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition". Hobsbawm suggests that where such traditions are invented, it is often deliberately rather than because former ideas are no longer viable. He demonstrates where in the modern world, Enlightenment orientated thought, unreceptive to reminders of an irrational "dark past" (1983:8) fills its void through new traditions without necessarily acknowledging why. This is the very essence of mythmaking in the service of ideology. Whilst much of his approach is cultural, Hobsbawm points hard to the then current political paradigm by writing of the problems created from rejecting old ways "by those who regarded them as obstacles to progress, or even worse, as its militant adversaries" (1983:8).

Hence, government-supporting media looked to historical examples to contextualise the strike. Repetitions around the General Strike were utilised to help communicate the seismic nature of events underway, but also to underscore to the miners that they could expect to be out on their own against a government looking to redress previous concessions, (Adeney and Lloyd, 1986: 279-80).

Lessons from the Heath administration were used in a complementary fashion and were intended as salutary tales of the dangers of compromise and political weakness. Both historical narratives cemented long-standing public impressions of miners as stubborn, tetchy, and requiring discipline. The supporting narrative was that Thatcher had the nous to do it. Crick (1985:66) writes of how the miners did not win the 1974 strike, the government lost it; "the events of that year gave the miners an aura of invincibility. People believed the miners had the power to topple governments…". He considers this aura as a mythic part of union tradition. Strong collective legends needed to be undermined for government success, hence individuals were encouraged back to work on an individual basis.

Myths of history were speedily pressed into service during the financial crisis, and very early on had a similar purpose to those used in the miners' strike to communicate scale and scope of events to their readership. Repetitions of history

that harked back to the 1929 Wall Street crash or even the South Sea Bubble quickly positioned this as a disaster, warning of difficult decisions and times ahead. However, beyond initial pattern-seeking, repetitions of history also became a space filler by journalists struggling for copy. Generalist reporters covering the crash were suddenly presented with new terms and models that they had never seen before. This left them looking for historical analogies, both for the public and themselves in place of analysis, Low, (2008),

> *"The more I understand, the more I realise I don't understand. Take securitisation, for instance. I looked it up: apparently it's when you package up a whole number of mortgages, then sell the debt to someone else…."*

Jenkins (2008) similarly appeals to shared commonality of ignorance; "you don't understand it either, do you?". He goes on to position the crisis against 1929 events, challenging Galbraith in saying that understanding was the best safeguard against recurrence and resorting to blaming excessive "modernisation" and lack of government regulation. Outcomes from 1929 were also used by journalists once the rescue plan was agreed, both in terms of managing immediate problems and in how it would be paid for. Having stabilised the system, "the feeling that ordinary people will end up carrying much of the burden…", (*The Sunday Times,* 2008) evident within the first week persists through the dataset. *The Times editorial* (2009) is fairly typical in its analogies of the Great Depression to the 2008 crisis, as marked with hardship, writing that the "precedents are uniformly terrible; the stakes are extremely high".

Myths of reputation, heroism, and villainy

There is significant common ground in the way that myths of reputation are presented in both crises, although as above, narratives are built to serve very different purposes. Crisis situations quite naturally result in the production of heroes and villains from the press because key individuals come to represent the embodiment of certain events, certain values, and ways of being. Tribally, as readers, we identify with some and take exception to others, and crises force us to take sides.

During the miners' strike, press treatment of Arthur Scargill appears to follow the *Stepping Stones* strategy to the letter. Isolation and discreditation on a personal level became uniform tactics once the early weeks were over and journalists and public alike settled to the fact that the strike would be of some duration. Allen describes media presentation as a personal "vendetta" (2009:282) as Scargill became a synecdochised representative of both the mining industry and politicised trade unionism in general. There were several benefits for the Government in this strategy, firstly that Scargill came to embody all that the Conservatives wished to end about trade unionism, in terms of his intransigence, and "refusal to tack" (Routledge, 1993:275). He was set up both in general terms as a speedy reference point for middle England on what was wrong with unions, as well as a necessary counterpoint for Thatcher's own conviction politics. Jones (2009:73) writes of how the two were "well suited to be pitted against each other". In specific terms, he became the epitome of an outdated and unfashionable industry.

Demonising Scargill, Thatcher's hagiographers could more easily paint the strike in binary terms, with the Government option presented as the only right one. Beynon (2014:221-2) goes further in ascribing the defeat of the 'hard left' and Scargill as Mrs Thatcher's primary motivator, with little retrospective acknowledgement of alternative roles for the coal industry or employment issues. Further benefits were also gleaned from depicting Scargill as Neil Kinnock's personal albatross, cutting out compromise politics as irrelevant.

Journalists personal recollections of media relations suggest a mix of doors closing on Scargill's small number of trusted press contacts as the dispute ratchets up and editors' close ranks, prompting a series of retaliatory verbal attacks. Jones (1986:198) cites his speech from the 1985 NUM conference where Scargill states that the media campaign against the miners, "would have impressed Goebbels". Crick also notes how Scargill used attacks on journalists to warm up a crowd (1985:133-4), referring to them as "hyenas", and how this reciprocal hostility was used to motivate strikers. Whilst this came at personal cost, e.g., the "I don't like me either" quips against media remarks (Crick, 1985, 128-9), personal struggle as the embodiment of his industry also appears claimed as part of his retrospective

identity. In terms of an epithet to his term of office, Routledge's grudgingly respectful, if not necessarily hostile biography cedes him "honour" as the "man who said 'no'" to capitalist forces and State legitimised authority, (1993:276).

In terms of the financial crisis, similar demonised attributes of individual bankers quickly rose to the surface. Indicators of rapid Government rescue plans meant that UK media sources were not in a position to downplay the economic contribution of the industry as a whole, compounded by editorial worries about reports making the situation worse (Guerrera, 2009:45). Therefore, negative coverage quickly focused on individuals, particularly in relation to bonuses, rather than the industry per se, where critique tended to focus on poor auditing and control. The FSA is castigated as "toothless tigers", headed up by a "dithering" Lord Turner (MacLeod, 2009) and slow to call time on deficient regulatory systems.

Definitions of a cultural problem of a few greedy individuals needing an effective gamekeeper as opposed to failing industry mores of a corrupt system was facilitated by events over the Atlantic. In the US, widespread negative perceptions of Dick Fuld's management of Lehman had been circulating for some time. Wighton (2008a) writes of Fuld's failure to sell in 2007 during the week before the bankruptcy; "He could have got a fortune. He could still have got a good price a year ago. He could probably get a decent sum even now." The accompanying headline that "*Fuld's pride may come before a further fall*" works on a personal and organisational level. Fuld's *personal* bankrupting of Lehman therefore coloured subsequent UK reports, setting a pattern that coverage of Goodwin et al continued.

Stigma then swiftly became enshrined around individual "financial predator". Kamm, (2008) described these bankers as "parasitic even in a culture that celebrates commercial success". Named industrialists and entrepreneurs are contrasted in the article as similarly successful but gain plaudits due to active production or contribution rather than simply being exploitative. Unlike Scargill, whose negative reputation had been gradually constructed by the media since Saltley Gate in 1972 and subsequently ramped up during the early weeks of the strike, the fall of bankers' reputations was a swift volte-face in the press. The demonization of certain individuals became particularly powerful due to their

previous self-marketed successes. Stanley and Mackenzie-Davey (2012) argue persuasively for why stigmatisation was compartmentalised around individuals, due to previous role status and subsequent schadenfreude from media and public.

Myths of legitimacy and illegitimacy

Myths of (il)legitimacy provide the greatest number of similarities in approach between both crises. In this instance, myths serve very similar purposes - defending the legitimated State against hostile events, enemy groups, and individuals. Edelman (1988:73) identifies how the advocacy of certain actions both implies that a certain group is dangerous and provides clear indication of illegitimacy to those who fail to share that point of view. Equally, certain identity labels confer legitimacy or not; the term "miners' strike" in itself might represent a symbol of illegitimate action, as raised by Jones (1986:203). Use of the term "coal dispute" is considered more neutral, although it is significant that thirty years on, strike remains the popular term.

Another term that conferred illegitimacy on striking miners, as discussed in chapter five, was that of 'militant'. The label had come to be associated with a more general expression of industrial dispute but was also increasingly conflated by the press with Militant. Whether this conflation was deliberate, as part of government strategy is uncertain, however, it does appear as a conscious defence of state. Striking miners were placed in direct opposition to those at work, labelled as "moderate". This represents a moral panic, as defined by Cohen (1987:9). Thomas-Symonds (2005) demonstrates how Militant membership increased from a minority concern during the early years of the Thatcher premiership, in direct response to both Conservative rule and the offices of Neil Kinnock as leader. He identifies this left extremism as a 'credibility gap' for Labour, (2005:30), and conflation here provides a twofold benefit for the Conservatives, both in terms of alienating the public from the miners, and from Kinnock's 'legitimate' Labour party. It also made it easier for traditional left-wing press outlets to support a more 'moderate' stance, such as supporting a national ballot before industrial action. Other hostile identity labels for striking miners were those relating to support for the USSR, membership of the Communist party, and terrorist groups including the IRA.

The Conservatives needed misdirection afforded by the identification of a large and hostile militant force in order to justify huge expenditure on police overtime and use of court time from accelerated charges for picketing borne by the taxpayer. Wallington (1988:7) highlights how trumped-up offences subverted civil law, and additional conditional bail controls added to fears for those arrested. Emphasis on differences aimed to lend credence to government legitimacy. Hence reported remarks such as: "As violence erupted on the picket lines again Mrs Margaret Thatcher declared that the rule of law must prevail over the rule of the mob…" (Clement and Tendler, 1984).

During the financial crisis, similar actions delegitimised named bankers and parts of the culture associated with excessive bonuses. Abrupt switching from lauded and legitimate, to failed and illegitimate speedily focused on issues around remuneration as reward for failure, with Goodwin's pay-off provoking much angry commentary. In the space of a few weeks, media sources move from regretful, yet polite resignation that McKillop and Goodwin won't forgo "huge payoffs" (Waller, 2008) and leave RBS following the expensive integration of AMRO to frothing indignation. *The Mirror* quickly differentiate between "Flashy Fred, who had to be dissuaded from looting a £1million payoff on his way out of the door", and ordinary RBS staff who we don't hear about as now jobless individuals (Routledge, 2008). However, coverage also reflects the individualised nature of the times, with faith put in another individual, Gordon Brown as the saviour of the economy.

Intervention through a rescue package calls a rapid halt to any potential wholesale stigmatisation of the sector for the media. In order for it to be legitimate to save the industry, it needs to be judged as worth saving, rather than the UK Government following initial American response in allowing Lehman to go to the wall. This provokes both the demonization of named individuals and highly paid CEOs in the industry as well as exhortation to return to traditional values from the media as the anticipated price of rescue for the rest.

The immaterial service economy of finance and debt packaging, as opposed to a "real economy" (Routledge, 2008) of material goods is also rapidly delegitimised. This is demonstrated via journalistic frustrations from retrospectively trying to

interpret risks that were only designed for calculation through complex modelling (Tett, 2010:117-9). Growing suspicions that senior bankers themselves did not understand their own systems accretes early on, building their delegitimisation as experts and negative status as overpaid frauds, *Sunday Times*, (2008):

> *"No bank executives should be allowed to plead ignorance. If there are things on bank books that they do not understand… they should not be there… a return to traditional banking…should rediscover the virtues of dullness."*

Once the initial emergency is over, and attention is drawn to longer-term recovery, reports typically call for re-legitimation via traditional banking practices. These exhortations are also catalysed by frustrations around transparency and governance as key to future legitimacy of the industry, which is perceived to be continuing to shield itself from scrutiny, Bowditch, (2009):

> *"It sometimes seems that the more superficial transparency there is in the way Britain is run, the less any individual can be held to account. In the last 20 years, a rash of ombudsmen, regulators, czars and adjudicators have spread through society like typhoid in a slum"*

In this way we see both the piercing of the myth of individual responsibility and New Public Management strictures but also inertia toward change.

During both crises, the media role steers the public heavily to accept their interpretations of legitimacy via approval of State action. Philo (2007:177) sums up such media presentations and their associated structures through identifying that, despite any illusions of balance in reporting, "only one set of statements makes "sense" in that we are systematically given the information necessary to understand the explanations and policies which they represent".

Myths of choice and agency

An immediate superficial similarity here is a lack of clarity on agencies of state in both crises; both appear ambiguous and open to interpretation. However, as

explored above, during the miners' strike this is a purposeful result of planned obfuscation on the part of the Government. During the financial crisis, confusion and panic of a reactive situation resulted in both a paucity of information and direction for the media to report on.

In terms of the press, this resulted in quite different outputs presented to the public. The coal dispute presented a picture of miners' actions and response via secondary agencies of state such as the police, the law, or in some aspects, the media. This was rather than a response to primary Government instigation of pit closures and loss of jobs and communities in mining villages without plan for reinvestment.

For individual miners, direct government propaganda via NCB letters, marketing campaigns and indirect measures on social security cuts for dependents was presented as a *choice*. Either abandon the long-standing collective in favour of personal agentic action to return to work, seek employment elsewhere or hold with tribal loyalty of a derided and isolated community. As explored in chapter five, these mythical choices were presented as binary and straightforward – ballot or not, work or not, move with the times, or not. However, this seemingly clear choice myth is correctly identified as nuanced in *The Guardian* (albeit only via the letters page) where choice is identified as only choice when backed by financial capability. The policy of the market "ignores therefore the needs of those without purchasing power" (Smidman, 1984). Whilst the government may have been surprised by the persistence of resistance, their misdirection strategy about the size and scope of planned pit closures assumed that miners would not see an eventual outcome. Without a future job or prospects "choice" was no choice at all.

Miners and their leadership correctly identified long-term prognoses of government planning; it was therefore important that this was obfuscated from the public lest too much sympathy be generated. Job losses in mining towns could then be attributed to individualised failures, with strikers unable to move with the times. Early on, future industry investment was falsely intimated on cooperation, with MacGregor's comments in early March that the overtime ban was "seriously jeopardizing" the industry's future…." (Felton, 1984a). Once the strike was properly

underway, sustained pronouncing from both MacGregor and the government about a "great future" for the coal industry were commonplace in the dataset. Prime Ministers Questions:

> *"Mrs Thatcher: I wholly agree that those miners who want to go to their work in order to produce coal which has a great future, because that industry has a great future…."* (*The Times,* 1984h).

During the financial crisis, ambiguity about government agency was a direct reflection of the confusion of a reactive crisis situation in the media. Some of this was due to negotiations discussed above and in chapter six, and lack of new information to report on. Other issues included homogenous available sources, (Berry, 2012) with attributable quotes often inside the loop of analysts and former banking insiders, many of whom were working on their own very limited information. In terms of individual responses from the industry itself, Bell and Hindmoor (2015) aim to unpick agentic action in the context of institutional structures – saying how agents did not fully understand their own system nor its frailties, although they could see the impact which resulted in repeated panic and herding. Whilst this perspective is insightful, it is less helpful in considering media reaction, which largely focussed on the vacuum that permitted excessive greed and "gross moral turpitude" (Waller, 2008) of senior executives.

The media were also quick to castigate poor abilities of senior bankers in aiding government with rescue and recovery. Having caused the crisis, they were painted as strategically absent in helping resolve it. Gordon Brown's mythical depiction as heroic, "Brown can stand tall…", and "so tall, he almost seems above party politics" (Ashley, 2008) is as much about symbolic scapegoating of Goodwin as praise for Brown. "Panglossian reassurances" of time to fix problems are reported as "embarrassing" by Guerrera (2008b) as the industry is plunged into crisis. His purpose is to demonstrate how "respected and better-paid leaders are stuck in the past and unable to understand this crisis has radically changed their role". Tett (2010:307) discusses another reason for lack of agency in tackling industry recovery, stating "Though Wall Street – or the City – had repeatedly preached the gospel of creative destruction to other parts of the economy during the twentieth

century – urging non-financial sectors to embrace restructuring – policy makers and bankers were unwilling, or unable, to apply that principle to the banks".

Lack of agentic response to the panic alongside denial of responsibility from individual bankers was later strategically reframed by the press during the 2009 hearings. Agency is analysed as both "affirmed and denied" by Tourish and Hargie (2012:1056) in terms of blame reduction and responsibility attribution. However, whilst unsuccessful in terms of media, public and subsequent Financial Services Authority report (2011:8), metaphorical presentation of themselves as variously victims, observers, and part of a universal collective (Tourish and Hargie, 2012) was successful in avoiding court proceedings. Brown's later reflections that bankers should have gone to jail highlights quietly successful longer-term minimisations of agency here (Elliot, 2017).

Lack of visible agentic action is personal and political. Rescue via government action and resulting analytic vacuum enabled both active misdirection from vested interests and passive misdirection from poor regulation and control to a focus on bad apples and preservation of the status quo. Although those at the top lost significant amounts of money during the crisis, their influence did not wane as a result. Levels of inequality in the UK continued to increase, as Dorling (2013) points out, by the time Thatcher left office the annual incomes of the richest were 70 times the national mean, by 2007, that figure was 144 times. He comments how that share fell in 2008 but is considered to have bounced back. Decisions still continue to be made by small, closed groups of the wealthy and influential. Therefore, when things did go wrong for this group, a speedy return to normal could be effected via a few errant scapegoats to detract attention.

Conclusion

In summary, this thesis undertook centralisation of political mythmaking during analysis of two discrete crisis situations in recent British experience. Having worked through media reports in detail during chapters five and six, chapter seven above used a longer lens to consider the wider perspective offered by comparing and contrasting the mythic environments and themes of the two. Both crises emerge as

consequences of Thatcherite initiatives. The first was demonstrated as a short-term and intended outcome of deliberate strategies to defeat the unions as a political concern and facilitate market logics. The second as a long-range, accidental denouement resulting from purposeful removal of a previous social democratic paradigm and deliberate abandoning of established and stable control systems.

The former might be judged as successful paradigm change (Blyth, 2013) which established dominant and hegemonic neoliberal myths, aided by media outputs. Thirty years on, crisis meltdown provided a new set of conditions for potential change, with a lacuna from the catastrophic abruption to established dominant social logics of the free market. This was another such opportunity to renew or replace a tired myth. However, the latter amounted to a failure of change, where protest responses were generally muted, and defensive narratives speedily restored the status quo. Meanwhile the incoming austerity myth was rendered as common-sense for the public good. As commented by Gamble, capitalism, and its sporadic crises rely on its abilities in "privatising gains and socializing losses" (Gamble, 2014:42-3). In this case, media outputs encouraged Britons to accept they had been living beyond their means (Stanley, 2014:895).

The following final chapter offers an opportunity to provide some more overarching conclusions as well as to leave aside specifics and undertake a little speculation in setting this research into possible future contexts. It considers both how mythmaking is not only a facet of crisis reporting but part of the fabric of how we understand our society and how media presentations serve as an enabler for this.

Chapter eight: Conclusions. New myths for old?

> *"For the great enemy of truth is very often not the lie--deliberate, contrived and dishonest--but the myth--persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic. Too often we hold fast to the cliches of our forebears. We subject all facts to a prefabricated set of interpretations. We enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought. Mythology distracts us everywhere--in government as in business, in politics as in economics, in foreign affairs as in domestic affairs…"* (John F Kennedy, Yale inaugural 1962).

Introduction

This thesis uses the concepts of myth and mythmaking to understand how media outlets report crises in a modern society. It shows how flexible and normative mythic repetitions accumulate in support of dominant interests, creating authority and legitimacy, establishing particular ways of seeing. Myth analysis highlights the fundamental malleability of historical social memory and opens important perspectives on the careful selection and interpretation of convenient facts as an ever-present part of political life.

The aims for this brief conclusion are fourfold. A first section summarises the contribution of each chapter to the thesis as a whole. A second considers the limits of the case study approach and considers possibilities for future work that would broaden and deepen subsequent analysis. A third section embeds the two case studies into the wider temporal context. This demonstrates how sequences of public myths which provide dominant mainstream images of political "myth today" (Barthes, 2009) are built upon historical myths, whilst also being repurposed for the future. Finally, the thesis closes with a proposal for reorienting critical social scientific frames to accommodate myth analysis. This would provide valuable insights into the socio-political processes which privilege dominant political narratives, where, as observed by Kennedy's famous inaugural more than fifty years ago, political myth serves as distraction.

Summary findings

This thesis has developed arguments for including myth analysis as a key part of our accounts of political and economic events. This conclusion summarises the chapter by chapter steps in that argument which supports the reorientation through case studies of two major crises in recent British history – the coal dispute of 1984-5 and the financial crisis of 2008-9. These chapters suggest the potential for a wider field of application for myth study which will be the subject of the next section.

Chapter one discusses the media angle on what public myths are *for,* what purposes they serve and for whose benefit. The chapter challenges the established social belief that media reports reflect public opinion and makes the case for understanding media outlets as influential propagators of political myths. The chapter then considers the varying roles that media outlets played during each crisis and their evolution during the intervening period. The chapter makes the case for myth study providing insights into socio-political processes in the coal dispute of 1984-5 and the financial crisis of 2008-9.

Evidence drawn from a wide variety of interdisciplinary sources in chapter two support this central argument - that orientation toward myth could make a wide-ranging and complementary contribution to existing material analyses of crisis events, their social interpretations, and political outcomes. This chapter posits Barthesian approaches from *Mythologies* (2009) as a productive point of entry for understanding media myth making. It also notes three reasons why greater clarity and structure could come in crisis analysis if a more explicit framework were applied. First, myths themselves are opaque and slippery and a framework facilitates a variegated focussing technique that meets Barthes desire for an approach that is critical, analytic, and dynamic (p.153). Second, the essay format of *Mythologies* is orientated toward micro-level incidents and interactions, but this thesis considers the impact of mythmaking on major events through low-key repetitions of similar images in the everyday language of the press. A framework here provides a structure within which we can analyse the influence of myths on the macro processes of public life. Finally, use of a thematic framework showcases

important linkages and interactions between myths so that their contributions to an overarching myth in each crisis can be highlighted.

Having presented this myth framework in chapter two, it is put to work in chapter three as a way of critically exploring the existing literature on each crisis. The majority of contributors to diverse literatures of crisis foreground material and political analyses, and so this chapter focuses on their secondary and tertiary insights pertinent to myth analysis. This new focus helped define new avenues for the empirical investigation of mediated political myths. In the coal dispute, mythic non-involvement of the state was important in legitimising a Conservative administration which needed new, opportunistic myths in service of neoliberal ideologies. For the financial crisis, protective myths about the bad practices of errant individuals effectively defended legitimacies of the banking sector through misdirection.

Chapter four tackled the methodological, and practical dimensions of undertaking empirical analysis of myth making. This chapter discussed the theoretical challenges of differing case study frames, concluding that a partnership with a well-established and congruent approach in critical discourse analysis provided an appropriate way forward. This decision was justified firstly by arguing that myths were meta-narratives and, on that basis, it would be possible to apply critical discourse analysis (CDA) outside their traditional field of small-set textual analyses. This approach also demonstrates how these media texts convince through repetition. The final justification is the underpinning assumption from CDA principles that media texts are an intrinsic part of our political and cultural ideologies. In terms of the practicalities of research approach, the chapter also considers the challenges of building empirical material from two different datasets.

Chapters five and six provide empirical evidence of media "myths at work" through the case studies of both crisis situations. They demonstrate the agency of mediated political myths. Arguably, this applies when myth is used proactively in the service of ideological design as in the coal dispute, or in a reactive way which incidentally defends the status quo, as happened in the financial crisis. Both chapters observe that myths are cumulatively effective through repetitions which define and

reinforce dominant worldviews. Whilst often working as micro-narratives in bigger news stories, they are able to pass unnoticed and unchallenged. The use of the framework reveals both the ubiquity of these crisis myths and their power to normalise.

Findings from the coal dispute in chapter five reveal new aspects to hegemonic designs of the Thatcher government via the oversimplistic binary nature of choices put to the public and that myth of choice itself. Simplifications of these mythic messages remove all nuance from debates about values, industrialism, collectivism, and modernity. Chapter six demonstrates how the then flagging neoliberal project was sustained during and after the financial crisis through myths as defence with a focus on individual bad bankers rather than on systemic issues of regulation and irresponsibility of finance. Both chapters offer fresh insights on each crisis by analysing media myths that worked through a bricolage of repetition, careful language choices and thematic storytelling tropes.

Chapter seven closes the arc of the central argument and considers implications of the cases for understanding longer-term impacts of neoliberal life in the UK. This stretched from early promises under the New Right, through normalisation, catastrophe, and subsequent defensive repair after the financial crisis. The chapter follows the effects of government ideological changes away from the crises themselves to their wider contexts of political and social change and challenge. To facilitate this, the chapter considers three themes: ideological change and defence, collectivism and individualism, and traditionalism and modernity as axes to address questions about change and stasis in public life. It demonstrates how myths smoothed contestations, reducing participation and pluralism so that narratives for change and stasis were rendered unambiguous, and resolutions to crisis situations legitimate, sensible, and inevitable.

Limitations of current study and prospects for future work

This thesis uses two case studies to examine political mythmaking from print media sources. This was a pragmatic decision based on the practicalities of what could be researched and written about in a thesis length piece of work. The decision not to

include, for example, traditional broadcast media outlets was partly due to practicalities about scoping issues, available sources, and potential dataset size. Additionally, as observed in chapter four, the inclusion of broadcast media would have added fresh complexities because British public service broadcasting operated around ideas of balance which did not apply to tabloid or broadsheet print media. It would be interesting to undertake further work based on analysis of broadcast media output in crises. Any investigation in this area could fruitfully build on earlier contributions about consent production from the Glasgow Media Group, (Philo, 1995; Philo et al, 1977).

It is also useful to briefly consider limitations from non-inclusion of new media platforms in this thesis as well as potential opportunities available from incorporating them in future research. This is due to important changes in print formats during the intervening period between the case studies.

The marketplace has changed substantially in thirty years. During the time of the coal dispute, daily papers held forth via an unchallenged platform because they were essential to gaining authoritative morning news for many people on their way to work. Reach and influence of print media slowly waned over the intervening years, with the pace of change accelerating from the new millennium (Curran and Seaton, 2018:174). During the early digital period, multimedia approaches were in flux before mainstreaming of current hybrid forms. Print-format sales came to be known as traditional, and very recently, legacy media. These now operate with digital adjunct platforms. Against this background, the financial crisis represents the last major window for print media as a universal go-to authority on what was happening as far as the public were concerned

New media formats did not exist during the coal dispute and were much less prominent in 2008-9 than they are today. If new media sources had been added to the financial crisis dataset that would have unbalanced the design of this particular study. However, the inclusion of new media in future media studies of different mythmaking events would definitely be worthwhile as a contrast to print media outputs.

Despite declining daily sales of print titles, they continue to play an important role in focusing public attention on issues. A recent case study on the Windrush scandal (Langer and Gruber, 2020:22) noted that whilst digitally networked stories "go viral" quickly, sustained attention generated by slower news cycles of legacy media outlets persist in the public consciousness and thus impact policy agendas. Whilst digital and social media sites have in effect democratised the ability to myth make, news stories gain traction and staying power if they are taken up by heavyweight print providers. Hence, print media sources still retain an important role in political crises. Their interaction with online sources in either amplifying or stifling news stories would be another area well worth studying.

Changes underway above also mean that future investigations into mythmaking will be vital for documenting and analysing rapidly developing media scenarios. As asserted in chapter one, all traditional and legacy formats are currently under pressure at this time, both due to financial constraints and game changing issues of fake news and manipulation. Concepts of public information, service and balance in reporting have shown themselves ill-equipped to cope with current extremism and digital misinformation outside the frame of more traditional left versus right-wing establishment commentary. Wahl-Jorgensen et al (2017) argue that existing paradigmatic notions of impartiality-as-balance for broadcasters is both limiting and lacking in context. Taking this a step further, longstanding, and established mores around professional and named journalists working under house rules, editorial control and known ownership are crumbling. Claims to objective or at least tribal journalism in service of public interests are fading and are being challenged by new forms of journalism in service of particular actors, whether visible or not. Serious news sources and the academics who research these sources need new approaches, making myth awareness and analysis more important than ever.

"Myth today"[18], yesterday, and tomorrow

In summary, this thesis produced a detailed empirical study of British newspaper media articles during two crisis situations. Its analysis of narratives and montages of narratives specific to each crisis during chapters five and six was followed by a longer temporal framing in chapter seven which linked the two crises by considering them as part of the journey of the neoliberal myth. This longer lens demonstrated how myths continuously enable media outlets to frame and reframe ideas and events as certainties or ambiguities depending upon prevailing political context. They are one facet of what Hoskins and Tulloch (2016:52) refer to as the contention of "mediated connectivity", where the present is linked to past memories for the purpose of framing particular paths as certain or inevitable.

This thesis promotes the idea of a succession of media myths as core and constant for managing consent. Two brief final arguments now take this contention further. The first of these links that neoliberal myth to its predecessor myth of social democratic consensus and its potential future successors.

Commentators have argued that the idea of post-war consensus as a predecessor to neoliberalism is in itself a convenient shorthand for policies that promoted social cohesion following a decade of hardship (Hickson, 2004). These policies promised full employment and social mobility to a generation returning from wartime conditions. Whilst planning was underway during the war, the success of the Atlee administration in delivering the National Health Service and accompanying social policy suite was such that the Conservatives did not bother to contest it (Thomas, 2007: 266) until New Right ideas spawned a challenge through neoliberal ideologies. Going further back, welfare reforms in 1906 were mythologised as an end to Dickensian working conditions which helped reconcile the common man to that Victorian "Club" governance outlined by Moran (2003) in chapter seven.

In terms of mythic succession, as seen over the course of this thesis, the neoliberal myth failed in 2008 with the onset of the financial crisis which discredited earlier promises and needed repair. The post-war democratic consensus myth fitted with

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[18] Barthes, (2009: 131-87)

collective achievements for the many whilst the promises of neoliberalism delivered big for a few. The failures of finance-based capitalism should have left the UK open to refreshed ideas for renewed myths of democratic control, social logics, and investment in new industries. However, because the state chose to defend neoliberalism and shore it up through austerity myths, the UK has remained in ideological stasis with the closing down of public debate alongside libraries, community projects and Sure Start centres. The Brexit shocks and pandemic situation have added to a sense of entropy and disillusionment, with public suffering reduced avenues to change social meaning and challenge vested interests.

Prospectively, were this thesis written in the future, a still longer lens might see historians and political scientists surmising that the financial crisis was still underway a decade later through rising antagonisms, social media contestations and austerity outcomes. Gamble (2009a: 33) asked if the financial crisis might be an event to trigger a deeper crisis of political and economic legitimacy. Certainly, the recent COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has highlighted the impact of continuous underfunding on the NHS and public services, with outcomes of state mobilisations still unclear (The Guardian; 2020). Whilst the short term political and economic storm might be over, for those struggling to thrive in straightened times, their individual circumstances might constitute a long-term crisis of living standards, exacerbated by this new set of conditions. As noted by Alston (2019) hostile UK initiatives such as Universal Credit have reproduced genuine hardship narratives and Victorian conditions for those in poverty.

Despite potential of the internet to allow people to share information, lack of site verification and a bewildering array of sources have compounded public problems for evaluating evidence. Enli (2017:53) illustrates how during the digital era, intensified personification and popularism characterised the 2016 US election, allowing Trump a direct platform to bypass and critique established media outlets. Personal opinions, idiosyncrasies and irregularities appeared non-crafted and more authentic to voters than managed communications.

However, Brexit myths, elite profiteering, rule breaking and challenges to the instruments of state are all works in progress which will need to be fully played out.

There are two current likely candidates for future myths: "levelling up" and the prospective splintering of the UK. The former includes rising discourses of a 'left-behind' North (Berry, 2019), oversimplified and co-opted by all political parties. Berry argues for this accidental-looking presentation to be re-orientated as deliberate subjugation through over-centralisation and the dominance of London and south-east focussed concerns. Similarly, Boyle (2018) has deconstructed mythic illusions of those who voted to leave the EU, arguing that they result from a lack of recognition about the end of Empire and how this opens an opportunity for the English to gain a new identity. For Boyle, splendid isolation and a riven Europe denies the Scots, the Welsh, and the Irish a will of their own.

By charting endless reframing and the journeys of prior and future myths, this thesis makes the case that mediated political myths are a constant and necessary social glue. Their production helps manage material aspects of the crises of modernity and what happens between them. They encourage focus on the shorthand of what appears constant and unambiguous at times of change rather than to become uncomfortable through thinking through what is complex, nuanced, and dynamic. Away from the specifics of the case studies, we can start to see that idea of mythological history explored in chapter two with more clarity. Myths are both historical and ahistorical, repetitive, malleable, and recyclable. As noted by Boas in 1898 (and reported by Lévi-Strauss, 1955), mythologies are built up to be shattered, with new worlds built up from their fragments.

Summary value of myth analysis

Implications of the above for political analysis are that mediated political myths provide normative authority and legitimacy for the ongoing workings of life in modern society. Barthes concluded his *Mythologies* with a request for a reconciliation with myth, (p. 187). This thesis has attempted to address that request; rather than forcing that reconciliation by ignoring myth or placing it as an afterthought, mythmaking has been foregrounded as something which is complementary to other, more material analyses of crisis situations. Other studies will need to be undertaken to see whether insights from myth can enable more

effective academic responses to the challenges of proliferation in news sites and sources and new ways of understanding events. This thesis presents a first step.

Conspiracy theorists and fake news have always been part of modern state affairs; a century later, the Zinoviev letter continues to be debated as a forgery contributing to a Conservative election win in 1924 (Bennett, 2018). Long-standing journalistic traditions about traceable sources, editorial review and named proprietors for media outlets have previously hindered snowball effects from unevidenced stories and covert players. This is no longer the case, as has been seen from hidden agency activity revealed by the Cambridge Analytica scandal (see Boyd-Barrett, 2019) and other kinds of covert microtargeting online that attempts to influence democratic processes by converting susceptible readers.

What is equally new is changes to audiences; a rise of political and moral relativism alongside identity politics, and, after thirty years of neoliberalism, commodification of both knowledge and education. We saw in chapter one how social media sites once heralded as a democratic future for citizen journalism have been co-opted, and monetarised. These developments show how much we need new analytical tools that avoid mythic short-cuts and ready-made models of understanding. The ability to handle discomfort and ambiguity from unpicking myth by effective analysis is needed more than ever.

Here, at the very end, it can be said that the current challenges discussed above demand reorientating of existing critical frames for analysing language choices and representations in public life. Modern states have historically relied on a limited number of sedimented and broadly balanced media outlets which guide informed citizenship in a generally orderly, rational, and bounded way. But online flux and claims to truth made by powerful and uncontrolled actors threaten existing processes. We lack visibility of who and whose funds are directing proliferations of news, fake news, and anxieties online and in legacy media.

In this context, myth analysis can help identify emerging political tropes, providing insights into repetitions that promote dominant or hidden interests. Use of a myth framework gives us insights into murmuration and subsequent flight directions in

political processes as well as insight into unseen attempts at power and influence. In short, myth analysis provides that "discomfort of thought" raised by Kennedy above. Whilst this area requires a lot more study, and this thesis can only provide a first step, much fruitful insight could be gained by giving myth analysis a greater role.

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Appendices

Appendix one: Myth table

Coal dispute and financial crisis mythmaking summary

	Coal dispute	*Financial crisis*
Overarching myths	The wrong doing of a misinformed *collective*, led astray by outdated ideals and facilitated by unrestrained powerful demagogue as epitome of extreme ideas *Amplifies the presentation of the ballot as only legitimate and democratic course, and of just a dispute, conceals government activity and size of closure plans. Stigmatises by tribe whilst simultaneously offering possibility, and cementing reputation and context*	The wrong doing of powerful *individuals* as epitome of greed and irresponsibility, unrestrained by an ineffective collective of 'supine' (FT) Boards, lax regulation and permissive culture *Amplifies the scapegoated individual and the presentation of the few bad apples, cronyism of leadership and of high-octane risk-taking lifestyle. Conceals a lack of regulation and control, press own complicity in not asking hard questions and eventual question of long-term consequences and size of taxpayer bill.*

Myths of choices and agency (possibilities)
 	
'Choices' are amplified during miners' strike, downplayed in financial crisis.
 	
Agency denied or denial attempts in both crises
	• Trope of "choice" already established Thatcherite discourse
	• Othering of the militant collective with its Soviet, dissident values helps consign post-war consensus to the past, enabling the myth of the "go-getting" society, a new Britannia and promotion of individual and their rights.
	   ○ Media make sense of the possibilities ahead – as agent for societal change
		• Following initial shock and inaction at Lehman fail and anticipation domino of future catastrophe – US and subsequent UK rescue deals set up as no alternative – too big to fail narratives. Symbolic removal of "bad" leader as only choice.
		• narrows debate to blame rather than change
		   ○ Downplays alternative arguments and helps make sense of continuation of the same – media as agent for social

	○ Hides the reality of the everyman trying to defend his job and local community • Miners are called up as representative of a mythical past as remote to 1984 values as the General Strike and Jarrow.	continuity at febrile time. ○ Conceals how expert committees were from same banking communities ○ Conceals lack of public education on finance and lack of serious debate
Underpinned by… ↓	• Sets up a binary choice of the state-subsidised, inefficient nationalised industry populated by militant flag waving trade unionists led to their doom by their irresponsible leaders contrasted with their up and coming, dynamic privatised and dynamic Other in entrepreneurs.	○ Permits dissonant chords to be held simultaneously – (Glynos, 2012 on "super clever" and "incompetent wreckers".) • Lampooning of the shamed individual along with their compliant boards amplifies public need for sackings (followed by subsequent "show trials") and spectacle of remorse. Downplays process of renormalisation of the value of the City to UK economy and reinforces the need for recovery and presents protests as sideshow
Myths of legitimisation and delegitimisation *Coal dispute is proactive claim for legitimacy by Government through othering and delegitimisation of miners.*	• Legitimacy previously enacted in long term strategy of North Sea oil, redundancies, and Employment Acts and the setting of targets for the mining industry - economic performance with set deadlines. • Short term management of closure programme and managing divisions through ballot issue. • Hides different job prospects and conditions	• Previously legitimised and applauded controlled / "expert" speculation flipped to out of control gambling narrative in hyper masculine culture (Prügl 2012) • Aggressive expansion of RBS flipped from risk-taking being just good business to one of recklessness ○ Amplified - lulled into security of no more boom and

Financial crisis delegitimises the individual CEO to re-legitimise the industry.	by presentation as simple division rather than federated union, which hides regional distinctions. • Hides legitimacy of area strike by rule book and actual plan for closures. • Amplifies the reasonableness of Conservative approach and minimises the stealth appropriation of the centre ground in British politics. • Amplifies the threat of militancy and delegitimises parliamentary Labour party (effectiveness through poll point loss from initial Kinnock "honeymoon").	bust - hence demonic depictions of now threatening Other. o Amplified – the lost culture of banking as cautious, sensible business and need to return to previous prudence. o Promotes taking personal responsibility of taxpayers; "little guys caught out" and easy public acceptance of subsequent austerity discourse (Stanley, 2014)
myths of *reputation* e.g. (wrongful) leaderships, heroism, and villainy *Reputations gained and lost key elements to both crisis* ***Underpinned by…*** ↓	Literature on myths of key actors already established (Charteris-Black, 2015; Milne, 2014; Adeney and Lloyd 1986) • Personal demonization of Scargill as embodiment of Marxist, Communist other (touted micro associations to South Africa and IRA) creates myth of eventual endgame of socialism and eventual creation of UK Stalin. o Reveals Thatcher Boudicca myth defending Britannia and gives bonus of swipe at Labour party but conceals end of consensus politics and end of	Former celebration of the risk taker - heroic tales of company salvage (Lehman during 9/11) and expansion of RBS. Existing Western romance of the great leader (*Forbes* type interviews) o Nicknames were formerly held as badges of honour – the Gorilla as alpha, Fred the Shred as model of android efficiency during takeovers. o Fuld creates his own myths of reputation and heroism as a skilful operator (stories of the blackjack table and Vegas). Similarly, Goodwin promulgates own myth of efficiency

		and cleverness (mercy killings; drive-by shootings). Both hyper-competitive through narratives.
	o With post Falklands win, needed new target for 1987 victory, provided by miners – Kinnock not providing enough of a target. (Tony Benn as parliamentary militant, and Arthur Scargill as union militant). o Personal demonization of Scargill conceals the legitimacy of his central point that they plan to shut down the industry	o Hero mythology now switched to depictions of the demon, who had us "in a spell", now falling away so that we can see the sorcerer for what he was, now outside the boundary and a threat. o Lack of apologies seen as attempt to salvage reputation. o Amplifies dialogue of a few bad apples in otherwise sound system, concealing issues on light touch regulation that allowed "bad apples" to thrive.
Myths of *history* and *permanence* *For both crises, spirits of the past called up (Marx).* *Barthes (2009: 132) myth is type of speech chosen by history – "objects become the prey of mythical*	Press using history of 1972 strike as cornerstone of mythmaking here, both in creating a narrative that Thatcher will want revenge, and Scargill's success at Saltley as to why militant action needs to be feared and controlled. • "...shackles of history and myth make it impossible, unthinkable to fight and lose again to miners" *(The Guardian* 4 Apr 1984). • Also returns to mythical fight of class struggle and General Strike.	Financial crisis draws on historical context of the South Sea Bubble and the Great Depression. o The historical context amplifies perspective that under right conditions it is rational that these individuals sought to maximise their gains o Downplays long term effects of the crisis and effect on public purse when

speech for a while, then they disappear, others take their place and attain the status of myth"	• Dispute raises Conservative historical myth that socialism is the ever-present enemy that still needs to be fought by new Britannia and myth of conflict against threatening other with non-traditional / British values. 　○ Invocations of church and state as part of traditional and historical British values, in particular the Law. 　○ Amplifies what the "Citizens" and "British people" want – "the overwhelming majority of people in this country, except perhaps the Labour Party, are behind the police…" 　○ Downplays civil liberties and issues • Historical context of the miners at heart of the class struggle • Both sides engaged in narrative that industrial dispute determined the future of British democracy	set in historical context 　○ Downplays political guilt at measures that will now need to be taken in recovery and also length of time measures will be needed for and impact on the taxpayer. • Scale of crisis reckoned with historical narratives (110 references in Goodwin dataset, 11 in Fuld). Expected factual narratives of "public autopsy into the biggest bankruptcy in US history" (FT, 6 October 2008) but also comprehension that crisis already taking on aspect of myth.

Appendix two: Article Samples

Appendix two provides an in-depth look at two articles considered in the thesis as an example of the process undertaken. Each article was considered as per procedures set out by Fairclough, (1996) in chapter 5 (p.109-139) of *Language and Power,* as discussed in chapter 4 of the thesis.

N.B. It has been necessary to use the earlier 1996 edition of this text for this appendix, as due to COVID-19 restriction issues, it has been impossible to get a copy of the 2001 second edition also used in the main body of the thesis.

During this chapter, Fairclough sets out a reference manual for undertaking textual analysis, which is intended to be used at the initial text analysis stage of the three part approach to Critical Discourse Analysis he outlines in figure 2.1 on p.25 of the book. This approach covers the interaction between the text, the process of production and interpretation, and wider social conditions for production and interpretation, and is outlined in more detail in chapter 4, p. 116-7.

The manual works in three sections, with ten sets of questions and sub-questions attached to support the researcher. The three sections are summarised briefly below together with their relevance to working with myth and what the approach can add to analysis:

a) *Vocabulary and its experiential values such as ideologically contested words, overwording and rewording. Relational values including euphemisms, and expressive values including metaphor. Choices in news vocabulary help create a narrative that links ideas and events and mediates between the political sphere and the reading public*.
   Where CDA techniques support here is in helping critique vocabulary choices and making explicit those decisions journalists make in their monologue production of reports. Metaphorical expressions are a key part of myth production as discussed on pp.42-4.

b) *Grammar and its experiential values including active or passive or positive or negative attributions in sentences, and whether agency is made clear. Relational values including pronoun choices and modes such as questions and imperatives, and expressive values of modality.*
   In this thesis, ideas of mythmaking in and around agency are explicitly threaded throughout, mainly through the thematic framework heading and associated discussions for each crisis, *Myths of choice and agency.* (See framework, p.57, coal dispute discussion, pp.71-4, financial crisis discussion, pp.85-7; chapter 5, pp.139-45, chapter 6, p.167-173.) These discussions draw on a number of source articles in each, congruent with the CDA approach that "a single text on

its own is quite insignificant: the effects of media power are cumulative, working through the repetition of particular ways of handling causality and agency…" (Fairclough, 1996:54)

c) *Textual structures such as turn taking and control. Their role within larger-scale structures where there are predictable elements in a predictable order, in certain types of discourse, such as in a newspaper article, (see p.138-9).* Ordering of news reports and turn taking in news articles controls the flow of explanations in explaining what has happened and creates logics. Making links between CDA techniques and political narratives is highly compatible with myth study in this area. Their use in demonstrating how media reports build narratives that present the world and political life in particular ways is tackled by Philo (2007;177), who notes how language and its structures embody systems of thought. Whilst in this way, although turn taking and different sides are shown, the report is balanced in favour of dominant interests.

As noted during chapter four of the main body of the thesis, (p.97) the examples used to explore the method below, are very much those selected by the choices of the researcher as compatible with the thesis aims, and therefore should be considered as illustrative of the method, rather than exhaustive.

It should also be noted that due to the amount of material generated through close set textual analysis, that in terms of research design, the researcher is presented with two broad choices. Whether to pick a small set of texts from the original sample and deep dive into their contents, (as per e.g., Hart, 2017) or in using a wider lens, to use texts where they provide illustrative examples of the argument proposed. Both approaches are equally valid, but present differing constraints, as discussed in chapter four, p.97.

There are two articles considered as examples using Fairclough's method in this appendix, one from each case study window. The articles have been presented in full for ease of access. One is from *The Times* and the other from *The Financial Times*:

Example 1: From the Coal Dispute

Reference:

Routledge, P., (1984a) Moderates dampen left-wing hopes of all-out pit strike, *The Times*, **16 March, 1**

Supporting information and database:

Paul Routledge, (Labour Editor). "Moderates dampen left-wing hopes of all-out pit strike." *Times* [London, England] 16 Mar. 1984: 1. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 12 June 2017. [699 words]

Moderates dampen left-wing hopes of all-out pit strike.

- *Left-wing hopes of an all-out national miners' strike have been blasted by heavy votes against action from moderate coalfields.*
- *A big majority against striking is expected in the Nottinghamshire area, which called a 24-hour stoppage for its ballot today.*
- *In a deal following picket's death at Ollerton Colliery, Yorkshire miners are leaving picket duties to their Notts colleagues until the ballot result is known.*
- *Mr Brittan, the Home Secretary, was accused by the Opposition of inflaming a difficult situation when he spoke in the Commons of pithead intimidation.*

Miners in the moderate areas yesterday delivered a body blow to left-wing hopes of a national strike in the mining industry by returning heavy votes against industrial action. More than 12.000 members in the Midlands area of the National Union of Mine- workers have voted four to one against striking in support for Yorkshire miners whose picketing has continued in defiance of a High Court order. A similar vote against striking was recorded in the single-pit Cumbria coalfield. The men at Haig colliery decided by 383 to 109 against joining the "snowball strike" despite being told only the previous day that most of them will lose their jobs in the next few months. In Lancashire, usually regarded as a "barometer" coalfield reliable industry sources reported last night that despite intensive picketing by Yorkshire miners the vote is running at more than three to one against an all-out stoppage. Miners in Nottinghamshire, Britain's second largest coalfield, vote on their area leaders' strike recommendation today, after reaching a "no-go-area" deal with militant Yorkshire pickets — they will strike for the day to hold a pithead ballot in peace. The vote among traditionally moderate Nottinghamshire miners usually corresponds with the poll verdict in the Midlands, and after picket line violence there National Coal Board managers expect a big majority against a strike.

The board's figures released last night indicate that the disruption is still growing. In all, 138 pits are on strike or are "picketed out" by flying pickets from Yorkshire or other militant coalfields. Only 21 pits are working normally, two more are turning some coal and at another nine men are at work but not producing. The board's lawyers are considering the evidence indicating that the injunctions against unlawful secondary picketing granted two days ago have been breached in many cases, but the board is delaying a return to court during the 24- hour truce reached between the Yorkshire and Nottingham miners' leaders.

… Mr Henry Richardson, the Nottinghamshire miners' secretary, said a Yorkshire picket's death early yesterday had convinced everyone of the need for unity among miners. He said: "It's obvious that life and limb are in danger and therefore we are saying to our membership that this cannot go on." Another pithead ballot will he held today in north Derbyshire, once regarded as a left-wing stronghold but now more in tune with moderate opinion. If the vote there conforms with the pattern elsewhere there will be intense pressure on the union's left-wing leaders to order a national ballot next week. There are fears, however, that if the Nottinghamshire men vote against striking then, in the words of one official "all hell will be let loose" by Yorkshire pickets. Mr Arthur Scargill, the union's president, said in a statement: "Following the NCB decision to use Tory anti-trade union legislation in taking out an injunction against the Yorkshire NUM. there has been an escalation of action throughout the British coalfields." This deliberate NCB provocation, alongside the tragedy that occurred last night on the picket line at Ollerton, demonstrates how serious the situation has become."

The union's Yorkshire area executive formally decided to continue sending flying pickets to spread the strike. Mr Jack Taylor, area president said: "There might be a way of interpreting the injunction to allow us to picket in other coalfields. If we believe that for us to carry out our responsibility to our members, we need to picket in other areas we shall do so."

***

Summary	This article has been selected for discussion as typical of those displaying oppositional debates to set up questions of miners *choice and agency* in terms of choosing to strike during the coal dispute. It is situated during the very early part of the dispute, where a number of federated areas such as Yorkshire are already out on strike, and where other areas such as Nottinghamshire are deciding what to do.
	The key stakeholders from the miners (as selected by the media) are represented here, with voices heard from area leaders including Yorkshire (Mr Jack Taylor) and Nottinghamshire (Mr Henry Richardson) as well as NUM president, Mr Arthur Scargill. These people are identified by name and position. Other key stakeholders from the NCB are not named directly, rather by

	position only, such as 'National Coal Board managers', 'NCB lawyers' and 'one official'. The only government stakeholder mentioned is Home Secretary, Mr Leon Brittan, whose inclusion in the headlines might appear tangential, given none of the article is about him. The journalists raise his contribution as a placeholder for the reader in terms of 'inflaming' the situation discussed in the article. This reminds the audience that the government are stakeholders in this dispute, although they are not directly part of this report.

a) Vocabulary and its experiential, relational, and expressive values	• This excerpt contains a number of ideologically contestable phrases as discussed on p.142 of chapter 5 which takes three quotes from the article, under the mythic theme of *choice and agency*. It offers insights into the debate of whether miners will opt for militancy or moderation. The word 'militant' is used interchangeably with 'left-wing', leaving the reader to infer that the word 'moderate' can be held as synonymous with centre or right-wing values. The word moderate itself is inflated from its more general meaning in the Oxford English Dictionary.
	
	    o The OED offers 3 meanings of the word 'moderate'. In terms of its political meaning, it lists "*of persons or their opinions: not strongly partisan; not radical or extreme*". By placing others as moderate, the strikers are radicalised. This may not necessarily be the case if individuals are only striking to preserve their jobs, rather than having a strong political opinion in general.
	
	• There are also a series of contestations available in the report which positions Yorkshire at the centre of these 'militant' values and in opposition to the more 'moderate' position from Nottingham and the Midlands. The establishment of Lancashire as a 'usual' 'barometer' also infers a historical and current position of that area as a guide to general feeling amongst miners. Its position not to support the strike 'despite intensive picketing by Yorkshire' also supports the position of Yorkshire as othered and extreme.
	
	• Here we can also see an example of overwording to support the creation of opposing positions, which Fairclough (1996:115) sees as indicating a focus of ideological struggle. The word moderate is used on 6 occasions in the article, against either left-wing or militant positions.
	
	• A variety of expressive values are used in the piece from the sources quoted, including:
	
	    o Language from Mr Henry Richardson (Nottingham secretary) is conciliatory in expressing a wish for unity, "that life and limb are in danger". The use of the metaphorical language here adds emphasis to Mr Richardson's point. Hart (2017:6) notes how this type of

	metaphor acts as a frame to help understand how the event (death of a picket) should be reasoned through and reacted to emotionally. The quoted statement is congruent with the general positioning of Nottinghamshire miners in the text. This sentiment of a call for unity amongst miners also appears in the paired article on the front page, "Miners united by picket's death" by Clement and Seaton (1984) where their opening line leads with "both moderate and militant miners were shocked yesterday by the death of a flying picket…" This provides an example of the "intertextual chains" discussed by Fairclough (1992:288) and discussed on p.55 of the thesis. o The unnamed official quoted with the metaphorical statement that "all hell will be let loose" is also congruent with the actions of Yorkshire miners as depicted in the text. o The journalist (Paul Routledge) expresses a number of incongruent metaphors during the text, suggesting his own discomfort at events. The headline is that "moderates dampen left-wing hopes", which conveys an impression of gentle lowering of expectations, whereas in the sub headings he dials up the rhetoric to say that "hopes of a national strike have been "blasted by heavy votes". By the first line of the main report, this is metaphorically described as "a body blow". We cannot know whether the headline was adapted by an editor, however, as it is the front page headline, we can assume it has met with some scrutiny. The ownership of *The Times* by Rupert Murdoch who was highly supportive of Margaret Thatcher will have caused some discordance for some journalists (see p. 20 of the thesis). We also know from his own recollections in his later biography of Scargill (Routledge, 1993: xii) that he was conflicted as a journalist, seeing the miners' struggle reflected in his own industry with the breakout of the Wapping dispute in 1986. Here, Rupert Murdoch moved production for News International papers out to Wapping. New technologies here allowed journalists to input their own copy, resulting in huge reductions in printing jobs.
b) Grammar and its experiential, relational, and	• The unnamed official above provides the most obvious example of unclear agency in the report (see Fairclough 1996:124). The position in the text following on from Mr Richardson's statement might lead the reader to assume that it is another Nottinghamshire official, however, its placing immediately before Mr Scargill's statement might equally

expressive values	suggest it was made by an NCB spokesperson. This might be given additional credence given its opposition to the conciliatory words agreed by Nottinghamshire officials and prior text referring to "the board's lawyers" and that the "board is delaying". • In terms of other agents covered in the report, much of the impetus and active agency in the first half of the report around the immediate event of the vote against striking is awarded to "the moderates". They are the subjects (Fairclough, 1996:121-3) of a high number of sentences, e.g., "delivered a body blow…", "voted four to one against striking". The second part of the report, in setting the vote in the context of wider strike events, sees a wide variety of active and passive voices as a contest between two sides and a variety of stakeholders in each, actions "done by" and actions "done to" follow in turn. • Both Mr Richardson and Mr Taylor are directly quoted using relational values to assert inclusion in their pronouns (Fairclough, 1996:128) and to make a claim for authority to speak (Fairclough, 1996:128), in this case on behalf of regional union members. Mr Richardson uses "we are saying to our membership", as he speaks for himself and his Nottingham members as ideologically together. Mr Taylor's comments are even more assertive of solidarity, with seven significant pronouns in two sentences; "allow *us* to picket", "*we* believe", "for *u*s", "carry out *our* responsibility", "to *our* members", "*we* need to picket" and "*we* shall do so". • The article also includes a series of reporting statements that convey currency and authenticity to the reader through use of the present tense. Fairclough (1996:129) notes this as a particular feature of news reports, hence "moderates dampen", "miners are leaving", "disruption is still growing", "21 pits are working normally". Fairclough sees this as both supporting a press position that the world is transparent and disguising the "messy process of information gathering and interpretation" (1996:129) and ideological design.
c) Textual structures	• The textual structure of this report generally follows the established newspaper conventions described by Fairclough on p.137. Fairclough here notes how many newspaper reports may be made up of predictable elements in a predictable order. This follows the narrative patterns of what happened, (local vote against action) what caused it (local ballot set up), what effects (contestation between opposing parties and a variety of stakeholders including other areas, key figures, NCB, and government) etc. This is complementary with the narrative patterns used in developing story structures and building expected patterns of engagement described by Bruner and discussed in the thesis on p.46-7. The principles are further

| | developed by Fairclough (1996:25) to explore what this can mean in terms of news convention, that the headline and first paragraphs provide the most newsworthy comments, before moving into further specifics.
• In terms of interactional features in the text, (Fairclough, 1996:133-4) Paul Routledge as the journalist offers one form of a turn taking system for interviewees. This is within the constraints of the reporting structure, which affords power to the reporter, editor, and proprietor in making choices on what to report. (This is discussed in the thesis body on p.16, where Puglisi and Snyder set out the conditions for political behaviour by media outlets). Here a balance of perspectives is offered. Having set up a contrasting argument between the perspectives of the 'moderates' and heard from a representative (Mr Richardson), as well as the unnamed official, Paul Routledge also takes time to hear from two balancing contributors, as a form of turn-taking in the article. For the other side, we have a statement from both 'militant' leader, Mr Arthur Scargill as union president, and Mr Jack Taylor as the area president of Yorkshire. |

Example 2: From the financial crisis

Reference:

Parker, G., and Thomas, D., (2009) Former executives face bonus grilling, *Financial Times,* **9 Feb, 2**

Supporting information and database:

George Parker, (political editor) Daniel Thomas (then reporter) Former executives face bonus grilling, 2 *Financial Times* [London edition] *Factiva, Web,* 12 October 2016 [604 words]

The City and Westminster have differing views on the pay issue, write George Parker and Daniel Thomas

In the early 18th century, after the bursting of the South Sea bubble, a parliamentary resolution proposed that bankers be tied up in sacks filled with snakes and thrown into the Thames. The threat was never seen through but according to Vince Cable - the Liberal Democrat treasury spokesman who unearthed this historical precedent - Britain's banking fraternity is deservedly facing another run-in with parliament.

John Prescott, the former deputy prime minister, launched a public campaign yesterday to stop bonuses being paid to RBS staff. Tomorrow will see the modern equivalent of bankers being put into stocks at Westminster. Sir Fred Goodwin, former RBS chief executive, will join other former bank executives in trying to explain business models to what is certain to be a hostile Commons treasury committee. Sir Fred, who emerged from the RBS debacle with a £8.4m pension pot, has hired Phil Hall, former News of the World editor, to coach him.

"They are bringing this on themselves," Mr Cable said, as he looked ahead to the bank bonus season, starting today with Barclays. "Some of them have extraordinarily thick skins." Westminster and the City may be less than two miles apart but the bonus question has exposed a vast gulf in the way the pay issue is perceived. Alistair Darling, as both politician and part-owner of Britain's banking industry, is caught in between. The chancellor knows the public would prefer no banker to receive any bonus. But he accepts that some bonuses are contractual obligations and others may be necessary to retain key staff - profit-making foreign exchange traders for example - at RBS and Lloyds, the two part-nationalised banking groups. "We actually need some of these people to help dig us out of this

hole," says one ally of Mr Darling. But explaining any bonuses paid to staff at banks that only survive thanks to the taxpayer will be excruciating.

Barclays is likely to say today say that bonuses will be cut between 50 and 60 per cent on average in its investment banking and management divisions, to what is likely to work out at about £600m. Payments will also be split between shares and cash, with none of the executive board set to receive any bonus for last year. Barclays, which refused to comment, is also expected to reveal a profit for the year approaching £6bn, which makes its bonus policy less contentious than that for RBS and Lloyds, which have been kept afloat by £37bn of public money.

RBS plans to pay up to £500m in discretionary bonuses, as it struggles to find a balance between what would be politically acceptable and commercially necessary to retain staff and reward profitable units. The bank, which declined to comment on the size of bonuses, must honour about £500m of contractual obligations, including those to former members of ABN Amro as well as its RBS Sempra Commodities joint venture. A spokesman said bonuses would be "dramatically reduced"; there would be "no reward for failure for those individuals directly involved with losses".

Lloyds Banking Group made it clear last year that it planned to pay bonuses to top executives, though those at executive level would probably be paid in stock. It sees itself as a different case because of a past prudence that made it one of the few banks in the world capable of rescuing HBOS.

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Summary	This article has been selected for discussion as typical of those focusing on banking failings as a result of individual or small group behaviours rather than structural problems during the financial crisis. It is situated towards the end of the main crisis events, where the rescue package has been put into operation, and those banking executives who lost their jobs as a result of the crisis are expected to give evidence of events to the Treasury Committee. It offers an example of how *The Myths of History, Continuity and Change* are regularly pulled into crisis analysis (p.192-3) , in this case where Vince Cable has chosen to make some personal political capital out of research that he has been undertaking on the banking industry.
	The key stakeholders (as selected by the media) are only selectively present during the article. In terms of parliament, both government (Mr Alistair Darling and Mr John Prescott) and opposition (Sir Vince Cable) representatives heard from either directly, or indirectly, in the case of Mr Darling's 'ally'.

	Fred Goodwin, who is the recipient of most of the personalised criticism of bankers (see especially pp.187-9) is the only individually named former executive, with the rest consigned to the position of 'others'. In terms of the banks involved in the crisis, the three major players for the UK are discussed in turn. No representatives are quoted by name. Barclays is noted as refusing to comment on bonuses, the RBS statement is given by an unnamed spokesperson and the indirect attributions to Lloyds are historical.
a) Vocabulary and its experiential, relational, and expressive values	• Whilst the article does not contain the significant overwording of ideological contestation in 1984 such as identifying miners as 'militant' or 'moderate' present in the samples from the coal dispute, there are a number of remarks that separate bankers into two camps. Those who will be needed, and those who should face censure (see detail on good and bad bankers on p.93). The article accepts the former group will receive rewards in the forthcoming 'bonus season', whilst representatives of the other group who are seen to bring trouble 'on themselves' will have to explain themselves to the committee.
	• Mr Alistair Darling (Chancellor) is identified as 'caught in between', 'this vast gulf' on pay, both for his muddied role as 'politician and as part-owner of Britain's banking industry'. He is used as a device for the reporters in helping to separate out those bankers who need to go before a 'hostile' committee and those who will be 'necessary' for recovery. This sentiment is reinforced later with the comment that RBS 'struggles' to 'find a balance between what would be publicly acceptable and commercially necessary'.
	• The article contains a high number of evaluative vocabulary choices (Fairclough, 1996: 115). An 'oppositional wording' (Fairclough, 1996: 113) is established for the forthcoming Treasury committee meeting. Britain's 'banking fraternity' is set up in opposition for a 'run-in with parliament'. The use of banking fraternity as a phrase here is a rewording that confers images associated with closed male groups outside general public accessibility, such as the masons, or even the mafia. This idea of wrongful elite behaviour is an established part of news articles during the crisis, such as identified by Kerr and Robinson (2011) and discussed on p.91 The implication of wrong-doing is carried through via references such as 'face bonus grilling', 'put into stocks', 'debacle' and 'hostile…committee' to make the context for the spokesman's comment that there would be 'no reward for failure'.
	• The phrase 'put into stocks' also does some heavy lifting in terms of sustaining the idea of public spectacle for the bankers' trial (p.191) that opened up the report. The historic

	references to the South Sea Bubble of 1720 as a crisis in investment and confidence following frenzied insider trading and speculation (see Dale, 2004) are a popular feature in news articles on the financial crisis (see p.195). Whilst they are often used to explain what financial losses might do to an economy alongside noting cyclical crises in capitalism, here the example focuses on 18th Century punishments. In full knowledge (which will be explained later in the article) that some bankers will be needed going forward, and some bonuses will have to be paid, the stocks or sacks filled with snakes are positioned to appeal to the public, who aren't going to get their wishes for all bankers to be denied a bonus as penance.
	• In terms of expressive values (Fairclough, 1996: 118) these appear throughout the article. Those bankers who have been judged negatively for their actions receive matching evaluations directly from the journalists such as 'deservedly facing another run-in', and 'Sir Fred, who emerged from the RBS debacle with a £8.4m pension pot'. They also receive negative evaluation of their personal qualities from the selection of quotes made; Mr Cable is quoted directly as saying "Some of them have extraordinarily thick skins." The RBS spokesperson also negatively evaluates *individuals* 'involved with losses' . Similarly, a positively classed value is chosen for Lloyds through use of the word 'prudence'. Other stakeholders are included in these expressive values, such as justifying bonuses paid as being 'excruciating' where the taxpayer has bailed out the bank.
	• There is also a variety of negative expression around Sir Fred Goodwin personally, as the only named former executive. A careful selection of negative facts are clustered around his description, from the 'debacle' at RBS, to the size of his £8.4m pension pot, and that he felt the need to hire a former tabloid editor to prepare him. Whilst Mr Cable's descriptions of 'bringing this on themselves' and 'thick skin' does not mention Goodwin directly, the proximity of placement suggests to the reader that this description does apply to him.
b) Grammar and its experiential, relational, and expressive values	• There are a variety of interesting grammatical processes going on in this report. This is largely because the article has two parts; one which is future orientated in reporting on what bankers will 'face' at the forthcoming Treasury committee hearing, and the second part a wider commentary on the situation in the main banks.
	• The first grammatical issue of note is around tense, with the first half of the article divided into past and future events. In terms of the former, that Mr Cable has found precedent for what to do with erring bankers, and that Mr Goodwin has hired Phil Hall to coach him. In terms of the latter, the press

	men are speculating on events of the following day. Here we have 'tomorrow will see the modern equivalent of bankers being put into stocks' and that Sir Fred Goodwin 'will join other former bank executives'. The second part of the article swings in terms of tenses used between expected further future actions from the banks, where their bonus decisions are deemed 'likely' and those banks where only past information is known. There are a number of additional expressive modalities also present in the article which convey 'possibility' (Fairclough, 1996:128) such as 'payments will also be split' and 'plans to pay'. These are presented in the text amongst known happenings, which are in non-modal present tense, such as 'we actually need'. Fairclough notes this as a common convention in news reports (p.129), where what is known is treated as a categorical truth without intermediation. He says this helps disguise complexities and mess around information gathering and its interpretation. • In terms of agentic identification during the article, this is somewhat selective, as outlined above. Named parliamentary agents who will question the bankers are absent, and the passive voice of 'bankers being put into stocks' is used to centre the wrongful actions of the bankers with the reader.
c) Textual structures	• Again, the textual structure of this report generally follows the expected convention discussed in the first sample. The narrative pattern of what happened, (Deputy PM launches campaign to stop bankers receiving a bonus), what caused it (size of bankers' bonus in the middle of a crisis) and what effects were reported (expected responses from a wide range of stakeholders including other banks, difficulties within the government, and public preference for bankers not to be rewarded.) • In terms of interactional features during this text (Fairclough, 1996:133-4) Parker and Thomas as reporting journalists offer a form of formulaic turn taking. Having set up an initial dialogue of "differing views" on bankers' pay issues, the authors initially discuss Westminster perspectives, offering reports on Vince Cable's (Liberal Democrat) research and John Prescott's (Labour) campaign. Both politicians are identified according to their respective standing, as Treasury Spokesman for an opposition party and Prescott as former deputy prime minister. • Following a politically orientated discussion and direct quotes from Mr (now Sir) Cable, the article then moves to the second set of views from the City, via a sample of banking perspectives. This is an interesting structural decision as the three banks featured are in very different positions. Barclays come first, as one of the banks less affected by the crisis. They

	are positioned as taking a cautious approach. The authors report their expected bonus policy as "less contentious", but also note their refusal to comment to journalists. RBS, as the major focus of the crisis in the UK, is positioned as also not commenting on bonus size, although their spokesman is directly quoted on the "dramatically reduced" reward. The reader is then positioned to see Barclays as not needing to talk to the press due to lack of dependence on the State, unlike RBS. The position from Lloyds closes the article, with the journalists positioning the bank as outside the current row on the bonus issue, with the "sees itself as a different case because of past prudence." The journalists allow this justified position by reporting it as one of the few able to rescue HBOS, and therefore a 'good' bank as opposed to the 'bad' bank in need of rescue (p.161) aligning the wider organisations with the judgement of individuals during the article.