

HOW TV PRODUCERS DEALT WITH THE WAR IN IRAQ IN CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

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*If we can help children understand more,
they will worry less.¹*

The initiation of the war in Iraq in March 2003 and the prior global political controversy accompanying it led to debate and insecurity not only at the governmental level, but also among the people throughout the world. On the one hand, the reasons the United States and its allies gave for their intended invasion in Iraq (alleged arsenal of weapons of mass destruction) seemed to be ill founded. Hence, many governments questioned the U.S. plans and assumed a position in opposition to the superpower. Furthermore—only 1¹/₂ years after the attack on the World Trade Center in New York—there was a high level of insecurity and fear among many countries that a new war could lead to advancing further international terrorist attacks. Consequently, peace demonstrations took place throughout the world, and people were hoping until the last minute that the war in Iraq would be prevented. In Europe, the upcoming war led to a big controversy within the European Union (EU) because its three most influential nations—Great Britain, France, and Germany—held different positions in regard to this matter. In Germany, in particular, the issue of the war in Iraq became a national debate as national elections were approaching, and the

issue was included in the election agenda. Overall, then, it can be said that the issue of a new war in Iraq and the fear of possible consequences for the rest of the world in the form of terrorist attacks were omnipresent in the public domain of many countries throughout the world.

In terms of the media, the war in Iraq caused the producers of children's TV programs, in particular, to confront the various difficult issues. The subject of the war was omnipresent, too, among children and youth, and it may well have been the case that many were afraid of possible consequences of the war in Iraq for their own countries. Youth joined demonstrations against the war throughout the world, and it can be assumed that many children and young people discussed the issue in school and at home. Given this situation, broadcasters of children's TV were faced with the problem of how to deal with the situation. They asked themselves such questions as: What anxieties do children have? Should the war be dealt with in children's programs? If so, how should the topic of the war be handled? Can we provide children with some kind of support?

This chapter is a report about a survey undertaken for the purpose of determining how children's television broadcasters worldwide dealt with the war in Iraq and how they represented the issue in their children's TV programs. The analysis presented was developed from data obtained via a survey conducted with the help of the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI) in cooperation with the Prix Jeunesse International.

The objectives of the survey were, first, to discover in broad terms how the producers of children's TV programs handled the topic of the war in Iraq. We sought to ascertain if broadcasters believed that children's TV should deal with the subject of war at all. If so, to what extent did children's TV programs focus on the topic? Were there guidelines that were developed and/or applied? Should they seek to inform children by means of specially prepared programs? Did the producers avoid the issue; perhaps, to protect children from what was going on in Iraq? Second, questions were asked about the programs produced on the subject of the war; for example, whether they were part of the regular children's programming schedule or broadcast as special programs. What formats were adopted, and were particular guidelines for their content applied? The survey also investigated the indirect influence that media coverage of the war had on children's TV (e.g., the cancellation of children's TV programs to make way for extended special news reports). The final research objective was to establish whether, and if so in what ways, children's opinions and questions were voiced during the programs and how the topic of anxiety was dealt with.

The survey was conducted in May 2003 (i.e., about 2 months after the invasion of Iraq by the U.S. forces). A semi-structured questionnaire was sent to TV broadcasters worldwide. Altogether the survey was sent to more

than 400 broadcasters; 31 broadcasters from 23 countries responded (mostly European countries, as well as Canada, the United States, South America, Asia, and Africa; see Table 7.1). Thus, the response rate was quite low. The reasons for the lack of interest in responding to the survey are a matter of

TABLE 7.1
TV Stations That Took Part in the Study

COUNTRY	TELEVISION STATION
Austria	Österreichischer Rundfunk und Fernsehen ORF
Belgium	Ketnet/Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroep VRT
Brazil	Canal Futura
Brazil	TV Cultura
Brunei	Radio Television Brunei RTB
Canada	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation CBC
Canada	Radio-Canada
Chile	Televisión Nacional de Chile Canal 7
Denmark	Danmarks Radio DR
Egypt	Art-Teenz Channel/Arab Radio & Television ART
Finland	Yleisradio Oy YLE
France	France 3
Germany	Buena Vista Deutschland
Germany	Fox Kids Germany
Germany	Kinderkanal KI.KA (ARD/ZDF)
Germany	Südwestrundfunk SWR
Germany	Westdeutscher Rundfunk WDR
Germany	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen ZDF
Great Britain	British Broadcasting Corporation BBC
Hungary	Magyar Televízió MTV
Iran	Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting IRIB
Israel	Israel Educational Television IETV
Italy	RaiSat Ragazzi
Kenya	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation KBC
Korea	Korea Educational Broadcasting System EBS
Mongolia	Mongolian National Television MN
Romania	Societatea Romana de Televiziune TVR
Sweden	Utbildningsradio UR
Sweden	Sveriges Television SVT
Switzerland	Schweizer Fernsehen der deutschen und rätoromanischen Schweiz SF DRS
United States	Noggin/The N

speculation: The issue may not have been relevant to the majority of producers worldwide, or they may not have had time to answer due to their hectic pace of work, in the context of the war, or work in general.

The majority of the 17 survey questions were multiple choice. In a few cases, the producers were also requested to give a short comment (e.g., producers were asked whether they had specific guidelines concerning the images or content represented in their children's programs on the war). In this case, the producers were asked to list or supply a copy of their guidelines. At another point, when the broadcasters were asked whether any of their children's programs were canceled due to the war, they were also invited to describe the circumstances for this action. Some of the TV producers added comments when they simply felt they had more to say about a specific issue. These extra comments were also considered in the data analysis. The questionnaires were subjected to a quantitative analysis. However, due to the low response rate, a qualitative analysis, too, proved to be manageable.

The report on this research begins with a description of the positions and strategies, as well as the problems and concerns of producers of children's programs concerning the issue of broadcasting to children about and during the war. The second section presents the results of a case study conducted on a small selection of children's programs broadcast during the war in Iraq. Here the focus is on the formats and genres chosen and the ways that the producers' guidelines and strategies were applied in these programs.

HOW THE PRODUCERS OF CHILDREN'S TV HANDLED THE WAR IN IRAQ

Overall, the survey showed that the producers held different opinions about why, how, and to what extent the topic of the war in Iraq should be dealt with in children's broadcasting. In regard to four basic positions for the degree to which their children's TV programs were devoted to the war, the producers' responses indicate the following (see Fig. 7.1): 19% of the respondents claimed that there was a heavy focus on the war in their programs. These broadcasters were the UR from Sweden, the BBC, France 3, the Austrian public broadcaster ORF, and the two German channels ZDF and KI.KA. The primary vehicle for dealing with the issue of the Iraq War involved the use of their own regular children's news programs. The reason these producers gave for devoting more attention to the war than to other topics was that by doing so they were simply reflecting the omnipresence of the war in the public domain. They assumed that the war in Iraq was *the* subject of conversation in schools, at home, among peers, and in the media as children were confronted with pictures and reports of the war.

Broadcasters' basic approach towards the topic of war on children's television: how intensively must children's TV tackle the war?

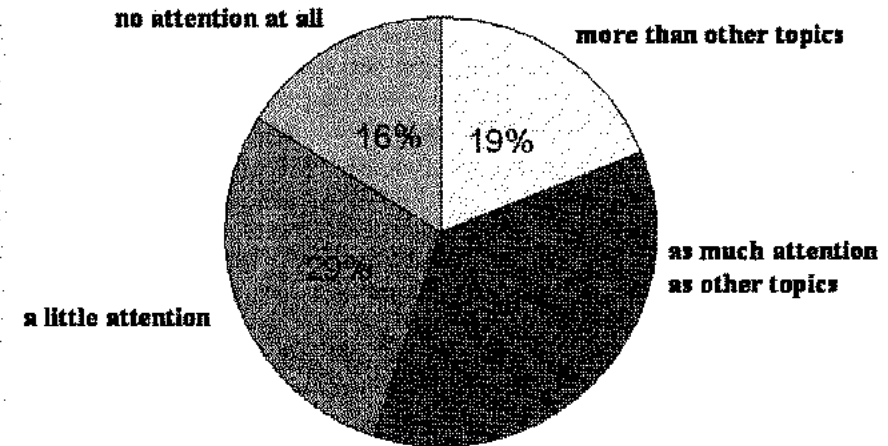


FIG. 7.1. Broadcasters' basic approach toward the topic of war on children's TV: How intensively must children's TV tackle the war?

HOW INTENSIVELY MUST CHILDREN'S TV TACKLE THE WAR?

Probing their comments in depth, several respondents noted that problems arose when children watched news programs designed for adults and read newspapers, as Ragna Wallmark from Sweden explained: "Children do not understand what they are seeing, so they become frightened." She stated that children need information to help them deal with the war, and thus broadcasters bore a degree of "responsibility and must try to provide the children with explanations." A number of the producers concurred with this opinion,

believing that their task in dealing with the war was to provide their young audience with information. As Ian Prince, editor of the BBC children's news program *Newsround*, put it: "We aim to equip children to handle their lives better by giving them the information they need about the world around them, in the way they want" (Prince, 2004, p. 10). Supplying the children with reports and explanations of the war means to take the young audience seriously. The aim is to help them work on their questions and fears by means of the TV programs. As Prince stated in an interview in the *London Times*: "Very often, we find that if we can help children understand more, they will worry less. If you don't cover these stories, then rumor and Chinese whispers take over in the playground. It is better to be straight with young people, so long as we take care not to speculate" (Freen, 2003).

In addition to producers who focused heavily on the war, more than a third of the producers (36%) reported that their TV station chose to feature the war in their children's programs, but to a lesser extent. These broadcasters were the European channels Ketnet from Belgium, RaiSat from Italy, TVR from Romania, and SWR and WDR from Germany. Other broadcasters who shared this approach were Mongolian National Television, Radio Television Brunei, Israel Educational Television, Art-Teenz Channel of ART in Egypt, IRIB in Iran, and the Brazilian channel Canal Futura. Some of these broadcasters explained that they tried not to overload the children with information about the war and to ensure that the war received the same amount of coverage as other topics. As the head of the Children's Education Department at Mongolian National Television (MN) wrote:

We consider it important to inform Mongolian children about the war and to let them know that innocent Iraqi children (. . .) are struggling to survive the effects of the war. However, there are also other topics which, to be totally honest, are equally important and which are closer to our daily lives, for example a weather disaster caused by the heavy snowfall or illnesses such as SARS.

For Layaly Badr, of Arab Radio and Television in Egypt, another reason for focusing on the war was her country's proximity to the war zone and its solidarity with the people there. "We are Arabs," she wrote, "Iraq is part of our nation." She further explained that the war was covered on children's TV, because "children should be aware of what is going on around them." Friederike Barth, head of Children's and Family Programming at Südwestrundfunk (SWR) in Germany, also noted that, on the one hand, "it is necessary to explain appropriately the topic to children," but she argued that, on the other hand, there was no sense in overloading children with information on the topic and paying too much attention to it. She believed this would create the risk of "arousing fears or intensifying existing fears."

For this reason, SWR concentrated on providing a balanced selection of topics and the right amount of war coverage in its children's programs. This point of view was echoed by Catherine Castille of the Belgian broadcaster Ketnet: "We do not want to scare children but provide them with information so that they can better cope with the war and put it into perspective."

The majority of the producers who said that the issue of the Iraq War should receive the same amount of attention as other topics integrated it into their regular children's schedules. Those who had a news program mainly used this as a space to deal with the topic. A few also produced special programs on the war, in the form of talk shows, interactive programs, or documentary reports. Only a small number of these TV stations broadcast special programs on the war.

Nine of the 31 TV broadcasters who took part in the survey (29%) reported that they paid the war relatively little attention. These were the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, the Korea Educational Broadcasting System EBS, Channel 7 from Chile and TV Cultura from Brazil, Radio Canada and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation CBC, the U.S. channel Noggin/The N, as well as the Danish broadcaster DR and SVT from Sweden. One reason given for not dealing with the war in their productions was that, in some cases, children's programs had to surrender their slots to the relevant news sections, which then broadcast coverage of the war.

Frequently, these broadcasters reported that they simply did not have the means to react to current events such as the war in Iraq. One producer who complained about the lack of opportunity and resources for reporting on current events was Judith Gay, Director of the Department for Children's, Youth and Family Programs at Radio-Canada: "We would like to have the opportunities and the means to rapidly put on the air a show for kids about the war," she wrote. In particular, broadcasters that tend to show mainly fictional programs were limited in this situation. Beatriz Rosenberg of TV Cultura in Brazil stated: "We believed that the war in Iraq was an important topic. However, we had neither live program nor indeed any other program on which we could feature the topic." Some of the broadcasters that paid little attention to the war in their children's programs did so because they did not have the means and looked for other ways in which they could incorporate the topic. The children's department of TV Cultura, for example, cooperated with the channel's news department that, in turn, produced special reports on the war for children. These short reports were broadcast as part of the regular news programs on the first 4 days of the war. The Swedish broadcaster SVT showed the award winning animated film *Tornebekken* made by the Norwegian Film Institute. Bella Stjerne, who is responsible for children's and youth programming at SVT, explained: "The film deals with the consequences of the war from a child's perspective and answers some of children's questions about the war."

Indirect ways of addressing the war, too, were employed. The U.S. channel Noggin/The N also addressed the war indirectly within the framework of its series, *A Walk in Your Shoes*. Noggin/The N produced an episode in which an American boy exchanged places with a boy from Amman, Jordan, so they could each experience the life of the other. Filmed prior to the beginning of the war, the children speculate about the possibility that there will be a war in Iraq and its horrific consequences. Those responsible for children's programming at Channel 7 in Chile embraced topics related to the war, such as tolerance, love, and understanding for one another. The channel produced short clips on these topics in which children who spoke different languages were shown holding one another's hands and appealing for peace.²

Although the majority of these broadcasters did not have the means or possibility of covering the war the way they would have liked, they did share the basic position with those who featured the war in their programs, albeit to different extents. They felt that there was a need to serve as a source of information, and thus they addressed the war in Iraq in their children's programs.

Apart from the TV broadcasters who were convinced that they had to deal with the issue of the war and only differed in the amount of coverage based on the resources available for this undertaking, the survey revealed that a limited number of producers shared another basic position on the issue. Five survey respondents (SF DRS from Switzerland, the Hungarian Magyar Televízió MTV, YLE from Finland, Buena Vista Germany, and Fox Kids Germany) intentionally offered no programs about the war. It was their declared intention to protect children from the facts of the war and to provide a distraction by offering alternative, war-free programs. The reasons they gave for doing so are contained in the explanation of Jussi Pekka Koskiranta of YLE, Finland: "War is something for adults" and "the children can't do anything about the war." Beny Kiser of SF DRS in Switzerland held a similar opinion and maintained that it was precisely because of this that "it is not the business of children's television programs to deliver information." Kiser explained further that in any event children watched news programs for adults with their parents, thus making it even more necessary for children's TV programs to provide an alternative in times of war. This opinion was shared by Buena Vista in Germany which, along with other members of the Disney Group, saw itself as a violence-free zone. The Disney channels offered a safe haven, explained the Director of Programming, Ralf Gerhardt, where children were able to be sheltered from omnipresent media coverage of the war. In doing this, Gerhardt continued, Disney was satisfying the desire of the parents of its target audience who did not want "their children to be in touch with upsetting pictures of the war on the other channels." In summary of this position, it can be said that according to these broadcasters' programming policy, children's programs were to

be a shelter and safe haven for children seeking to escape the events of the war. Because they believed children would obtain their information in any event from news programs for adults, these broadcasters endeavored to use children's programs to provide an alternative to coverage of the war.

Given this rationale, the latter set of TV stations totally avoided the topic of the war in their children's programs. "We didn't mention the war at all," affirmed Eszter Farkas-Laki, summarizing the position of Hungarian TV. Further, not only did Buena Vista Germany avoid the issue of the war but all programs broadcast were checked to ensure that they contained nothing that could be directly or indirectly linked to the war. According to Program Director Ralf Gerhardt, this meant that, to ensure that the channel was a safe haven for children, some episodes of popular programs were canceled: "This was because the content, or some of the content, was in some way related to war or military institutions; for example, cartoon characters were playing video games in which soldiers were killing one another; cartoon characters were wearing uniforms; or, the action took place on an aircraft carrier." Proof that this approach was highly valued by the audience, too, was provided by the program director: "Ratings worldwide have shown that in difficult times television stations such as the Disney channel, Fox Kids, and Cartoon Network attract more viewers."

PRODUCERS' GUIDELINES ON THE COVERAGE OF THE WAR

The survey also revealed that a large number of the producers had or developed guidelines for the selection of content of their children's programs about the war. Their main concern was whether to show the war, in particular, violence or the consequences of violence. As Reza Saidabadi of the Iranian broadcaster IRIB explained: "One of our guidelines was not to show any scenes of violence in our children's programs. Instead, we showed more acceptable scenes illustrating the consequences of the war." Moreover, many producers specifically ensured that, although they showed pictures of war, they did not include shocking pictures. "We showed neither blood nor dead people, but we did show people (children) in hospitals," said Joachim Lachmuth of Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) in Germany.

In addition to guidelines regarding images shown, some TV stations, such as TV Cultura in Brazil, applied guidelines regarding the language to be used in their children's programs. "We tried to explain everything that was happening in Iraq in simple language," Beatriz Rosenberg commented on her approach. Particular focus on the use of the language used in their reporting was mentioned, too, by Ian Prince, editor of *Newsround*, the children's news

program of BBC. With Great Britain being one of the countries actively involved in the Iraq War, the producers of *Newsround* had to be aware of the fact that what was going on Iraq might have had direct impact on the lives of some of their viewers: "With the biggest deployment of UK troops in decades, there would also be a lot of worried kids in the audience with family/relatives in the Gulf," Ian Prince explained. Hence, those responsible for *Newsround* paid particular attention to the language used when having to report difficult issues: "So rather than 'Hello, ten British soldiers have been killed in . . .,' it was better to have something like, 'Hello, and among the top stories from the Gulf war are new reports of British soldiers being killed in the fighting. This morning the Ministry of Defense said that ten soldiers died when . . .'" (Prince, 2004, p. 10). Similarly, one of the guidelines set out by the U.S. channel Noggin/The N was to explicitly avoid creating any link with the events of September 11. "We did not want to show any pictures of the planes flying into the World Trade Center or of the towers collapsing," explained Alyssa Cooper, Executive in Charge of Production at Noggin/The N.

Not to report about the war in the manner usually reported was one of the guidelines of the Brazilian broadcaster Canal Futura. As Débora Garcia, Contents Manager at Canal Futura, stated, "Our perspective on the war issue was based on the belief that our audience already had access to an abundance of information about the conflict itself" (2004, p. 13). Consequently, the channel's programs were not about "the day-to-day developments of the war," and "any form of war coverage which focuses on hard news" was avoided—as for example, the "detailed description of the technological equipment of the U.S. forces or a numerical evaluation of the consequences of ongoing fights" (p. 13). As an educational channel, Canal Futura "did not talk about the war as such, but about the motivations for war and the consequences that are likely to evolve as part of a conflict like the war in Iraq" (p. 13). According to Garcia, the channel's main task was "to provide detailed information on the social and historical context surrounding the issue" as because there are always "different perspectives that make war a reality." Canal Futura aimed at enabling its audience to contextualize the war by supplying them with the interrelations and circumstances of the war, the different perspectives and motivations of the different countries that lead to the conflict, and so on. The channel's overall aim was to enhance a "critical perception of reality" as well as peace and cultural tolerance.

In summary, the survey revealed that broadcasters had fundamentally different opinions about whether to deal with the war in Iraq; if so, they also differed in regard to the extent as well as how to deal with the war. On the one hand, there were a few children's broadcasters who intentionally offered no programs about the war. The broadcasters' programming policy defined children's programs as a shelter and safe haven for children seeking to escape the events of the war. These producers sought to protect children from the facts of war and to provide a distraction or diversion by offering alternative,

war-free programs. On the other hand, the majority of the broadcasters surveyed felt obliged to act as a source of information and as intermediaries for children, and thus they specifically addressed the topic of the war in children's programs. They believed that information specifically prepared for children should be provided to young viewers in order to help them deal with the war. At the same time, they wanted to give children the opportunity to express their opinions on the war; they regarded their young audience as their country's future decision makers and so sought to contribute to their political socialization through their programming and reporting.

THE PORTRAYAL OF THE IRAQ WAR ON EUROPEAN CHILDREN'S TV: A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

To get an idea of how the basic positions, strategies, and guidelines developed by the individual broadcasters were translated into their children's programs during the war in Iraq, I conducted case study analyses of a small sample of programs broadcast by the producers who participated in the survey. In fact, when the survey was sent out to the broadcasters worldwide, we requested they supply examples of their children's programs on the issue of the war in Iraq. The producers who kindly provided us with some of their programs were broadcasters from France 3, Swedish television SVT, the German ZDF, the Austrian ORF, as well as DR from Denmark.³ Hence the material analyzed in the case studies was derived from European public broadcasters only. Further, apart from the Danish producer, all the programs analyzed were from regular children's news programs, or children or youth programs that contain news sections.⁴

The analysis of this small sample of selections from five European public broadcasters sought to obtain a general understanding of the formal features of coverage of the war in Iraq on children's TV. Particular emphasis was placed on the analysis of the program formats and genres chosen for the coverage of the war (e.g., war reports, talk shows, expert interviews, etc.) and the way they were specifically adapted for the child audience, and on how the guidelines and strategies of the producers were applied in the programs on the war (e.g., not to show frightening pictures, to reassure children, to take a child's perspective, to answer children's questions on the war, etc.).

News Reports and Reports Providing Background Information

In general, it can be said that news reports regarding the situation developing in the war zone were chosen as the main format of war coverage on chil-

dren's TV. The news reports for children were quite similar to those in adults' news programs, as were the pictures shown. Thus, children's programs broadcast the same images as the adult news programs (e.g., Baghdad being bombed at night, the preparations of American troops on their aircraft carriers, George Bush's official speech at the beginning of the war, conferences between Saddam Hussein and his advisors, etc.). This may well be due to the fact that pictures were difficult to obtain during the Iraq War (cf. Krüger, 2003). One of the differences between children and adults' reports was that most of the adult material was reedited for the children's programs (i.e., the pictures were used in a different constellation, and new audio reports were created specifically for children). Here the specific guidelines that most of the channels in the case study had developed were applied (e.g., the use of simple language, not to show dead or injured people, etc.).

In addition to news reports on the current situation in the war zone, reports providing background information on the war were also a common element in children's programs. These background reports typically included comprehensive explanations and dealt with issues that were also debated on programs for adults (e.g., the complex context of the war). A formula often adopted for the explanation of the background to the war was the use of animated pictures. France 3, for example, used animated pictures to explain to their audience the background of the war. The producers demonstrated this by means of animated pictures that showed that the Americans were primarily interested in Iraq's oil. Further, they argued that, should the Americans win the war, the Iraqi people would export their oil to the United States.

Another issue of great interest in adult news explained by means of animated pictures in children's TV was the fact that journalists were embedded with the military and accompanied soldiers to the war front. For example, on *logo!*, the children's news program of Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) in Germany, animation was used to illustrate how the journalists embedded at the front with American military personnel operated. The program explained that the journalists had to allow the U.S. military to censor their reports, and the host of *logo!* added the comment that: "What the military doesn't like simply isn't shown." This was illustrated with the animated figures of a journalist and a U.S. soldier sitting in the desert watching a report the journalist had produced. The U.S. soldier was using the "thumb's down" sign to show that he was not happy with the report.

Not only did the situation of the embedded journalists become an issue in children's TV, but so too was the debate about the journalists' problems with reporting on the Iraq War in general. France 3 featured the specific role of the media in this war and the difficulties of portraying the war on TV. In one report of the children's news program of France 3, a journalist is pictured sitting in the TV studio as she described how the channel received the visual material for news reports and talked about the Iraq War as "la guerre

des images" (the war of images). She explained this by showing different images that the war correspondents had received from the two main parties involved in the war. The journalist made it clear that the images distributed by the Americans primarily showed war prisoners, whereas the images from the Iraqi side portrayed mostly Iraqi people killed by the U.S. troops. The news journalist went on to explain that the images were supposed to achieve specific purposes for the specific parties who tried to gain control over the work of the journalists worldwide.

As these examples show, the producers of children's programs made an effort to make complex and controversial issues related to this war comprehensible to their young audience—issues such as embedded journalism or the visual propaganda of those involved in the war.

Special Reports From a Child's Perspective

Reports on topics relevant to children were another way in which broadcasters incorporated coverage of the war into children's TV schedules. These reports focused on the child's perspective by mainly portraying children whose lives were directly influenced by the war. They featured children in Iraq; children whose Iraqi parents had fled the country and who were now living in Germany, France, and other places; as well as American children living in Germany whose parents or other relatives served in the U.S. military. In one program, for example, American children who attended an American school in Germany were interviewed about how the war influenced their daily lives. Their stories were full of worries about relatives, friends, or people they knew who had relatives or friends who served in the U.S. army.

The reports about children in Iraq gave insights into how the war affected these children's daily lives. The Swedish broadcaster SVT, for example, produced a documentary about two brothers and their family shortly before the war in Iraq started. The two boys were first filmed attending classes at school, something it explained few children did any more because many had already fled in anticipation of war. Then the two boys were accompanied home to their parents and siblings. At their home, the boys' parents outlined how the family had prepared for war. The father explained that he had taped plastic around the windows of the house in the order to protect the family from poisonous gas attacks. In addition, the family had stored three baskets of groceries in the corner of their living room so they would have provisions when war broke out. Then the report showed the two brothers playing football with their friends in the somber surroundings where they lived. Finally, the boys explained that playing soccer was a way of diverting themselves from thinking about the war, and that they hoped everything would be all right again after the war and that life would be better then.

The reports on children whose parents had fled Iraq and who consequently had been living in Europe for many years (children in Sweden, Germany, and France were featured in the reports) showed the children sitting in their living rooms watching the news about the war at home. In the interviews, they said they were concerned about all of the developments in Iraq. Both France 3 and ZDF underlined in their reports the fact that the children were primarily worried about their relatives in Iraq. One report on France 3 showed two boys and their parents sitting around the table talking about the current circumstances in Iraq. They discussed the situation of their relatives, and the children tried to telephone their relatives to enquire how they were doing. After this, the children were asked how they felt about the war, and they explained that they were primarily worried about their grandmother who still lived in Iraq.

Different Strategies Used to Include Children's Views and Voices on the War

The programs on the war used various strategies to include what children in the respective countries thought of the war. Danish TV produced a 3-minute "Vox Pop" that featured children and teenagers presenting their opinions. Sweden's regular SVT news program invited two pupils ages 12 and 13 who attended a Stockholm secondary school to appear on the show. The first boy actually came from Iraq, and the other still had relatives living there. They presented their views about the war, how it affected them, and their worries. The Austrian program *Confetti TiVi* went on location to ask children about their opinions and questions concerning the war, and then these statements were featured on the program, with the presenter exploring the issues in a discussion with an expert. On the German ZDF program *logo!*, numerous statements made by children in e-mails, letters, and the like were selected and read out loud in the studio, followed by the presenters' comments or answers. Indeed, some of the *logo!* programs were based solely on the issues contained in the children's statements. Also, children were allowed to speak out during some reports on demonstrations and events held to demand peace. They were shown demonstrating and asked why they were participating and what they thought about the war.

Inclusion of Experts' Explanations and Comments

Another program format used to feature the war on children's TV was expert discussion panels in the studio. Among those who discussed the war with presenters in the studio, giving their expert opinions, were a psychologist, a military expert, an expert on children and the media, and a peace edu-

cator. Other specialists, such as an expert on international relations or an adult news journalist of the German public broadcaster ZDF, were interviewed at their workplaces on specific themes concerned with the war. The news journalist, for example, explained the problems of media coverage of war from the point of view of a journalist, the psychologist gave advice on how to deal with children's anxieties, and the military expert commented on the events of war and gave careful prognoses on how the conflict might progress. The peace educator on Austrian TV reassured the child audience that the war was taking place very far from their own country and that there was no danger at all for the war to spread to Austria. The children's news program on France 3 not only asked experts about their opinions at their workplaces or in the TV studio, but the channel also broadcast a discussion event that took place in a school. Here children gathered in the school hall and were able to ask a panel of experts questions about the war.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research study was twofold. The first was to use a survey to document the basic positions, guidelines, and strategies applied by the producers of children's TV programs in regard to coverage of the 2003 war in Iraq. Second, based on the survey outcomes, a small sample of children's TV news programs or news sections from children's or youth programs from five European broadcasters were analyzed to understand the ways that the positions, guidelines, and strategies were translated into the programs on the war in Iraq.

The findings of these analyses correspond to many points found in a Dutch study that investigated the coverage of the World Trade Center attack in the Dutch children's news program *Jewgdjournaal*, produced by the Dutch Broadcasting Corporation (see Walma van der Molen & De Vries, 2003). The report of this study presents a "typology of consolation strategies" that includes all the strategies applied by the broadcasters, whose aim is "to relieve their child audience or to provide their viewers with a better framework to understand the news information" (p. 7). Among the strategies listed is taking a child's perspective by including, for example, "expert explanation," the "personal accounts of children," and "paying attention to the reaction of the viewers," (p. 8), strategies also applied by some of the broadcasters surveyed regarding the coverage of the war in Iraq.

As Walma van der Molen and De Vries (2003) noted, broadcasters do not seem to have a "formal or explicit plan"; rather, they "use certain strategies intuitively, based on their overall ideas about conveying emotional information to children" (p. 7). Similarly, the results of the survey on the

Iraq War reveal that, despite a great deal of interest in and responsibility for their child audience, and despite their enthusiasm for and devotion to their work, most producers surveyed did not have a clear plan of strategies regarding the portrayal of the war, and most based their decisions on their intuitions and assumptions about the needs of children. Like Walma van der Molen and De Vries, who hoped that their "typology could . . . prove useful for . . . makers of informational programs directed at children" (p. 7), I also hope that the survey and the case study analysis of how the war in Iraq was portrayed, or not portrayed, may help producers to reflect on the strategies that are useful and appropriate in the production of children's TV programs in times of war and to the translation of these strategies and guidelines into the programs for children.

NOTES

1. Ian Prince, editor of *Newsround*, the children's news program of the BBC, interviewed by Alexandra Frean ("Threat of War Leaves Children in Fear," *Times*, March 8, 2003).
2. Besides the inclusion of programs on the war, children's TV was also indirectly affected by the war in Iraq. As many broadcasters considerably expanded their news programs and also reported live on some events, in some cases children's programs were canceled. Many broadcasters reported that this was often the case in the first few days of war. For example, Friederike Barth from Südwestrundfunk (SWR) in Germany reported that the entire children's schedule was canceled on the first weekend of the war in Iraq. This also happened at Radio-Canada, "because our news department reported on the war all day and also in the evening," said Judith Gay. In individual cases, this caused negative reactions—for example, in Finland: "One of our morning programs was canceled due to the war," reported Jussi Pekka Koskiranta of YLE, "and the parents were extremely annoyed about it."
3. I would like to thank these broadcasters for making their programs available to me.
4. The program examples included in the case study are: nine news selections from the children's program *Mon Kanar* from France 3 (each selection is 2–3 minutes long, and they were aired throughout March and April 2003); an 11-minute section from *Lilla Aktuellt*, the children's news program on Swedish SVT, that was aired on March 20, 2003, the day of the invasion of Iraq; 10 examples of the German children's news program *logo!* are 4–5 minutes long and were aired during the first and the second week of the war (i.e., from March 20, 2003, and on). The sample of *Confetti TiVi*, the Austrian children's program, consists of ten 3- to 4-minute selections on the issue of war that were aired between March 10 and the end of March; finally, Danish TV provided a 3-minute "Vox Pop," which features children and teenagers giving their opinions about the war that was aired in March 2003.

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