

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Content and Timing of Media Coverage of Message Events: Cycles and Comparisons

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It is now widely recognized that in a democratic state, citizens may express concerns about public issues through staging public events, and that they communicate their message to a broader public by attracting media attention for their events. But the media do not cover all events, and the content of the media coverage may be favorable or unfavorable to the message that those staging the event are attempting to convey. Because the media are so important in the process of communicating with the public, and because most research on public events necessarily relies on newspaper archives, it is important to understand the factors that determine whether an event is covered in the mass media and, if covered, what the nature of the coverage is. These concerns are being addressed in a number of research projects in the US and Europe. In the present project, data from four years (1993-1996) in Madison, Wisconsin are analyzed to determine the interplay between claims-making events and the content and timing of media coverage, both of those events and of the issue about which the claims are made. Data include records of claim-making events previously compiled from five distinct sets of police archives, and text files of local newspaper stories about each event located through exhaustive event-specific keyword searches of 18-month intervals around a given event. Past analysis of these data has determined factors which determine whether an event receives any timely media coverage. The present study examines the content and timing of media stories about these events and the issues around them. Extant electronic text data bases of retrieved newspaper stories are coded for the prominence and content of their coverage of public events. These are supplemented by searches of electronic newspaper archives for other coverage of the issues and organizations involved in the events. Statistical analyses demonstrate different patterns for the timing and content of event coverage depending on the form and sponsor of the event, and show the interplay between events and news coverage in the unfolding of protest campaigns. Comparisons with similar data collected in a small German city provide an initial basis for assessing the extent to which these results transcend differing political contexts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Rationale and Theory

Nonviolent protests and demonstrations have come to be seen as part of the democratic process, as a way for those who lack routine political power to influence public opinion and public policy and, in the process, increase their effective representation in routine politics. But protests and demonstrations that receive no media coverage are like trees that fall in uninhabited forests – perhaps they make a sound, but how would you know? Researchers and the general public alike have tended to treat those events which appear in the mass media as the universe of all events. Events generally have to receive media coverage to be significant, but those that receive coverage are a subset of the larger set of potentially-significant events, events that could have political influence if people knew about them. The "selection bias" of the media is the process whereby potentially-significant events are excluded from media coverage.

Until recently, it was very difficult to study selection bias in the media coverage of protest events, because there was no reasonable way to find out about events the media do not cover. In the past few years, a growing community of researchers has been exploring this problem in a new way, taking advantage of the fact that police departments have become routine collectors of information about protest events (McCarthy, McPhail, Smith 1996 and the articles collected in Rucht, Koopmans, and Neidhardt 1998). Scholars are making tremendous advances in understanding these dynamics with the comparison of police and media records of protests and demonstrations in cities in the United States (McCarthy, McPhail and Smith, 1996; McCarthy et al. 1998; Oliver and Myers 1998a; Oliver and Maney 1998; Germany (Hocke 1998), France (Fillieule 1998), Switzerland (Giugni and Wisler 1998, Giugni and Passy 1998), and Belarus (McCarthy, Titarenko, McPhail, and Augustyn 1998). As this work progresses, the scholars involved have come to recognize that the methodological question of media selection bias is a pointer to the much broader and more substantive question of the interplay between protest events, media coverage of the events, and larger political processes.

Protests never arise in a vacuum; they are a response to other events or problems. Politicians make speeches, introduce bills, and take other actions which may lead to protests. Military actions provoke antiwar protests; welfare reform bills provoke pro-welfare protests; proposals to increase tuition provoke anti-increase protests. Other protests are more pro-active, designed to bring attention to a previously-neglected problem. Protests are designed to attract media attention to a problem, but sometimes the media coverage comes first, stimulating the protests, rather than the other way around. These interrelations can be studied only by examining the dynamic relation over time between protest events and media coverage in the shifting context of other political events.

Local News

Although most research attention over the years has been focused on national "newspapers of record," scholars have begun to recognize the importance of local news media, both substantively, for their role in shaping local political discourses, and methodologically, for their relative comprehensiveness in covering local events. More people read local news than read *The New York Times*. Many events which come to be perceived as national news, or as part of a national movement, begin as local events which make the local news. A full understanding

of the role of the media in shaping protest cycles requires an examination of the construction of local news and the ways local politics and local protest are intertwined with national movements and national politics. Studies of local protest campaigns, particularly those which have compared similar campaigns in different locales, have found differences which are tied to the particular social, political and economic conditions of an area; studies of local protest reveal the influence of national or global movements as they play out in particular way in a particular place (e.g. Rothman 1993, Hellman 1987, Ray 1993, Eliasoph 1993, Everett 1993; Kriesi 1988; Kriesi et al. 1992; Eisinger 1973). Local news media cover a much higher proportion of the events within their catchments than do national media, and as electronic archives of newspapers make searches of a compilation of local newspapers feasible, scholars are recognizing that a collection of local newspapers may provide a much more comprehensive documentation of events than any national newspaper ever can. However, more studies are needed of the construction of local news before this potential can be realized.

Diffusion Processes and Protest Cycles

This research is situated theoretically and substantively within a particular understanding of cycles of protest. Although social movement theorists traditionally stressed the ways in which protests and demonstrations stand outside the normal institutional politics of elections and legislatures, it is now well understood that protests and demonstrations themselves can become ritualized and institutionalized (e.g. Lofland and Fink 1992, Oliver and Marwell 1993). Within the past ten years, variations and elaborations on the ideas of political process and political opportunity have shown how protests, movements, parties, and states continually interact, constrain, and shape one another throughout a cycle of protest (Brand 1990; Koopmans 1993; McAdam 1983; McAdam and Rucht 1993; Britt and Wolfson 1991; Traugott 1993; Offe 1985, 1990; Oliver 1989; Snow 1992; Tarrow 1967, 1988, 1989, 1992, 1993, 1994; Costain 1992, Gamson and Meyer 1994; Hellman 1987; Kleidman 1992; Tilly 1984a, b; Wejnert 1994; Meyer 1990, 1993).

As this work has evolved, scholars are developing a new theoretical conception of the processes in a protest cycle. The key to this theoretical transformation is to conceive of protest cycles as the product of interdependent diffusion processes in which protests, political institutions, organizations, and the mass media co-evolve over time (Oliver and Myers 1998b). Scholars are increasingly using diffusion language to speak of the ways in which protests in one time and place influence the likelihood of protests in other times or places (e.g. McAdam 1982, 1983; Tarrow 1988, 1994; Koopmans 1993; Kriesi, Koopmans, Dyvendak, and Giugni 1995); Olzak 1992; McEneaney and Olzak 1993; Olzak, Shanahan, and McEneaney 1996; Olzak and Olivier 1995). Until recently, however, discussions of the diffusion of protest events have stayed at a relatively superficial level, merely pointing to the evidence for diffusion. This situation is changing in the wake of technical developments in modeling diffusion (E.g. Strang and Tuma 1993, Strang 1991b; Hedstrom 1994; Olzak 1992; McEneaney and Olzak 1993; Olzak Shanahan and McEneaney 1996; Olzak and Olivier 1995; Myers 1997a, 1997b).

The theoretical conception undergirding the present project takes advantage of these developments, but goes beyond them in recognizing the interdependence of different forms of action and the ways in which they shape and constrain each other as they evolve together. Protests affect the probability of subsequent protests by setting an example, by inspiring more sympathizers to become mobilized, by affecting policy, or by drawing repression. Many of the

effects of protests on subsequent protests are mediated by media coverage, and future protests are more likely if prior protests receive widespread media attention. Characteristics of an event or issue affect the likelihood that the media will cover it, including especially its size, other factors affecting its "newsworthiness," and its fit with news routines and beats. But characteristics of past media actions also influence the likelihood that an event is covered, notably the "media attention cycle" (Downs 1973). For example, McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith (1996) found that events were more likely to be covered if there had been more national media coverage of the issue in the quarter of the event and the quarter preceding it. This means that the media have an internal diffusion process with which protests interact as they seek media coverage. But what caused the media attention cycle? At least one factor affecting media attention to an issue is newsworthy protests and demonstrations about the issue. So, over time, protests cause media attention, and media attention causes protests.

In addition to the mutually causative effects of protests and media coverage, both are obviously influenced by political processes and external events. When the state legislature is considering restrictions on abortion or abolition of welfare, the actions of politicians stimulate both extensive media coverage and extensive protest mobilizations. Similarly, a series of high-profile anti gay events in Madison stimulated both widespread media coverage and pro-gay demonstrations. Since the purpose of a protest or demonstration is usually to create an occasion that will draw media attention to an issue, it is reasonable to ask whether the protests in these cases drew any more attention to the issue than was already being generated by the politicians or other "external" actors. Sorting out the relative weight of these mutual effects requires a careful longitudinal analysis.

Interdependent Routines: Protesters, Police, and Reporters and the Creation of News

This mutual dependence at the level of the interrelation among events is mirrored in relations of mutual dependence at the level of the production of the individual event and the individual news story. Most research and theory in social movements are implicitly based on a very neat image of the relation between protesters, police, and media: protesters plan and carry out a protest event, police are caught by surprise by the event and attack or arrest protesters, and media report what happened in the confrontation. But this neat image is more wrong than right for the 1990s. Protesters, police, and reporters are more like members of an improvisational troupe: the script isn't fixed, but the players have worked together before, follow general guidelines, and can predict each other's actions. In the 1990s in the US and, increasingly, in Europe, protests and demonstrations are planned in advance, often in collaboration with the police. Police in Madison make a point of getting to know and forming ongoing cordial working relationships with local activists and seek to remain as non confrontational as possible even in the face of disruptive unpermitted protests. Media coverage of protests and demonstrations is similarly collaborative. Press releases written by the protesters are the basis for many stories, and activists and journalists cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with each other, the activists contributing news leads to journalists and the journalists contributing news coverage to the activists' movements. Finally, the police and the media work together: reporters check with the police to find out what is going on, and keep the police scanner on in their offices. We also found many cases in the police records in which police reported learning of upcoming protests from student newspaper articles, posters, and radio announcements. In short, the typical protest event which makes the local news is a largely ritualized joint production of at least three parties:

activists, police, and media.

Issues and the News Writing Process

Predicting media coverage of events and issues thus requires understanding the process of writing news and its interface with the other actors in the drama, especially as they play out in a local context. Most studies of the framing of protests and issues in the media have been qualitative case studies which have provided detailed accounts of the framing of a particular issue or event, generally demonstrating the ways in which norms of objectivity and balance lead to stories which give weight to institutionalized authorities and delegitimize protesters or citizen action (Gamson et al. 1992; Baylor 1996; Hertog and McLeod 1995; Gadi 1993; Kielbowitz and Scherer 1986; Reese and Buckalew 1995; Liebes 1992; Pride and Richards 1974). The literature tends to emphasize episodic features that make a story "newsworthy" such as a clear "peg" to hang the story on, clear "soundbite" messages, unusual or dramatic images, and fitting in with reporters' "beats" and deadlines (Galtung & Ruge 1965, Hocke 1996, McLeod & Hertog 1994, Weiman & Brosius 1991, Ryan 1991, Gitlin 1980, Tuchman 1974).

Iyengar (1991) distinguishes thematic accounts which locate protest events in a larger context from episodic accounts which focus on the particular event in question, generally criticizing the mass media for too much episodic reporting and too little thematic reporting. However, our unsystematic impression of the newspaper coverage of protest events in Madison is that it is often sympathetic to the protesters, and our conversations with Madison reporters indicate that they normatively value thematic news reports over episodic coverage of events. Instead of constructing a blanket indictment of or blanket apology for local media, we propose to examine in more detail the variations in the way protest events are constructed by working reporters, and how these are affected by the nature of the "story" they are covering. As the results of selection bias studies are coming in, it is becoming clear that the stories that make the news arise from a combination of professional journalists' judgments about the newsworthiness of events and the mundane constraints of getting the news and making a deadline.

Most social science discussions of newsworthiness neglect the fact that the true newsworthiness of an event is not just an episodic property of the event itself, but of the relation between that event and other events (i.e. its thematic content). Media attention cycles have long been recognized (e.g. Downs 1973, Oliver and Furman 1991, Gitlin 1980; Molotch 1979; Cancian and Ross 1981; McCarthy, McPhail and Smith 1996; Baumgartner 1993; Hilgartner and Bosk 1998; McCarthy, Smith and Zald 1996) as factors affecting media coverage of movement events and issues. However, media attention cycles have not been analyzed in terms of reporters' routines and professional norms. To the extent that journalists concur with Iyengar and attempt to produce thematic accounts of events, they will tend to follow "stories" or issues, not isolated events, thus producing media attention cycles. Events that tie in with a developing thematic story should, by this logic, receive more attention than purely episodic events which lack ties to larger themes. Relatedly, journalists believe that current controversial issues are more important and newsworthy than consensual issues because they are matters of public debate which require the information and thoughtful discourse that a newspaper can provide. Thus, issue attention cycles arise from journalism working the way journalists believe it should work.

But reporting is not just a matter of newsworthiness, it is also constrained by much more mundane factors that affect the simple mechanical process of getting to a story and getting it written by a deadline. Our research in Madison (Oliver and Myers 1998a, Oliver and Maney

1998) indicates that annual events, events on Mondays, and events that occur in the afternoon are much more likely to be covered while those that occur in locations other than the Capitol or University lecture halls are much less likely to be covered. When all event types (including social, recreational, and entertainment) are included, any given event is less likely to be covered the more other events are occurring within the same three days. And event types that are focused and predictable (annual events and ceremonies) have higher rates of coverage than those which are more diffuse or unpredictable (fund-raisers and unpermitted protests). Ceremonies, which lack "dramatic" elements, nevertheless have high rates of media coverage, which we believe is because they are scheduled, focused events at a central location which are accompanied by a press release and, thus, are easy to cover. These results fit with the work needs of reporters to plan ahead and use a limited amount of time efficiently.

Types of Issues

As we dig into the logic of the news writing process, it becomes clear that we need to analyze the differences among issues and protest events in their relation to reporters' norms and routines. Protests and issues have been viewed homogeneously, but considerations of the rhythms and norms of reporting suggest that issues may be classified into several groups according to the logic of news-gathering. It is important to make a distinction which we may call the difference between a crisis issue and a chronic issue. Crisis issues are timely and have an obvious peg: there is a significant decision or action point about which there is conflict and around which actors are mobilized on both size of the issue. Chronic issues are those about which there is ongoing social conflict, but no immediate crisis. With this distinction made, we may identify four types of issues about which there may be protests, from the perspective of the relation of the issue and the protest to the routines of reporting. (1) Crisis issues arising from institutional processes, such as a welfare reform bill being debated in the legislature where there are "legitimate" actors on both sides of the issue. This would be an issue and would receive coverage whether or not there were protests, although not every issue that "should" be an institutional crisis is treated as one (e.g. Keefer 1993). In this case, we expect the issue to be framed as conflictual, balance norms to prevail, and protest events to be framed as parts of the larger story and subordinate to it. (2) Crisis issues arising from protest, where a group with an urgent concern brings it to the public agenda via protest, or protest becomes sufficiently disruptive that the protest itself becomes the urgent issue. In these cases, there would be no story if there were no protests, even if the protests point to an ongoing chronic social conflict. We expect coverage of these issues to emphasize the conflict or disruption, and to frame the issue as conflictual. Balance norms are relevant, but news stories may "tilt" to one side or the other, often with subtle rather than obvious framing techniques. (3) Chronic issue with no immediate crisis. Chronic issues are unlikely to be deemed newsworthy and protests about them are often ignored. However, a protest event may provide a "peg" for a story about the issue, if the paper is inclined to print one (i.e. if news is slow or the reporter or editor is sympathetic). Meshing with reporters' routines is crucial for receiving coverage of a chronic issue. Chronic issues are often the basis for ritualized annual events (e.g. a Take Back the Night march) which evoke little conflict and which allow reporters to plan ahead for the event and perhaps prepare feature or human interest stories to accompany a short report on the event itself, which typically has little intrinsic news value. Alternately, an advocacy group may call a press conference or put on a ceremony to release a report calling attention to a problem and hand out a press release which can be the basis

for a news story. We expect that reports on claim-making events for chronic issues will tend to receive time-limited coverage, and will give the protester's point of view with little attempt at "balance." By contrast, the same kind of event held when there is a crisis event tied to the chronic issue will receive conflict-oriented coverage, i.e. coverage which attempts to provide "balance" by discussing the opposition. (4) Media-led issues. Reporters value investigative reporting, and sometimes they do it. Sometimes people protest after learning of an issue from the news media. One would expect such protests to be covered as part of the evolving issue, but to play a secondary role in the coverage.

These considerations of the ways reporters develop different kinds of stories suggest that the framing of protesters and protest event will depend on the nature of the issue and the reporter's (or newspaper's) prior experience with the activists. Madison is a liberal protest-tolerant town, and most demonstrators tend to be framed in our story files as reasonable or upset people stating their concerns about controversial issues. Protesters whom reporters disapprove of seem more likely to be ignored than defamed, unless the event is disruptive enough to "force" attention, in which case patterns of quoting opponents will prevail. Once an event has been described by the initial reporter, it is reasonable to assume that this description will persist and influence subsequent reports on the issue, because reporters refer to their clipping files of past newspaper stories when writing subsequent articles about the issue or people involved. A stylized representation of the event (or cluster of events) may be referred to months later. Within these general tendencies, *The Capital Times* is self-consciously more pro-protest and editorially liberal-left, while the *Wisconsin State Journal* is politically moderate-independent and self-consciously probusiness and institutionally oriented, so we expect to see differences between these two papers in their portrayal of protests, particularly of more disruptive or more "radical" protests.

The typology of issues will also affect the patterns of the timing of media coverage of the issue in relation to the timing of protest. For institutional crisis and media-led issues, media coverage of the issue will precede the protest, and coverage of the protest event will be subordinated to coverage of the issue. For protest-led issues, media coverage of the issue will follow the protest, and will tend to be dominated by conflicts over the protest event itself. For chronic issues, media coverage will be tightly compressed around the event itself.

Comparing Newspaper and Television Coverage

There have been some comparisons of national newspapers and national television news in the coverage of protests (Gans 1980, Kielbowicz and Scherer 1968, Schudson 1982). Contrary to expectations based on most of their work (including Iyengar), McCarthy et al. (1998) found that national television news reports on DC events were, on the average, more thematic in their treatment than the print media, treating protests as parts of larger issue-related stories. There has been very little comparison of local newspapers and local news. The usual claim is that newspaper reporting tends to be more issue-oriented and sustained, while local television news broadcasts tend toward sensationalist crime reporting and "fluff." (Davie and Lee 1995; Danielian and Page 1994; Gitlin 1997; Altheide and Rasmussen 1976) However, some researchers report that newsrooms choose stories on the basis of professional norms of newsworthiness (Berkowitz 1990, 1991; Gelles and Faulkner 1978). Television, especially local television news, is a visual medium, with visually-interesting activity being a central criterion of newsworthiness. We expect that local television will tend to cover protest events which are

focused and visually-oriented, and which are conducted by activists experienced enough to call the television station. The scripts to which we have access do not provide the content of the video clips used in the broadcast, so we will not be able to examine the visual framing of televised news, but only the content of the (usually extremely short) verbal commentary about the script. In line with most of the literature (but in contradiction to the McCarthy et al. results), we expect that there will be less thematic content in local television broadcasts than in local newspapers.

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It is necessary to explain the logic and findings of the past data collection as a context for understanding the proposed new analyses, so this discussion will be merged with the formal "results of prior support" section. At the time this research was designed, all prior research on media selection bias had begun with a particular police archive which was taken to provide a universe of all protest events. For McCarthy and McPhail, this was the permits of the "First Amendment events" of the DC police departments, while for Peter Hocke, it was a detailed record maintained by one particular officer in Freiburg, Germany. Media records were obtained by reading the appropriate newspapers for exactly the same time interval as the event series, either with a full text read, or by relying on a newspaper's index. The Madison project was initiated at the request of these other researchers to provide a comparative case of a small US city that would be the US equivalent of Freiburg, so that comparisons could be made.

Our initial work in Madison revealed that others' methodologies had relied on assumptions about the police and media records which were not generally correct and which would bias attempts to assess media selection or to compare media selection bias across locales. Our initial findings have been communicated to other protest events researchers via a 1996 conference paper, two 1998 conference papers, and a series of private communications, and have affected subsequent research designs and analyses by other scholars.

First, the assumption that permit records provided a systematic universe of protest events was incorrect for Madison. We found that there was no comprehensive Madison record of protest events. Only Capitol Police permits were consistent and systematic across years; Madison Police Department parade permits and Street Use applications and permits were unsystematic and were treated as temporary documents to be discarded when no longer needed. Although the Madison Police Department log book is computerized, its search logic could not be made useful for our purposes. We spent 200 hours reading and coding the 130,000 entries in the paper log book and discovered that there were, indeed, a substantial number of unpermitted protests that could not be located any other way. Nevertheless, we concluded that the effort involved in reading the MPD log book exceeded the potential payoff for other years. We had more success with Capitol Police and Campus Police log books, which could be usefully searched electronically, although locating events in them was still much more time consuming than processing permit records, and again found a substantial number of unpermitted protests. Our need to struggle with a variety of agency records led us to recognize that each agency collected records according to a different logic related to its physical and legal jurisdiction, and that all police records are subject to similar jurisdictional logics, even if their orderliness gives the impression of completeness. Our finding a substantial number of unpermitted protests in log books is especially significant because log books are much harder to search and code than permit

records (so it is tempting to ignore them) and because our research shows that unpermitted protests are less likely to receive media coverage than permitted protests, a result which we believe is clearly tied to the routines of news writing and is highly significant for assessing the selection bias of newspapers.

Secondly, we examined a much broader range of public events than other researchers, which permitted us to compare the media selection of protest events to other public events, and to identify a broader range of event forms which could carry protest content than had previously been recognized. In particular, we showed that researchers had previously naively assumed an isomorphism between form and content in the "protest," when in reality the same event form could carry different content. Our initial work led other scholars to broaden their data collection strategies, and to rethink their understanding of protest events and protest forms in the broader context of political debates and nonpolitical public events.

Thirdly, we adopted a different approach to locating media coverage of public events, using an event-centered search strategy with the NEXIS data base of newspaper records. In contrast with prior research, we defined an 18-month interval from six months before the event to a year after the event for core events (and shorter but well-defined intervals for some events), and employed exhaustive pre-structured boolean search strategies using all possible keywords in a police record to attempt to locate every mention of that event within the appropriate time interval.

A second difference between our search strategy and standard full-text reads is that the latter usually examine only the "news" pages and omit the editorial pages, while we retrieved articles regardless of their section. We find that about 20-25% of all stories about events are printed on editorial pages, often in the form of letters to the editor or guest editorials (which are essentially long well-written letters to the editor). Another 10% of the stories are scattered in various features sections or the business or sports pages. Contrary to other researchers' assumptions that material on editorial pages is merely "opinion," we find that these stories often contain concrete descriptions of events, sometimes the only concrete description ever printed. It is important also to note that disputes about descriptions of events often appear in the opinion or editorial sections rather than in the news sections. We also find that prior coverage of protest events often occurs on the opinion pages in an editorial "call to action" (usually a guest editorial) which gives assembly instructions and clearly states the claims to be made.

Our initial expectations were that event-centered electronic searches would be much more efficient and less time-consuming than full text reads. This expectation was not confirmed. Although sloppy searches can be conducted very quickly, comprehensive and replicable electronic searches for all mentions of an event in an 18-month interval have proved to be quite difficult and time-consuming. There still appears to be some small time efficiency advantage in a selection bias study for our approach over reading the full text of all newspapers in a comparable interval. However, we will not know this for sure until we content-analyze our saved stories and compare our total data collection times per story to those from other projects. Our methodological comparisons so far indicate that our strategy located many stories about events that would be missed in standard full-text reads, usually those in the opinion or features pages, or mentions that occur after the first few paragraphs of an article. On the other hand, the full text read located a few of our events missed in the event-specific search, usually because there was incomplete or erroneous information in the police record. Where the full text read has a significant advantage over event-based searches is that it can also locating stories about protest

events which are not in the police record, and there are many protests covered in the newspapers which are not in the police records. We have analyzed these patterns as part of understanding the logic of jurisdiction.

It is worth noting that we also tested generic event descriptor searches using keywords such as *rall**, *demonstra**, *march**, *protest**, etc. Our conclusion is that these do not work very well. All of the generic event descriptors are common English words with many meanings which produce a very high proportion of false hits. Additionally, many of the stories we found about such events never used the "generic" terms in the story, and would not be located by a generic search. Generic searches did find some events that were not in the police records, but many fewer than a full text read found. In short, our results indicate that there appears to be no easy way to do protest events research, and that claims about automating the process of searching media records should be viewed skeptically unless documented with evidence from explicit comparisons with other search methods.

Whether or not our event-based search strategy holds up as the method of choice after between-project comparisons of cost effectiveness, our approach has yielded data that are unmatched by other projects because of our event-centered time interval in searching the media. Prior researchers have assumed a temporal isomorphism between events and their coverage. If they studied police records for 1991, for example, then they searched newspapers for 1991. But, of course, news stories about events do not necessarily occur on the day of the event, nor on the day immediately after. In fact, contrary to the assumptions of most researchers, a substantial portion (20-25%) of event coverage occurs before events, and event types differ greatly in the mix of before and after coverage which they typically receive, with some events receiving a great deal of pre-event build-up (e.g. big marches in Washington), and other events receiving low initial coverage which builds over time in the wake of subsequent events (e.g. the Watergate break-in). But the usual media search strategy implicitly searches a different time interval for every event, depending on when it occurs in the year. This unexamined variance in search intervals is an important unexamined source of bias in previous protest events research.

Our search strategy has thus given us data to study the dispersion of media coverage of different kinds of events, and our data will permit scholars to design future newspaper samples of protest events with much sounder knowledge of the relation between the time of an event and the time of the coverage. Events which ever receive media coverage usually receive at least some coverage fairly close to the event: although only about half of the events receive "next day" mention, 68%-78% receive mention within one day before or after the event, from 80% to 85% are mentioned within the week of the event (i.e. less than four days before or after), and 87% to 90% are mentioned within the two weeks before or after the event. However, the majority of events are mentioned in more than one story. In 1995, for example, only 30% of the events which received coverage were mentioned in only one story, and another 14% were mentioned in only two stories; 27% had three to six stories, 17% had seven to ten stories, and 10% had 11 to 20 stories. The last two events had from 29 and 79 stories each. Coverage is highly spiked in the three days around the event but dispersed fairly broadly outside the spike: excluding the outlier event with 79 stories, 23% of all stories were printed the day after the event, and 33% of the stories were printed within a day of the event (i.e. day before, day of, or day after); 44% were printed within three days before or after the event, 53% were printed within a week before or after, 75% within a month, 83% within two months, and 89% within four months before or after the event. In short, attempts to gather "all" the media coverage of an event need to examine at least several months around each event, and analyses of event data bases compiled from full text

reads of newspapers need to consider the truncation of event coverage at each end of the studied series.

The results of our "selection bias" analyses are broadly consistent with the findings from other projects, although we have identified some news routine effects missed by others. Our analysis of "all" 387 public events for 1994 (including social, entertainment, and recreational events as well as claim-making events) found that events are more likely to receive media attention when they are larger; make claims, and involve conflict; are sponsored by national SMOs, business interests, nonprofit institutions, or event-specific groups; are not sponsored by local SMOs or religious groups; have local ties; involve vehicles; attract unexpected police action; occur at the Capitol or the University; occur when there are fewer other events occurring; and occur on some days of the week rather than others. Net of these factors, ceremonies, commercial promotions, and "special events" are more likely to receive coverage, while unpermitted protest actions are less likely to receive coverage. These results clearly indicate that the "newsworthiness" of an event for the local newspapers is linked less to its novelty or disruption and more to its overall size, its intention to deliver a message to the public, its links to ongoing politicized conflicts, and its consistency with the normal routines of news reporters. Our analysis of 566 claim-making events (rallies, marches, ceremonies, vigils, speeches, unpermitted protests, informational displays) for the years 1993-1995 finds that coverage is more likely for events which are larger, use an amplifier, involve conflict, have counter-demonstrators, involve more police, are at the Capitol or inside a University building, occur on a Monday, and occur in the afternoon. Additionally, there are clear temporal effects on media selection including seasonal cycles, and political and electoral cycles (with much lower coverage of protest events in a presidential election year), thus challenging the usual assumption in newspaper studies that selection biases can be assumed to be fairly constant across time.

Papers

"Comparing Media and Police Records of Collective Events." Pamela Oliver and Daniel J. Myers. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, 1996. (Preliminary paper superceded by additional data collection.)

"Media Coverage of Political and Nonpolitical Public Events." Pamela E. Oliver and Daniel J. Myers. Paper presented at the Second Conference on Protest Event Analysis, 9-11 July 1998, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB). Under review.

"Making the Local News: Police and Media Records of Protest Events in a Small City." Pamela E. Oliver and Gregory M. Maney. Presented at the American Sociological Association, August 24, 1998. Being revised for publication.

"Issues in Studying Public Event Records: Sources, Search Strategies, Timing." Gregory M. Maney and Pamela E. Oliver. Being revised for publication.

"The Timing of Media Coverage of Public Events: Implications for Sampling Strategies." Gregory M. Maney and Pamela E. Oliver. Being revised for publication.

"Patterns of Access: Routinization of Activist-Reporter Contacts and Media Coverage of Protest Events." Gregory M. Maney and Pamela E. Oliver. Being revised for publication.

Data Sets

The following data sets are being cleaned and checked for correctness and will be deposited along with documentation within the next few months with the Data and Program Library Service of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which catalogues data sets and can

provide copies of the data to interested parties.

1) For 1994, all public event records (including both message events and entertainment or commercial events, as well as literature distribution permits) obtained from five police sources and a street use agency. Media codes indicate whether any news coverage occurred within two weeks of the event.

2) For 1993-1996, all claim event-type records obtained from four police sources. Media codes indicate whether any news coverage occurred within six months of the event.

3) Story files. Separate files for each year 1993-1996, including results of event-specific NEXIS searches for all events for 1994 and claim-making events only for 1993, 1995, 1996. Each record is the identifying information for a newspaper story. Records include the name of the newspaper, the publication date, section, page, word count, byline, dateline, and headline for the retrieved article, as well as a code indicating whether there is a graphic, and identify the event with its date and identification numbers and a short textual description, so that story files can be matched with event records. Identifying information for each story is sufficiently complete to permit one to find the original story in the NEXIS data base or any other archive of these newspapers.¹

Additional specialized data files for methodological studies will not be deposited as they are not of general interest, but will be made available on request to persons wishing to check the results of our work. These include event- and story-wise files for the results of three distinct searches of media archives for May 1994, including a full-text read, and event-specific NEXIS search, and a generic event descriptors NEXIS search.

Problems to Be Investigated and Hypotheses to be Tested

The proposed continuation of this research project builds directly on the greatest strength of the data we collected in the previous phase of this research, and examines the interplay over time between protest events and mass media coverage of the events and the issues they address. Data already in hand will be further coded and used to test hypotheses about the interrelation between events and event coverage for events addressing different kinds of issues, and to compare newspaper coverage in Madison with local television coverage and with newspaper coverage in Freiburg. New data will be collected on newspaper coverage of issues, and hypotheses will be tested concerning the interrelation between issue coverage and protest events for different kinds of issues.

Timing and Framing of Coverage of Different Types of Events and Issues

Our existing data base of news stories will be the basis for a detailed study of the description and framing of protest events about different issues, and the way these shift through time and between sources. This will not be grounded in a "description bias" perspective, in which the concern is the accuracy of the account relative to external accounts provided by activists or police (e.g. McCarthy et al. 1998). Given the generally cryptic and incomplete character of the Madison police records, a description bias study of these data is unlikely to be

¹Because the text of the newspaper stories are copyrighted, as is NEXIS, we believe it is illegal for us to make our archive of the electronic text files themselves publically available. We also have obtained electronic copies of local television broadcasts, which are similarly copyrighted and not available for public distribution. When funding permits content analysis, content codes will be merged into the story files and deposited.

informative, although we will continue to examine the degree of congruence between police and media descriptions of the same events. Our major attention will instead be on assessing the different ways similar events about different kinds of issues are described and framed, and on showing how these descriptions evolve through time in repeated news story mentions of the same event. Consistent with reporting practices and norms, we expect that a detailed description of an event is likely to appear only once (if at all) in a particular news source. The amount of descriptive detail and the original framing of the event will be affected by the relation between the reporter and the protesters, and by the relation between the protest event and media coverage of the larger issue. Subsequent mentions of the event will tend to be stylized distillations of the original published description. We will analyze the patterns and processes whereby these distillations occur, and the ways in which they are deployed in subsequent news stories. We will specifically investigate the way in which this process of distillation may be altered when there is public contestation about the nature of the event. Finally, we will examine the nature of pre-event coverage and its relation (if any) to post-event coverage, and the way these are affected by the type of issue.

From our existing "tag line" files, we are able to determine that an event received at least some newspaper mention on a particular date in a particular newspaper section with a particular headline. It would be possible to complete the process of coding the volume and prominence of media coverage on a self-help basis, but support is needed to pay coders for more detailed coding of the descriptive content and framing of events in these stories. Coders will also read the news broadcast scripts we have obtained from a local television station and extract and code all stories referring to claim-making events.

Locating Madison events in national media sources using our event-specific search protocol with the *New York Times* has proved excessively costly and inefficient, with searchers devoting upwards of twenty hours of labor without finding a single mention of a targeted Madison event while wading through thousands of false hits. We remain interested in determining the predictors of national coverage of a local event, and will explore alternate data collection strategies. Although a search on "DATELINE=Madison, Wisconsin" is very efficient, it is not comprehensive, because local events in national media are often mentioned in a story about a number of different events in different locales. It may prove feasible to search national sources for every mention of "Madison" near "Wisconsin" within the appropriate time frame and simply save every story that mentions a targeted event type (as in a full-text read), and match up events later.

Measures of News Article Content to be Coded. Variables to be coded in the stories include:

1) Descriptions of the objective features of the event, including numbers of participants, location, actions, duration, organizations or persons involved, and claims made at the event. Many of the collected stories include little or no explicit description of the event, but instead refer to it obliquely, so all articles are coded for the extent to which there is any specific descriptive information about each objective feature and, if there is, what it is.

2) Prominence measures, including the location of the story in the newspaper (section, page), the number of words in each story devoted to describing the event and the larger issue or circumstances around the event, the placement of those words in the story, and whether there is a graphic. We will also code whether the event itself is mentioned in the headline or lead paragraph of the story. Our searches retrieved many instances in which the event is mentioned only obliquely with a short phrase in a story that is about neither the event nor the issue; a special

code will mark such oblique mentions. For television scripts, we will code the number of script words describing the event, the number of seconds allocated to the whole story and to the video clip (if any), and the number of minutes and seconds elapsed in the news show before the beginning of the story about the event.

3) Framing measures will focus on the thematic versus episodic character of the story, the degree of conflict and crisis, the relationship between the event and the larger issue, and on the valence of the story, i.e. the extent to which it "tips" in sympathy toward or away from the claim-makers. Additionally, we will code the content of issue-relevant material in each story in anticipation of linking this with the study of issue-attention cycles described below.

A) Thematic/episodic character. Following McCarthy et al. (1998) we will code the proportion of issue-relevant material in the story devoted to the protest, degree of emphasis on the details of the protest, degree of emphasis on the purposes or goals of the protesters, degree of emphasis on the incidental details of the protest, whether there is mention of specific policy goals of the protest, whether there is mention of the significance of protester goals, the degree of episodic emphasis in the story, the degree of thematic emphasis in the story, and whether there is more thematic than episodic coverage. Additionally, we will code the length of historical perspective on the broader issue or context and whether other related protest events are mentioned.

B) The degree of crisis, i.e. the extent to which there is some immediate decision or problem involved and, if so, whether it is linked to the issue or to the event. Additionally, we will code the nature of the portrayed relation between the protest and the issue, i.e. is the protest portrayed as having a potential effect on the issue, or only as being a consequence of the issue?

C) The degree of conflict, is the extent to which the story covers the existence of social or political conflict around the issue or event.

D) The valence or the "tip" in the story is assessed with the amount of material expressing the point of view of the protesters, their opponents, and "neutral" parties, as well as more subtle aspects of the way this material is portrayed. Based on other research and our reading of stories, we expect these to include: 1) Amount of direct and indirect quotation from protesters, their allies and supporters, their opponents and detractors, and "neutral" officials about the event and the issue. 2) The motives and competence imputed to protesters and their opponents. Are they taken at face value and presented as competent to speak, or are their motives or knowledge challenged? 3) Does the story sound as if it could have been based on a press release? (I.e. is it entirely or almost entirely one-sided and sympathetic towards the event?) Or is its orientation entirely or almost entirely anti-protester? (The latter usually arises only in items printed on the opinion page, or occasionally in news stories about someone who has made a public statement denouncing a protest.) 4) How (if at all) is "balance" executed in the story? Is one side or the other quoted as saying something that sounds obviously stupid or objectionable and might have been quoted out of context or otherwise selected to slant a story under the guise of balance? (This is obviously a subjective assessment, but one that seems necessary for distinguishing true "balance" from pseudo-balance.) Whose standpoint is at the core of the story? The protesters? Their opponents? "Neutral" bystanders?

E) Distillation and consistency. Distillation is the extent to which the event is referred to with a stock phrase that evokes the event without really describing it. If the event-specific coverage of an event in a particular story is fully distilled (i.e. only a phrase or at most one or two short sentences), the text will be copied and pasted verbatim as a text field in the coded data file. These distilled mentions will be compared with each other and with more descriptive accounts of

the same event and a judgment made about whether the descriptions or distillations of the same event in different stories are consistent.

F) Summaries across different stories about the same event. Determination of the consistency or inconsistency of multiple stories about the same event will be determined by examining the coding of each distinct story about an event. Derived codes will describe the total series of stories about a particular event, including the number of stories, the mix of pre- and post-event coverage, the initial description and framing of the event, the presence or absence of conflicting accounts of the event among the stories, and the degree of consistency or inconsistency between initial accounts and subsequent mentions.

Hypotheses to be Tested. Although most prior research on media coverage of movements has emphasized the way in which "mainstream" sources undercut and de-legitimate protest, we do not expect to find this as the dominant motif in Madison in this period, when there are very few truly disruptive protests. Instead, we expect many protests to be treated as legitimate public expressions of concern, with more subtle patterns of relation between coverage of the protest and coverage of the issue. (1) Consistent with their respective editorial policies, we expect that *The Capital Times* will generally provide more detailed event coverage and more sympathetic and conflict-oriented coverage of protests and demonstrations than the *Wisconsin State Journal*. (2) Newspaper coverage of protests and demonstrations about crisis issues based in institutional processes will tend to focus on the issue controversy itself rather than the event, and will tend to quote both sides, with protest coverage framed as one of the "voices" in the controversy. (3) Newspaper coverage of larger permitted demonstrations tied to chronic issues with no associated crisis issue will de-emphasize conflict. Coverage of the event itself will often be perfunctory (a very short article, or a graphic and a caption). Longer coverage will be one-sided, treating the demonstrators sympathetically and quoting them extensively (i.e. the story will sound like it could have been based on a press release) or will emphasize "human interest" aspects of the story (e.g. a gay teenager's life is highlighted on the weekend of the Gay Pride march). Newspaper coverage of small unpermitted protests of chronic issues will either be nonexistent or a perfunctory account of the event with little or no discussion of the issue. (4) Newspaper coverage of events about chronic issues will be more focused on the event than the issue, while coverage of events about urgent issues arising in institutional processes will be more focused on the issue than the event. Coverage of events about urgent issues arising from protest will initially emphasize the event and conflict about the event and later include more discussion of the issue in follow-up stories mentioning the event. (5) Local television coverage of protests and demonstrations will tend to focus more than newspapers on the action itself and provide a highly distilled statement of the issue involved. (However, this expectation from the literature is contradicted by the results in McCarthy et al. 1998). (6) Newspaper coverage of events about chronic issues will be tightly compressed around the event, while coverage of events tied to urgent issues will be more dispersed around the event. (7) Coverage of events will be less descriptive and more distilled as the temporal distance from the event increases. (8) Unless it is contested, the initial description and framing of an event in a particular news source will provide the basis for a distilled representation that is employed in all subsequent stories about that event in that news source. When the description of an event is contested within a source or between sources, the distilled representation will tend to include a "controversial" qualifier or otherwise make reference to the contestation about the event. (9) Events whose descriptions are contested will receive more event-specific coverage than events whose descriptions are not contested. (10) Coverage of Madison events in external newspapers will be based on the descriptions published

in Madison newspapers; coverage of Madison events in national television news programs will be based on news stories broadcast in Madison. No event will receive external coverage without receiving local coverage.

Methods of Analysis. Olzak and Olivier (1998) provide an extremely useful discussion of various statistical techniques for analyzing protest event data which reviews a wide variety of approaches and their appropriateness for particular kinds of data and particular kinds of analyses. When the unit of analysis is the event and the dependent variable is whether it receives media coverage, logistic regression is used to predict the log odds of the probability of receiving coverage from independent variables characterizing the event. Multinomial logistic regression will be used to test whether an event receives a particular configuration of coverage when there are more than two options (e.g. whether an event receives pre- or post-event coverage, or both). When the unit of analysis is the event and the dependent variable is a measure of the volume or extent of media coverage (with no coverage being represented as 0), the data are left-truncated counts, and Poisson regression is likely to be most appropriate, although the distributional properties of the data will have to be assessed. When the unit of analysis is the event and the dependent variable is a measure of the valence or framing of media coverage, the particular analysis tool chosen will depend upon the distributional characteristics of the dependent variable. It may be possible to obtain correct results for these factors using only the subset of events which receive any media coverage. However, because the factors that determine whether an event is covered at all may also determine the valence or framing of media coverage, it may be necessary to correct these results using selection models such as Heckman's two-step procedure.

Analysis of the Interplay of Protest Actions and Media Coverage in Issue Attention Cycles

Media attention to issues and protest events obviously is both cause and consequence of protest events. The point of a protest event is to bring more public attention to an issue, which would hopefully imply that media coverage of an issue (not just the event) rises after a protest event about that issue, as a consequence of the protest. But media coverage of one protest event increases the future likelihood of other similar protest events (either other events around the same issue, or similar events around different issues), and there is substantial evidence for diffusion effects of a variety of forms of collective action (e.g., McAdam 1982; Pitcher, Hamblin, and Miller 1978; Spilerman 1970b; Olzak 1992; Rudé 1964; Olzak 1987; Koopmans 1993; Lichbach 1985; Diekmann 1979; National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968) which are generally believed to be mediated by media coverage. Further, media coverage of an issue often precedes protest and, indeed, may even actually inspire protest around that issue. Coarse examination of the correlation between issue-coverage and the probability of event-coverage within a given time period cannot disentangle these mutual causations. Instead, a shift must be made to a longitudinal analysis capable of assessing the relative weight of each of these effects for different kinds of protests about different kinds of issues.

I propose to disentangle these effects by shifting to an event-history approach which builds on the theoretical work I am doing in another project with Daniel Myers (Oliver and Myers 1998b). Existing data on events and stories about events will be supplemented with new data on stories about issues. The data will be reconstructed with the unit of analysis being the issue-date, yielding $i \times d$ cases, where i is the number of issues and d is the number of dates. A record is created for each date on which a protest event occurs, a media story is printed, or an "external" event occurs that is relevant to a particular issue. External events that affect protest events or media coverage in general (e.g. the legislature being in session, a major disaster

occurring) also have records. Each record includes variables describing the particular event, issue, story, or time-varying external factor. For each event or story record, additional variables are computed to indicate the total number of events and issue-specific events and news stories which have previously occurred within a recent time period. (Empirical experimentation is needed to determine the appropriate time periods.) The dependent variable is the duration between events. Two separate analyses are performed. The first treats media coverage of an issue as the dependent variable which is affected by prior media coverage of that issue (the issue attention cycle) and recent protest events around that issue. The second treats the occurrence of a protest event as the dependent variable which is affected by prior protest events (the protest cycle) and prior media coverage of that issue and of other protest events. Other independent variables are controlled in both analyses.

Although in principle this type of analysis is straightforward, it has never been done before with event/issue data, and there are a number of methodological difficulties to surmount in constructing the data and performing the analysis. Because news coverage is extremely spiked around an event, it will be preferable to perform the analysis using days, but this could make the data set extremely large. There are 1461 days in a four-year period and if 100+ issues are analyzed, the potential size of the data set is on the order of 15,000 records. However, the actual number of records will be much smaller and may remain tractable. Depending on exactly which events and issues are included in the analysis, there are only 500-700 issue-dates on which a protest event occurs. Again depending on the specific subset of events analyzed, we have identified 1200-1500 newspaper stories which would yield records of event-specific media coverage.

Initial analysis will be conducted using the events and the event-specific stories which have already been collected. This analysis will test the hypothesis that media sensitivity to an event is increased by prior events, and that subsequent protest events are more likely when other protests have occurred recently and have obtained media coverage. We will test for saturation effects in media attention cycles with quadratic terms for prior events and stories to capture curvilinear effects. The models will also include terms to capture the known seasonal variations in public activity, which is higher in the spring and fall, and lower in the winter and summer. The specific estimation procedures will have to be chosen after preliminary analysis of the distributional characteristics of the data, and may involve either standard discrete logistic regression models, or continuous models such as Cox regression or other procedures which make assumptions about the underlying hazard. This is a somewhat risky enterprise because this kind of analysis has not been done before and the distributional and error properties of the variables are unknown, but the potential substantive payoff is enormous and well worth the risk.

This analysis will be extended to predictions of the relation between events and issue-relevant coverage after the supplemental data have been collected. The number of records arising from searches for issue-relevant news stories will necessarily be much larger. Many of the issues in the data set are very limited and specific and will have less than 20 days of newspaper coverage, but other "big" issues could conceivably have some mention on more than half of the days in the time period. The logic of the analysis will be the same as for events and event coverage, so and it is reasonable to hope that the experience of the earlier analysis will smooth the way for the larger analysis of issue coverage.

Measuring Issue Attention. McCarthy, McPhail and Smith (1996) attempted to assess issue attention cycles with what they acknowledged is a crude measure, the number of stories within a quarter about each of the top ten issues, as retrieved in an electronic keyword search of

national newspapers. They made no attempt to explore media attention cycles for the hundreds of other issues in their data set.

Measuring issue attention cycles less crudely is much more difficult than it may initially appear. Any generic protest events series involves a very large number of distinct issues. Our four-year series, for example, contains events addressing nearly a hundred distinct issue arenas, some with only one or two events, others with as many as 25. Many of these issue arenas in turn encompass a variety of different specific issues. For some purposes, issues can be grouped into issue arenas, such as "other countries' policies," or "labor issues." But a study of the interplay between media and protest events cannot remain so general, and must consider each specific country's policies that have been the subject of protest, or each specific labor union. Specific issues are often intertwined in a larger conflict. For example, the "gay/lesbian" issue is a major arena during our study period. Within this "issue" are numerous sub-issues, some national and some local. National issues included military policies, the national gay pride march in 1993, and same-sex marriage. Local issues have included hearings around Wisconsin's law banning same-sex marriage, and several overlapping ongoing public disputes around the purported lesbianism of the fire chief, the disciplining and ultimate dismissal of a black firefighter (who is also a conservative minister) for distributing anti-gay literature at work, the picketing of liberal pro-gay churches and religious gatherings by that firefighter/minister and other conservative Christians, and scuffles between anti-gay picketers and Lesbian Avengers at a number of pro-gay and anti-gay religious/movement gatherings. In principle there are several quite distinct issues involved, but in practice they are all intertwined and are probably not separable.

Our project's extensive experience with keyword searches in NEXIS makes us considerably less naive than most researchers about what is involved in doing this work correctly (and critical of researchers who claim to have conducted such searches without discussing their approaches to potential problems). Many issues are described with a variety of synonymous or politically-charged keywords, and searches on some words (e.g. "women" or "black") turn up thousands of stories and a very high proportion of false hits. Failure to include appropriate synonyms can yield too low an estimate of the number of stories about an issue, while failure to check for false hits can yield too high an estimate. Further, issues differ greatly in the extent to which the words describing them involve synonyms or false hits, so huge errors can be introduced into any casual attempt to use keyword searches for comparisons across issues in the quantity of media coverage. Finally, the very vocabulary of an issue often changes over time in the process of contestation, biasing time series analyses that fail to capture language shifts. Additional problems arise in attempting to study the coverage of the issues in our event base. Many police records do not mention the issue involved in a protest, and even when they do, they do not necessarily use the language of the protesters or the resulting news story. If an event receives media coverage, we are able to use the language of the event story as a starting point for the language of the issue, but when an event is not covered, it can be much more difficult to determine the words the newspaper might use for discussing the issue.

We will begin issue-centered searches by purposively selecting a small number of issues from our events, varying in the dimensions of breadth/specificity, the number of events concerning them, and our experienced-based assessment of how problematic the appropriate keywords are likely to be in terms of the synonym and false hit problems. For each event, we will define the specific issue involved as well as the broader movement of which it is a part. For example, the "Take Back the Night" march is concerned specifically with violence against women (itself a fairly broad issue) and is located within the feminist movement. Preliminary

keyword searches of the month of a target event and four randomly chosen months (one from each year) will be conducted to determine the vocabulary of the issue and the broader movement, the number of "hits" per month for each of the obvious search terms, and the prevalence of false hits. Based on this preliminary work, an optimum search strategy for each issue will be designed and documented and applied to the four years of data a month at a time, maintaining records of the numbers of false hits from a particular search, saving electronic copies of all relevant stories, and maintaining records of how many hours are required for each issue-month of searching for different kinds of issues. Based on this initial work, we will design the issue searches for the remainder of the cases, respecifying broader movement domains, developing estimation procedures, or sampling events or time periods as necessary to make the whole design feasible within the study period.

Issues Without Events. A full test of the effect of protest events on media coverage requires data on issues about which there are no protest events. The full universe of such issues is essentially infinite. However, we may define a smaller set of potential issues by using our data on literature distribution permits. Over 100 organizations and individuals a year are granted permits to distribute informational literature on the Capitol grounds. While some are private businesses, the vast majority are issue-oriented organizations. Issues represented in these literature distribution permits but not in the other event records may be sampled and studied as a way of further assessing the impact of events on media coverage of issues.

Hypotheses. 1) Net of other factors, events are more likely to be covered when they are tied to an issue which has recently been receiving media coverage. This effect will be especially strong for crisis issues arising from institutional processes and media-led issues. 2) Net of other factors, an event around a particular issue increases media attention to the issue after the event. This effect is expected to be strongest for protest-initiated crisis issues and weaker for other kinds of issues. 3) Net of other factors, a non-ritualized event increases the probability of subsequent non-ritualized events if the event receives media coverage, while ritualized events (i.e. annual events) have no effect on subsequent actions. This effect will be the strongest for events in the same issue arena, but there will also be a generalized effect on actions around other issues. 4) The effect of an event on subsequent coverage of its issue will be mediated by the extent to which coverage of the event and issue are framed in conflictual terms (with conflictual events having a greater impact on subsequent media coverage than consensual events).

Independent and Control Variables

A variety of independent and control variables will be used in all analyses. Police records always contain the date of the event and generally contain the time of the event. We have also coded the estimated size, the number of different police officers mentioned in the record (an indicator of unexpected disruption), the presence of counter-demonstrators, whether there is any report of disruption, whether there are vehicles involved, whether there will be electrical amplification of sound, whether the event is linked to a holiday or anniversary, whether an event is an annual event, whether the event made a "claim" (i.e. sought to influence the behavior of people other than themselves), whether there is social or political conflict about the sponsoring organization or the issue the event addressed, the location of the event, the name and type of sponsoring organization, and the issue the event addressed. We have also added to the data files a code indicating whether the Wisconsin state legislature was in session on a particular day.

We will add other independent variables to the data to control for external factors which affect events or media coverage. All such variables will be tied to the dates for which they apply.

From the Legislative Research Office and the municipal clerk's office we can determine whether bills were been introduced or hearings held on a particular issue. To identify "big" stories that consumed a large share of the news hole, we will consult year-end lists of top news stories from local and national news sources. We anticipate that these and other control variables can be readily coded without a substantial investment of time.

Cross-National Comparisons

There is very little, if any, research comparing the media selection processes in different countries. Madison was initially selected as a study site because of its comparability to Freiburg, Germany, where Peter Hocke (a graduate student working under Dieter Rucht) has collected police and media data on protests and demonstrations 1983-1989. Delays in the completion of his dissertation and our own heavy involvement in data collection prevented collaboration during the prior grant period. I believe that we have conducted the Madison project in a manner that has let it make a substantial contribution in its own right. However, it seems worthwhile to pursue the comparison, and I have included some money in the budget for travel to facilitate collaboration with Peter Hocke, who is just about done with his dissertation and looking for employment in Germany. His research in Freiburg took advantage of an usually complete police record of protests and demonstrations 1983-1989. He excluded event types which were not consistently documented (these excluded types overlapping with many of the Madison event types) and focused on marches, rallies, vigils and blockades. There were 417 such events in the seven years he studied, but only 235 were "in the sample," which unfortunately (from my perspective) was tied to the media sample. (The number of studied events was further reduced to 196 by excluding squatter movement events.) In line with PRODAT protocols, only 43% of the days are studied (every weekend and the weekdays of every fourth week) with the assumption that media coverage occurs in the day after the event. Of the 196 events analyzed, 74 or 38% were determined to have received local media coverage. In the papers I have available, Hocke does not report the mix of event types among these 196; this matters because other research indicates that vigils have very low rates of media coverage, while the other event types would have high coverage rates. In Madison, the overall rates of media coverage for similar events in the four-year period 1993-1996 are: 50% for rallies, 56% for marches, 27% for vigils, and 42% for a heterogeneous category of unpermitted protests. Of course, not all these events were covered on the day after the event. Using the 1995 data (for which event information has already been merged into the story files), we find that 73% of the 22 rallies received some coverage, but only 45% received next day coverage; of the 21 marches, 76% received coverage but only 52% the next day; none of the three vigils received any coverage; and of the 22 unpermitted protests, 55% received some coverage, but only 36% received next day coverage. Overall, then, the rates of local media coverage appear to be roughly comparable when adjusted for methodology. Hocke finds covered events are more "newsworthy," where this is a scale which indexes the timing of the action, its size, organizational backing, presence of a prominent person, degree of conflict, duration, and concreteness of demands; he does not report multivariate tests assessing the relative strength of these and other factors. Given the design of Hocke's data collection, it will not be possible to use the Freiburg data for a longitudinal analysis like that proposed for the Madison data, but it should be possible to re-analyze his data to obtain multivariate analyses of "selection bias" factors which can be compared with those from Madison and increase our understanding of local media coverage.

Work Plan

The requested start date for this proposal is January 1999. I am on sabbatical for the fall 1998 semester and will be completing revisions of all the papers listed as in process during this semester. In the first year, data creation tasks include coding the content of the event stories, first for the prominence measures, and then for the dimensions of framing; identifying and coding event coverage in the television scripts, and carefully pretesting procedures for conducting issue searches as outlined in the proposal and planning a strategy for conducting such searches within the time frame of the grant period, possibly sampling a subset of issues for the analysis. First year analysis tasks will include comparing newspaper and television coverage of events, testing hypotheses about the relation between episodic and thematic frames and the nature of the issue, and running event history analyses assessing the mutual relations between protest events and the publication of event coverage with a given level of prominence. Depending on his availability, collaboration with Hocke to compare Freiburg and Madison will begin in the summer or fall of 1999. Second year data collection will be focused on acquiring the issue data, and second year analysis will focus on event-history analyses on the relation between protest events and particular types of media coverage, along with Freiburg-Madison comparisons. Toward the end of the second year, we will begin the event history analysis of the interrelation between issue attention cycles and protest cycles. The final six months will be spent writing articles based on the research.

The budget request includes a half-time graduate student for the duration of the project and a small amount of money for undergraduate assistance. If this proposal is funded, I will submit a supplemental REU proposal to pay undergraduates to do the bulk of the coding of content in the saved event stories and the searching for and coding of the issue stories. Our past undergraduates hired with REU money proved invaluable and cost-effective, as media searches and content coding are extremely labor-intensive. We have found that students prefer to work an average of about 15 hours a week, with some schedule flexibility to accommodate finals and the opportunity to work extra hours during breaks. There will be enough work on this project to keep three undergraduates busy for 15 hours a week each. Two of our previous students have worked for us for two years and are returning as juniors this fall. One of these is exceptionally intelligent and has reached an entry graduate-student level of performance in terms of understanding the logic of what we are doing and making sensible contributions to deciding how to structure the work. He is studying abroad this fall, but will be back in January, and I would like to re-hire him to supervise and train the other undergraduates, as well as do some of the work himself. It is likely that he will end up as a social researcher, and he is interesting in coauthoring papers from the project.

The graduate student will be responsible for overall supervision of the undergraduates and for working with me to design the coding schemes and search strategies. S/he will also be expected to do data handling and statistical analysis under my direction. I expect to hire and train an as-yet unidentified student to work on this project. Given the caliber of our graduate students, I have every expectation of being able to find a student who will be able to become a productive member of the research team in short order. I will provide overall direction for data collection, and will take the lead in most of the data analysis and writing.

The graduate student most recently working on this project, Gregory Maney, will be in Northern Ireland doing his dissertation research this fall, and hopes still to be there and living off dissertation funding when this grant begins. He conducted many of the methodological studies in the previous grant period, and we expect to continue collaborating on these data in the future,

although his dissertation will be his immediate priority. The graduate student who worked on this project in its first year and did the infamous 200-hour reading of the MPD police log, Daniel Myers, is now an assistant professor at Notre Dame and is collaborating with me on another project in which we are developing diffusion models of collective action and cycles of protest. That project has close theoretical and methodological links with the proposed event-history analyses in this proposal, and Dan has moral claims on the data from his sweat equity in the first year. I expect that some or all of the event-history analyses will be conducted in collaboration with him, although he will not be funded from this project.