Unpacking Protest Events: A Description Bias Analysis of Media Records with Systematic Direct Observations of Collective Action - The 1995 March for Life in Washington, D.C.

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Introduction

Despite the extensive use of newspaper archives to study protest events over past two decades, three methodological problems remain. We do not know if descriptions of the large protest events the media report accurately represent the actors and actions of which those events are composed; we do not know if the large events that the media report differ from the more frequent smaller events that are not reported; and, until recently we have not had a methodology by which to generate the basic descriptive information about protest events necessary to address and resolve the first two problems.

In this chapter we briefly discuss the history of efforts to unpack protest events so as to make these problems more empirically accessible. We describe a taxonomy of collective action used to develop an observation and recording system with which we have trained and deployed observers to systematically sample collective actions in protest events. We then report on extensive data generated by this system in the study of one large protest event, the 1995 "March for Life." We compare our empirical representation of this protest event with newspaper and television news reports of the same event. We briefly discuss the implications of our data for "the illusion of unanimity" which surrounds much theoretical and empirical work on protest events. Finally, we advocate both further research with our observation and recording system as well as more education of media workers on the complex and social nature of the protest events which are of interest to both social science and the media.

Protest Event Analysis

Over the past quarter century social scientists have designed and produced, from national daily newspaper archives, machine-readable data sets on the issues, actors and forms of collective action making up protest events, as well as their orderly or disorderly nature, number of arrests and the like. This has enabled the mapping of repertoires of collective action as well as the

examination of waves and cycles of protest events in relation to various archival measures of social, political and economic conditions which provide obstacles to or opportunities for collective action in Europe (Shorter and Tilly 1974; Tilly 1986, 1993, 1995) and the U.S. (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; McAdam 1982). Over time this methodology (Franzoni 1990; Olzak 1989; Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992; Diani 1992) has become standardized and widely employed by sociologists and political scientists in the United States (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Everett 1992; Olzak 1992;) and in Europe (Tarrow 1989; Rucht 1991; Koopmans 1993; Kriesi et al. 1995; Della Porta 1995; Fillieule 1996). It is difficult to exaggerate the important contri-butions of this methodology to the volume and quality of our empirical knowledge and theoretical understanding of protest events.

However, until recently two questions have remained unanswered. First, how representative of the population of all protest events that take place are the events reported in the media. Second, of those events selected for reporting, are media characterizations representative of event actors and their actions within and regarding the protest events. The first question is one of selection bias, the second of description bias. Until recently there was no method for establishing the population of protest events and thereby systematically addressing the question of selection bias. McCarthy, McPhail and Smith (1996) addressed this methodo-logical problem by compiling archival records of demonstration permits granted by the three major police agencies in Washington, D.C. This allowed them to establish the population of Washington demonstration events for 1982 and 1991. They compared this population against the sample of Washington demonstrations reported in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* and those reported in the nightly news telecasts of the three national networks. Their results have significant bearing on the many empirical and theoretical protest event analyses over the past quarter century which have been based on newspaper archives. Of the nearly 2,000 demonstrations which occur each year in Washington, less than 10% are reported by the print or electronic media. There are two significant correlates of selection bias. First, the media are much more likely to cover demonstrations which address or illustrate issues to which they are already giving attention. Second, larger demonstrations are far more likely to be reported than smaller ones even though the latter are far more frequent. Thus, news media reports of protest events represent only "the tip of the iceberg." A similar pattern is reported in several European countries.

The Washington, D.C. permit records have also been used to investigate description bias. The results, reported elsewhere in this volume (McCarthy, McPhail, Smith and Crishock 1995), yielded high correlations between newspaper accounts and information found in permits records, such as date, purpose and size of the event. The correlation between television reports and

the permit records varied; e.g. they were high for date and purpose of protest but low for protest size and for whether the protest was part of a campaign. These media-permit comparisons also have great significance for protest-event theory and research based solely on media records. A limitation of the permit records, however, is that they are created before the event and thus contain very limited information about the range of collective actions occurring during the permitted events. Thus, we do not know the extent to which the description bias patterns identified in the media-permit comparisons by McCarthy, McPhail, Smith and Crishock apply to the collective action composition of demonstrations.

These recent investigations of selection and description bias raise two major questions. First, to what extent do the large protest events reported in the media differ from the more frequent smaller protest events that are not reported? Second, what is the nature of the description bias of media accounts of collective action at demonstration events? Both of these questions require a method for "unpacking" demonstrations and identifying their constituent actions. Those actions could then be (1) compared across small and large demonstrations and (2) compared with actions which are reported in news media accounts of these demonstrations. Until recently social scientists have lacked a method for generating this "basic information in the field of social protest" (Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992: 91-92).[1] In this chapter we present our system for unpacking demonstration events and a preliminary illustration of how it can be used to study description bias. Although this system has been used to investigate collective action at large protest events and has yet to be used at small ones, we hope to illustrate how the system can be used to address this question in the future.

Unpacking the Protest Event

The problem of unpacking protest events has been addressed in one way or another by a variety of scholars over the past twenty-five years. As the 19th century paradigms of "the crowd" crumbled in the face of both historical research (e.g. Rude 1967) and contemporary field research (Berk 1972; Fisher 1972; McPhail 1972; Lofland 1981), a more empirically accessible picture of crowds in general, and demonstrations in particular, began to develop. At the micro-level of analysis, scholars examined various phases in the life course of

1 Charles Tilly's coding of newspaper records and other chronicles of contentious gatherings is an exception. He has systematically coded type of gathering, type of gathering issue, type of acting unit and verbs used to describe type of collective action taken (Tilly 1995).

temporary gatherings: the assembling processes which form gatherings (Quarantelli and Hundley 1969; Aveni 1977; McPhail and Miller 1973; Johnson 1984; Klandermans and Oegema 1987), and the dispersal processes which terminate gatherings (Sime 1980; Johnson 1987).

Research on collective action within the gatherings themselves proved more difficult to carry out given the initial absence of conceptual frameworks and methodological procedures with which to proceed (cf. Milgram and Toch 1968; Marx and Woods 1975; McPhail and Wohlstein 1983). Blumer attributed social science ignorance of what occurs in crowds to the absence of "a well thought out analytic scheme which would provide fruitful hypotheses and lead to more incisive observations" (1957: 135). But this offered a paradox rather than a solution. Incisive observations presuppose some conceptual scheme or criteria specifying the phenomena to be observed; but a plausible conceptual scheme must build upon at least minimal observations of the phenomena to which the scheme is addressed. Not until we are familiar with the phenomena to be explained can we develop viable explanations from which fruitful hypotheses can be derived for empirical testing.

Turner's (1964) seminal discussion of "the illusion of unanimity" within crowds and his alternative characterization of "differential expression" provided McPhail (1969, 1972) with a partial solution to Blumer's paradox. McPhail argued that crowds might better be construed as temporary gatherings within which two or more people occasionally engaged in collective actions of various types or forms. Rather than the blanket of uniform behavior implied by the concept of "the crowd," the more appropriate metaphor might be a patchwork quilt of alternating and varied individual and collective actions within these temporary gatherings. The challenge was to identify and describe those collective actions. McPhail (1969) took up this challenge by training and deploying multiple observers with pen and paper to describe any and all instances of two or more persons acting with or in relation to one another. Recording gradually shifted to film and then to slides and videotape. Over the next ten years McPhail repeatedly reviewed and analyzed those varied, rich and extensive records and inductively identified approximately forty recurring elementary forms of collective action. McPhail and his colleagues developed criteria and procedures for using this taxonomic scheme to make field observation records and to code film and video records of collective actions in prosaic, religious, sport and political gatherings (McPhail 1972; Wohlstein and McPhail 1979; McPhail and Pickens 1981; McPhail and Wohlstein 1982, 1986; McPhail 1991).

McPhail's taxonomy of elementary forms is organized around four parts of the body and can be summarized by answers to four questions: Which direction are people facing? What noises are people making with their mouths? What are

people doing with their arms, hands and fingers? What are the positions and movements of people's torsos and legs in relationship to the ground? The four dimensions were selected because of the meaningfulness attached to these body parts for understanding human communication, purpose, movement and action. They are called facing, voicing, manipulation and body positioning. In turn, the variations on each of these four dimensions yield approximately 40 elementary forms of collective action.

> *Facing* includes facing in the same, i.e. parallel, direction (e.g. same facing as a function of walking in the same direction or as a function of looking at a common object) and facing in converging directions (e.g. conversation clusters, arcs and rings).
>
> *Voicing* includes vocalization (e.g. cheering, booing, laughing, whistling) and verbalization (e.g. talking, singing, chanting). Talking can be further divided on the basis of substantive content (praying, conversing, pledging, etc.)
>
> *Manipulation* may involve things (e.g. carrying, striking, throwing), other people (e.g. embracing, restraining, striking), one's own body (e.g. clapping, snapping), or gesturing (making symbols, e.g. #1, peace, clenched fist).
>
> *Body positioning* here refers to horizontal motion (e.g. walking, running, marching), vertical motion (e.g. standing up, sitting down) and the resulting place or position of the body (e.g. upright, seated, prone). For the observations reported here we have collapsed the vertical motion/place categories.

Not every collective action which might occur in a gathering is on our list of forms. However, the taxonomy and the list of forms is empirically generated from observing hundreds of gatherings. If any collective action at all is observed in a gathering, it will likely be one or more of these forty elementary forms. However, (1) all these forms do not appear in all gatherings; (2) the forms may appear separately or in various and sometimes complex combinations; (3) the forms may vary in direction, tempo, substantive content, and in the proportion of the gathering participating in any simple or complex sequence of collective action. The taxonomy itself is exhaustive since forms which are empirically rare could be placed into it. Ten "other" categories (e.g. other facing, other carrying/lifting things) were included on the code sheet to allow coding forms of collective action which were not expected to frequently occur in political gatherings.

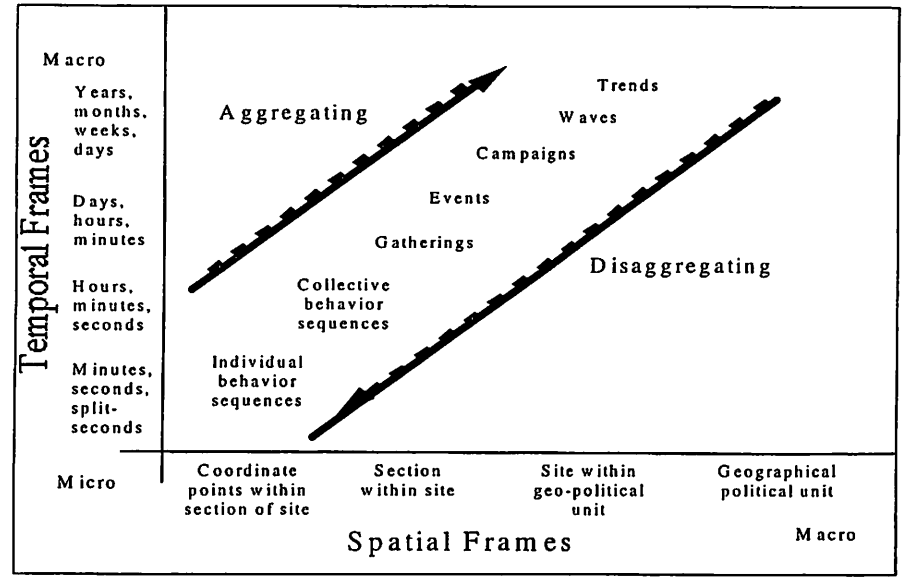
Levels and Units of Analysis

At first glance it may appear that there is an enormous gulf between the macro-level of analysis which has to date prevailed in protest event analysis and the

micro-level of analysis with which we have proceeded to study purposive action within gatherings. On the contrary, we believe that the units of analysis at these disparate levels are not only related to one another, we think of them as nested units. Other students of collective action advance similar continua of levels and units of analysis with elementary units of analysis accumulating to form more complex units (cf. Lofland 1985: 1-25; Olzak 1989; McPhail 1991; Tilly 1993).[2]

Figure 1 illustrates our conception of a cumulative sliding scale of micro- to macro-units of analysis. As the scale moves from micro to macro, the spatial area increases over which the phenomena occur as does their temporal duration. The various elementary forms of collective action by individuals alternate with actions those same individuals take alone.

Figure 1: Units of Analysis by Spatial and Temporal Levels of Analysis (after McPhail 1991)



2 Tilly construes social movements as clusters of political performances at multiple levels of analysis, e.g. individual or collective actions and interactions, the sequences of these that make up a performance (e.g. a demonstration), the cluster of performances that constitute a campaign, the set of campaigns that make up the shared narrative history of a social movement, the repertoire of all contentious collective actions, and, "the array of all repertoires [of collective actions] ever available within given limits of time and space" (1993: 8-9).

Taken together, the aggregation of all those individual and collective actions constitute what has traditionally been termed "the crowd," but which McPhail calls a temporary gathering.[3] In turn, two or more gatherings (e.g. a rally followed by a march to some destination where dispersal or other actions occur) make up what is termed an "event"; and the aggregation of two or more events (e.g. daily rallies followed by marches to picket line sites) make up a campaign. Forms of collective action, of gatherings, or of events may spread across multiple geographical locations in a relatively brief period of time resulting in a wave, e.g. the 1960 sit-in campaign in the U.S. civil rights movement (McAdam 1982; cf. Koopmans 1993). The frequency of any or all of these collective phenomena also rises and falls across time resulting in cycles (cf. Tarrow 1989; Tilly et al. 1975; Olzak 1992; Della Porta 1995).

A Method for Observing and Recording Collective Action

Having placed the taxonomic scheme for collective action within the larger context, we will now briefly describe the translation of that taxonomy into a systematic method for observing and recording collective action. This method consists of multiple observers, distributed throughout a gathering, who record their observations on a field coding form based on our taxonomy of collective action. The objective is to systematically sample collective actions across space and time, not to produce a comprehensive record of all collective (let alone all individual) actions.

Our current field recording form (see Appendix) has as its primary element a matrix allowing observers to record each of 43 forms of behavior by actors in any of six categories. The 43 forms, each corresponding to a row, were derived from our taxonomy of collective behavior, but were tailored to include those forms we expected to find in political gatherings.[4] Ten additional "other" categories are used to code forms which are not specifically named. The six

3 The concept of the crowd implies a uniformity of action and a homogeneity of actors which is empirically false. In view of the problems with this antiquated concept we will use the term "temporary gathering" here to refer to a collection of two or more people in a common place in space and time. Gatherings are opportunities for two or more people to act collectively; they do not guarantee it (McPhail 1991: 153).

4 Our taxonomy of collective actions was inductively generated from observation records of hundreds of gatherings, including but not limited to political demonstrations. Thus, while the taxonomy can contain all the collective actions in which we have observed two or more persons engage, some are more likely in prosaic, sport or religious gatherings than in political gatherings. In short, the taxonomy can be expanded or contracted to fit the type of gathering under observation.

columns correspond to the five categories of people who are most often present at demonstrations (MacCannell 1973) and an "other" column. Like the elementary forms, the particular actor categories were selected because of the type of gathering being coded. For other types of gatherings in other places, different categories would be appropriate. The six actor categories are:

Demonstrators - those in the gathering whose visible and identifying actions support the stated purpose of the demonstration.

Onlookers/passersby - those at or near the gathering venue for purposes unrelated to the demonstration.

Police - any law enforcement officials at the gathering.

Media - reporters, photographers and video camera operators from newspapers or broadcast news agencies.

Counter-demonstrators - those at or near the gathering whose visible and identifying actions oppose the stated purpose of the demonstration.

Others - includes vendors, other service workers, pickpockets, sociologists and people demonstrating for purposes unrelated to the demonstration.

Coders are instructed to consider such factors as actions, words, clothing, relationships, locations and artifacts when deciding to which category an actor belongs.

Beneath each of the actor category column headings is a cell in which the observer is asked to estimate the number of actors in each category who are present in the observer's area of responsibility and who are visible to the observer. Many people in the area may not be visible to the observer because they are behind other people. The observer has no way of judging to which actor category they belong or in what elementary forms they are participating. The judgments about participation in elementary forms are based only on those actors who are visible to the observer. We do not consider this a major problem because the collective action observed and recorded represents only a sample of the collective action in the gathering.

The remaining 53 rows on the central matrix are used to record the observer's estimates of the proportions of actors in each category who are participating in one or more of the 43 elementary forms of collective action plus the 10 residual "other" categories. Each cell corresponds to the intersect of an actor category and an elementary form of collective action. For each cell the coder estimates what proportion of the visible actors in the category are participating in the elementary form. The lower case letters (a-g), from the proportion of actors key, are used to indicate seven ranges of proportions. An "a" entered in the box indicates that although the action is observed, only one person is acting so no

collective action is present. The letters "b"-"g" indicate increasingly higher levels of collective action with "g" indicating 100% participation. Although making these calculations for 318 cells in a few seconds appears both complex and difficult, most of the cells are left empty (due to the absence of many of the actions at any particular sampling interval). Coders need only read down the list of actions under the categories of actors present in his or her area and record those actions which are present.

A complete description of our system is found in *The Collective Action Observation Primer* (McPhail and Schweingruber 1995), which was used to train the observers. The *Primer* contains instructions on the coding process and detailed criteria for identifying each elementary form and actor category. For instance:

> *Facing in the same direction* is when individuals' lines of sight are roughly parallel. This may result because they are moving in the same direction or because they are looking at the same thing.[5]
>
> *Function of monitoring* describes actors facing or orienting in the same (parallel) direction as a function of looking at (monitoring) the same thing, e.g. a passing delegation in a march. This often occurs when actors are positioned to look at something big enough to see without forming an arc.
>
> *Disparate pedestrian cluster(s)* describes clusters of two or more actors moving together. These people may touch, talk and/or look toward each other as they move. Although the actors within each cluster move together in the same direction, the clusters move in disparate directions. This frequently occurs when large gatherings are forming or breaking up (and sometimes on the fringes of large focused gatherings) and is described by the term "milling."
>
> *Chanting* is verbalizing the same words in unison, usually repeatedly, and often in rhythm.
>
> *Placarding/bannering* is bearing placards, banners, signs, flags or large photographs which carry visual messages in words and/or pictures.
>
> *Striking things* is hitting something forcefully, either with the hands or with something held with the hands such as a stick or bat. *Striking* may break something (such as striking a car window) or make noise (such as striking a drum). If the *striking* damages or destroys property, also code as *violence against property.*

5 The primer also indicates that "facing ... is important because it is a crude indicator of what a person is giving attention." Similarly, chanting and placarding/bannering are means by which persons state their interests and contentions (McPhail and Schweingruber 1995: 2).

Implementation

Implementing the method required recruiting observers, training them to use the code sheets correctly, positioning them throughout the gathering venue, debriefing them, and entering their records into a quantitative data base for analysis. This section briefly summarizes how we accomplished this for the two demonstrations we have so far observed with this method.

Most of our observers were Washington-area university undergraduate students recommended to us by colleagues. (The other coders included one of the authors, a professor and several graduate students involved with the project.) The undergraduate observers were paid for their time involved in group training, observing/recording and debriefing. They were also paid for studying *The Primer* and whatever practice they did on their own.

The observers were furnished with *The Primer* to study several days before their first training session. They were instructed to study it, to become familiar with it before their group training began and to prepare questions to ask during the training. The group training took place during a day-long session two days before the demonstration. The sessions consisted of (1) a brief lecture on temporary gatherings, the history of observing them and the purpose of the project, (2) a brief history of the March for Life, (3) an illustrated overview of the elementary forms and coding procedures, (4) practice using the coding forms, and (5) practice estimating the number of actors and density of gatherings. The history of the March for Life, the overview of forms and coding procedures and the practice coding forms all made extensive use of 35mm color slides. All of the forms were illustrated with slides while they were being explained.

The observers practiced using the criteria and procedures in *The Primer* by coding slides of elementary forms in various demonstrations. After each slide was coded, the authors and trainees discussed, compared and corrected the results. The training on estimating the number of actors and the density included the use of slides, but also included taking the trainees outside and arranging some of them in various formations for the other trainees to observe. The trainees were encouraged to study their codebook and practice coding the day between the group training and the demonstration.

Essential to the method is the distribution of observers throughout the demonstration venue such that each observer is responsible for a clearly delineated area. Before each demonstration took place, the authors visited the venue and divided it into a matrix. The boundaries of the various sections include sidewalks, trees, lampposts, stages, audio speakers, buildings in the background, and sightlines connecting these various markers. The entire demonstration venue was then mapped, including markers and sightlines, so

that each observer had a map of the complete venue, with his/her specific observation area indicated. Depending on the size of the demonstration venue, the number of observers and the number of cells or areas in the matrix, observers might be placed in every area or in a subset of areas.

Upon arriving at the demonstration location, the observers synchronized their watches to ensure that they were coding during the same sample period. They were each given a spiral-bound pad of code sheets and a map with their area marked. Because we anticipated people questioning the observers about their identity, the code sheet books had the project name on their bright green plastic covers, each observer wore a project name tag and each observer carried business cards of the project's co-investigators. Observers were told they could answer demonstrators' questions about their coding as long as this didn't interfere with their duties. However, they were encouraged not to be drawn into discussions about demonstration-related issues.

Each observer was led to his or her area by one of the authors, who indicated the boundaries of the area. The observers were instructed to walk around these boundaries and study the area. Observers were directed to stand at a spot where they could observe the faces of most of the people in the area. At the March for Life rally venue, where we put multiple observers into some of the sections, we had the observers stand apart from each other.

Beginning at 11 a.m. (a half hour before the official start of the March for Life rally) each observer was instructed to fill out a code sheet to indicate what was taking place in their area during a one-minute sample. The observers were told to scan their area for approximately 30 seconds of the one-minute sampling period and to then begin filling out their code sheets. They could look up from the sheets to observe the area again, but they were not to code any new behavior which took place after the one-minute observation sample was completed. For the March for Life, observers repeated the observation and recording every 15 minutes. (The interval between observation samples was reduced to 10 minutes for the Rally for Women's Lives.) The March for Life observers moved, at specified times, to their second position, either along the march route or at the march destination at the Supreme Court.

Collective Action at the March for Life

The following analysis is based on data collected at the 1995 March for Life, the first demonstration we observed using this method. The code sheet was slightly different from our current version, which appears in the Appendix. We note two important differences. First, the code sheet had five fewer elementary forms. Second, at the March for Life, observers recorded the proportion of

actors engaging in collective action on a six-point scale, which we subsequently re-scored into a five-point scale (cf. Table 5, below) where 0 = no one or only one person acting (thus, no collective action), 1 = two or more persons acting but less than 25%, 2 = 25-49%, 3 = 50-74%, 4 = 75%-99%, and, 5 = 100% participation (mutually inclusive collective action).[6]

Although we had multiple observers in some observation areas, the data and analysis discussed here are based on just one coder per observation area. The rally site contained 15 observation areas, which covered the entire rally site. The march had six observation areas along the route, three each on the north and south sides of the street. March observers were responsible for the one-half of the street through which the demonstrators processed as well as the adjoining sidewalk. The area in front of the Supreme Court was divided into nine areas. Across these 30 areas, the number of observer records per area ranged from 6 to 12 with a mean of 7.7. The total number of observer records was 232.

Recapitulation of the Protest Event. The first segment of the March for Life protest event consisted of a 1 hour and 20 minute rally on the Ellipse, south of the White House grounds, and bordering Constitution Avenue. From this location demonstrators walked along Constitution Avenue, then up to Capitol Hill, where they turned onto First Street SE. They then dispersed in front of the Supreme Court, which is located across First Street from the east front of the U.S. Capitol.

The procession from the Ellipse rally to the Supreme Court termination point took approximately one hour and thirty minutes. A small pro-choice counter-demonstration was held at the Supreme Court but most of the counter-demonstrators left before the majority of the pro-life "marchers" arrived. However, the pro-life demonstrators did encounter a large number of media workers and police.

Actor Categories. We had a total of 232 observation records made in the 30 observation areas across the three locations comprising the protest event. Table 1 reports the percentage of those records in which at least one individual in a particular actor category was visible to our observers. These numbers are not proportions of the total number of visible actors; we cannot generate those proportions from our data. However, we can get a sense of it from observers' estimates of how many actors were visible in each category. These estimates range from one actor to over one thousand actors.

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6 In the scale used by the observers, a = one to six actors (with the exact number specified); b = at least seven actors but less than 25% of the total visible; c = 25-49%; d = 50-74%; e = 75-99%; f = 100%. We recoded all "a" responses with two or more actors into one of the proportional categories.

Table 1: Proportion of Observer Records Reporting Each Actor Category

Actor categories	Event		Rally		March		Destination	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Demonstrators	219	94.4	140	100.0	26	72.2	53	94.7
Police	55	23.7	1	0.7	14	38.9	40	71.4
Media	46	19.8	26	18.6	4	11.1	16	28.6
Onlookers/passersby	27	11.6	0	0.0	15	41.7	12	21.4
Counter-demonstrators	8	3.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	14.3
Missing	3	1.3	0	0.0	3	8.3	0	0.0
Total	358	154.3	167	119.2	62	172.2	129	230.4
Samples	232		140		36		56	

Overall, and at each of the three separate sites, demonstrators were the most frequently observed actor category (94.4% of records); police (23.7%) were the next most frequent category, followed by media workers (19.8%), then onlooker/passersby (11.6%) and counter-demonstrators (3.4%).[7] However, the percentage of reported actors differed significantly from site to site for the latter four actor categories. Police were the second most frequently reported actors at the destination site (71.4%) and third most frequently observed along the march route (38.9%), but they were not a visible presence at the rally site (0.7%).

Media workers were most frequently reported at the destination site (28.6%), where many of them waited for the demonstrators to arrive. Media workers were also present at the rally site (18.6%), where they were accommodated by a large media platform, designed for photographers and video crews, positioned in the middle of the site and facing in the direction of the rally stage. Media workers were less frequently reported along the march route (11.1%). None of our observers reported onlookers/passersby at the rally site. Perhaps this is because all the observation areas were located within the rally site, while non-demonstrators walked along the sidewalks bordering that site. Along the march route, however, onlookers/passersby were the second most frequently observed category (41.7%), as many were using the sidewalk for non-demonstration purposes. The same was true for the march destination site where onlookers/passersby were also noted.

Counter-demonstrators were not noted in observers' records at the rally site or along the march route (although some counter-demonstrators were scattered along the route but not within the purview of our observers' assigned locations). Before the march arrived at the Supreme Court, counter-demonstrators held a

7 The overall rank ordering of frequency of actor categories corresponds to the only earlier report available (MacCannell 1973).

small pro-choice vigil with singing and guitar playing on the sidewalk in front of the Court. Since the March for Life has taken place each year since the 1973 Court decision - Roe vs. Wade - which legalized abortion, this is a symbolic site for both pro-choice and pro-life demonstrators. During some previous years, there had been confrontations between pro-life and pro-choice demonstrators at this site. However, at the 1995 March for Life, most counter-demonstrators left the destination site before the pro-life demonstrators arrived. They were observed in only 14.3% of the records taken at the destination site. Table 2 shows the minimum, maximum and modal range for each actor category, by site.

Table 2: Range in Number of Actors by Category and Site

		Demonstrators	Onlookers	Police	Media	Counter-demos
Event	min	1	1	1	1	2-5
	mode	51-100	6-10	2-5	2-5	26-50
	max	501-1000	11-25	51-100	11-25	51-100
Rally	min	6-10	-	2-5	1	-
	mode	51-100	-	2-5	1	-
	max	501-1000	-	2-5	6-10	-
March	min	1	2-5	1	2-5	-
	mode	51-100	2-5	2-5	2-5	-
	max	101-250	11-25	11-25	2-5	-
Destin.	min	1	1	1	1	2-5
	mode	11-25	6-10	11-15	2-5	26-50
	max	251-500	11-25	51-100	11-25	51-100

The estimates of the number of actors in each category gives a complementary picture, but shows more clearly how much more prevalent demonstrators were than other types of actors. When demonstrators were reported, the modal estimated frequency range was 51-100 with a maximum range of 501-1000. Counter-demonstrators, when visible, had a modal range of 26-50 and a maximum range of 51-100. With one exception - a sighting of between 50 and 100 police at the destination site - none of the other actors were ever reported at a frequency higher than 11-25. Police and media both had modal frequency ranges of 2-5, while onlookers/passersby's modal range was 6-10.

Observed Collective Actions

In this section we will discuss which collective actions were observed during the 1995 March for Life; in the following section we will discuss the extent of observed demonstrator participation in those actions. Space limitations prevent the discussion of individual or collective action by other actor categories in the

present paper. Thus, we will take up in turn two different units of analysis: the first will be the observers' records of the presence of collective action; the second will be their estimates of the proportion of actors in their areas of responsibility engaged in various forms of collective action.

Observer Records of Collective Action

Every fifteen minutes observers scanned their areas of responsibility for one minute and noted which categories of actors were engaged in which categories of action. We will briefly summarize the categories and extent of collective action which observers recorded. Table 3 below summarizes those types of collective actions our observers reported seeing most frequently at each of the three sites. Before turning to that table, several caveats are in order.

First, we noted earlier that actions on each of the four dimensions (facing, voicing, manipulating and locomoting) are more or less mutually exclusive. Normally people can face but one direction, can make but one noise with their mouth and are in but one body position at any one point in time. However, since people have two sets of arms/hands/fingers, their manipulation actions are less mutually exclusive.

Second, demonstrators can simultaneously engage in multiple actions across these four dimensions. Demonstrators are always facing some direction whether they are sitting, standing or walking (body position/locomotion). In addition, while demonstrators are facing in a common direction (e.g. toward a platform from which a speech is emanating), they may be holding aloft placards or banners (manipulation) and simultaneously cheering or booing the speaker's remarks (voicing). While it is unlikely they will be both raising their placards and applauding at the same time, it is not impossible. We have yet to devise an efficient means of recording all combinations of actions; thus, we report each of them separately. The reader should always bear in mind that demonstrators can engage in two or more actions at once.

Third, while our taxonomy provides us with an almost exhaustive list of all the actions in which two or more actors can engage collectively, we have not always observed all of these actions in every gathering we have observed. The March for Life was no exception. A rather long list of actions were observed at one but not at all three locations: Queuing, booing, oohing/ohhing/ahhing, the (non-violent) striking of a person, and lying down were observed at the rally but not along the march or at the destination site; neither praying nor striking of inanimate objects were observed at the rally; exchanging was not observed at the destination site; and neither arcs, rings, shouting, speech making, gesturing nor clapping were observed at the march sites. At the 15 minute intervals when observers systematically recorded one-minute samples of individual and

collective actions, they reported *no instances* of restraining a person, violence against a person or against property; nor were there any instances of finger snapping or jogging/running at any of the three sites. Neither pledging/reciting, throwing things or marching were observed at the rally or march site.[8] Finally, it should be noted that while these individual or collective actions were observed on occasion, they were not frequent at any location. Consequently, we have elected to display in Table 3 only those collective actions that observers recorded in double-digit frequency at one or more sites.

Table 3: Mean Percent of Collective Actions Reported by Site

Collective actions		Rally	March	Destination	Mean
Facing	Same-*f* monitoring	86.4	34.6	49.1	56.7
	Conversation clusters	61.4	23.1	73.6	52.7
	Disparate pedestrian clusters	40.0	30.8	58.5	43.1
	Same-*f* inclusive loco.	7.9	80.8	34.0	40.9
	Arcs	9.3	0.0	17.0	8.8
	Rings	7.9	0.0	18.9	8.9
Voicing	Conversation	61.4	65.4	56.6	61.1
	Chanting	2.1	34.6	34.0	23.6
	Cheering	30.7	3.9	11.3	15.3
	Singing	5.7	15.4	9.4	10.2
	Praying	0.0	3.9	24.5	9.5
	Shouting	0.7	0.0	13.2	4.6
	Pledging/reciting	0.0	0.0	11.3	3.8
Manipulation	Placarding/bannering	97.9	84.6	75.5	86.0
	Embracing/clasping person	7.1	15.4	13.2	11.9
	Carry/dragging person	12.1	7.7	1.9	7.2
	Leafleting	12.1	11.5	5.7	9.8
	Other carrying/lifting things	12.1	7.7	5.7	8.5
	Clapping	22.9	0.0	1.9	8.3
Locomotion/Position	Standing/upright	94.3	61.5	86.8	80.9
	Walking	66.4	96.2	83.0	81.9
	Sitting/seated	27.1	30.8	26.4	28.1
Matching Clothing		11.4	7.7	11.3	10.1
# of Observer Records		140	26	53	

The *most frequent collective action* reported overall and at all three protest event locations was collective *placarding/bannering*. While this peaked during the rally (reported in 97.9% of samples), it diminished only slightly during the

8 Notwithstanding the label, "March for Life," these demonstrators walked to their destination, i.e. they did not march "in step" as do military units or marching bands.

march and at the destination site. Throughout the entire protest event, many demonstrators raised their placards and banners high.[9]

Standing/upright (80.9%) and *walking* (81.9%) were the second and third most frequent forms of collective action reported by our observers. Not surprisingly, standing was more common at the rally (94.3%) and walking at the march (96.2%), while the forms had similar frequency levels at the destination.

The fourth most frequent form of collective action reported by our observers was collective or interactive voicing in the form of *conversations*; this was the case overall (61.1%) and at each of the protest venues (61.4%; 65.4% and 56.6%). We know from other research (McPhail 1994b) that conversation clusters typically involve from two to five or six persons. Thus, note here that the sixth and seventh most frequent forms of collective action overall reported by our observers involved (stationary) *conversation clusters* (reported in 52.7% of samples) and *pedestrian clusters* (reported in 43.1% of samples).

Other research (Aveni 1977; McPhail and Miller 1973; Clelland et al. 1974) suggests these are companion clusters of two to five members who assemble together, remain together throughout the duration of the protest event, and then disperse together. They intermittently participate in more inclusive forms of collective action (monitoring, chanting, cheering, singing, praying, clapping) and acting alone or interacting with their companions, e.g. engaging in conversation. These companion clusters are the most common and in our judgment the smallest but most fundamental units of social organization in all temporary gatherings. While our observers report that clusters were very much in evidence during the rally as well as at the destination site, they diminished in visibility during the march itself when a large proportion of the demonstrators were proceeding shoulder to shoulder; clusters, if observed and reported during this phase of the protest event, were likely to have been among the demonstrators standing along the march route.

The fifth most frequent overall form of collective action was *monitoring* (56.7%), which reached its peak at the initial rally (86.4%) when demonstrators were standing and facing the platform from which they were addressed by a series of rally speakers.[10] This dropped dramatically during the march and there indicates demonstrators standing along the route facing in the direction of the procession in the street; this increased slightly at the destination site.

9 Many placards were mass-produced statements of opposition to abortion or images of aborted fetuses; others were hand-made and expressed a variety of anti-abortion or pro-life sentiments. Banners identified their bearers as members of delegations from pro-life chapters, or parochial schools or churches in various eastern U.S. cities.

10 These included event organizers, some clergy, and many newly elected Republican congressmen and congresswomen who vowed to vote pro-life throughout their tenure.

Under the heading of facing, note that facing in a common direction as a function of *inclusive collective locomotion* was not frequently observed during the rally; however, it increased dramatically during the march because that is what the majority of demonstrators were doing.[11] This remained comparatively high at the destination because most of the demonstrators continued their "march" into the destination area before dispersing.

Under the heading of voicing, note that *chanting* is virtually absent during the rally but is reported by as many as one-third of the observers during the march and destination segments of this protest event. Conversely, under the heading of manipulation, *clapping* is reported by one-fifth of the observers during the rally but is virtually absent during the march and at the destination.

Several manipulation categories warrant comment. *Embracing/clasping* includes linking arms and holding hands; it was observed and reported in comparable frequencies at all locations. *Carrying/dragging a person* is reported with comparable frequencies at the rally and march sites and typically indicates adults lifting and carrying infants and children throughout the rally and march. *Other carrying/lifting things* refers to any inanimate object other than a placard or banner. The most frequent object reported by our observers was some piece of audio-visual equipment (e.g. camera, video camera, microphone). *Leafleting* was a frequently reported activity at the rally site and along the march route.

Demonstrator Participation in Collective Action

Collective action varies by form, by complexity, by substantive content, as well as by direction, frequency, tempo and velocity. Perhaps most importantly for this discussion, it varies by the proportion of the total gathering participating in any particular sequence of collective action. Mutually inclusive collective action is rare and this fact was once again confirmed in the records yielded by the systematic sampling of the protest event under examination.

Mutually Inclusive Collective Action. Of the forty-seven activities observers could have recorded, mutually inclusive participation by all demonstrators in an area was highly unlikely for twenty-one of those actions (e.g. speech making, restraining another person, leafleting). We gave careful scrutiny to observers' records to see if any of them reported any instances of participation by all the demonstrators in their areas in any of the remaining twenty-six actions. The frequency of recorded instances at each site was divided by the product of the

11 The few occasions of inclusive locomotion reported at the rally site were in all likelihood delegations of demonstrators moving together from the large buses in which they arrived into the rally venue itself, or in some instances moving together at the end of the rally to take positions within the line of "march" to the Supreme Court.

number of observation records at each site times the twenty-six actions in which mutually inclusive participation was possible (see Table 4).

Table 4: Demonstrator Participation in Unanimous Collective Actions by Site

Proportion participating	Rally (f)	March (f)	Destination voicing (f)
50–74%	49	19	19
75–99%	259	44	51
100%	83	14	137
# of observer records	140	26	53
# of possible actions	26	26	26
Potential collective actions	3640	676	1378
Inclusive collective actions	Rally %	March %	Destination %
Unanimous	.013	.028	.014
Three-quarters or more	.085	.093	.051
One-half or more	.107	.114	.099

Mutually inclusive collective action was rare. Slightly less than 3% (0.028) was reported by observers along the march route. Considerably less unanimous participation was reported by observers at the rally and destination sites.[12] Thinking that perhaps unanimous participation was too exacting a standard, we reduced the cut-off point to participation by three-quarters or more of the demonstrators. This lesser standard increased collective participation to near 9% at both rally and march sites and to 5% at the destination site. When we dropped the cut-off point to one-half or more of the demonstrators, collective participation increases to 10% or more at all three sites.

This is a further illustration of our earlier reminder of the "illusion of unanimity" which frequently surrounds assumptions and discussions of "protest events." They are neither homogeneous, continuous nor mutually inclusive phenomena; to the contrary, they are variegated and diversified.

Extent of Demonstrator Participation in Collective Action. In Table 5 we have summarized the extent of demonstrator participation in collective actions

12 Mutually inclusive actions on at least one occasion at all sites were standing and walking; at two sites, monitoring; and, at one site, inclusive collective locomotion, pedestrian clusters, singing, conversing and sitting. Collective actions by three-quarters of the demonstrators on at least one occasion at all sites were monitoring, inclusive collective locomotion, conversation clusters, conversing, placarding, standing and walking; at two sites, disparate pedestrian clusters and chanting; at one site, arcs, cheering, pledging, clapping, sitting and marching. Collective actions by half the demonstrators on at least one occasion at all sites were monitoring, chanting, conversing and placarding; at two sites, monitoring, inclusive collective locomotion, conversation clusters, disparate pedestrian clusters, chanting, singing, praying, standing and walking; and, at one site, arcs, cheering, shouting, clapping and marching.

across the entire protest event and at each of the component sites making up that event. We calculated the mean estimated proportion of demonstrators participating in collective action (ranging from "0" for no collective action at all to "5" for unanimous participation) at each site and over the course of the overall protest event.

Table 5: The Frequency of Collective Actions: Mean Values of Estimates of the Proportion of Actors in Collective Action by Protest Site

Estimated proportion	Value
None or 1 actor	0
> 2 actors but <24%	1
> 25% but < 49%	2
> 50% but < 74%	3
> 75% but < 99%	4
100%	5

Elementary forms of collective action		Rally site	March route	Destination site	Protest event
Facing	Same-*f* monitoring	3.13	0.54	1.09	1.59
	Same-*f* inclusive locomotion	0.29	3.39	1.23	1.63
	Conversation clusters	0.99	0.31	1.43	0.91
	Disparate pedestrian clusters	0.57	0.65	1.00	0.74
	Arcs	0.13	0.00	0.19	0.11
	Rings	0.08	0.00	0.21	0.10
	Queues	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.02
Voicing	Conversation	1.36	1.19	1.23	1.26
	Chanting	0.04	0.62	0.70	0.45
	Cheering	0.71	0.04	0.15	0.30
	Singing	0.13	0.27	0.11	0.17
	Praying	0.00	0.12	0.30	0.14
	Shouting	0.01	0.00	0.23	0.08
	Pledging/reciting	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.06
Manipulation	Placarding/bannering	2.51	2.46	1.57	2.18
	Clapping	0.50	0.00	0.02	0.17
	Embracing/clasping person	0.07	0.23	0.15	0.15
	Leafleting	0.13	0.12	0.06	0.10
	Other carrying/lifting things	0.14	0.08	0.06	0.09
	Carrying/dragging person	0.12	0.08	0.02	0.07
	Other manipulating things	0.03	0.08	0.02	0.04
Locomotion/Position	Standing/upright	3.76	1.58	2.74	2.69
	Walking	1.11	4.08	2.26	2.48
	Sitting/seated	0.31	0.31	0.34	0.32
# Observations		140	26	53	

The actions in which the greatest amount of demonstrator participation occurred included the collective locomotion form of walking during the "march" phase of the demonstration (mean = 4.08) and the concurrent activity of facing in a common direction as a function of inclusive locomotion (mean = 3.39). Similarly, the body position of standing/upright was highest during the rally (mean = 3.76) along with the concurrent collective facing activity of monitoring in the direction of the rally platform (mean = 3.13). Whereas each of the preceding activities varied according to demonstration site, the collective manipulation activity of placarding/bannering remained relatively constant throughout the entire protest event (mean = 2.18), although it was highest during the rally (mean = 2.51), declined slightly during the march (mean = 2.46) and then fell to a low (mean = 1.57) during the destination phase.

Conversation was also consistent overall (mean = 1.26) and at each of the three demonstrations sites (means = 1.36, 1.19 and 1.23, respectively), although at a lower level than the other collective activities just considered. Again, this activity complements the collective facing in conversation clusters at the three sites (means = 0.99, 0.31 and 1.43, respectively).

During the rally phase, cheering (mean = 0.71) and clapping (mean = 0.50) are respectably high, and chanting increases slightly during the march phase (mean = 0.62) and destination phase (mean = 0.70).

One final table provides yet another picture of the patchwork variation in collective action across the spatial distribution and temporal duration of one phase of a protest event: the opening rally. Eighty-six percent of our observer records reported demonstrators engaged in collective monitoring during the rally. Other than standing or walking, the next to the highest extent of collective action was facing in the direction of the platform during the rally (mean = 3.13). But this too varied in space and time. Table 6 provides a multivariate representation of this variation.

The first variable is what we call "depth" and refers to three swaths cutting across the width of the rally: the front cross-section (nearest the platform); the middle cross-section; and the back cross-section. The means for collective monitoring for those cross-sections were, respectively, front (3.38), middle (3.38) and back (2.53).[13]

The second spatial variable - centrality - is orthogonal to the first. The section directly in front of the rally platform was designated "the center"; the two adjoining sections, combined here, were designated "the margins"; the next

13 An analysis of variance was performed on the dependent variable proportion of demonstrators engaging in facing with three independent variables: depth, centrality and time. Depth and time were statistically significant at a .001 level. Centrality was statistically significant at a .10 level.

two adjoining sections, also combined, were designated "the fringes." The means for collective monitoring for those areas were, respectively, center (2.83), margins (3.31) and fringes (3.00).

Table 6: Collective Facing as a Function of Onlooking, by Location and Time within a Rally Gathering

Depth*	Centrality			Time*
	center	margins	fringes	
front	1.50	2.75	0.00	first half hour
	4.00	4.50	3.75	second half hour
	4.00	4.00	4.00	third half hour
	4.00	4.00	4.00	fourth half hour
middle	1.00	2.00	2.00	first half hour
	2.00	4.25	2.75	second half hour
	4.00	4.50	4.00	third half hour
	4.00	4.75	4.00	fourth half hour
back	0.50	0.75	0.50	first half hour
	2.50	2.75	3.00	second half hour
	3.50	2.75	4.00	third half hour
	3.00	2.75	4.00	fourth half hour
Overall mean = 3.09 Depth means: front = 3.38; middle = 3.38; back = 2.53 Centrality means: center = 2.83; margins = 3.31; fringes = 3.00 Time means: 1st half hour = 1.27; 2nd = 3.37; 3rd = 3.87; 4th = 3.87				
0 = none or 1 actor; 1 = ≥ 2 but <25%; 2 = 25–49%; 3 = 50–74%; 4 = 75–99%; 5 = 100% * Independent variable is significant at .001 level.				

The most dramatic differences in Table 6 involve variations across time. Our fifteen-minute intervals between observation samples were pooled into half hour periods. The means for monitoring across time were: first half hour (1.27), second half hour (3.37), third half hour (3.87) and fourth half hour (3.87). The significant differences are evident in the distribution of bold means in the table. The first half hour of observations covers the period of time preceding the start of rally; the majority of demonstrators are still standing and milling in clusters within the rally venue but occasionally facing in the direction of the platform where a musical group is providing pre-rally entertainment. The rally is fully underway in the next three half hour periods and this is evident in the front and middle cross-sections (depth). The back cross-section is only sparsely filled with demonstrators during the first two time sections and unevenly filled during the final two time sections, at which points collective facing increases.

In sum, the extent of participation in collective action is a variable, not a constant. The most characteristic feature of the sequence of demonstration

gatherings making up this protest event, like the many we have observed less systematically in the past, is alternation between and variation within individual and collective actions across time and space.[14]

Media Records of Collective Action

The primary way that most citizens and most scholars learn about protest events is through the mass media. But, as noted at the outset of this paper, the media report only a small fraction of all the protest events which are held. Of those events the media do select, they report "a small selection of the manifold detail of such a complex event, and ... may, in fact, distort the details [they do] report" (McCarthy, McPhail, Smith and Crishock 1995: 1). While permit records are invaluable for answering questions regarding selection bias and some regarding description bias (ibid.; see also their contribution to this volume), they do not contain the detail to address the question of media description bias in reporting the collective actions which make up protest events. The collective action data generated with the criteria and procedures described in this paper can be used to conduct such an investigation.

The discussion which follows is based upon network news coverage of the January 23, 1995 March for Life and the related anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, as well as extended video coverage of the rally which opening the 1995 protest event by C-SPAN, a public affairs channel. While we read newspaper stories from a number of metropolitan papers, this account is based on those from *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times* and *U.S.A. Today*. The network television news story visuals were coded using the same system our coders used on site. The television audio track and the newspaper stories and photographs were also examined for mention of collective action. Here we report three findings. First, a small proportion of the coverage was devoted to describing collective action in the March for Life protest event. Second, those elementary forms which were reported by the media were also coded by our observers. Third, those forms which we found most prevalent at the demonstration were reported by the media. We treat each of these findings for television and then for newspaper reports.

14 While the primary objective in this chapter is one of describing collective actions in protest events, the alternating and varied individual and collective actions that make up any protest gathering present a formidable challenge to existing explanations of human behavior. The challenge of developing an alternative explanation is one to which we have given considerable attention elsewhere (McPhail 1991, 1994a, 1994b; McPhail and Wohlstein 1986; McPhail and Tucker 1990; McPhail, Powers and Tucker 1992; Schweingruber 1995, 1996).

Television News. All three networks ran stories on January 23 about the March for Life. Additionally, CBS and NBC ran stories on January 22, the actual anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision.[15] These stories totaled just over five minutes with 57 shots. For approximately two minutes of this time (33 shots) visuals of demonstrations were on-screen, but March for Life visuals accounted for only 34 seconds and nine shots. The information for each of the five stories is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Length in Time (and Shots) of Television Stories Regarding the Roe vs. Wade Anniversary, the Visuals of any Demonstration and Visuals of the March for Life

Network and date		Entire story		All demos		March for Life	
CBS	1/22/95	1:55	(23)	0:44	(15)	0:00	(0)
NBC	1/22/95	0:33	(5)	0:18	(4)	0:00	(0)
ABC	1/23/95	1:58	(18)	0:42	(6)	0:12	(1)
CBS	1/23/95	0:19	(6)	0:11	(4)	0:11	(4)
NBC	1/23/95	0:17	(5)	0:11	(4)	0:11	(4)
Total		5:02	(57)	2:04	(33)	0:34	(9)

Two of the networks, CBS and NBC, constructed their March for Life stories similarly: An anchor introduced the story from the studio and continued a voice-over during four shots of people marching, each sequence of shots lasting a total of 11 seconds. The major difference was the camera position: CBS's is high above the march, with one shot showing easily over a thousand demonstrators and the others showing at least a hundred each. NBC's camera was at ground-level and showed fewer demonstrators. One shot focused on two signs, while another showed little more than a man carrying a crucifix.

Both CBS and NBC had run abortion-related stories on January 22, which were longer than their January 23 stories. NBC's story (5 shots, 0:33) included a pro-choice march-rally in Washington, D.C. (2 shots, 0:07) and a pro-life motorcade (2 shots, 0:11). CBS's story (23 shots, 1:55) included a pro-life vigil outside a church attended by President Bill Clinton (9 shots, 0:28), an unidentified pro-life vigil (2 shots, 0:03), a National Organization of Women (NOW) pro-choice march in Boston (2 shots, 0:06) and the "Deadly Dozen" press conference, in which the American Coalition of Life Activists released a list of abortionists (2 shots, 0:07).

15 Over the 20 plus years of the annual March for Life, the principal organizer has insisted on holding the protest event on the anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision (January 22) unless that date falls on a Sunday; when this occurs, as it did in 1995, the demonstration is held on the following day (cf. McPhail and Husting 1994).

ABC combined coverage of the two days' events into one January 23 story, which contained just one ten second long shot of marching March for Life demonstrators. The story focused on the "Deadly Dozen" list and reported that some of the people responsible for it believed that "killing of abortion doctors [is] justifiable homicide." ABC's story included thirty seconds (5 shots) of a vigil outside the house of one of the targeted abortionists.

From the four CBS shots, three elementary forms are visible, but they are the three forms - inclusive locomotion, walking and placard/bannering - which were engaged in by the highest proportions of demonstrators during the march. The NBC shots show the same three forms, but others - gesturing and carrying other things (crucifix and bouquet) - are also visible. ABC's shot shows the same three major forms as well as chanting. All of these forms were coded.

While the networks' March for Life visuals were entirely of the march portion of the demonstration, C-SPAN, which devoted far more time to the event than any of the networks, broadcast the rally. C-SPAN focused on the speeches in its one hour, 22 minute long coverage. For the majority of the coverage the only individuals visible were on the stage. The audience was visible for approximately 11.5 minutes. The coverage began and ended with wide shots showing the stage and audience. During the speeches, the camera zoomed out 12 times to show audience members and sometimes panned from side to side. The longest the audience was on-camera continuously was just over two minutes. When the audience is visible, peoples' backs are to the television viewer. However, several forms of collective action are visible. First, from an overhead vantage point, the orientation of the demonstrators forms a wide and shallow arc around the main stage. (Our observers at ground level, who saw smaller sections of this arc, coded it as monitoring.) However, demonstrators forming conversation clusters or walking are also visible. Demonstrators can also be seen carrying placards, banners and crosses, and sometimes waving them. The C-SPAN coverage does contain an unedited sound track of the rally. The most audible voicing is cheering, although one speaker led the demonstrators in chants. Clapping is also sometimes audible. During the pledge of allegiance, though, whatever verbal pledging the audience did was drowned out by the leader. Again, these forms were all coded by our observers and the most frequent forms they coded were visible on C-SPAN.

Newspaper coverage. The newspaper coverage shows a similar pattern to the television coverage. Minimal descriptions of individual and collective actions are present in newspaper stories covering the March for Life but are not their largest elements. The stories may also include descriptions of speech content, reporting on the political issue of abortion and quotes from demonstrators and politicians. They may also report on other demonstrations, including those by more "radical" pro-life groups and by pro-choice groups.

The collective action which is reported in the media was also recorded by our observers. *The New York Times'* account of the March for Life mentions three elementary forms (speech making, singing and placarding), *The Washington Post* four (marching, chanting, placard/bannering and singing), *USA Today* three (praying, singing and marching) and *The Washington Times* four (placard/bannering, other carrying things [wooden crosses], carrying a person and marching). Other forms could be inferred from the newspapers' mention of gathering forms - rally and march.

Additional collective action data can be gleaned from newspaper pictures. Two types of forms occur in almost every picture: (1) some form of facing in the same or convergent directions and (2) placarding. We believe that these two elements are chosen by news photographers because they convey that many people acted together for a cause, which is pictured on the placard.

Summary and Implications

The extensive protest event research done in the last two decades has drawn almost exclusively on newspaper archives as a data source. Both newspapers and television news cannot and do not cover all protest events; there is evidence of a bias in the ones they select. Those which address or illustrate issues already the focus of media attention are more likely to receive attention than those that do not, and, very large, if infrequent, protest events ($\geq$ 100,000) are far more likely to be covered than small events which are in fact far more frequent.

To date there has been no method for ascertaining whether, first, media descriptions of large events accurately represent the actors and actions of which those events are composed, and, second, if there are any differences between large and small protest events beyond their actual size.

This chapter describes and illustrates a method for addressing the first of these problems and one which is capable of addressing the second. Because protest events are complex but nested phenomena, a systematic record of the collective actions of which demonstration gatherings are composed provides one means of unpacking those events. A taxonomy of elementary forms of collective action, inductively generated from the observation of hundreds of gatherings, was used to develop a training primer and a field observation/recording form (see the Appendix). Observers were trained and deployed to record two large protest events; the event reported here involved an initial rally site, a procession route, and a termination/dispersal site.

Observers took one minute observation samples every 15 minutes of all the collective action by various categories of actors taking place in their assigned areas of responsibility. This paper reports the actions of demonstrators, the most

frequent actor category observed during this event. The most frequent category of collective action reported throughout the event was placarding/bannering, walking, standing and conversations, followed by collective monitoring (particularly at the rally site), and both (stationary) conversation clusters and pedestrian clusters. The extent of demonstrator participation was quite mixed. There were few instances of mutually inclusive or "unanimous" collective action. When it occurred it was relatively simple, e.g. collective monitoring or "facing" in the direction of the platform during the rally, or collective inclusive locomotion during the course of the march. Even so, it was seldom that as many as one-half of the demonstrators were engaged in any form of collective action during any one minute observation sample.

There is clear evidence that collective action varies across the spatial distribution and temporal duration of protest gatherings, lending further credence to the notion that they are more likely patchwork quilts of alternating and varied individual and collective action than they are uniform blankets of mutually inclusive collective action. The "mean" levels of demonstrator participation in even the most prevalent forms of collective action (e.g. placarding/bannering) were below 50%. Prototypical protest event activities, such as chanting, cheering and singing, fell well below 25%. We found particularly noteworthy the recurring reports of conversation and pedestrian clusters which, based on other research, we take as evidence of the companion clusters (family, friends and acquaintances) that assemble together, remain together throughout protest events and then disperse together, in all likelihood the most elementary unit of social organization in protest events. In short, protest events are made up of collective actions but not continuous or mutually inclusive collective action. Researchers need to remain sensitive to the "illusion of unanimity" as they design their research and interpret their results.

Nonetheless, the results of this systematic observation of one protest event suggest that the collective actions reported by the media are also regularly reported by trained observers, and that media reports include the collective actions in which demonstrators most frequently engage. The media do not look for, note or report all the collective actions in which demonstrators engage, nor are they sensitive to the social organization composition of protest events; however, this may well be a function of social science's failure to educate media workers about the complex nature of protest events. That failure, in turn, may be due to social scientists' "lack [of] basic information in the field of social protest" (Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992: 91-92). The method we have described and illustrated here may provide one tool for altering this information base and increasing both social science knowledge and media reporting of a phenomena in which we both have a significant interest.

Appendix: The Code Sheet

initials:	coder #:	location:	time:

		Dem	O/P	Pol.	Med	Cdem	Other
Number of actors visible in category (A-J)							
FACING	*f* monitoring						
same direction	queuing						
	incl. collect. loco.						
	disp. ped. cluster(s)						
converging directions	convrs. cluster(s)						
	arc(s)						
	ring(s)						
other	other						
VOICING	cheering						
vocalization	booing						
	ooh/ohh/ahhing						
	other						
verbalization	chanting						
	singing						
	shouting						
	praying						
	pledge/reciting						
	conversing						
	speech making						
	other						
MANIPULATING							
gestures	gesturing						
things carry/lifting	placard/banner						
	AV equipment						
	other						
passing	leafleting						
	exchanging						
	other						
striking	striking things						
throwing	throwing						
push/pulling	pushing/pulling						
other	other						
another person	embrace/clasping						
	restraining						
	carrying/dragging						
	striking person						
	other						
self	clapping						
	snapping						
	other						

# of actors key
A = 1
B = 2 to 5
C = 6 to 10
D = 11 to 25
E = 26 to 50
F = 51 to 100
G = 101 to 250
H = 251 to 500
I = 501 to 1000
J = over 1000

Est. # Total Actors
(circle one)
A B C D E
F G H I J

Density (circle one)
Free passage
Must slow/turn
"Excuse me"
Difficult movement

Proportion of Actors
Key
a = 1 person
b = ≥ 2 people & < 20%
c = ≥ 20% & < 40%
d = ≥ 40% & < 60%
e = ≥ 60% & < 80%
f = ≥ 80% & < 100%
g = 100%

Confidence Scale
(circle one)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6
low medium high

BODY POSITION vertical position or motion	standing/upright						
	sitting/seated						
	kneeling/knelt						
	lying/prone						
	other						
horizontal motion	walking						
	marching						
	jogging/running						
	dancing						
	vehicular motion						
	other						
VIOLENCE	vs. persons						
	vs. property						
CLOTHING	clothing						

Record details of the following on back
1. "Other" categories
2. Vehicular motion
3. Violence
4. Clothing in common
5. Dramaturgy
6. Civil Disobedience
7. Other noteworthy actions occurring during your coding interval
8. Any noteworthy actions which occurred between coding intervals (specify as such)

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