Selection. Description. Reaction.

How Television News Covers Movements and Protest

Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het behalen van de
graad van Doctor in de Sociale Wetenschappen
aan de Universiteit Antwerpen te verdedigen door

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Politieke Wetenschappen

Antwerpen 2013

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Photo: Caroline Van Ranst

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Dedicated Research for the Movement Boys

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Voorwoord

Een goed doctoraat is een af doctoraat. Het klinkt wat onrespectvol. Maar dit doctoraat is af en naast tevreden over en fier op het doorlopen denk-, zoek- en schrijfproces ben ik vooral dankbaar. Want dit doctoraatstraject zou nooit afgerond zijn zonder de steun en hulp van een groep mensen die ik enorm hard wil bedanken. Het moet ook gezegd worden dat ik nooit aan een doctoraat begonnen zou zijn zonder deze mensen. Dubbele dankbaarheid dus.

Ik wil vooreerst *Stefaan* bedanken. Voor de grenzeloze vrijheid en het blinde vertrouwen. Het gevoel van respect en het absoluut niet betuttelende. Voor de tijd en het mij mijn weg laten zoeken. En voor de vele, snelle, gulle en altijd constructieve commentaren; per mail, skype, telefoon, op een trein, of gewoonweg 's morgens aan de ontbijttafel van een conferentie waar ik met de moto naar toe mocht. Erg belangrijk. Stefaan is zo af- of aanwezig als promotor als je zelf nodig acht, laat je als onderzoeker zelf naar je limieten zoeken en legt de lat dan net iets hoger. Best wel een risicovolle strategie, maar het maakt de voldoening des te groter. Hoe het komt dat zoiets uiteindelijk toch goed komt, weet ik niet. Maar de enorme drive en het inspirerende enthousiasme van Stefaan zitten er zeker voor iets tussen. De gave van Stefaan die ik echter het hardst bewonder en waar ik zonder twijfel het meeste plezier aan beleefd heb is die om mensen aan te werven waar het leuk mee samenwerken is.

Ik zou me geen betere naaste eerste collega's hebben kunnen dromen dan *Joris* en *Jeroen*. Belezen, gepassioneerde en geëngageerde onderzoekers maar ook en vooral twee heerlijk sfeervol bulshittende zwanzers. Fantastisch. Ik laafde en laaf me aan jullie discussies en koester warme herinneringen aan de *movementmeetings* in de Highlander, het doorzakken in bruine kroegen of het aan media- en CCC-rapporten werken bij Joris thuis. Ik ben trots om deel te hebben mogen uitmaken van de Movement Boys, en ook al zitten we al een tijdje in een soort van "abeyance structure", de Movement Boys, dat gaat niet kapot.

Dit doctoraat is volledig gebaseerd op inhoudsanalyse en wat dat betreft had ik geluk. Ik heb het immers kunnen leren van de *master* zelf. *Knut* begeleidde me uitstekend bij het schrijven van een buitenlands nieuws rapport, nam me mee en moedigde me aan om naar conferenties te gaan, en was bovendien het solide sluitstuk van een strak op organisatie-voetbal inzettend Pol&Sjot. Om van het Leeronderzoek dat we samen gaven nog maar te zwijgen.

Een uitgebreid woord van dank verdient ook *Jonas*. Geen vraag is hem te veel of komt hem ongelegen en het antwoord is er altijd pal op. Jonas is pure bloeddoping geweest voor dit doctoraat. Zijn slides en raad over datamanagement, statacommando's en syntaxprogramma's waren van onschatbare waarde en het seminarie 'media en politiek' gebruikten we als laboratorium voor de laatste hoofdstukken van dit proefschrift.

Van het mannenbastion dat M²P eens was schiet na de zoveelste feministische golf niet veel meer over. Specifiek wil ik drie M²P-babes bedanken. *Anne*, voor het voorzien van M²P van de nodige vrouwelijke touch, en de week en verjaardagscake op summerschool in Trondheim; *Julie*, voor het meewerken en coderen aan de nieuwsmonitor over het middenveld op een moment dat ik het eigenlijk wel gehad had met al dat middenveld; en *Pauline*, voor de broodnodige hulp bij het datamanagen van het CCC-project en om van start af vol petrol mee in de grootste data-analyse ooit te vliegen.

M²P transformeerde van een zootje ongeregeld naar een geoliede machine met tweewekelijkse staffs, professionele discussants en midweekweekends. Ongeacht de constellatie bleef de ziel van M²P constant en het is zonder de minste twijfel die moeilijk te operationaliseren contextvariabele die de belangrijkste factor is in het verklaren van deze doctortitel. Wat ik eigenlijk zeggen wil: M²P is écht wel ok.

Buiten M²P wil ik graag *Kris* bedanken: lotgenoot in het doctoreren maar ook buurtgenoot, mede motard en ski-fanaat. Gedeelde smart is halve smart. Een speciaal woord van dank verdient ook mijn commissie. *Heidi* en *Rens*, dank voor de kritische maar constructieve houding, het vele leeswerk en de suggesties die dit doctoraat beter maakten dan het aanvankelijk was.

Ten slotte wil ik mijn ouders bedanken. *Papa*, *mama*, jullie zijn op een veel rechtstreeksere manier mee verantwoordelijk voor dit doctoraat dan jullie zelf ook maar zouden kunnen vermoeden. Een voorbeeld. Tot en met het derde studiejaar moest ik na het nieuws van 20u naar bed. Tja. Willy Claes was mijn minister van Buitenlandse Zaken en Irak en Agusta hielden

weinig geheimen voor me in. Toen Meester Julien op een blauwe maandag anagrammen op het bord schreef en we “gaza” in “zaag” moesten transformeren, kreeg ik het hoongelach van een hele klas over me heen door te beweren dat “gaza” wel degelijk een woord was. Het trauma dat dit alles mij opleverde heb ik enkel van me af kunnen schudden door een vier jaar durende doctoraatstherapie. Die bestond uit geconcentreerde blootstelling aan nieuwsfilmpjes en herhaaldelijke, intensieve media-analyse. Laten we hopen dat het gewerkt heeft en dat ik niet herval. Papa, mama, ik ben jullie enorm dankbaar voor alle aangeboden kansen, voor de open blik op de wereld, zowel in het groot als in het klein. Merci. Ik kan het niet anders zeggen. *Laura*, *Senne* bedankt om mee te gaan enquêteren en in muffe archieven betogingsdata te verzamelen. Ik maak mezelf graag wijs dat jullie dit niet enkel deden voor de dikke flappen maar ook uit een soort van broeder of zusterliefde. En tussen ons gezegd en gezwegen, zo heb ik het alleszins ervaren.

Ik zou dit dankwoord graag willen afsluiten met de volgende woorden:

Voila. Finito. Gedaan. Mijn botten zijn klaar voor de volgende show.

Wijnegem

6 oktober 2013

Introduction

This study deals with the relationship between mass media, social movements and protest. In particular, two questions are set out to be answered. *First*, what kind of movements and protest events are more successful than others in attracting media attention? Or, put differently, why are some movements or events selected over others and what kind of mechanisms cause this differential selection? *Second*, how are movements and protest molded and shaped by the media machinery? Do social movements receive coverage that highlights their issues and that is consonant with their claims? Or does media coverage tends to undermine the agenda of social movements? More precisely, what conditions regulate how media filter protest politics? In sum, this study deals with the *selection* and *description* of social movements and protest by mass media and aims to tease out the conditions that regulate the media filtering process.

The premise of this study is that media attention matters for social movements. Nowhere in this study the actual impact of media on whatever possible outcome of movement activity is directly assessed. The relevance of the chapters presented here hence rest on the presumption of a single argument, that is, that media attention is key for social movements and that therefore this topic deserves scrutiny. Let me start with presenting some quotes that underscore this premise before I more fully elaborate on it.

In 1968, Michael Lipsky, theorizing on protest as a political activity rather than irrational mayhem, is one of the first who explicitly acknowledges the significance of mass communication for protest. Aptly worded, Lipsky (1968: 1151) states: *"Like the tree falling unheard in the forest, there is no protest unless protest is perceived and projected"*. According

to Lipsky, mass media set the limits of protest activity; reporters are a key constituency protest leaders should appeal to; demonstrations that do not succeed in getting noticed, most likely will fail. One year and a boom in protest activity later, Amitai Etzioni accepts an invitation by the United States' National Commission on Causes and Prevention of Violence. Demonstrations by students, the civil rights and anti-war movement are shaking the foundations of the country and need examination. In the resulting policy paper, Etzioni (1969) argues that although demonstrations have occurred throughout history, their status as frequent and effective instrument of political expression has become apparent with the rise of television. With television being fond of vivid pictures and protestors seeking the "eyes and ears of the country", the needs of both were considered intimately intertwined. *"As long as there is protest to express and television to communicate"* Etzioni (1969: 14) writes, "*demonstrations can be expected to continue as an integral part of the American political system."*

About fifteen years later, Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986: 72) add weight to these arguments. Mass media have become central to the "*life and death"* of social movements. They play a crucial role in movement emergence, sustainment and goal attainment. Oliver and Myers (1999: 39) much in the same way continue: *"Understanding the filter applied by newspapers and television to the reality of protest is essential to understanding the effects of protests and demonstrations in the polity."* Koopmans (2004), finally, even goes a step further and maintains that elites react to protest only *if* and *as* depicted in the media arena. Authorities simply do not care to react to protest that is not reported and if protest does get reported, elites do not react to protest as it "really" was, but as it appeared in the media.

In sum, as evidenced by these quotes, the fascination for mass media by students of social movements can be traced way back and seems to have continued ever since. In this introduction I make a strong case for studying the relationship between social movements and mass media. I take stock of extant literature, highlight its limitations and indicate room for improvement. I introduce the datasets that will be used and the research questions that guide the different chapters. But first things first: why does media attention matters for movements and why should we care?

Why Media Attention Matters for Movements

Social movements are crucial forces at the input side of politics. They define public problems, suggest solutions, aggregate citizen voices, and communicate about this problems and solutions (backed-up by these citizen voices) to public officials (Burstein & Linton, 2002). Movement scholars therefore assume movements to be important forces of social and political change (McAdam & Su, 2002).

Crucial, however, is that social movements as a rule lack direct access to the policy making process and hence are easily ignored. In order to succeed, movements must walk far less beaten tracks. They must try to generate support among authorities and sympathy among bystanders; an ongoing sense of legitimacy and efficacy among their constituents and a sense of urgency that pressures all the actors in the system to act (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1988). Lacking direct access to institutional politics, however, movements need to go public and attracting media attention can play a pivotal role in each of the abovementioned processes. More specifically, Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) distinguish three functions of media for movements. Media attention is crucial for reasons of "mobilization", "validation" and "scope enlargement".

The *mobilization* function of mass media deals with the necessity for movements to reach out and can best be understood as the marketing mechanism of social movements. In particular, mass media allow movements to preach to the not yet converted. Lacking direct access to the policy making process, the non-converted are key. In the words of Klandermans (1997), media attention is helpful in consensus mobilization. By drawing attention to movement issues, claims and supporters, media coverage can influence public opinion, sets the agenda and can constitute a favorable mobilization climate (Holmes Cooper, 2002). True calls to arms in the media arena are rather exceptional. Most frequently explicit media mobilization in non-partisan outlets is limited to situations of "suddenly imposed grievances" (Walsh & Warland, 1983) or "moral shocks" (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995). When it comes to reaching out, Vliegenthart and colleagues (2005) established that media coverage of movements facilitates membership recruitment. Walgrave and Manssens (2005) scrutinized a rare case of media operating as explicit mobilizing actors instead of neutral transmitters. Holmes-Cooper (2002), finally, found how congruent movement and media framing affected mobilization success. In

sum, media attention matters for movements because it affects mobilization capacities: to the very least, it diffuses awareness beyond the inner circle.

Second, media coverage also *validates* social movements. Social movements operate at the margins of the political system. They are resource poor and often weakly organized. Interest groups scholars refer to them as "beggars at the (policy making) gates". Media attention is vital for such organizations because it grants them recognition. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948: 101) speak of the "status conferral function" of mass media: *"The mass media bestows prestige and enhances the authority of individuals and groups by legitimizing their status. Recognition by the press or radio or magazines or newsreel testifies that one has arrived, that one is important enough to have been singled out from the large anonymous masses, that one's behavior and opinions are significant enough to require public notice"*. In sum, being singled out as newsworthy validates a movement. Even if coverage is bad, succeeding to elicit attention is key as movements that do not attract the media spotlight do not exist in the eye of the beholder.

Scope enlargement, finally, implies the activation of other parties. More than anything else, social movements hope to enlarge the scope of conflict when going public. By going public, social movements hope to activate third parties that are in favor of their claims. Scope enlargement as such is a possible consequence of the basic diffusion, amplification and validation capacities of mass media. Media attention might draw third parties to the negotiation table and might change the points of interest of elites already sitting at the table. Most basically, scope enlargement has to do with supportive third parties who increase the bargaining power of social movements. Having mighty allies, or being backed-up by many citizen voices, makes targets interested in re-election eager to pay attention. According to Schattschneider (1960) especially weaker groups have to gain with broadening the scope of conflict. Moreover, he considers the socialization of conflict as the essential democratic process. Of course, bringing a conflict under the attention of the many is not without risk and might backfire. Going public is a weapon of last resort and the outcome is unknown. Yet for the weak, it often is the only weapon available.

Media coverage has more internally-oriented consequences for movements as well. Media attention can boost cohesion (Kielbowicz & Sherer, 1986), increase moral (Molotch, 1979), or can single out spokespersons who will become perceived as leaders of leaderless movements

(Gitlin, 1980). Boiled down to its very essence, however, the unique selling point of media for movements lies in its ability to reach out. The media arena is the "master forum" of public discourse in contemporary democracies (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002). It has unmet centrality, reach and perceived consequentialness. With the impact of movements being indirect and operating via mass media, the key questions of this thesis become increasingly relevant. If the filter mass media apply to social movements and protest is crucial in the process from movement activity to outcome, then this filtering mechanism deserves up-close investigation. It is on this relationship, between media and movements this study concentrates. Answering the questions of *whether* and *how* mass media organizations decide to cover movements and protest, is the coal that makes this train roll.

A Matter of Selection and Description

Trying to attract and shape media coverage is easier said than done. This is especially so for social movements. What makes the relationship between media and movements interesting is not so much that both sides of the equation depend on each other. That is, that social movements want to diffuse their claims (they need publicity) and that journalists need content to report (they need information). The fact that the relationship is *asymmetrical* makes it intriguing. According to Ryan (1991) social movements face the double burden of the underdog: they have a more difficult time in gaining access and a more difficult time in getting their views presented undistorted in the media arena. Wolfsfeld (1997) holds that it bears fruit to observe the relationship between media and movements exactly along these two dimensions. One is *structural*, and deals with media access of movements. From the perspective of journalists it deals with selection. The other one is *cultural* and deals with the production of meaning. That is, the definition of issues in the media arena and the correspondence of this definition with the stance of a movement. For journalists this latter struggle goes by the name of description.

When it comes to *media selection*, it is crucial to see the media arena as a bounded space characterized by a high level of competition (Koopmans, 2004). Social problems today are to a great extent defined, constructed and projected in and through content generated by mass media institutions (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). Due to increased mediation and even

mediatization (Strömbäck, 2008) of politics, all kind of political actors that want to tackle a certain problem and want to put their ideas into practice, nowadays almost as a rule need to court the media spotlight. Yet the carrying capacity of mass media is limited and media attention therefore has become an increasingly scarce resource. As will be spelled out below, especially social movements are ill-positioned to participate in this fierce competition.

Studies of communication scholars show that media attention is unequally distributed and biased towards high-ranked state actors (Bennett, 1990; De Swert & Walgrave, 2002; Tresh, 2009). News media prefer to rely on sources with political power. What these actors do and say impacts many people and therefore they are inherently newsworthy (Van Dalen, 2012). Also in its day to day practicalities, the news production process is adjusted to the politically powerful, for instance via *beat* assignments: reporters camp before headquarters of parties and parliaments; in its practical organization, the newsgathering net is oriented towards institutional political elites. As a consequence, politically powerful far more easily find media resonance and often are the starting point of a news story. In order to arrive at balanced reports –a crucial professional norm-, journalists tend to rely not so much on social movement sources, yet on more neutral and safe 'establishment' sources like experts or civil servants (Tuchman, 1973). In sum, the outset for social movements looks bleak.

Whereas communication scholars have carried out content analyses scrutinizing media selection, social movement scholars have taken more of a case-study approach. By singling out particular movements and observing the strategies they deploy to increase visibility, two pathways towards media visibility have become apparent. One pathway deals with facilitating the news production process (*news routines*). As journalists face strict deadlines, movements try to ease the news-gathering process by presenting easily digestible sound bites and ready-publishable information packages (Barker-Plummer, 2002; Rohlinger, 2006). In a case study on the National Organization for Women, Barker-Plummer (2002) showed that NOW's ability to gain media access was dependent on two factors. Besides the possession of material resources (money, staff, members) it was the knowledge about media routines and the development of specific and reflexive media strategies that gave NOW's visibility a boost. The creation of a Public Information Office that organized press conferences, announced research reports and subsidized the press with a steady stream of releases was crucial in this respect. As a matter of fact, Barker-Plummer shows that 77 percent of all NOW related news was instigated by the movement itself, and the early successes of winning coverage convinced

NOW leaders that press strategies were as important as legislative and educational strategies in the struggle for women rights.

Being able to present such information subsidies (Gandy, 1982), however, requires organizational resources that most movements actually lack (Thrall, 2006). Another pathway towards media coverage hence deals with staging events that are maximized in terms of *news values.* It is by carrying out exceptional acts that social movements succeed in courting the media spotlight (Wolfsfeld, 1997). By staging protest events that offer drama, conflict, action and opportunities to shoot vivid pictures, journalists can be tempted to pay attention. More than a press release, demonstrations appeal to the nose for news of journalists. Danielian and Page (1994) hold that protest actions are the most surefire way for citizen groups to make it into the news. Andrews and Caren (2010) similarly conclude that staging protest events increases media visibility. More specifically, these latter authors show in a rare combination of detailed organizational survey material and media analysis that even controlled (and hence on top of) for organization staff and membership size, staging demonstrations positively affected the visibility of environmental organizations.

When it comes to the subsequent *description* of groups in the media arena, breaking the media gates by staging protest appears to be not without consequence. The seminal work of Galtung and Ruge (1965) on news values underscores that the characteristics that make an occurrence newsworthy also are likely to be stressed in the resulting news report. For movements staging protest events this means that especially the event and particular details of the event will receive attention, not necessarily the issue, critique or claim put forward. Specific studies that deal with media description of movements and protest even go a step further. The “protest paradigm” literature holds that journalists follow an implicit template when covering protest events (Chan & Lee, 1984; Gitlin, 1980; McLeod & Hertog, 1992, 1998). This routinized pattern of protest coverage results in news reports with a number of fixed characteristics that tend to trivialize, marginalize and even demonize protestors (Boyle et al., 2006; Detenber, Gotlieb, McLeod, & Malinkina, 2007; McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). Besides a focus on the behavior and appearances of protestors other characteristics of the paradigm are for instance the invocation of public opinion (proving that protestors are an isolated minority); the reliance on official sources (presenting their definition of the situation); the use of derogatory news frames (protest as crime, as violence, as riot, as freak show, as romper room, as carnival); the explicit (in words) or implicit

(visuals) downplaying of protest size; or the exaggeration of the potential threat of a protest group, amongst others.

In sum, having briefly introduced the core literature, movements seem to be caught in a catch-22. They are in great need of media attention in order to be successful yet have a difficult time in gaining media access. Staging protest events is the most surefire way to attract attention, yet the resulting coverage tends to be more harmful than helpful. In short, movements find themselves trapped in a lose-lose situation; they are doomed if they do and doomed if they don't. At least, so the easily hummable tune of extant research goes. The aim of this thesis is to come at a more fine grained conclusion of the relationship between media and movements and to tease out the conditions that regulate whether and how media cover movements and protest in one way or the other.

Gaps and Contributions

Thus far, I explained why media attention matters for social movements. I also briefly sketched the main contours of the relationship between both, and I argued that it is worthwhile to look at this relationship alongside the dimensions of selection and description. Having made the outset of this dissertation clear, what are the limitations of current studies and where does this study contributes? Wrapped up in a single sentence, this study: (1) integrates social movement and communication studies; (2) follows a consistent, systematic, quantitative and innovative approach; (3) tests long-held assumptions in a non-American context; (4) focuses on television news instead of newspapers; and, (5) adds "reaction" to "selection" and "description" as another dimension for studying the relationship between media, movements and protest. Taken together, these contributions allow the examination of the conditions that regulate media coverage of movements and protest, which is the overarching contribution this study aims to make.

(1) Integrating Social Movement and Communication Studies

Although it might seem to be at odds with the first several pages, media attention for social movements is not a central aspect in social movement studies, nor is it in communication

studies. The topic clearly falls in between disciplines. Social movement scholars foremost have been interested in how movements emerge, develop, organize and recruit. The most systematic data collections of media content by social movement scholars even have nothing substantially with media attention to do. Based on newspaper articles, social movement scholars construct longitudinal protest event datasets to track down protest cycles and mobilization levels (Kriesi, 1995). Especially methodological concerns about validity and reliability of this newspaper data occupies social movement scholars (Earl, Martin, McCarthy, & Soule, 2004; Oritz, Myers, Walls, & Diaz, 2005; Rucht, Koopmans, & Neidhardt, 1998).

Communication scholars on the other hand foremost have been interested in media visibility of another type of political actor. Media attention for political parties and presidential candidates is what attracted the lion's share of scholarly attention. To this purpose, communication scholars scrutinized specific periods (election times) and paid only scant attention to 'political outsiders'. Interestingly, also the tools utilized by both fields differ: communication scholars depart from mass media and execute content analyses. They focus on the end *product* of the interaction between activists and journalists. For social movement scholars, however, movements and their activities are the starting point of scrutiny. The efforts that activists make and the interaction between activists and journalists – that is, the *process* of gaining media attention- takes center stage (see for instance Ryan, 1991). This thesis will focus on the end product and less direct on the process of news making as especially that part of the relationship between media and movements is underexposed.

The fact that the topic of this thesis falls in between disciplines does not mean that knowledge about the topic is in its infancy. What it does mean is that knowledge is scattered, not produced in a cumulative way and begs for better integration. With the question of movement impact booming in social movement literature (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, & Su, 2010; Giugni, 1998) the moment for a better integration is now. Social movement and communication scholars by and large ask the same questions, yet what strikes the eye is that there is no real dialogue between both fields. To say it somewhat bluntly, both scholarly communities are not on speaking terms although cross-fertilization would be fruitful (see Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2010 for a similar call to integration). In sum, the topic of social movements and media attention by and large has fallen in between isolated disciplines, has rarely been the center of attention, and both disciplines have very different starting points if they do tackle the issue. As a consequence, knowledge about media and movements is

scattered and produced non-cumulatively. A major contribution of this thesis is that it aims at a much needed and fuller integration of both disciplines. Only by combining insights and eliminating shortcomings of both scholarly fields, "newsmaking" will become the conceptual building block in social movement theory Kielbowicz and Sherer (1986: 90) wanted it to become more than a quarter of a century ago.

(2) Following a consistent, systematic, quantitative and innovative approach

Empirically, the interest of social movement scholars in media attention has foremost been methodological. Yet literature on social movements and news media also has been long on theory and short on rigorous, systematic empirical tests. The articles and book chapters of Lipsky (1968), Molotch (1979), Kielbowicz and Sherer (1986) and Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) are exemplar in this respect. Molotch (1979: 91), for instance, writes that his essay is "quite speculative" and does not offer "research findings". Similarly, Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) argue that their article is long on general arguments but short on specific applications. McLeod and Hertog (1998) as well urge researchers to start undertaking empirical studies as these would allow to further specify characteristics and conditionalities of the protest paradigm.

All in all, literature on social movements and media attention is overtly theoretical or methodological, and if substantially empirical, rather limited in scope. Social movement scholars study single movements, or compare competing movement organizations on a single issue (Barker-Plummer, 2002; Rohlinger, 2002, 2006). The protest paradigm, moreover, is based on the scrutiny of only a limited number of (anarchist) marches in a small American city (Hertog & McLeod, 1995). Most of these studies use political discourse analysis to track down very specifically particular characteristics of media coverage and present the reader with very detailed an fine grained qualitative accounts (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 1980).

This study complements previous research by taking a more quantitative approach that allows for the comparison across movements, events and issues. A such, it is far better positioned for teasing out the conditionality and might more confidently appeal to generalizability. In the past, findings of single, low-N case studies all to easily have been presented and reiterated as established general truths (Cottle, 2008). This study will put key assumptions in the field to the test and tease out the conditionality of media coverage for

social movements. It will make use of census media data (rare in social movement and communication research), real world police archive data (unseen in communication research, rare in social movement research), it will compare across issues and movements (rare in social movement research), and it will make use of innovative measuring techniques, for instance airtime as measure of specific attention-types in content analysis (rare in communication research).

(3) Testing assumptions in a non-American context

The relationship between media, movements and protest foremost has been tested in an American context (Amenta, Caren, Olasky, & Stobaugh, 2009; Andrews & Caren, 2010; Berry, 1999; Danielian & Page, 1994; Dardis, 2006a; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Sobieraj, 2010) known for an entirely different media and political system. Whereas Belgium falls under the "Democratic Corporatist" umbrella, the United States is exemplar for the "Liberal" media system (D. C. Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In both systems journalistic professionalization is high, but in the latter one mass media is more profit-driven and market dominated whereas in the first one strong public broadcasters are active and the press is subsidized to protect press freedom.

Curran, Iyengar, Lund, and Salovaara-Moring (2009) show how public service systems offer more hard news and that consequentially knowledge gaps between high and low politically interested are lower compared to more market driven countries as the US. Compared to Belgium, the American media system is far more fragmented, and especially in the television market this has led to politically affiliated stations (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Iyengar & Hahn, 2009). In Belgium viewers can actually not tune into a news station that aligns with one's political preference. Taken together, the profit-orientation, fragmentation and subsequent polarization all are likely to affect the representation of social movements in the news (D. Weaver & Scacco, 2013). For instance, US protest paradigm research has found that protest reports are very event-oriented. News items focus on the spectacle, the behavior and the appearances of protestors. One could wonder whether in less competitive and hence entertainment oriented media systems protest reports will be equally event-oriented. Another descriptive characteristic of protest reports could differ as well. That is, the balancing norm. One could expect that politically affiliated television stations are less likely to balance

stances congruent with a stations ideology. Yet on the other hand, the US political system thrives far more on conflict than the Belgian political system(Lijphart, 1999). This latter reasoning could lead to the expectation of more (pseudo) balance in US news reports. Irrespective of these speculated directions of differences between both media systems, it is worthwhile to see whether results of the American context hold in another media and political system. This is especially because the different requirements of both systems can affect both the action repertoire as the movements themselves: if media time and again prefer radical above moderate voices, the power balance within movements –and on the aggregate in civil society -is likely to shift.

Closely related, much of the research on social movements and media attention can be placed in the "manufacturing consent" corner of media research (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). These scholars stress the power of media as agents of social control and supporters of the status quo (De Luca & Peeples, 2002; McLeod & Hertog, 1992; Olien, Tichenor, & Donohue, 1989). Linked to the social power structure, media reproduce existing power relations and support the establishment. The literature here is far more normative (or "critical") and ideological. It uses words as "propaganda", "hegemony", "status quo" and "flack". Research in the manufacturing consent tradition for sure has its merits, and its American origin most likely flows from the bigger corporate control over media in the American context. The literature however, is somewhat at odds with the Belgian case, and therefore not really drawn upon. Moreover, Herman and Chomsky's (1988) "propaganda" model leaves little room for mediating factors and presents the media landscape as a monolithic bloc. The goal of this study however, is exactly to tease out mechanisms that mediate the representation of movements and protest in the news.

Yet even in its own right studying media attention for social movements in the context of Belgium is worthwhile. In Belgium, studies on this topic can be counted two fingers. Exemplar for the state of the field, one contribution is completely theoretical (Vriamont, 1994) and one thought provoking study focuses on newspaper coverage (Verhulst & Walgrave, 2005). In short, in Belgium, nothing even close of a systematic inquiry of media attention for movements exists. This study is the first in its kind.

(4) Television news instead of newspapers

Most previous studies on media coverage of movements and protest have turned to the press. The choice for newspapers from the perspective of movement scholars is logical given the fact that they are far more easy accessible, have a bigger news hole and therefore most probably, are more complete in storing protest events. This study focuses on television news, however.

If one is interested in the impact of protest rather than in methodological issues, television news is the preferable medium to scrutinize. Television news still is the most important source of information about politics and society for most citizens in Western democracies (Curran et al., 2009). The fact that television adds pictures to words makes it extremely well-suited to communicate the vibrant atmosphere of protest as well (Small, 1994). The visual stimuli of televised protests increase audience recall, increase emotional arousal and therefore might be more effective than newspaper articles in pressuring viewers to choose sides (Graber, 1990, 2001). Protest in television news also will be displayed more prominently, while in newspapers they can be buried in a two inch column on page 29. In sum, it is television news that impacts audiences, and therefore is relevant to study (Smidt, 2012; Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). Especially in Belgium, where the audience for news is on the rise and two broadcasters – one commercial and one public television station- with their flagship newscasts have an eighty percent market share during prime time, studying television selection and description definitely is relevant (Wouters, De Swert, & Walgrave, 2009).

It remains to be seen whether results of the newspaper literature hold for another mass medium. The news hole of television news is far more limited and other selection mechanisms might be at work because of the visual nature of television news. Also the format and logic of television (7 days on 7, evening versus morning, more oriented towards immediate communication and current affairs) can be of influence on selection dynamics. Description of protest by television news might be very different as well, with television being able to communicate visually and audibly instantaneously whereas newspaper journalists deliberately have to describe everything what they want to present to their audience. Television news items also tend to be shorter, and the question of what kind of information

about a protest event gets public notice and what kind of information is dropped, might be different compared to newspapers.

(5) Adding "reaction" to "selection" and "description"

To date, social movement scholars have shown interest in selection and description of protest events. Yet the most crucial consequence of any protest event is whether it succeeds in activating third parties or reaching the target and having it pay attention. No systematic empirical attention has been paid to the immediate "reactions" of targets and third parties to protest in the media arena. With most of the interaction and mutual observation between movements and elites nowadays occurring in and via the mass media (Koopmans, 2004), examining the reaction of others to protest in the news shows itself as a fruitful approach to further study how movements "struggle over meaning" in the media arena. This study thus adds "reaction" as another element worthwhile studying to the more established research tracks of "selection" and "description". In doing so, it more closely ties communication studies (who look at reactions of others in the news as a matter of balance) to social movement studies (who look at reactions of others as a matter of responsiveness or scope expansion) and brings media coverage –the crucial mediating variable between protest activity and movement outcome- a step closer to its potential political impact.

Closely related to the point raised above, this study engages in a more nuanced operationalization of media attention than previous studies (for an exception see Vliegenthart et al., 2005). For most prior work in the social movements tradition, media attention was simply operationalized as a binary condition of being in the newspaper or not. The aim of this study clearly is to go beyond this simple dichotomy. When investigating selection also the prominence (is the protest event a lead item or not) and the volume (is the protest report long or short) of this selection will be scrutinized. Similarly, for the presence of social movements in the news I will take into account whether movements are granted "standing" (are allowed to contribute to a debate using their own words) or are merely mentioned and whether they are balanced or receive monopoly positions in news items. On the level of description, I will make a distinction between event and exemplar orientation of episodic coverage, a distinction that I argue is crucial and lacking in previous studies. So, this thesis defines and operationalizes its core independent variable (media attention) more fine-

grained. By tackling selection, description and reaction in one study, I believe it also tracks to a mounting degree the discursive success of social movements in the media arena. Movements and protest can be selected for exposure; they are in or out of the picture. Next to simply receiving coverage, movements will be occupied with how they are represented in the media arena. Finally, it are the reactions of others in protest reports that can make or break movements, but even if reactions are negative I suppose them to boost the functions of mass media for movements.

Wrapped up, these five contributions allow for a better understanding of whether and how television news covers movements and protest and as such allows for teasing out the conditions that regulate coverage.

Data Collection

This study makes use of content analysis as a method of inquiry. Although every chapter will have a separate data and methods section, I believe it is appropriate to briefly introduce the basic characteristics of the data here. Two types of content were collected: television news content and police records of protest events.

Television news database. All 19 o'clock flagship newscasts of both the public (Eén) and commercial (vtm) broadcaster of Belgium (Flanders) are archived and coded by the Electronic News Archive (ENA). The archive is hosted by the University of Antwerp and the Catholic University of Leuven and is funded by the Flemish government. Every news item is coded on the issue, actor and country level. The ENA-database is a census television news dataset which is rather unique.

The fact that it continues over time means that the ENA-coding team changes over time as well. ENA-coders are trained and paid students of the university of Antwerp. The intake of coders is strict. Only coders who conform sufficiently to the norm are allowed in the team. Coders are followed-up, get occasional but detailed feedback of the ENA-coordinator, and all encodings receive a check before being merged to the master file (De Swert, 2011). Formal inter-coder testing is done occasionally (De Smedt, Wouters, & De Swert, 2013). Results show that countries and actors are coded reliably (Krippendorf α >.765). For issues, however, this

holds only for the major topic level. Most variables in the ENA are free from interpretation (length of the news item, station, length of an actor quote). Open text fields (actor function, actor name, countries) are cleaned and some of them are recoded into closed categories by the ENA-coordinator. Most disagreements on encodings in the ENA have to deal with multidimensionality of items and actors rather than with outright mistakes (or loss of attention or concentration). The basic coding allows researchers to efficiently search the database. For this study, the total domestic news agenda (defined as every news item that made a reference to "Belgium") between January 2003 and December 2010 is taken into account. The dataset consists of 65,325 unique news items and 207,254 actors.

In order to make the ENA-file useful for this study, some recoding needed to be done. First of all, no suitable actor category containing all movements of interest existed. Therefore, all closed actor categories were sifted through by the author. Based on a comparison between the original open text field and the thematic description of the news item, actors got assigned a social movement (or more precisely, advocacy group) stamp or not. For some categories, recoding was easy (spokesperson civil society), for others it was somewhat more time intensive (employee). All advocacy groups in a next phase were recoded into six advocacy group families (unions, professional, environmental, human rights, welfare and consumer organizations) and double coded (Average α =.947).

A *second* recoding of the data had to do with finding protest events in the database. In order to achieve this, all items that involved protestors as actors were included as protest items. Next, a needle-haystack SPSS syntax using protest and its synonyms as search terms was developed. This syntax ran over the open thematic text fields (full sentence and key word summaries) of the database and created a protest dummy variable as well. It is the combination of both that resulted in the final protest dummy variable. The *final* and most thorough recoding of the database was on a subset of these protest items. All protest events that were part of the police archive database were retrieved from the archive. Manually and sorted on date and item number, first, the link between the police archive dataset and the television news dataset was made. More specifically, all news items during the day of the protest event that dealt with the protest event (and its topic) were selected. In a next phase, the original video footage of the news items was subjected to a detailed content analysis with a specific codescheme.

Police record database. After dozens of phone-calls, hundreds of e-mails, and one meeting and a sincere presentation, access was granted to the police archive with demonstration requests and reports of the police district "*Brussel-Hoofdstad-Elsene*". All protest events that took place between 2003 and 2010 were retrieved from a paper archive and digitalized. Brussels is the capital and political heart of both Belgium and Europe. The main political institutions of the different Belgian regions as well as the headquarters for many European agencies and foreign embassies are located in this jurisdiction. This specific context makes Brussels a particularly attractive location for protestors interested in showing their discontent.

In Brussels all demonstrations have to be requested. Protest events that were not requested yet bumped into by patrolling police officers also were part of the archive. Copies of the requests and permits were coded on-site by the author and a group of MA-students. Coding was done during one week in April 2011 and one month in the summer of 2011 (June-July). In an ideal situation, one record would give a start to finish perspective of a particular demonstration. The document would open with a letter of request to the mayor, would contain a risk analysis and police deployment plan, a short description of the protest issue, and an estimation of the amount of participants and organizations involved. The document would end with a short follow–up report after the demonstration, describing the flow of events, the actual number of participants, and any irregularities (arrests, violence, blockage of traffic). Only in 62% of the events, such an after demonstration report was present, however. All protest events from January 2003 to December 2010 were coded, leading to a database of 4,582 records.

The major asset of police record data is that it offers media independent information and as such allows for the most robust test of media selection. Only a handful of studies to date have succeeded in gaining access to police archives (Barranco & Wisler, 1999; Hocke, 1998; McCarthy, McPhail, & Smith, 1996; Oliver & Maney, 2000) The fact that police record information is standardized and therefore much more complete than media data is another asset. Media reports for instance do not report who the actual organizers were, or how many people attended (small) demonstrations. Police records store this data far more systematically. When it comes to description as well, media independent data proves useful. Previous studies rely on information in a media report to predict media description, yet

consequentially run the risk of being tautological. The police archive dataset delivers the lion's share of the independent variables that will be used in this study.

Overview of Chapters

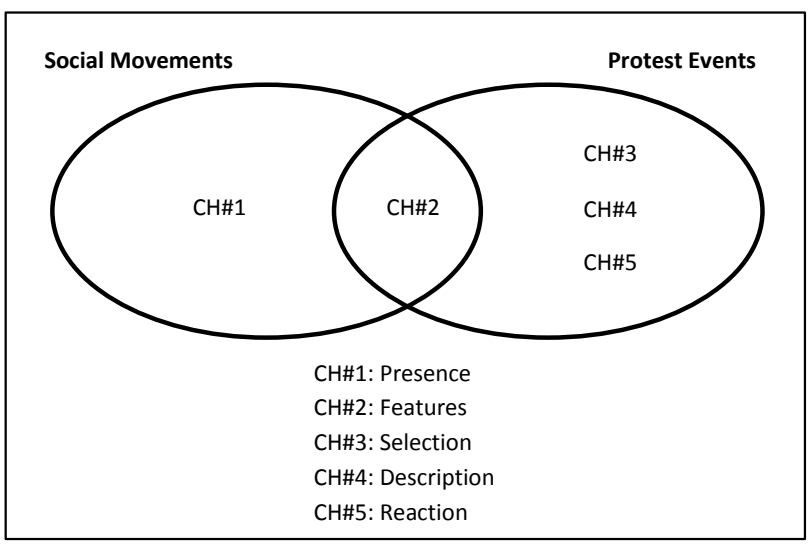
This thesis consists of five chapters. Each chapter has the form of a scientific article and tackles the relationship between movements, protest and media from a slightly different perspective. Every chapter stands on in its own, but the preferable reading order is the chronological order in which they are presented here. The outline of the chapters below focuses on research design and the fit with extant literature. No results are mentioned. In every abstract, and in the final conclusion, findings of each single chapter are presented. Figure 0.1 presents a schematic overview of the different chapters.

In Chapter 1 I study the presence of advocacy groups in the Belgian domestic media arena. Indirectly, this first chapter thus deals with media *selection* of movement *organizations*. Studies of social movement scholars foremost have taken the form of case studies scrutinizing single groups and the difficulties they encounter when trying to elicit media attention. The upside of these studies is that they are very detailed, the downside that they are not really suitable for generalization. Communication scholars have taken a more wide-angle approach and performed large-scale content analyses. The downside of these studies is that they especially focus on political elites (in election times). Knowledge about advocacy groups hence is a mere byproduct; all advocacy groups are lumped together under a single label, their potential for differential media presence is neglected. Chapter 1 travels a less beaten track. It combines the assets of both previous study forms and takes a middle-range approach: it examines the presence of six families of advocacy groups across the issues of the Belgian media agenda and compares advocacy group presence to the presence of elected officials, experts and civil servants. As such, it aims to refine the one size fits all conclusion of advocacy groups as underdog news sources.

Chapter 2 compares attributes of protest and non-protest news items across three types of advocacy groups (unions, environmental organizations, peace organizations). More specifically, it tests whether source selection patterns (balance), volume (item duration),

prominence (headline status) and standing (group quotation) differ across protest and non-protest items. In this chapter, I argue that social movements can make news by following two strategies: an information strategy (issuing press releases) or a mobilization strategy (staging protest). These strategies result in news reports that feature physical protest or not. Two questions take center stage: first, are there any systematic differences across protest and non-protest items? Second, are these differences generic, or do they apply more to some types of groups than to others? As such, this chapter deals with the *formal description* or packaging of social *movements* in the media arena. Chapter 2 contributes to extant knowledge in two specific ways. By comparing for the first time protest to non-protest items this study adds a baseline to the protest paradigm. Is the portrayal of the very same advocacy groups different if one compares protest with non-protest items? Or, put differently and more provocatively, are groups better off by means of protest in the news, or is the opposite true? Second, by comparing differences across types of advocacy groups this study explores the conditionality of the protest paradigm. Can we speak of general laws or do coverage patterns vary across types of groups?

Figure 0.1
Schematic overview of the chapters



Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are a triptych. They deal with “selection”, “description” and “reaction” to and of protest. The structure of all three chapters is the same: dependent variables are media

variables; independent variables are drawn by and large from the police archive dataset. Chapter 3 deals with media *selection* of protest events. It starts from the basic truth that newsmaking is a process of exclusion rather than inclusion. Two questions are examined: to what extent do protest events become news? And, which characteristics of protest events make them particularly newsworthy? Not merely the binary condition of being selected or not (presence) but also the prominence (does the protest event is headline news) and volume (how much attention is paid to the protest event) of protest coverage is taken into account. Other contributions of chapter 3 to the extant literature are: that it takes television news into account instead of newspapers; that it includes new input variables that are especially suited for television news (symbolic actions); and, that it compares across television stations with a different ownership structure probing at whether ownership structure matters for selection.

Chapter 4 tackles *the* central characteristic of the protest paradigm. In particular, it gauges the share of attention in a protest report that is paid to the issue, to the event, and to exemplars. Phrased differently, chapter 4 focuses on the *description* of protest events. Extant research holds that protest coverage focuses on the particular of the event, that is to say, on the appearances and the behavior of the protestors. Not the claim of the protestors nor the reasons why they take to the streets are up front in protest coverage. Coverage of protest, in other words, thus is foremost *episodic*, rarely *thematic* (Iyengar, 1991). The first research question is descriptive. Is protest coverage indeed more episodic than thematic as the literature causes one to expect? In a second step, chapter 4 teases out factors that might drive why journalists pay more attention to one coverage type than to another. As such it puts the conditionality of the adherence to the protest paradigm to a much needed test. The operationalization of coverage types in chapter 4 is innovative and unique. By measuring thematic, event and exemplar coverage by using airtime, a far more detailed and reliable picture arises when it comes to how journalists translate the vibrant reality of protest to the screen. In sum, chapter 4 presents results on the most robust test of the most central aspect of the protest paradigm that is executed to date.

Chapter 5, finally, studies immediate *reactions* of political targets and third parties in news reports on protest events. In this chapter I contend that reactions of others boost the signaling, validation and scope expansion functions of media for movements; that most of the interaction between movements and elites occurs in and via mass media; and that studying reactions brings the study of media coverage of movements one step closer to the study of

impact of movements. In other words, I argue that protest thrives by provoking reactions and that reactions therefore deserve up-close investigation. Social movement scholars have dealt with selection and description of protest before, yet reactions in the news to protest are *terra incognita*. In chapter 5 I ask whether targets and third parties respond to protest in the media arena, I describe how they respond and I examine the circumstances under which they are more likely to respond. Concentrating on reactions in protest nicely ties social movement and communication studies together. For communication scholars reactions in the news are a matter of balance, for social movement scholars they are a matter of responsiveness.

Taken together, these five chapters offer a much needed contribution to extant literature on media and social movements. They discuss and scrutinize the topic from different angles, present more robust tests of existing assumptions and add new areas of inquiry to the field. Moreover, all the chapters tease out the contingency of television news coverage of social movements and protest, resulting in a more nuanced picture than the tale of "gloom and doom" often reiterated in previous research. In a final concluding chapter, I present an overview of the key findings and knit the different chapters together.

1

The Underdog can Bark?

Advocacy Groups and Source Selection Patterns across Issues in Belgian Television News

Abstract

Advocacy groups are considered to be underdog sources in the news. This study compares the presence of different types of advocacy groups across issues of the Belgian television news agenda to the presence of elected officials, experts and public servants. Results show that advocacy group presence is segmented by issues and that sourcing patterns differ strongly across issues. Whereas vocational groups (unions and professional organizations) are at least as present as elected officials on economic issues; human rights and environmental groups are far less prominent on their respective core issues. Findings indicate that the official dominance, or its flipside, the underdog status of advocacy groups in the news, is not generic but issue-specific. More powerful groups appear more prominently on more newsworthy issues, supporting the idea that the media arena is not a level playing field. Although advocacy groups are absent on as good as half of the domestic news agenda, it is argued that the presence of advocacy groups on the issues they care about nonetheless is substantial.

The Underdog can Bark?

Advocacy Groups and Source Selection Patterns across Issues in Belgian Television News.

Introduction

If politics is a struggle over who gets what when and how, a major venue for this struggle today is the mass media arena (Strömbäck, 2008). In contemporary societies, the media arena is the master forum of public discourse. Citizens predominantly learn about social problems via the media and issues and actors that are high on the media agenda are also prominent in the public's mind (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). In this context, media exposure is an increasingly crucial resource for all kinds of political actors. In the words of Cottle (2006, p. 2): *"Today everyone it seems, from elected presidents to eco-warriors, all look to the media to advance their strategic aims and symbolic claims."*

In this paper I investigate the presence of advocacy groups in the media arena. Scrutinizing media presence of advocacy groups is relevant for two reasons. First, especially for advocacy groups, making a prominent presence in the news is considered as a crucial step towards success. As a rule, advocacy groups lack direct access to the policy making process and therefore depend to a major extent on public strategies to weigh on the political agenda (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Second, from a normative perspective, scrutinizing the presence of advocacy groups puts the openness of a media system to the test (Gerhards & Schäfer, 2009). Who has a voice in the media arena matters for the health of democracy (Norris, 2000). Advocacy groups tend to hold elites accountable; their presence in the media arena

tells us something about the watchdog or lapdog role of the press. Put differently, investigating media presence of advocacy groups allows us to tackle the question of whether mass media are truly a civic forum offering pluralistic debate or rather a safe haven for political elites, sustaining existing power relations (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Ferree et al., 2002).

Essentially, this chapter deals with the presence of a particular type of source in television newscasts. Research about sources in the news has established an *official dominance* in the news. The mix of sources in the media arena is not diverse but strongly skewed to those in power (Van Dalen, 2012). In their selection of sources, journalists rely heavily on high-level politicians and public administration personnel (Bennett, 1990; De Swert & Walgrave, 2002; Gans, 1979; Shehata, 2010). Advocacy groups lack power and therefore are catalogued as underdog news sources (Ryan, 1991; Tresh, 2009). Or so the easy hummable tune produced by extant research goes.

This chapter aims at a better understanding of advocacy group presence in the news and at a refinement of the bottom line finding of advocacy groups as underdog news sources. Previous studies of advocacy groups and media coverage can be divided into two groups. Studies of social movement scholars foremost have taken the form of detailed case studies scrutinizing single groups or issues, rendering comparisons and generalizations difficult. Typically, these studies started from an individual movement or group and scrutinized the hurdles these groups encountered in gaining media attention (R. Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Rohlinger, 2002). Political communication scholars, on the other hand, have taken a more wide-angle approach by carrying out large scale content analyses. These studies foremost focus on media presence of political elites, however. Knowledge about advocacy groups are mere “byproducts” of investigating elite presence. It is no surprise then, that these studies make use of broad all encompassing “civil society” categories and neglect the large variety of groups and their potential for differential media presence. Also, these studies focus strictly on political news or even take only election periods into account (Hopmann, Vreese, & Albaek, 2011; Shehata, 2010; Van Dalen, 2012).

In sum, there appears to be a mismatch between the claims scholars make about advocacy group presence in the news and the research designs and efforts that have been made to substantiate these claims. In this chapter I aim at refining the one size fits all conclusion of

advocacy groups as underdog news sources. In order to do so, I draw on a dataset that includes all news items of the Belgian flagship newscasts of the most important public and private television station (2003-2010)[1]. By systematically comparing media presence of different families of advocacy groups across issues and actors (elected officials, civil servants, experts), this study combines the assets of both previous approaches.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I introduce the concept of advocacy groups and present a typology of advocacy groups. Next, I shed light upon the relationship between advocacy groups and mass media. In particular, two mechanisms that are crucial in source selection (political power and thematic relevance) are applied to advocacy groups. Results show that advocacy group presence is strongly segmented *by* issues and that sourcing patterns differ strongly *across* issues. On issues related to the labor market, consumer affairs, agriculture and social affairs, advocacy groups are more or at least as frequently part of the news as elected officials. This is to a far lesser extent the case for the issues on which human rights and environmental groups are active. In other words, the official dominance in the news is not generic but issue-specific. The assumed underdog news source can bark in the Belgian media arena, and the bark of some is even louder than those of the usual suspects. This does not imply that the media arena is a level playing field, however. The issues of groups with strong insider positions rank high on the media agenda, and exactly these powerful groups succeed in taking the lead or following in the slipstream of elected official sources in their respective issue domains.

Advocacy Groups: a Conceptualization

Between the micro level of the citizen and the macro level of the state, myriads of organizations work to turn private troubles into public issues and struggle for the inclusion of these issues into the political machinery (Andrews & Edwards, 2004; Elchardus, Huyse, & Hooghe, 2001). It are these kind of political actors that are of interest here. Whereas clear cut criteria exist to consider a collective actor as a political party, such strict guidelines for advocacy groups are lacking, in part because of the fact that different fields tackle the very same subject and bring their own particularities with them (Beyers, Eising, & Maloney, 2008).

Interest group scholars, for instance, tend to focus on those organizations that are resource rich, more institutionalized and professionalized and whose preferred strategy is that of "inside" lobbying. The issues interest groups advocate for generally are narrow, private economic interests (Jenkins, 2006). Social movement scholars, on the other hand, speak of movements as broad networks of groups and individuals that challenge elites and authorities (DellaPorta & Diani, 1999). Movements are considered to be more loosely structured (Gerlach & Hine, 1970), less professionalized and operate more on the margins of the political system. They put pressure by unconventional means of participation and their issues more lean towards "collective" goods (Berry, 1999; Verhulst, 2011).

Despite such sound theoretical descriptions, several scholars note that these are hard to use as guiding principles in empirical research (Burstein, 1998, 1999; Diani, 2012). Interest group scholars recognize that interest groups also "go public" (Beyers, 2004; Binderkrantz, 2005; Kollman, 1998) whereas social movement organizations can become strongly institutionalized and professionalized too. Here, I consider *all collective actors that do not exclusively belong to state or market and who organize to influence policy* as "Advocacy groups[2]". Advocacy groups are not private firms, professional lobbies or (government) institutions. Nor are they political parties; they do not take part in elections. Advocacy groups also do not equate typical civil society organizations: bowling leagues, youth movements and football clubs are not considered advocacy groups as their primary goal is not political (Putnam, 2000)[3]. All advocacy groups are membership based and focus on particular issues they consider pivotal (Allern & Bale, 2012; Schattschneider, 1960).

Grouping Advocacy Groups

With the above conceptualization, a large variety of groups with a straightforward common ground is set apart. A next step is to differentiate within this broad group. Not surprisingly, many classifications exist and scholarly consensus on the allocation of groups to broader families is absent (see Amenta et al., 2009; Binderkrantz, 2005).

A crucial distinction made in the interest group literature is between organizations defending specific constituencies -sectional groups-, and organizations defending public interests or

collective goods, -named citizen or public interest groups (Berry, 1999; Walker, 1991). Also whether the constituency of an organization has a vocational base or not is frequently used (Andrews and Edwards, 2004). A traditional social movement typology is the distinction between "old" (or "traditional") and "new" social movements. The typology relates both to the organizational structure as to the issues of the movement. Old social movements are more professionalized and organized and mobilize within traditional socio-economic cleavages. In other words, the so called bread and butter issues have crystallized in strong organizations. New social movements, like the peace, environmental and north-south movement focus on post materialist and emancipatory issues. They tend to be less professionalized and more loosely organized (Buechler, 2000; Kriesi, Koopmans, Dyvendak, & Giugni, 1995). Based on insights from either field, I distinguish six different families of advocacy groups (table 1.1). Both issue (old versus new) and constituency (selective versus non-selective beneficiaries; vocational versus non-vocational) serve as grouping criteria. In the next paragraph I will elaborate on the characteristics of these different families.

Table 1.1

A typology of advocacy groups

Advocacy group family	*Issue*	*Constituency*	*Status*
Vocational groups			
• Unions	Old	Specific Vocational: workers	insider
• Professional Organization	Old	Specific Vocational: employers	insider
Sectional groups			
• Welfare groups	Old	Specific non-vocational	mixed
• Consumer groups	Old	Specific non-vocational	mixed
Public Interest groups			
• Human Rights groups	New	Diffuse constituency	outsider
• Environment groups	New	Diffuse constituency	outsider

A first family of organizations clusters groups that have a specific constituency based on vocation and have an "old" issue portfolio. This family is split up in *unions*, defending workers

rights, and *professional organizations*, representing the employer's side. Both unions and professional organizations are powerful actors in neo-corporatist Belgium (Lijphart, 1999). They are strongly embedded in the policy-making process: they take seats in government advisory boards and even have real implementation power (Ebbinghaus & Visser, 2000; Martens, Van Gyes, & Van der Hallen, 2002). A second family of organizations defends specific constituencies not grouped on base of vocation, yet also focusing on redistributive, economic issues. Besides defending the interests of their membership base, they often have an important service providing function. Again, two subgroups are distinguished. The *welfare group* family consists of the typical not-for-profit organizations like health insurance organizations, organizations that provide services to the family, defend the interests of the poor, the ill, the disabled and the elderly (Salamon & Anheier, 1992). Notwithstanding decreasing pillarization in Belgium, many of these welfare groups have links to unions. A second subcategory is the family of *consumer organizations*. Consumer organizations inform and educate the mass public, protect consumers against producers and often offer services to their members (Grunert-Beckmann, Gronhoj, Pieters, & Dam, 1997).

A third cluster of organizations most closely leans to the notion of public interest groups or new social movements. The interests defended here are much more diffuse. Post materialistic values are high on the organization's agenda (Kriesi et al., 1995). Williams (2004) argues that these organizations are more about cultural understandings, norms and identities than material interests and economic distribution, although one could argue that these movement are instrumental too. The beneficiaries of these organizations to a far lesser extent coincide with the organization's membership base making it far more difficult to see these organizations as representatives of a well-defined constituency. This third family of advocacy groups is split up in an *environmental* family and a *human rights* family, the latter including groups mobilizing on issues like migration, anti-racism, peace, development aid and women's rights, the first also including anti-nuclear and animal rights branches.

With these six families a classification is created that speaks both to the central ideas in the literature as it fits the research question at hand. First and foremost, each family category has substantial common ground: the families or clusters of organizations can easily be linked to specific *issues* and policy areas. Second, albeit more indirectly, this typology also addresses the *political* and *organizational capacity* of the different families. Unions and professional organizations are resource rich organizations, possessing money, staff and members. They

also have stronger ties to parties and government, possessing insider positions. Human and environmental right groups lie at the other end of the continuum. They are to a far lesser extent professionalized and institutionalized, whereas the picture for sectional groups is somewhat mixed. Both organizational and political capacity, as well as the importance of issues can be related to the news capability of groups.

Advocacy Groups in the News

The relationship between advocacy groups and mass media organizations is one of "mutual dependency" (Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2010). Journalists need advocacy groups to balance elite perspectives in their news items and to perform their watchdog role. Advocacy groups, on the other hand, want media to diffuse their messages and to enlarge the scope of conflict. The power balance between both actors is *asymmetrical*, however. Basically, advocacy groups need media attention to a far greater extent than journalists need their quotes: for journalists, advocacy groups are merely one potential source out of many others (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Case studies established that advocacy groups have a difficult time in winning media exposure; their struggle for coverage resembles an uphill battle (R. Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Gitlin, 1980; Ryan, 1991).

In the next paragraphs I will introduce two mechanisms that guide news media source selection and as such account for the newsworthiness and presence of sources on the screen. The first mechanism departs from the political power of a source; the second mechanism takes the issue on which a source is active into account. Running ahead of the full argument, it will be contended that advocacy group presence in the news is compartmentalized by issues; that issue domains in the media arena should be regarded as reference points in advocacy groups' struggle for attention; and that within these issue domains it is the relative prominence of advocacy group *vis à vis* significant others that is the ultimate benchmark for judging advocacy groups' discursive success.

The first mechanism that is crucial in eliciting media attention is "power". A great many studies have found a persistent "*official dominance*" in mass media source selection (Bennett, 1990; Wolfsfeld & Schaefer, 2006). These studies conclude that source selection is

structurally biased towards official sources (Shehata, 2010). Journalists prefer official sources because of the fact that every move an official actor makes, is likely to have consequences and impact segments of the public. Moreover, relying on official sources also increases the efficiency of news production. Officials, for instance, more easily transfer neutrality and objectivity to a story. Facing strict deadlines, "official" information is less time intensive to validate and double-check. Not all official sources have an equal chance to make news, however. Also among officials, media attention is unequally distributed, and biased towards high-level politicians (Bennett, 1990; De Swert & Walgrave, 2002; Schoenbach, Ridder, & Lauf, 2001; Tresh, 2009; Walgrave & De Swert, 2007). In general, advocacy groups do not possess such an inherent news value. We therefore can expect them to be less present in the news than elected officials. Tuchman (1973) argues that in order to balance official political views, journalist even are more likely to search for unaffiliated experts or establishment sources like. Journalists prefer members of the administration or unaffiliated experts rather than advocacy groups because they are relatively safe to quote: they add prestige to a story, are less opinionated and possess face value reliability (Greenberg, Sandman, Sachsman, & Salomone, 1989; McLeod & Hertog, 1998). This leads to the first two hypotheses:

H1: Advocacy groups are less frequently used as sources in the news compared to elected officials.

H2: Advocacy groups are less frequently used as sources in the news compared to experts and public administration personnel.

With the news value of political power as a key predictor of media access, I expect advocacy groups that have strong insider positions to be more present in the media arena compared to groups that do not. Danielian and Page (1994) concluded that the "heavenly chorus" of interest group voices in American television news sings with a "strong upper class accent"; Verhulst and Walgrave (2005) found similar indications in the presence of social movements on the front pages of the Belgian press. I therefore expect unions and professional organizations to be particularly present in the news. These vocational groups are strongly institutionalized, can weigh on policy making and thus most closely approach the news value of political power. Also, these organizations possess most organizational resources, like staff, members and money, increasing their news making capability (Thrall, 2006).

H3: Vocational groups are more frequently used in the news as sources compared to other families of advocacy groups.

The news value of political power is not the only determinant of news selection, however. In line with Wolfsfeld and Schaefer (2006), Tresh (2009) argues that media attention is strongly issue-driven. That is to say, sources foremost have a thematic relevance for journalists; their news value is issue-specific. Danielian and Page (1994) demonstrated that media presence of advocacy groups is segmented by issues: whereas unions can be authoritative and credible sources when it comes to labor market issues, they are less likely to be quoted on environmental issues. In the same vein, I expect media presence of specific advocacy group families to be compartmentalized by issues: the odds of a specific family of advocacy group appearing in the news will strongly depend on the issue area in focus.

H4: The presence of advocacy group families as sources in the news is compartmentalized by issues.

Although the expectation of group segmentation by issues is rather straightforward, its consequences are not. If group presence is segmented by issues, the newsworthiness of an issue is likely to affect the presence of advocacy groups in the media arena. In other words, media presence then is not only a consequence of political power, but also of issue relevance. Issues that are high on the media agenda act as windows of opportunity, facilitating media access. Such media attention can be short lived, in the form of "issue attention cycles" (Downs, 1972) after for instance suddenly imposed grievances (Walsh & Warland, 1983). Resource poor groups then can surf media waves and exploit momentum. A more structural and pervasive influence is the routine newsworthiness of issues. Deacon (1996b) argues that economic issues are among the most perennially newsworthy topics, inevitably increasing chances of employer and employee organizations to appear prominently in the news.

Wrapped up, if group presence is bounded by issues, issues should be taken into account when analyzing advocacy group presence in the news. The prominence of advocacy groups in the media arena then is not merely about an absolute visibility, but relates to the ability to be chosen as a source on a particular issue and the relative strength *vis à vis* other sources that compete over media exposure on that particular issue. Media attention then is the outcome of a zero sum game, with a selection funnel that exists of at least two consecutive thresholds: some issues are more newsworthy than others, advantaging particular events and actors over others to be part of the news. Issues in this way set boundaries to the potential presence a

group has in the media arena. Next, within issues, different types of actors compete over media access, both with other kinds of actors (advocacy groups with elected officials) as with similar actors (advocacy group A with advocacy group B). If the extant literature is right, one would expect advocacy group sources to be less newsworthy than elected officials, even on the issue level. This results in hypothesis 5.

H5: Advocacy groups are less frequently used as sources in the news on any issue compared to elected officials.

However, I expect source selection patterns to vary strongly from one issue-domain to the other, reflecting power balances in real world policy areas. The official dominance in the news, or the acclaimed underdog position of advocacy groups, hence would be not generic but issue-specific. In particular, I expect vocational advocacy groups to stand stronger on their core issues because they more closely approach political power. Human rights and environmental groups, on the other hand, are less established and institutionalized. I therefore expect them to be less prominently present on their core issues. Furthermore, I expect these latter groups to have to tolerate a higher presence of experts and public administration sources on their core issues. These groups tend to have lower legitimacy, increasing the odds that journalists will feel the need to balance these sources with perspectives coming from more established and neutral players in that issue area.

H6: Vocational advocacy groups are more frequently used as sources on their core issue(s) compared to public interest groups on their core issue(s).

H7: Experts and civil servants are less frequently used as sources on the core issues of vocational groups compared to their use as sources on the issues of public interest groups.

Data and Methods

In order to test the abovementioned hypotheses eight years of television news coverage (2003-2010) is analyzed. All news items of every single day of the 19 o'clock flagship newscasts of the most important commercial (vtm) and public broadcaster (Eén) of Belgium constitute the research population. Data were retrieved from the Electronic News Archive (ENA), a continuous news monitoring service hosted by the University of Antwerp and Leuven. The ENA archives newscasts and performs an extensive coding of issues, countries

and actors in every single news item[4]. In this chapter, the total domestic news agenda, being any item with a reference to Belgium constitutes the research population (α = . 919)[5]. For the entire research period, the dataset consists of 65,325 unique news items and 207,254 actors. The archive defines an actor as both speaking sources and sources that are merely mentioned. Actors are both persons and organizations/institutions.

For this study, a secondary coding was performed and four mutually exclusive dummy variables were constructed (advocacy group source, elected official source, civil servant source and expert source). The recoding was done by the author and based on three fields in the database: the open text fields "actor name" and "actor function", and the closed field "actor category" (α-value of typology = .867). A random sample (n=1000) of actors was double coded by a trained coder in order to test for inter coder reliability. The *elected official* source dummy holds all national politicians (government executive members, parliamentarians, references to parties and heads of parties; α = . 977). The *expert* source variable holds all scientists and all sources that were explicitly labeled as experts in the news (α = . 878). *Civil servant* sources are state institutions, government departments, government agencies and the spokespersons of these organizations (α = . 861). Six families of *advocacy groups* were distinguished: unions (α = . 995); professional (α = . 961); consumer (α = . 989); welfare (α = . 844); environmental (α = . 980) and human rights organizations (α = . 916). *Topics* in the news were categorized in 15 main issue categories (.630 < α < .813) ; 14 issues on which advocacy groups were present and 1 "other" category[6].

Results

Hypothesis 1 expected elected officials to be more present across the board in the media arena compared to advocacy groups. Table 1.2 shows the results. On the entire domestic news agenda, elected official sources indeed dwarf advocacy groups. One actor in five (21.2%) in the news is an elected official source; only seven percent (6.7%) of all news sources is a (spokesperson of an) advocacy group. Elected officials appear three times as frequently in the news compared to advocacy groups. Hypothesis 1 is confirmed. Elected officials do appear more frequently in the news if the entire domestic news agenda is taken into account. The presence of advocacy groups is substantial however, and they appear more

frequently than civil servant sources (4.2%) and expert sources (3.1%), naturally regarded as the more, neutral usual suspects journalists prefer instead of advocacy groups (Tuchman, 1974). Hypothesis 2 hence needs to be rejected.

Table 1.2

Presence of four types of sources on the domestic news agenda (2003-2010)

Sources	Presence	
	N	%
Elected Official Sources	43,946	21.2
Advocacy Group Sources.....	13,859	6.7
Civil Servant Sources	8,609	4.2
Expert Sources.....	6.472	3.1
All News Sources	207,254	100

Hypothesis 3 suggested that organizations with close ties to political power are more likely to be present in the news. Table 1.3 shows the distribution of media attention across six types of organization families. The unit of analysis is the unique appearance of a peculiar type of advocacy group family in a single news item[7]. Results support hypothesis 2. Together, unions and professional organizations account for more than half (56%) of the attention for all advocacy group families. Interestingly, it seems that journalists make sure that organizations that defend workers or employers rights appear equally in the news (2670 items with at least one professional organization, 2669 items with at least one labour union). Unions and professional organizations both receive about two times, three times and four times as much media exposure as human rights (15.5%), consumer (11.1%) and welfare (10.0%), and environmental groups (7.5%) respectively. In sum, most attention goes to advocacy families that already have established positions, suggesting that the media arena indeed is not a level playing field. Media attention reflects (and reinforces) political power, hence supporting what Wolfsfeld (1997) calls the “principle of cumulative inequality”.

Table 1.3

Presence of six types of advocacy group families on the domestic news agenda.

Sources	Presence	
	N	%
Professional Organizations	2,670	28.0
Union Organizations	2,669	28.0
Human Rights Groups	1,477	15.5
Welfare Groups	1,062	11.1
Consumer Groups	956	10.0
Environmental Groups	714	7.5
Total	9,548	100

In the above results, abstraction was made of the fact that news is issue-driven; that actors only have a thematic relevance as sources for journalists and that consequently the newsworthiness of issues is likely to affect the presence of advocacy groups in the news. Put differently, the dominance of vocational groups can be the consequence of the fact that the issues of these groups are far more prominent in the news. Hypothesis 3 stated that the presence of advocacy groups in the media would be compartmentalized by issues. Distinct types of advocacy groups would only score on a particular and limited set of substantially affinitive issues.

Table 1.4 shows the outcomes of six logistic regression analyses predicting the odds that a particular family of advocacy groups is present in a news item, using issues as predictor variables. Results do confirm hypothesis 4. Particular advocacy group families are more likely to appear in news items dealing with particular issues. Moreover, the link between each of the issues and the advocacy group family is substantial and logical. Unions, for instance, are fifteen times more likely to appear in an item on labor issues compared to their appearance on any other item. Also on issues related to the economy, and issues of traffic and mobility, unions are significantly more likely to appear.

Table 1.4

Logistic Regressions predicting advocacy group family presence (N = 55,485)

	UNION	PROF. ORG	WELFARE ORG	CONS. ORG	ENVR. ORG	HRIGHT ORG
Justice/Criminality	Ns	-	-	-	Ns	-
Social Affairs	Ns	Ns	**7.50**	Ns	-	Ns
Political Affairs	Ns	-	Ns	-	Ns	-
Economy	**3.67**	**2.68**	Ns	Ns	Ns	-
Traffic/Mobility	**1.40**	Ns	Ns	**6.70**	Ns	-
Labour	**15.32**	**2.16**	-	-	Ns	-
Environment	-	Ns	-	Ns	**58.89**	-
Consumer Affairs	-	**3.14**	Ns	**7.80**	Ns	-
Human Rights	-	-	Ns	Ns	Ns	**11.52**
Disaster	-	-	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns
War/Peace	-	-	Ns	Ns	Ns	**3.34**
Education	-	-	**2.01**	Ns	Ns	Ns
Development Aid	Ns	-	x	x	Ns	**10.77**
Agriculture	Ns	**5.18**	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns
Other	-	-	-	-	Ns	-
Pseudo R^2	27.6	12.7	14.3	20.8	36.6	21.0

Note: Numbers in bold are odds ratios for positive and highly significant (p<0.001) relations. Ns = not significant; - = negative significant relation; x = omitted due to perfect prediction, total N for Welfare and consumer organizations = 54,794

Professional organizations are significantly more frequently included in items about economy, labor market, consumer affairs and agriculture. The fact that farmer organizations were included as professional organizations explains this latter finding. Welfare organizations are significantly more likely to appear on items about social affairs and if the media spotlight focuses on education. Environmental organizations, next, are 59 times more likely to appear on environmental issues. Interestingly, environmental organizations were least newsworthy (see table 1.3) and appear as the only group that loads positively on only one single issue. The high odds ratio signals that the presence of environmental groups is very constraint to this single issue. Professional organizations, on the other hand, came out as the most newsworthy group family and this family scores on the widest range of issues. Also, professional groups appear to occupy a middle ground position: on the issues of the economy and the labor market also unions are present; on the issue about consumer affairs also consumer organizations tend to appear. Human rights organizations, finally, appear in the news on issues like development aid, war/peace, and human rights. Wrapped up, the presence of advocacy groups is segmented by issues in the news, strongly corroborating

hypothesis 4. As a consequence, one should take issues into account if one wants to judge advocacy group newsworthiness.

Table 1.5 provides results for the prominence of advocacy groups across issues compared to three other types of actors: elected official, civil servant and expert sources. The issues (rows) are ranked according to their weight in the media arena, percentages are row percentages. The unit of analysis is a news item with at least one speaking source. Unpaired two sample t-tests are used to test whether differences in source selection within a single issues are significant. For example, in eight percent of all items on Justice/Criminality (n = 12,269) at least one advocacy group source spoke. In 18 percent at least one elected official source spoke. Civil servant and expert sources both appeared in about five percent of the items on this topic. Shared letters in superscript show no significant differences at the $p< 0.0001$ level. So, whereas politicians (b) clearly outnumber advocacy groups (a), and advocacy groups outnumber civil servant (c) and expert sources (c), the latter two do not significantly differ in media presence on criminality.

Hypothesis 5 expected advocacy groups to be less prominent than elected officials on every single issue. This hypothesis needs to be rejected. Advocacy group sources appear more frequently in the news in items that consider the labor market, consumer affairs and agriculture. On three issues, no significant differences were found. This is the case for items about social affairs, economy and development aid. One clear pattern emerges from these results. Especially on issues on which vocational groups are active, advocacy groups tend to dominate, and even are most frequently relied on by journalists. Especially the dominance of unions on the labor issue is striking. The fact that this family has strong insider positions and does mobilize its membership base for disruptive action, seems to be a win-win strategy when it comes to media exposure. Unions play on both the news value of power and conflict (Van Dalen, 2012), and this seems to pay off: unions appear in 36 percent of all items that deal with the labor market issue (figure not in table); advocacy groups in general appear almost in half (45 %) of all labor market items. Clearly, vocational groups have established themselves as routine news sources. Their particular position in the political system accounts for their strong overall, and strong issue specific newsworthiness.

Table 1.5

Source selection patterns across issues of the total domestic news agenda (N = 55485)

	ADVOCACY GROUP	ELECTED OFFICIAL	CIVIL SERVANT	EXPERT	N
Justice/Criminality	8.0[a]	18.3[b]	5.5[c]	4.7[c]	12,269
Social Affairs	17.4[ab]	19.5[a]	9.7[c]	15.2[b]	6,380
Political Affairs	8.5[a]	79.8[b]	4.1[c]	6.2[d]	6,317
Economy	32.0[a]	30.6[a]	5.7[b]	7.7[c]	5,650
Traffic/Mobility	18.8[a]	29.2[b]	13.9[c]	6.9[d]	4,303
Labour	**45.0[a]**	26.4[b]	6.5[c]	6.6[c]	3,465
Environment	20.2[a]	29.0[b]	15.5[c]	15.7[c]	3,197
Consumer Affairs	**29.3[a]**	13.8[b]	6.1[c]	11.4[b]	2,284
Human Rights	22.8[a]	37.0[b]	10.7[c]	5.0[d]	2,127
Disaster	7.6[a]	22.8[b]	10.2[a]	8.2[a]	2,075
War/Peace	11.7[a]	32.6[b]	4.3[c]	6.9[c]	1,588
Education	9.2[a]	25.2[b]	5.8[a]	11.5[a]	1,440
Development Aid	23.2[a]	25.5[a]	7.2[b]	3.6[b]	691
Agriculture	**29.0[a]**	17.4[b]	6.5[c]	12.4[c]	587
Other	3.5[a]	17.5[b]	4.5[c]	10.3[d]	12,804
Total	13.3[a]	27.3[b]	6.9[c]	8.9[d]	55,485

Note: Frequencies (row percentages) sharing a same alphabetical superscript do not differ significantly (p<0.0001) according to unpaired two samples t-tests. Numbers in bold signify significant more advocacy groups than elected official quotation; Numbers with underlined indicate no significant difference between advocacy group and elected official quotation.

The pattern above also confirms hypothesis 6 which stated that vocational groups would be more prominent on 'their' core issues compared to public interest groups. Regression results in table 1.4 determined economy, labor, consumer affairs, traffic/mobility and agriculture as typical vocational issues, whereas environmental affairs, development aid, war/peace and human rights are typical public interest group issues. Whereas vocational families are most prominent on three of these five issues, public interest groups never are the most prominent source on any issue they care about. This does not mean that the presence of public interest groups is insignificant. True, they always appear less frequently than elected officials, yet their presence is always substantial –advocacy groups appear in at least one item in five on the issues of environment, human rights and development aid-, and their presence is never significantly lower than the presence of experts and civil servants.

Hypothesis 7 stated that civil servant and expert sources would be less frequently used on the core issues of vocational groups compared to the issues of public interest groups. The

policy domain in which civil servants and experts clearly are most frequently present is the environmental policy area. In every one in six items about the environment, at least one expert (16%) or civil servant (16%) source appears. It might be that journalists feel a need to balance environmental advocacy groups with experts or civil servants to legitimize (or de-legitimize) the claims of the environmental movement. Interestingly, the environmental issue has the most equally distributed source selection pattern of all issues. The Herfindahl index of concentration for the environmental issue reaches a value of 0.26 (which would be 0.25 in case of a perfectly equal distribution)[8]. Yet if we look at the other issues, no such clear pattern is emerging. Indeed, experts and civil servants are to a lesser extent present on the vocational issue of economy and labor. The strong presence of unions and professional organizations seems to crowd civil servants and experts out. However, the same is true for the presence of civil servants and experts on typical 'new' issues like war/peace and development aid. Hypothesis 7 needs to be rejected.

All in all, based on results in table 1.5 one cannot but conclude that advocacy groups do reasonably well in the media arena on the issues they care about. How then advocacy groups have come to be regarded as low-profile news sources in previous studies? Several findings in table 1.5 strike the eye, and provide clues in this respect. First, table 1.5 shows that elected official sources clearly have a wider thematic action radius than advocacy groups. Elected officials score high across all issues of the domestic news agenda. In eight out of fourteen specific issue categories their share of media presence is at least 25 percent, meaning that they appear at least once in every four items on that issue. For advocacy groups this holds only for four issues. Advocacy groups tend to score only on a limited part of the media agenda. In about half of the items of the total media agenda, advocacy groups are by and large absent. They are very weakly present on the issue of criminality/justice (8%), by far the most newsworthy theme in domestic news. Next, about a fourth of the attention of the media goes to issues in which advocacy groups have no interest (other = 12,804 items, Advocacy groups = 3.5%). In other words, there is a clear mismatch between the interest of the population of advocacy groups[9], and the issues the media pays attention to, a mismatch that is less pervasive for elected official sources.

Next, the issues in table 1.5 are ranked according to the amount of attention they generate, and show that the issues of public interest groups rank low on the media agenda, whereas the issues of vocational and sectional groups rank higher. The organizations that have insider positions also have higher opportunities to get their message across in the media arena, giving them advantages twice. It could of course also be the other way around, that is, journalists pay attention to these issues because powerful advocacy groups succeed in courting the media spotlight, whereas environmental and human rights issues rank low because their advocacy groups do not succeed in this purpose. More probably, however the causal chain runs the other way around. Duyvendak and Giugni (1995) speak of high profile and low profile policy domains; high profile domains involve more power and money (resources), are of higher electoral importance, and are more closely tied to the national interest. As media follow the trail of political power, especially these high policy domains rank high on the media agenda, as such favoring unions, professional organizations and welfare groups, as these are the groups that are active on these high profile policy domains.

A final finding in table 1.5 is that a highly newsworthy issue, that of political affairs (N = 6317), is almost monopolized by elected officials. Elected officials appear in 80 percent of all political affair items. News media take their role of fourth estate seriously: they devote ample attention to strictly political news, which obviously boosts the visibility of elected official sources . One could cast doubts however on the way journalists tend to perform their watchdog role. At least in the case of purely political affairs, significant other sources, like advocacy groups, civil servants and expert sources are only to a very limited extent part of the sourcing mix. This finding is illuminating, as the political affair issue foremost is about electoral and campaign coverage, and as such contains the items that most previous source studies took as their population of news items. All of the above again points to the relevancy to conceive the media forum as consisting of different issue arena's with different dynamics being at work across issues. Sources that are strong in field A are easily overruled in field B and some fields clearly are center courts, receiving much exposure, whereas others are sideshows, being less newsworthy.

Conclusion and Discussion

Previous research concluded that advocacy groups are underdog news sources. This study denounced the lack of specific systematic aggregate level empiric enquiries with regard to advocacy groups in the news. It explicitly compared the presence of several types of advocacy groups across issues to that of elected official, civil servant and expert sources. Results show that the assumed underdog news source can bark: its voice is more frequently heard than that of elected officials in some issue areas; advocacy groups are generally more prominent than experts and civil servants; and on the issues groups care about, their presence is never but substantial.

Three general conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between advocacy groups and mass media. *First*, the presence of advocacy group families in the media arena is tied to specific issues. As some issues rank higher on the news agenda than others, issues strongly affect the presence of advocacy groups in the news. This study shows that sourcing patterns differ strongly from one issue domain to the other. In some issue arena's advocacy groups take pole positions, in other domains they follow in the slipstream, and in yet other domains they are several laps behind elected officials. The combination of issues and relevant other actors therefore should be used as baselines if one wants to judge advocacy group presence in the news. *Second*, the thematic action radius of advocacy groups in the media arena is much more limited than that of elected officials. Advocacy groups are by and large absent on half of the domestic news agenda. The interests of advocacy groups and the media arena overlap only to a limited extent. Moreover, the issues that rank highest on the media agenda overlap with the issues of vocational groups, who already have strong insider positions. *Third*, journalists take their function of fourth estate seriously and devote ample attention to core political affairs. Results confirm the importance of the political newsbeat, yet the source selection pattern in this issue area points to a strong monopolization by elected official sources and a remarkable absence of advocacy groups. It can be that journalists balance core political affairs only along government-opposition lines, neglecting the non-institutional world. In any case, most source studies exactly scrutinize only this specific issue area. Results in this chapter show that especially results in this issue area cannot be generalized to the entire media agenda.

Not every advocacy group has an equal chance to make news. Vocational advocacy groups, known for stronger insider positions are more prominent in the news than public interest groups. Their issues are more prominent in the news, and they are more prominent on their core issues. In this sense, the media arena clearly is not the level playing field pluralist theorists would like it to be (Danielian & Page, 1994). On a unique organization level, analyses show that the ten most newsworthy advocacy groups account for half (48.3%) of all media attention devoted to advocacy groups. Moreover, more than half of all advocacy groups make it merely twice into the news during the eight year period under study. In that sense, Thrall (2006) is right when he states that very few groups make enough news to pursuit an effective outside strategy. Such a situation however is not unique for advocacy groups. Also many parliamentarians rarely make news (Tresh, 2009) and as a rule media attention is extremely skewed, a finding that holds both for advocacy groups as well as political elites.

In the introduction of this paper two reasons were put forward underscoring the relevancy of studying advocacy group presence in the news. For advocacy groups, media attention was said to be a critical resource in their struggle for social change. Results show that the media arena especially strengthens the strongest organizations, by giving them routine status, an extremely rare resource. If we leave the level of the individual group and take the entire media arena and the presence of advocacy group families into account, another picture emerges: in the sourcing mix across a wide array of issues, advocacy groups are substantially represented on the issues they care about, appearing more prominently in some policy areas than elected officials, following in their slipstream in others, and rarely being less prominently present than civil servants and experts. All in all, the underdog news source seems to be allowed to have its say. Most social movement studies exactly focused on the individual success of organizations in the news and narrated a story of gloom and doom. This study took a more aggregate, helicopter perspective at the matter and proves that there most definitely is light at the end of the tunnel.

As Gamson (2004) already noted, the mass media arena is a complex playing field that provides advantages and disadvantageous in uneven ways to the players involved. The contours of the playing field can change rapidly, under, but mostly beyond the control of the actors involved. The results of this study show that some actors all to easily have been labeled as carrying most of the burden most of the time. Taking a more aggregate perspective, it provided a nice complement to existing studies. Further data gathering efforts, in similar and

different political systems would strongly improve our knowledge of advocacy group presence in the news, as it cannot be discarded that the descriptive finding presented here are a Belgian idiosyncrasy. Further research is needed to empirically lay bare the characteristics that account for the differential exposure established here. Gathering data on characteristics, strategies and actions of organizations, coding *how* organizations make it into the news and taking the specific sensitivities of issues, political and media contexts into account would greatly further our knowledge about sources and their capacity to make news.

[1] Despite the multi-year period, I am not interested in eventual shifts of advocacy group presence in the media arena over time. The length of the research period solely serves to provide a general image of advocacy group presence. If, in line with theory, advocacy groups indeed have low chances of being present in the news media, short snapshot studies will easily provide skewed/biased images of advocacy group presence. The length of the research period filters these outliers for scarcity out, and provides us with a "routine" picture of advocacy groups as news media sources.

[2] The label "advocacy group" is also preferred by William Gamson (2004: 246*): "Advocacy groups" seems preferable to "interest organizations" as a term since many such organizations are more concerned about values than interests in any material sense and some are more like networks than formal organizations*.

[3] For more details and similar arguments about definitions of interest groups, social movement organizations and advocacy groups, see for instance Allern and Bale (2012), Burstein (1998), Beyers et al (2008).

[4] Both issue and actor codebooks are available upon request (www.nieuwsarchief.be).

[5] Intercoder results for the News Archive data are Krippendorf Alpha values. Inter coder reliability was measured by comparing the coding of one none consecutive week by nine trained student coders for a report on these intercoder tests see De Smedt, Wouters and De Swert (2013).

[6] Merely 6,1 % of all advocacy groups appeared on an "other" issue than those specified and explicitly labeled. The other category, comprises issues as "sport", "celebrity", "demography", "film", "theater", "International Relations/Europe", "telecommunication" and so on. News Items were only included in the other category if they did not match any of the other 14 main issues. The syntax that groups the 42 main issues into the 15 issue categories used here is available upon request.

[7] This means, for example, that three appearances of three different unions count as one union appearance.

[8] The herfindahl index of concentration is the most common measure for the degree of concentration of frequency data and can range from 1/N to 1, with N being the numbers of groups. For use of the index in the context of source selection by the news media, see for instance Gerhards and Schaefer (2009), Is the Internet a better Public Sphere?, *New Media & Society* (XX)X, 1-18

[9] It could be that there are many advocacy groups active on the issue of criminality, or on the issues grouped by the "other" label, but that the claims these groups make are never picked up by the mainstream media. As no real world data, nor a database on the population of advocacy group is present, one cannot exclude this latter reasoning.

2

Patterns in Advocacy Group Portrayal

Comparing Attributes of Protest and Non-Protest News Items across Advocacy Groups

Abstract

This chapter compares features of protest and non-protest news items across three types of advocacy groups. More specifically, it tests the news item attributes news item volume (length), prominence (headlines), standing (direct group quotation) and source selection (balance). Analyzing 2.845 news items of 17 Belgian advocacy groups, this study shows that across all advocacy groups, protest items are less frequently balanced and significantly shorter. Differences between protest and non-protest items are smallest for unions, turn negative for environmental groups, and are positive for peace organizations. Results are discussed in light of the (un)conditionality of the protest paradigm.

Patterns in Advocacy Group Portrayal

Comparing Attributes of Protest and Non-Protest News Items across Advocacy Groups

Introduction

News media coverage is an important political resource for advocacy groups (Andrews & Caren, 2010; Vliegenthart et al., 2005; Walgrave & Manssens, 2005). Typically, advocacy groups lack insider positions in the political system and as a consequence they need to go public with their claims(Lipsky, 1968). By going public, groups aim for the expansion of the scope of conflict, which in its turn might cause existing power balances to shift (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Media coverage is crucial in this respect: the public strategies of advocacy groups are considered only as effective as the amount and kind of media coverage they succeed to generate (Thrall, 2006).

For advocacy groups, gaining media coverage is easier said than done, however. The relationship between journalists and activists is described as one of asymmetrical dependency: advocacy groups need media coverage to a far greater extent than journalists need their quotes (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Groups fare greater constraints in gaining news media attention and also their message more easily gets distorted in the news (Ryan, 1991). Exemplar in this respect is the protest paradigm. This paradigm holds that coverage of protest follows an implicit template which undermines group goals and tends to marginalize, criminalize and even demonize protestors (McLeod & Hertog, 1998). All in all, it appears that advocacy groups are caught in a cath-22. Groups need media coverage to be successful, yet

have to fight an uphill struggle to make news. Protest strategies are considered as the most surefire way to gain media attention, yet by protesting, advocacy groups seem to do themselves more harm than good.

This study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on the relationship between advocacy groups and media coverage by comparing features of protest and non-protest items across three types of advocacy groups. More specifically, it tests whether the following news item attributes vary: source selection patterns (balance), volume (item duration), prominence (headline status) and standing (group quotation). Two questions take center stage: first, are there any systematic differences across protest and non-protest items? Second, are these differences generic, or do they apply more to some types of groups than to others? As such, this study contributes to extant knowledge in two specific ways. By comparing protest items to non-protest items this study adds a baseline to the protest paradigm. Is the portrayal of the very same advocacy groups different if one compares protest strategies with information strategies to make it into the news? Second, by comparing differences across types of advocacy groups this study explores the conditionality of the protest paradigm. Can we speak of general laws when it comes to protest coverage, or do coverage patterns vary across types of groups? And can we get a grip at the reasons why these patterns differ?

In order to answer these questions, this study draws on a large census dataset of television news items striking an eight year period (2003-2010). All news items that mention at least one of the 17 selected advocacy groups (unions, environmental organizations and peace organizations) form the research population. The setting of this study is Belgium. Belgium is a neo-corporatist country with a strong civil society and with unions strongly embedded in the policy making process (Ebbinghaus & Visser, 2000; Lijphart, 1999). The Belgian television news market is a textbook example of a duopoly situation with strong convergence between the only commercial and the public news provider (Hooghe, De Swert, & Walgrave, 2007). Results show that protest items more frequently open a newscast, are significantly shorter and are far less frequently balanced than non-protest items. These findings hold to a different degree across the different advocacy group families under study. Whereas protest has little impact on the portrayal of unions, protest portrayal is disadvantageous for environmental groups and positive for peace organizations. Taken together these findings contributes to our knowledge on the media packaging of advocacy groups and the (un)conditionality of the protest paradigm.

This literature review of this chapter proceeds as follows. First, literature on outsider strategies of advocacy groups is presented and related to the concepts of news values, news routines and the protest paradigm. Next, the different types of groups under study are introduced and assumptions about their news making capability are made. Finally, four news item features, being the dependent variables of this study, are presented. After a data and methods section, results will be discussed for each news item attribute separately and in the concluding section I will tie the separate finding together.

Information Strategies, Mobilization Strategies and the Protest Paradigm

Interest group scholars argue that outsider strategies of groups are on the rise, both in use as in considered effectiveness. More than before, all sorts of advocacy groups, even those with strong ties to institutional political power, try to appeal to the mass media and the public at large (Binderkrantz, 2005, 2011). Two distinct types of outsider strategies are distinguished, and both strategies can be linked to two different mechanisms considered crucial in the news making process.

First, advocacy groups can rely on *information strategies* (Beyers, 2004). These strategies are directly aimed at mass media. They entail holding press conferences, issuing press releases, distributing press kits or contacting reporters. Clearly, these strategies correspond to a *news routine* perspective, which puts the day to day practicalities of the news production process center stage (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). The fact that journalists have to meet strict deadlines and are confronted with clear budgetary constraints is at the heart of this perspective. Information strategies of advocacy groups acknowledge this production logic and try to facilitate news making by reducing the costs related to the newsgathering process. By subsidizing and thus controlling the information that reaches journalists, advocacy groups hope to gain power in the source-journalist relationship: they hope to get covered, and, more specifically, covered as spelled out in the provided subsidy (Gandy, 1982).

A case study of the National Organization for Women showed that NOW's ability to produce information and its knowledge about media routines strongly increased its public visibility (Barker-Plummer, 2002). Several studies combining survey and news media data reached

similar conclusions: groups with more resources, that can employ communication staff and develop a media strategy get more media coverage (Andrews & Caren, 2010). Group attributes have also been linked to the tone of coverage, although here evidence is far more limited. McCluskey (2008) found that especially resource-poor environmental groups succeeded in gaining positive coverage. In another study, interviews with journalists and activists point in a similar direction: journalists especially expect activists to be authentic, emotional and spontaneous (Sobieraj, 2010). Professionalization and adaptation to news routines seem to be detrimental for positive group portrayal. In sum, information strategies result in higher visibility, but it is questionable whether this visibility is positive.

A second outsider strategy of advocacy groups is of a very different nature. *Mobilization strategies* are about mobilizing citizens to participate in collective action events. These events in a next step can be judged newsworthy by journalists (Binderkrantz, 2005). Mobilization strategies are not merely about drawing attention and diffusing information, but also about making an impression and putting pressure. With this strategy, groups convey not only information but also force and determination (Beyers, 2004). Compared to information strategies, mobilization strategies are far less about adapting to news routines, yet more about appealing to *news values* or journalists' nose for news (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Protest actions offer drama, conflict, confrontation and spectacle. The higher an event scores on these news values the higher its chances of receiving coverage. Although extant research shows that foremost large, violent and symbolic protest events succeed to make news, and although only few events actually get covered (McCarthy et al., 1996; Myers & Caniglia, 2004), protest is considered as the most definite way for resource-poor groups to gain media attention (Danielian & Page, 1994). Protest is also considered as a weapon of last resort, however. The major downside of gaining media attention by staging protest events is that protest coverage more often than not presents the audience with a negative interpretative context surrounding the event and its participants (Chan & Lee, 1984; Cicco, 2010; McLeod & Hertog, 1992).

Numerous studies have established that protest coverage is subjected to a "protest paradigm", a routinized pattern or implicit template that journalists use to cover protest (McLeod & Hertog, 1998). Characteristics of the paradigm are a focus on the act of dissent instead of a focus on the issue being raised, a tendency to rely on official, elite sources instead of direct activist quotation, and, the dominance of negative frames (violent crime

story, romper room,…) instead of sympathetic or balanced frames. Taken together, coverage of protest is said to undermine a groups agenda and to protect the status quo (Boyle, McLeod, & Armstrong, 2012). Effect studies show how subtle differences in news media portrayal of protest events affect viewers' perception of the event's participants (Detenber et al., 2007; McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Nelson et al., 1997).

Recent research started to tackle the conditions under which media follow the protest paradigm. Protest that is more radical was found to be treated more critical (Boyle, McCluskey, Devanathan, Stein, & McLeod, 2004; Boyle et al., 2012). Especially group tactics (how activists behave), and not so much group goals (type of change sought) matter when it comes to mass media's adherence to the paradigm. Differences were also found between protest topics. Media coverage of war, labor and social protest differed across and within particular time periods. Besides event characteristics, also context matters. A cross-national comparison of protest against the war in Iraq revealed that the US press invoked the paradigm to a greater extent than the UK press, reflecting sociopolitical differences between both countries (Dardis, 2006b). Finally, also the medium matters, with mainstream press more closely mirroring protest paradigm characteristics than alternative press outlets (Hertog & McLeod, 1995).

In sum, extant research has distinguished two strategies of groups to make news. A strategy that ties in to news routines and a strategy that plays on news values. The selection mechanisms related to both strategies have been studied, and, for the mobilization strategy, media coverage was found to follow an established pattern. One of the central conclusions is that protest coverage often appears more harmful than helpful. Little attention, however, has been paid to how both strategies get molded by the media machinery, and whether the resulting news items differ from each other on certain characteristics. In particular, direct comparisons of advocacy group portrayal between protest items and non-protest items have not yet been carried out. This study aims to do so. It will compare several attributes of news items across three different types of advocacy groups and across protest and non-protest items.

Advocacy Group Families

Three types or families of advocacy groups will be dealt with in this study: labor, environmental and peace organizations. These advocacy group families were chosen because they regularly stage protest events yet have very different organizational traits known to affect media portrayal. Selecting such different advocacy group families presents a tough test for the generalizability of the results. If differences hold across very diverse types of advocacy group families, chances are likely that we deal with generic laws of protest coverage.

Labor organizations or unions are advocacy groups that protect workers' rights. In Belgium, unions are present in many government advisory boards and even have real implementation power, as they provide services otherwise performed by the state (Martens et al., 2002) . In other words, in neo-corporatist Belgium, unions are insiders of the political system. Belgian unions have a large membership base, and if "insider" negotiations fail, they mobilize their constituents to hold large scale protests (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2001). A strong and unique weapon of unions is the strike, which is frequently used (Devos & Humblet, 2007). Because of the insider status of unions, because they are rich in terms of resources and members, and because they are part of the system (and as such rarely challenge, but moreover protect the status quo) we expect little differences across protest and non-protest items for labor organizations, who are perennially newsworthy (Deacon, 1996a).

The *Environmental organizations* in the sample are professionalized and have a clear division of labor. Whereas some organizations foremost try to influence policy by doing research and by taking seats in advisory boards (Natuurpunt, Bond Beter Leefmilieu), other organizations have a more militant, activist profile and engage in disruptive or colorful and theatrical actions (Greenpeace, GAIA)(Verhulst & Walgrave, 2005). Environmental organizations foremost have checkbook members, whose engagement consists of monthly financial contributions. Therefore, their protest actions rarely are massive mobilizations, but foremost small scale actions maximally adapted to a media logic and executed by professional activists (Donatella della Porta & Diani, 1999). Environmental organizations clearly work with annual campaigns, and their actions are meant to bring attention to these campaigns. As a consequence, environmental protest rarely ties in with the 'news of the day', but is somewhat detached from current affairs.

Peace organizations are not strongly organized nor professionalized in Belgium, and best fit the label of "grassroots" movement (Walgrave & Rucht, 2010). Yet peace organizations were omnipresent in the beginning of 2003, with the imminent war in Iraq. The issue of the Iraq war was high on the media and political agenda, as also Belgian ports were used for weapon transports. Belgian political elites took clear anti-war stances, paralleling Belgian public opinion. Several large scale marches were organized, with approximately 60.000 participants taking to the streets of Brussels on February 15, the worldwide day of action against the imminent war in Iraq (Walgrave & Rucht, 2010). In short, both the political as well as the discursive opportunity structure were favorable for the peace movement in 2003. We expect the peace movement to have made use of this window of opportunity, resulting in differences between protest and non-protest items that are favorable for the peace movement.

News Item Features

Previous studies on advocacy groups and media coverage analyzed media presence, media frames or tone of coverage. This chapter looks at specific features or attributes of news items. Such attributes of news items can easily be measured and compared across a wide range of items and a diverse set of issues. Although rarely tested, such attributes clearly fit the rationale of the protest paradigm as a template that journalists use resulting in a particular type of news item.

Four features of news items will be looked into: prominence, volume, standing and balance. *Prominence*. Is a news item the opening item of a newscast or not? The order in which items appear in newscasts is not random. A lead news item is considered to cover the most important occurence of the day. Especially lead news items, controlled for real world cues, tend to set the public agenda (Behr & Iyengar, 1985). For advocacy groups seeking social support appearing in lead news items thus seems to be especially fruitful. Previous research established that especially large or violent protest events result in lead news coverage (Wouters, 2013). Especially unions stage large events, as they can easily mobilize their large membership base. Also protest against the imminent war in Iraq resulted in large scale mobilizations. It is therefore expected that especially union and peace movement protests will be featured prominently, up front in newscasts. However, because of the strong insider

position of unions, and because of the perennial newsworthiness of economic issues, protest is especially expected to make a difference for the peace movement.

Volume. News item volume deals with the length of a news item. The longer a news item the more information a news item can transmit. The length of news items can greatly vary. Some occurrences are treated in depth, whereas other occurrences are given limited airtime. This study sets out to explore whether protest and non-protest items differ in term of news item volume.

Standing. Having a voice in the media arena, that is, being directly quoted, is a crucial step in successful media coverage. By having a voice, a media source can provide its own interpretation of an event or issue. Instead of merely being mentioned, standing offers media sources with the opportunity to contribute substantively to an ongoing debate (Ferree et al., 2002). The protest paradigm expects direct quotation of protest sources to be low, as reporters rely heavily on official sources and official definitions of the situation (McLeod & Hertog, 1998; Van Dalen, 2012). In line with the protest paradigm, we expect advocacy groups to be less frequently quoted in protest items compared to non-protest items.

Balance. A final news item feature deals with the source selection pattern in news items. Items can be balanced, that is, have a voice-counter voice structure presenting quotes from different (types) of sources. On the other hand, sources also can have monopoly positions in news items: a source then can give its opinion uncontested by another (type of)source. An important professional journalistic norm exactly is this balancing norm (De Swert, 2011). The protest paradigm holds that especially official sources are quoted in protest items (McLeod & Hertog, 1998), which leads us to expect that protest items are more frequently unbalanced: especially the official perspective it presented. Moreover, if we consider the presence of advocacy groups in non-protest items to be foremost reactive, such items are by definition balanced, leading to protest items being less frequently balanced. However, protest items foremost deal with controversial issues, and exactly news items about controversial issues are more likely to air a more diverse range of sources and opinions (Berkowitz & Beach, 1993). When speaking of balance, it is also relevant to distinguish three spheres of media reporting: a sphere of consensus, of legitimate conflict and of deviance. Only in the sphere of legitimate conflict, journalistic norms and practices, like the balancing norm, are considered necessary. If

protest falls in the sphere of deviance, we should expect more activist monopoly positions in protest (D. Hallin, 1986).

Wrapped up, this research responds to the demand of the founding fathers of the protest paradigm to "continue to specify the characteristics of the protest paradigm" and to seek into the "conditions that regulate how closely media follow the protest paradigm" (McLeod & Hertog, 1998). Therefore, this study sets out to explore the following two research questions:

RQ1: Do news item attributes differ across protest and non-protest items?

RQ2: Do differences in news item attributes between protest and non-protest items hold across different types of advocacy groups?

Data and Methods

In order to assess whether and how protest items differ from non-protest items, this research analyzes television news content spanning an eight year period (2003-2010). Data were retrieved from the Electronic News Archive (ENA).The ENA-database is a census database: every evening newscast of every single day of both the most important public *(Eén)* and commercial *(vtm)* Belgian television channel is the research population. The database is hosted by the University of Antwerp and the University of Leuven. Coding is done both at the news item level (thematic content, domestic and foreign focus, news item length, position of item in newscast) and actor level (within news item: actor name, actor function, speaking or mentioned, speaking time). For the entire 2003-2010 period, the database counts 87.504 news items and 268.293 actors. Intercoder reliability (Krippendorf's Alpha) was calculated by having double coded a constructed week of seven newscasts by nine trained student coders and resulted in acceptable alpha values (listed below)(for more information about intercoder tests and the News Archive see De Smedt et al., 2013).

For this chapter, dealing with national advocacy groups, only items that referred to Belgium (α = .919) were taken into account. In total, 17 advocacy groups were selected for scrutiny, belonging either to the labor (N = 3), environmental (N = 8) or peace movement (N = 6). The selected organizations are well known organizations and appear among the most newsworthy organizations of their respective families. Although these organizations clearly are not representative for the entire population of advocacy groups of a peculiar family, they

certainly account for the lion's share of media coverage for every group family, and as such by and large determine the public image that arises. Protest items were separated from non-protest items by performing a needle-haystack word search on two variables (thematic description, thematic keywords) in the database. The search term used the word "protest", its synonyms and different protest forms (march, blockade, strike,…) as keywords.

In total, the final dataset consists of 2849 advocacy group family appearances in 2845 unique news items. Unions prove to be far more newsworthy (N = 2329) than environmental organizations (N = 463) and peace organizations (N = 57). Generally, 4 out of ten advocacy group items shows protest (37.6%). Especially peace organizations make news by staging protest events (66.7%). Unions (39.1%) appear more frequently with protest actions in the news than environmental organizations (26.3%), although most of the protest staged by unions are strikes (26.5% of all union items, 68.0% of all union protest items). Further information about the descriptives of the selected organizations can be found in Appendix.

A news item was considered *prominent* (α = .804) if it was the first item of the newscast of a particular day. *News item length* (α = .997) was operationalized as the number of seconds the news item lasted. *Standing* (α = .761) was operationalized as whether at least one source of the advocacy group family was directly quoted in the news items (1) or was merely mentioned (0). *Balance* , finally, was operationalized as whether at least one of the following sources was also present in the news item: a politician (α = .977), an expert (α = .748) or a civil servant (α = .866). Descriptives of the dependent variables can be found in appendix. The database is a census database, containing all the news items that mentioned the selected advocacy groups. In order to test for differences between groups and protest items, we will employ t-tests and two-way ANOVAs. As the database is not using any sample but containing all the news items of the selected advocacy groups, absolute numbers and mean differences irrespective of significance thresholds tell most of the story. Significance levels are only referred to as a matter of completeness and indication of robustness.

Results

Prominence. Do protest items more frequently open a newscast than non-protest items? Or, put differently, do advocacy groups more easily make headline news by pursuing mobilization rather than information strategies? A t-test shows that 11 percent of all protest

items is a lead news item, whereas only 8 percent of the non-protest items opens a newscast. (t (2028)=-2.409; p = .016). In other words, protest leads to more prominent coverage. A two-way ANOVA was conducted to test whether protest-items are more prominent than non-protest items across advocacy group families. Only the advocacy group family factor significantly explains lead news item coverage (F(2,2843)= 11.762, p = .000). Unions (10.8%) and Peace organizations (10.5%) open a news cast more often than Environmental organizations (2.8%). Whether an item deals with protest or not proves to be insignificant (F(1,2843) = 1.945, p=.116). However, a look at the mean differences between protest and non-protest items across the advocacy groups (table 2.1) presents a clear story line: both for unions (+2.5%) and environmental organizations (-0.8%) mean differences are small. Protest does not greatly affects prominence. For peace organizations, however, protest does matter. Peace protest is far more prominently covered compared to the information strategies of peace organizations.

Table 2.1

Estimated marginal means for prominence (0/1) across advocacy group families (N = 2849)

			95% Confidence Interval			
Family	Item	M(SE)	Lower	Upper	M(dif)	Sig.
Unions	Non-Protest	.096(.008)	.081	.111	.025	.042
	Protest	.121(.010)	.102	.140		
Environmental Org.	Non-Protest	.032(.016)	.001	.063	-.007	.802
	Protest	.025(.026)	-.027	.076		
Peace Org.	Non-Protest	.053(.076)	-.078	.183	.105	.197
	Protest	.158(.047)	.066	.250		

Volume. Groups protest because they want to put an issue on the agenda. Do protest actions succeed in eliciting more media attention than information strategies? In other words, are protest items longer than non-protest items? A simple t-test shows protest and non-protest items to differ significantly, with protest items (M=112; SD= 48) being shorter than non-protest items (M= 119 ; SD= 46); t (2162) = 3.825, p = .000. Table 2.2 presents estimated marginal means of a two-way ANOVA including group family as a factor, and shows that this conclusion holds across advocacy groups. Both the group family factor (F

(2, 2837)= 45.282, p= .000); the protest factor (F (1, 2837)= 10.890, p= .001) and the interaction term between both (F(2,2837)= 14.587, p=.000) are significant, with the group family factor having the largest partial eta squared (.031). In sum, both group type and group tactic matter for item length. Both union (M=118 sec; SD=.98) and peace group (M=126 sec; SD=2.50) news items generally last significantly longer than items about environmental groups (M=94 sec; SD=2.44) (p=.000). Protest items are significantly shorter than non-protest items (p=.000): the average protest item lasts 105 seconds, whereas the average non protest items lasts 121 seconds. This finding holds across all three types of advocacy groups, yet the difference between protest and non-protest item volume is steepest for environmental organizations. The average length of an environmental protest item is about thirty seconds shorter than a non-protest item. For unions (-4.67 seconds) and peace organizations (-8.42) the average difference in item length is much more limited, and for peace organizations the difference even is insignificant (p = .518).

Table 2.2

Estimated marginal means for volume (sec.) across advocacy group families (N = 2843)

			95% Confidence Interval			
Family	Item	M(SE)	Lower	Upper	M(dif)	Sig.
Unions	Non-Protest	121(1.23)	118	123	-4.67	.018
	Protest	116(1.54)	113	119		
Environmental Org.	Non-Protest	110(2.51)	105	115	-32.82	.000
	Protest	77(4.20)	69	85		
Peace Org.	Non-Protest	130(10.63)	110	151	-8.42	.518
	Protest	122(7.52)	107	137		

Standing. Do protest strategies result in having a voice in the media arena? Standing is a crucial cultural resource for groups willing to come across as legitimate. Being singled out as newsworthy and being allowed to speak makes groups valuable and credible players. A t-test shows no significant difference between protest (M = .86; SD =.34) and non-protest items (M= .87; SD = .34) when it comes to media standing (t(2847)=.574, p =.566). A two-way ANOVA shows that media standing is foremost a matter of group family (F(2,2843)= 146.886, p= .000), with all three group families significantly differing from each other. Unions have the

highest media standing, they are allowed to speak in about ninety percent of their news items (M=.91; SD= .007). Environmental organizations have least media standing: only in sixty percent of their news items, environmental groups make a quote(M=.60; SD=.017) . Besides the group family factor, only the interaction term between group family and group strategy is significant (F(1,2843)=17.422, p=.000).The strategy of protest has a different effect across the different groups. Table 2.3 shows the estimated marginal means of the interaction term. Whereas the standing of unions is always high and protest items do not significantly differ from non-protest items (p=.763), environmental organizations have less standing in protest items whereas peace organizations on the opposite have more standing in protest items. Interestingly, the share of standing in non-protest items for the latter two group families is about the same.

Table 2.3
Estimated marginal means for standing (0/1) across advocacy group families (N = 2849)

			95% Confidence Interval			
Family	Item	M(SE)	Lower	Upper	M(dif)	Sig.
Unions	Non-Protest	.914(.009)	.897	.931	-.004	.763
	Protest	.910(.011)	.889	.931		
Environmental Org.	Non-Protest	.698(.017)	.664	.732	-.198	.000
	Protest	.500(.029)	.443	.557		
Peace Org.	Non-Protest	.684(.074)	.536	.832	.211	.020
	Protest	.895(.052)	.792	.997		

Balance. A final news item attribute under scrutiny is the source selection pattern of news items. Are protest items more frequently balanced? Or do protest actions lead to monopoly positions? A simple t-test shows that non-protest items (M=.38; SD = .48) are more frequently balanced than protest items (M=.27; SD=.44); t (2405)= 6.097, p= .000. In other words, the strategy of protest leads to monopoly positions in news items. Moreover, the link between protesting and monopoly positions holds across advocacy group families. In a two-way ANOVA, only the protest factor is significant (F(1,2843)=7.112, p=.008), strongly suggesting that source selection foremost is a consequence of group strategy rather than of group family. For unions, as well as environmental organizations as well as peace

organizations, protest items are less frequently balanced than non-protest items. Absolute mean differences are substantial (about ten %), and besides for the low N category of peace organizations, strongly significant.

Table 2.4
Estimated marginal means for balance (0/1) across advocacy group families (N = 2849)

			95% Confidence Interval			
Family	Item	M(SE)	Lower	Upper	M(dif)	Sig.
Unions	Non-Protest	.367(.013)	.343	.392	-.099	.000
	Protest	.268(.016)	.238	.299		
Environmental Org.	Non-Protest	.437(.026)	.387	.487	-.150	.003
	Protest	.287(.043)	.203	.370		
Peace Org.	Non-Protest	.474(.108)	.262	.686	-.132	.320
	Protest	.342(.076)	.192	.492		

Conclusion and Discussion

This analysis tested whether particular attributes of protest items differed from non-protest items across types of advocacy groups. As such, this chapter contributed to the literature on the protest paradigm in three specific ways: it added new features to the paradigm, provided protest coverage with a baseline and teased out the paradigm's conditionality. Results show that protest items are more likely to be treated prominently. They are shorter and less frequently balanced. Media standing of groups does not differ significantly across protest and non-protest items. Although these conclusions hold to a different degree across labor, environmental and peace organizations, two general laws can be distinguished: protest items tend to be shorter and are more frequently unbalanced. The finding of both of these news item attributes holds across the three –very different- types of advocacy groups under study, as such passing a tough test. Obviously, both attributes are closely related. Exactly because protest items are unbalanced, they tend to be shorter, as no other sources are presented in the news item. In short, by staging protest events, advocacy groups gain monopoly positions in news items –they can present their claims uncontested by an official source- yet these items tend to be shorter.

At first glance, this finding runs counter to earlier protest paradigm research, which held that especially official views will be present in protest coverage at the expense of the activist point of view. Although being able to present one's view uncontested is a privilege that seems to be at odds with the protest paradigm, the finding can also be interpreted the other way around. It could be that the monopoly position of a group in a protest item is more a situation of "splendid isolation". Protest items then fall in the sphere of deviance, a sphere where journalists do not feel compelled to follow their journalistic norms, like the balancing norm. Moreover, it could be that "balance" to protest news items is provided in a completely different fashion. Not by the well-known voice-counter-voice structure (typically present in items that fall in the sphere of legitimate controversy), but exactly by more interpretation of journalists themselves and the presentation of certain derogatory news frames, as spelled out by the protest paradigm. If this latter reasoning is true, journalists, at least in part, can be seen as intentional protectors of the status quo. However, the fact that groups gain monopoly positions in protest items also can be interpreted as a simple consequence of the production logic of news: reporters are assigned to cover a march and want to show the activist perspective. By interviewing several demonstrators and presenting the audience with different activist perspectives, journalists try to paint a trustworthy or balanced picture of the march, how small and biased their sample of protestors that make it to the screen might be. Of course, the present analysis cannot distinguish between either reason or the other, yet what it does show is that when it comes to the source selection patterns in items of advocacy groups, a clear and consistent difference exist across protest and non-protest items.

Concerning media standing and headline coverage of advocacy groups, differences across protest and non-protest items were either marginally significant or insignificant, and, tended to go in different directions across advocacy group families. Whether a news item opens a newscast appeared to be foremost a consequence of advocacy group type: especially unions and peace organizations are featured prominently in newscasts, an attribute that turns out to be extremely rare for environmental groups. Both for unions and peace organizations, protest leads to a more prominent place in a newscast –although the difference between protest and non-protest items for unions is small.

Also standing, finally, turns out to be especially a matter of group family rather than of group tactic. Media standing of unions clearly stands out. Almost in every item that mentions a union, whether it is a protest item or not, unions are directly quoted (about 90 percent).

Environmental and peace organizations have a lot less media standing. Although they are equally frequently quoted in non-protest items (68%), the effect of protest goes in opposite directions for both families: whereas peace protest leads to a significant increase in direct quotation, environmental protest leads to a significant decrease in group quotation. Although this analysis cannot account for the exact dynamic behind this finding, several differences between both families point towards likely explanations, although one should regard them as speculative. The fact that peace protest was large and grassroots, whereas environmental protest foremost is professional and small; or, the fact that peace protest was peaceful, and environmental protest has a more disruptive image can account for these findings. Moreover, the peace protest actions were held in a favorable climate: both public opinion and political elites in Belgium were opposed against the war in Iraq, and the issue was high on the media agenda, meaning that demand for information was high. Such a favorable media opportunity structure was not present for the environmental groups under study. Far more than the peace organizations, environmental organizations had to make news by fighting an uphill battle on an already crowded media agenda, resulting in less direct quotation and less prominent exposure. In this sense it should be noted that the newsworthiness of peace organizations was especially short-lived and foremost due to the context of the imminent Iraq war in 2003, whereas environmental organizations far more frequently make news than peace organizations and appear to be less dependent of such a “favorable” context.

This study was exploratory: it explored new characteristics of the protest paradigm, and established that some news item attributes seem to hold across very different groups, whereas others do not. This study is limited in the sense that it could not get a clear empirical grip at the reasons why coverage differed across these groups, although plausible explanations were put forward. Future research could contribute greatly to knowledge about group and protest portrayal in the media arena by empirically taking event characteristics (was the demonstration large or small, disruptive or peaceful) organization characteristics (group goals, resources, membership size, communication strategies) and contextual data (public opinion about group goals) into account. If media attention is a crucial political resource for advocacy groups in their struggle for social change, further investigation of such research tracks could help organizations anticipate the mediated outcomes of their strategies.

Appendix

Table 2.5

Advocacy Groups and Protest: Descriptives

Family	Organization	Number of items	% of protest items (N)
Unions	ABVV (Socialist)	1430	42.1 (602)
	ACV (Christian Democratic)	1398	41.1 (573)
	ACLVB (Liberal)	356	41.3 (147)
	Total Family	2329	39.1 (910)
Environmental Org.	GAIA	127	28.3 (36)
	BBL	107	7.5 (8)
	Greenpeace	96	50 (48)
	Naturepoint	76	3.9 (3)
	WWF	36	16.7 (6)
	Bite Back	11	72.7 (8)
	Friends of the Earth	11	90.9 (10)
	Climate Coalition	6	83.3 (5)
	Total Family	463	26.3 (122)
Peace Org.	Forum for Peace Action	17	88.2 (15)
	Anti-War Platform	14	71.4 (10)
	Pax Christie	14	21.4 (3)
	Stop USA	7	85.7 (6)
	Peace vzw	4	75 (3)
	Bombspotting	2	100 (2)
	Total Family	57	66.7 (38)
TOTAL		2849	37.6 (1070)

Table 2.6

Descriptives of dependent and independent variables

Variable	Mean	Min	Max	SD	N
Protest	.38	0	1	.48	2849
Prominence	.09	0	1	.29	2849
Standing	.87	0	1	.34	2849
Balance	.34	0	1	.47	2849
Volume	116	14	567	47	2843

3

From the Street to the Screen.

Characteristics of Protest Events as Determinants of Television News Coverage

Abstract

Media attention is a crucial resource for demonstrators seeking to influence policy. This chapter assesses the determinants of television coverage for protest events. Police archive data for the city of Brussels is compared to newscast data of the biggest public and commercial station in Belgium (2003-2010). Results show that few demonstrations pass the television gates (11%). Above all, protest size accounts for newsworthiness. Disruptive and symbolic actions also attract the media spotlight, confirming drama and visuals as critical television news values. Whereas symbolism matters for media presence, it does not hold for headline (prominence) or length of coverage (volume). New social movements are especially likely to stage symbolic actions. As a consequence, their presence on the screen is less a function of their numeric weight in the street. Distinctive selection mechanisms are at work on the commercial and public broadcaster, suggesting that media ownership matters for news selection.

From the Street to the Screen.

Characteristics of Protest Events as Determinants of Television News Coverage

Introduction

Protest actions are communicative acts staged to signal situations of injustice. Not the act itself, but the reaction of others to the act is what brings about political leverage (Lipsky, 1968). The power of protest therefore strongly depends on diffusion and amplification; protestors' ability to gain access to means of mass communication is key. Media attention might raise the public saliency of an issue, might activate otherwise silent bystander publics and might put pressure on political elites to pay attention (Gamson, 2004). Koopmans (2004) asserts that politicians only react to social movements *if* and *as* they are depicted in the media arena.

Gaining media attention is easier said than done, however. News is to a far greater extent the result of a process of exclusion than inclusion. Numerous events happen every day and only few end up in pixel or print. In this chapter I scrutinize the selection of protest events in television news. Two straightforward questions take center stage: *To what extent do protest actions become news?* And, *which characteristics of protest events make them particularly newsworthy?* Previous studies tackling media selection of protest have focused primarily on newspaper coverage. This focus on the press primarily stemmed from methodological concerns and resulted in a distinct selection bias literature that probed the validity and reliability of newspaper data (Rucht et al., 1998). However, regarding protest coverage,

television news is at least as relevant a medium to study as newspapers. Television news is still the most important source of information about political affairs and society for the citizen public (Curran, Iyengar, Lund, and Salovaara-Moring, 2009). The fact that television adds pictures to words makes it extremely well-suited to communicate the vibrant atmosphere of protest as well (Small, 1994; Etzioni, 1969). Not only do the visual stimuli of televised protests increase audience recall, the subsequent emotional arousal might be more effective than newspaper articles in pressuring viewers to choose sides (Graber, 1990; 2001). Moreover, because of these visual conditions, other selection mechanisms may be at work in television news when compared to newspapers. The chance to secure interesting video footage, for instance, might be a more important news value for television (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001). In sum, television news has a far greater reach and a far greater potential influence compared to newspapers. If one is less interested in the methodological issue of data-source bias and more interested in the potential impact of protest, one needs to focus on the selection mechanisms of television news coverage (Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012; Smidt, 2012).

Besides the focus on televised protest, the second contribution of this chapter relates to the operationalization of media attention. Most previous studies define media selection simply as a binary condition of whether an event succeeded in attracting coverage or not. Media coverage of demonstrations varies significantly, however. Whereas some events are treated in depth, other protests are given limited airtime in so-called "news carrousels[1]". In the same way, some protests may be featured more prominently than others. When journalists assign headline status to an event, they clearly acknowledge its importance, a judgment that is not without its public consequence. Behr and Iyengar (1985) found that lead news stories are especially likely to set the public agenda. So, besides the *presence* of protest in a particular newscast, I also take the *volume* and *prominence* of protest coverage into account.

In order to tackle the central questions of this study, I utilize two databases. Police record data of all protest events organized in Brussels (2003-2010) are considered as the universe of events. Such extra-media data allow for the most robust test of media selection (Hocke, 1998; Oliver & Myers, 1999). Content analysis data of the flagship newscasts of Belgium's biggest commercial station and the Belgian public broadcasting service represent the media filter[2]. The chapter's third contribution lies in the assessment of selection mechanisms across two different stations characterized by different ownership structures. Results show television coverage to be a numbers game. Mass mobilization not only results in higher chances of

media coverage; large protest events also more easily make it into the headlines and are given more airtime. The same rationale holds for disruptive actions. Whereas symbolic actions and actions organized by more professionalized organizations more easily become news, they are not more likely to be prominent or lengthy news items. Protest events staged by migrant organizations, on the other hand, receives significantly less airtime. Interestingly, new social movements are especially likely to stage symbolic actions. It is these colorful and camera-ready tactics of new social movements, more than the size of their demonstrations, that lead to greater presence on the screen. Media ownership, finally, matters to a great extent for the selection of protest events: the news desk of the public broadcasting service (Eén) covers many more protest events, whereas the only commercial station with a newscast (vtm) is more confined to events that score high on disruption and drama.

Mass Media, Social Movements and Protest Events

Mass media attention is an important resource for movements seeking to influence the polity. Media attention validates a movement and is crucial to mobilization processes (Walgrave & Manssens, 2005) and membership recruitment (Vliegenthart, Oegema, and Klandermans, 2005). Media coverage is an asset that helps to enlarge the scope of a given conflict (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Although social movements need media attention more than institutional political actors, literature suggests that movements have to fight an uphill battle to gain media attention (Molotch, 1979; Rohlinger, 2006; Wolfsfeld, 1997; Ryan, 1991).

Two broad strands of literature account for access to the mass media arena: one stream focuses on the production logic of journalism (news routines). Another stream focuses on event characteristics (news values). In both perspectives, journalists act as gatekeepers, deciding what becomes news and what does not. Research on news routines looks at the day-to-day practicalities of the newsroom to explain media selection. Besides media ownership and the importance of profit making as overarching influences on newsroom dynamics, one of the most important routines in journalism is the assignment of reporters to “beats” (Shoemaker and Reese 1996). A beat is both a specific topic (crime, politics) and a specific location (court house, parliament). Beats assure a steady stream of coverage. Reflecting the mass media’s role of fourth estate, the most important news beat is the political beat. As a

consequence, the news-gathering apparatus' day-to-day attention is far more focused on institutional sources (Bennett, 1990; Tresh, 2009). Whereas political elites are caught in the newsgathering net whether they want it or not, social movements must more actively attract the attention of the media spotlight.

One way to obtain coverage is to anticipate these routines and facilitate the newsgathering process. The fact that journalists work under clear budgetary constraints and with strict deadlines suggests news production needs to be efficient (Tuchman, 1973; 1978). The work of journalists is made easier when groups present information in timely press releases and put forward leaders and spokespersons who speak in short and quotable sound bites. Social movements willing to enter the mass media arena must adapt to such news routines (Schudson, 1996). Andrews and Caren (2010) confirm that environmental groups that send more press releases, maintain contact with reporters, and call newspapers about their activities, are more likely to make it into the news. Sobieraj (2010), however, questions the effectiveness of adaptation to news routines. Opposite norms apply for political insiders and outsiders, is the argument she makes. Activists who try to be professional, quotable and credible do not fit the schema journalists have of political-outsider news sources and therefore will be ignored. According to Sobieraj, good activist sources, first of all, need to be authentic: journalists prefer them to possess an amateur status and moral authority, as well as having personal proximity to the issue at hand. Professionalization in this respect does exactly the opposite: it lowers the attractiveness and newsworthiness of protestors.

News value theory, on the other hand, considers newsworthiness as a product of event characteristics (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001). Events that score high on any number of news factors are more likely to elicit media attention. Such event characteristics are, for instance, unambiguousness, unexpectedness, possibilities of personalization and dramatization, novelty, the involvement of elites, negativity, and conflict (Tresh, 2009). These news values are not fixed in the sense that certain combinations guarantee media resonance. They vary between broadcasting systems and media outlets (Cushion, 2010). In general, for resource poor social movements, courting the media spotlight is less about news routines and more about emphasizing event characteristics known to have news value. Challengers succeed in entering the media arena only by carrying out exceptional acts (Wolfsfeld, 1997). Danielian and Page (1994), for instance, hold that protest actions are the most surefire way

for citizen groups to make it into the news. Andrews and Caren (2010) similarly conclude that using the outsider tactic of protest enhances the likelihood of media attention.

In sum, protest tactics clearly matters for social movements that want to make their claims public. Yet not every protest action is equally likely to become news. Specific characteristics of protest events will increase or decrease the likeliness of coverage.

Media Selection of Protest Events and its Determinants

Social movement scholars have developed a long-standing interest in the selection of protest events by mass media. Interest in the validity and reliability of newspaper data sparked a distinct selection bias literature (Danzger, 1975; Earl et al., 2004; Mueller, 1997; Myers & Caniglia, 2004; Oritz et al., 2005; Snyder & Kelly, 1977). First testing for inter-media selection, an important improvement was made by relying on media independent data, found in police archives (Barranco & Wisler, 1999; Fillieule, 1997, 1998; Hocke, 1998; McCarthy et al., 1996; McCarthy, Titarenko, McPhail, Rafail, & Augustyn, 2008; Oliver & Maney, 2000; Oliver & Myers, 1999). Table 3.1 gives an overview of those studies that explicitly tackled the problem of protest event selection by relying on police archive data. The overview shows that a great variety of cases have been looked into. Small local cities, as well as national capitals have been studied, in Europe as well as the United States. Both local and national newspapers have been chosen as media filters. Strikingly, however, only one study (McCarthy et al., 1996) assessed selection for television news.

What information does table 3.1 provide about the degree of selectivity? Percentages of media coverage are shown to vary greatly across media outlets and are clearly classified by the scope of the media outlet, with local newspapers systematically covering more protest events than national ones, and television news—with a far more limited newshole—covering fewer protest events than newspapers[3].

Table 3.1

Overview of studies assessing media selection using police archive data

AUTHOR	CITY	PERIOD	N	DETERMINANTS	MEDIA OUTLET	% COVERAGE
McCarthy et al (1996)	USA, Washington DC	1982-1999	3065	- Size - Issue - Newshole	1 Local 1 National paper TV News	LN[a]: 6.9% NN: 3.0% TV: 2.1%
Fillieule (1997)	France, Paris, Nantes, Marseilles	Jan-Jun 1989	785	- Size	2 National papers	NN: 9.6%
Hocke (1998, 2000)	Germany, Freiburg	1983-1989	196	- Size - Disruption - Sponsor	1 Local and 2 National papers	LN: 37.8% NN: 4.6%
Barronco & Wisler (1999)	Switzerland, Bern, Geneva, Zurich, Basel	1965-1994	1538	-Size -Disruption -Sponsor -Newshole	3 local and 1 National paper	LN: 63% NN: 51.2%
Oliver & Maney (2000)	USA, Madison	1993-1996	541	-Size -Disruption -Sponsor -Newshole	2 local paper	LN: 46%
McCarthy et al (2008)	Belarus, Minsk	1990-1995	817	-Size -Disruption -Sponsor -Issue	4 ideologically different papers	AN: 30.6%

Notes: [a] LN = Local Newspaper; NN = National Newspaper; AN = All Newspapers, TV = Television news; [b] See also Oliver & Myers (1999) for an analysis of a single year of the same dataset.

Variety within media outlets with the same scope nevertheless remains high. Besides scope of the media outlet[4], the ideological stance of the media outlet (Mueller, 1997; McCarthy et al., 2008) is also considered as a determinant of selectivity.

In the current study, both television stations are based in Brussels, are national in scope and have a very similar newshole.[5] Ideological stances in broadcasting are, contrary to the American context, atypical in Northern Europe (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Another potentially meaningful classification, however, is the distinction between commercial and public television stations. Commercial players were allowed to enter European television markets only since the late 1980s and early 1990s (Holtz-Bacha & Norris, 2001).

Despite the great similarities between both stations, I expect the ownership model of both stations to result in different patterns of media selection. Whereas public broadcasters focus more on "hard" political and institutional news, commercial stations tend to prefer "soft" news with a more sensationalist and entertainment-oriented focus, both in *what* they cover as in *how* they cover it (De Swert, 2007; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Reinemann, Stanyer, Scherr, & Legnante, 2012). As protest events typically tackle policy-related issues, I expect the hard news focus of the public broadcaster to act as a window of opportunity for protest events. I therefore expect the public broadcaster to cover more protest events compared to the commercial channel. Although protest events typically tackle hard-news issues, the form of protest (colorful and vivid, with participants singing, dancing and yelling) clearly fits soft-news criteria. I expect that the soft news focus of the commercial station will result in a distinct selection pattern: the news values of drama, disruption, spectacle, and conflict—news values that tie in with sensationalism and entertainment—would in this regard be stronger determinants of media selection on the private than on the public station. As a consequence, I expect protest events covered by the commercial station to more frequently receive a headline status and to get more airtime compared to protest coverage on the public channel. If commercial stations cover fewer, and more spectacular, events, it is logical to expect that commercial television will treat protest more prominently and at greater length. In the opposite direction, I expect that protest events that succeed in eliciting attention from both stations, will be covered more prominently and at greater length by the public broadcaster. These expectations result in the following hypotheses:

H1: The public broadcaster, with its focus on hard news, covers more protest events than the commercial broadcaster.

H2: Protest selection by the commercial channel is characterized by a more sensationalistic selection mechanism than protest selection by the public broadcaster.

H3a: Protest events are more likely to make headline news on the commercial channel compared to protest events on the public channel.

H3b: Protest events covered by both stations are less likely to make headline news on the commercial channel.

H4a: Protest events get more airtime on the commercial channel compared to protest event on the public channel.

H4b: Protest events covered by both stations get less airtime on the commercial channel compared to the public channel.

Besides the extent of media coverage for protest events, this study also sets out to tackle the *determinants* of media coverage. News selection of protest is by no means arbitrary, and a range of determinants influences the likelihood of coverage. Della Porta and Diani (1999) distinguish three different logics of protest: a logic of numbers, disruption, and bearing witness. These three logics of collective action clearly relate to criteria of newsworthiness: they hold characteristics explicitly correspond to the news values known from journalism studies.

The *logic of numbers* contends that large crowds demonstrate the social power of a group (Tilly, 2004). Mass mobilizations raise the chances that journalists will judge the event as relevant and legitimate. Demonstration size proves to be the strongest and most consistent factor predicting newspaper coverage of protest events (McCarthy et al., 1996; Oliver & Maney, 2000; Oliver & Meyers, 1999; Hocke, 1998; Fillieule, 1997). In the same vein, I expect television coverage of protest to be largely a function of demonstration size.

> *H5a: Protest events that succeed in drawing large numbers of participants are more likely to become news.*
>
> *H5b: Protest events that succeed in drawing larger numbers of participants get more airtime and will more frequently be mentioned as headlines.*

Besides the logic of numbers, della Porta and Diani (1999) also discern a *logic of material damage*. Protest organizers may aim at large numbers, but many potential protestors may drop out (Klandermans, 1997; Van Laer, 2011) and demonstration turnout is unsure. De Nardo (1985) suggests that groups that cannot lean on huge constituencies have to resort to more extreme and confrontational tactics. Disruption and violence clearly match with the media's need for drama and conflict. From a news value perspective such events should be more likely to result in news coverage. With the normalization and routinization of protest, the presence of explicitly violent protest has declined, however (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2001). Koopmans (1993) therefore speaks of confrontational protest, in the sense of acts of "civil disobedience". Not material damage, but getting arrested—with resulting captivating protagonist-antagonist images—becomes the activists' explicit goal. Here, we test for such a logic of disruption. Barranco and Wisler (1999) and McCarthy et al. (2008) found that events with arrests were more likely to make it into the papers, whereas Oliver and Myers (1999)

and Oliver and Maney (2000) did not find such a disorder dynamic to be at work. Myers and Caniglia (2004) found that within a group of civil disorders reported in local newspapers, the more intense disorders (deaths, arrests, arson, duration) more easily made it into the national press.

Here I expect violence and disorder to be consistent and strong news values. Television is by definition a far more visual medium than the printed press, and as violence and disruption clearly fit the need of television for spectacular images and conflict, I believe disruption to be a strong predictor of newsworthiness. Moreover, when it comes to media prominence and volume, I expect disruption to have a strong and positive effect. Besides overt conflict, unexpected protest can also be judged as disruptive. For example, protest events that are carried out without a legal permit can catch authorities off-guard and as such disrupt public life. Contrary to standard news value expectations, these kinds of unexpected protest events are less likely to receive media coverage. Both illegal demonstrations in Switzerland (Barranco and Wisler, 1999) and unpermitted protests in Madison (Oliver & Myers, 1999) seem to catch not only police but also journalists by surprise.

> *H6a: Disruptive protest events are more likely to become news.*
>
> *H6b: Disruptive protest events get more airtime and will more frequently be mentioned as headlines.*
>
> *H7: Protest events that are unexpected are less likely to become news.*

The logic of bearing witness, finally, fits groups that cannot or choose not to play on numerical strength or disruption. Here, persuasion is obtained via symbolically enacting one's claim. Imagination, creativity, and sensitivity to values and culture are key (Rochon, 1988). Whereas della Porta and Diani (1999) consider civil disobedience, which involves high personal commitment and risk of being arrested, to be a first aspect of the logic of bearing witness, my definition is more stringent and moves the symbolic dimension to center stage. The logic of bearing witness consists of actions that are theatrical happenings, carefully scripted and performed, in order to respond to mass media criteria of news judgment (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Pichardo, 1997; Tarrow, 1994). Examples of such symbolic actions include Amnesty International calling for the shutdown of Guantanamo by wearing orange overalls and imitating torture activities, international aid organizations highlighting the plight of refugees by installing refugee tent camps in city centers, or farmers publicly dumping milk to

protest low milk prices. These events are not events of mass mobilization. They can be disruptive, but do not have to be. Their greatest common denominator is that they are public performances in the form of pseudo–events. As such, they follow the rules of the media game and use key symbols to draw media attention. In *Visualizing Deviance*, Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1987: 274-275) describe how a citizen group opposed to nuclear weapons set up a symbolic action:

> *"The source organization selected a key location (a plant involved in weapons manufacture); a good day in summer when news was likely to be 'slow' because key source bureaucracies were in recess; and, sent a release, along with promises via telephone calls, that there would be 'violence' of some sort. One television station had three crews on location. The source organization arranged for five people to jump over a fence to throw red paint, signifying blood, on a wall. They were stopped and arrested for trespass or public mischief. Meanwhile two women were able to paint with stencils six green doves on a wall before they were arrested. . . . The source organization had also come equipped with a variety of props—including banners (e.g., 'Ban the Bomb') and a coffin—all of which were focused on by cameramen, along with shots of the paint on the wall and the persons responsible being arrested. The reporters recognized they were simply following the script of their source, and one remarked while editing that this item was a prime example of creating the news."*

It is the scripted nature, the staged performance, the reliance on news-routine knowledge, and the visually attractive aspect that make these symbolic actions particularly suitable for television coverage. Symbolic actions carry this media logic (Altheide & Snow, 1979) to its extremes. This is why symbolic actions are more likely to resonate with television journalists' conceptions of what constitutes news.[6] There is a price, however, that comes with the fact that symbolic actions tend to so closely follow this media logic. Scholars of political communication often describe the relationship between journalists and their sources as a dance, with both partners needing each other (publicity vs. information), and with a constant struggle over power (who leads the dance?). In the words of Strömbäck and Nord (2006: 161), "On the dance floor, political actors are doing what they can to invite the journalists to dance, but ultimately, it are [sic] the journalists who choose who they are going to dance with." I expect that activists staging events that follow the logic of bearing witness succeed in convincing journalists to cover events that otherwise would not have been judged newsworthy. However, as a consequence, the chance that these events will be featured prominently and at length will be lower. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H8: Protest events that are symbolic are more likely to become news than are events that do not display symbolic elements.

H9: Protest events that are symbolic get less airtime and will be featured less prominently than events that do not display symbolic elements.

Besides these logics of protest, I believe protest form matters as well. I distinguish between static and dynamic protest, and expect static protest to be less newsworthy. There are several reasons why a protest that moves from point A to point B (i.e., marches) could be more newsworthy. For one, marches are more likely to draw big numbers, and also are more disruptive because of the traffic jams they cause. According to McCarthy et al. (1996) dynamic demonstrations are also more visible and audible in public life as they more explicitly and overtly show off by parading in the streets. Finally, the fact that marches are organized far more infrequently makes them extraordinary and thus newsworthy. On the same note, one could also expect static protest to be more immediately focused on appealing to bystanders at the event, and less focused on appealing to a mass audience. Clearly the static form of protest—especially activities focused on distributing literature—is less about making headlines and more about convincing passing pedestrians. The function of static protest is more often to inform than to persuade.[7] For these reasons, I expect static protest events to pass through the media gates less easily.

H10: Static protest events are less likely to become news than dynamic protest events.

The logics and form of protest are not the only factors that matter for newsworthiness. News routines also matter. Events staged by more established and professionalized sponsoring organizations more easily pass the media gates (Oliver & Myers 1999; Hocke, 1998; McCarthy et al., 2008). These organizations are more resourceful, can maintain relationships with journalists, and can feed detailed information to the press (Andrews & Caren, 2010). In sum, these groups can adapt to news routines, thereby facilitating the newsgathering process. These groups are also more likely to have media standing. That is to say, they have previously proven to be a legitimate (and perhaps trustworthy) news source, and this enhances their chances of making it into the news once again (Ferree et al., 2002).

Although the distinction is not without its critics, a well-known and well-suited typology in this respect distinguishes between old and new social movements (Mellucci, 1996; Williams,

2004). The typology has several dimensions, including one measuring institutionalization and professionalization, with new social movements (NSM) having weaker organizational structures and being less institutionally embedded. The distinction is also issue related, however. Old social movements (OSM) care about redistributive, materialist bread-and-butter issues. New social movements—like the peace, environmental, and north-south movement—advocate post-materialist concerns (Buechler, 2000; Verhulst, 2011). With the increased internationalization of protest (Donatella della Porta & Tarrow, 2005), I also add migrant and asylum seeker organizations as a distinct type of social movements, as these are generally less organized and have fewer resources than their domestic counterparts (Chabanet & Giugni, 2008). Since OSMs tend to be more professionalized and institutionalized, I expect them to be better equipped to court the media. Especially in neo-corporatist Belgium, typical old social movements like unions and professional organizations take strong insider positions in the policy making process (Martens et al., 2002). With the media following the trail of political power, OSM protest hence can be expected to generate media attention more easily.

Another dynamic might also be at work: OSM issues (labor market, economy, agriculture, social affairs) might be featured more frequently and prominently in the news, resulting in a favorable media climate for demonstrations tackling "old" issues. Not the agency or professionalization of the organization, but rather the "discursive opportunity structure" of the media arena then accounts for differences in media presence. Regardless of which mechanism might be at work, this leads to the following hypotheses:

> *H11a: Protest events organized by old social movements are more likely to become news than are events organized by new social movements.*
>
> *H11b: Protest events organized by new social movements are more likely to become news than are events organized by migrant and asylum seeker organization.*

Finally, this study takes into account one more typical newshole characteristic. Demonstrations compete with other events for media attention. On days when news is slow, chances for any event to get media access should increase. One could expect demonstrations to take ad-vantage of the news vacuum that results from the lack of economic or political news over week-ends. This expectation is corroborated by Barranco and Wisler (1999), yet rejected by McCarthy et al. (1996) and Oliver and collaborators (1999; 2000). Less-populated news desks on weekends (McCarthy et al., 1996) and, for Wisconsin, the lack of legislative

activity on Mondays (Oliver et al. 1999; 2000), account for these findings. Whereas newspapers cover, at best, yesterday's events, television news is a daily occurrence, broadcasting both on Saturday and Sunday. I therefore expect weekend events are more likely to become news than events staged on weekdays.

> *H12: Protest events staged during weekends are more likely to become news than are protest events staged on weekdays*

Data and Methods

In order to assess the filtering mechanisms of mass media I compare data from police archives with media data (Rosengren, 1974). The research period runs from January 2003 to December 2010. The setting of the study is Brussels or, more precisely, the police jurisdiction *Brussel-Hoofdstad-Elsene*. Brussels is the Belgian capital as well as the political heart of both Belgium and Europe. The main political institutions of the different Belgian regions are located in this jurisdiction, as are the headquarters for many European agencies and foreign embassies. This specific context makes Brussels a particularly attractive location for protestors interested in showing their discontent.

Police record data. Access was granted to the archives of the Brussels Capital Police District.[8] In Brussels, every protest action needs permission. Copies of requests and permits were coded on-site by a group of MA students under supervision of the author. In an ideal situation, one report would give a start-to-finish perspective of a particular demonstration. The document would open with a letter of request to the mayor, would contain a risk analysis and police deployment plan, a short description of the protest issue, and an estimation of the number of participants, and the organizations involved. The document would end with a short follow-up report after the demonstration, describing the flow of events, the actual number of participants, and any irregularities. Such after-demonstration documents were only included for 62% of the protest events. Of those protest events that contained an after-demonstration report, 98% effectively took place.[9] Since I include all demonstrations in the analysis, the expected number of participants is used as a measure of demonstration size, rather than the actual number of participants.[10] If a demonstration was not requested, but discovered by patrolling police officers, a short after-demonstration report was written by the patrolling

officers and added to the archive. These unpermitted demonstrations comprise 5.5% of the police record database and are also included in the analysis.

Of course, police officers are not social scientists, and many prefer action on the street to administrative deskwork. Many demonstrations found in the media database were not present in the police archive. I am nevertheless convinced that the database is rather complete.[11] The police- record database covers many more protest events than the media database, and, as the goal of this chapter is not to draw a perfect picture of the real protest world but to investigate the media filtering mechanisms, the data make it possible to examine the gap between police records and media coverage.

Besides protest events, the archive contains other events related to public police interventions (police disposition in relation to football games, foreign head-of-state visits, royal family member *actes de présence*).[12] The unit of analysis in this study is the protest event, and partly follows Fillieule's criteria for selecting protest events. Fillieule (1998) uses the number of participants, a publicly expressive dimension, a political or social nature, the nature of the organizers, and the form of the event as dimensions for the selection of events as protest events. As social movement organizations do not have a monopoly on protest strategies, no organizational criteria were imposed. Mere fundraising actions of social movements organizations were excluded.

Media data. The University of Antwerp and Leuven host the Electronic News Archive (www.ena.be). The ENA is a census dataset that daily records and codes the 19 o'clock flagship newscasts of both the biggest commercial (VTM) and public broadcaster (VRT). The database runs from 2003 to the present. The coding scheme is elaborated at both the item and actor level. The Belgian mass media market is a typical example of a duopoly. Contrary to trends in other countries, the audience for news is high and growing, with both 19 o'clock newscasts reaching on average 75% of the market during the period of interest.[13] The ENA has no standard protest variable in its coding scheme. In order to trace news items about Brussels' protest, a "needle in the haystack" word-search was performed for the words "protest," its synonyms and its different notations.[14] The search resulted in 12,411 protest news items (11.8% of all news items during the 2003-2010 period mentioned protest, of which Brussels protest is a subsample). The news items were manually linked to the police

record database. A particular media report was linked to a particular demonstration drawn from the police archive only if date, topic, and protest location (Brussels) fully matched.[15]

Like previous research, the first dependent variable is a simple dummy variable reflecting whether a protest received media exposure or not. The study also takes into account the prominence of the protest coverage (whether the protest made it into the headlines of the newscast) and the volume of coverage (the duration of the total news item(s) about the protest event). Headline coverage is operationalized in the ENA archive as all items that get a short preview at the beginning of the newscast. In order to test the impact of the different input variables, logistic regression is used when analyzing the dichotomous selection and prominence measures. As the volume of protest coverage is a count variable with the variance exceeding the mean, negative binomial regression is used. Given the discussion about stability of media selection (Ortiz et al. 2005), demonstration year is added as a control variable.

Results: Passing the Media Barricades

We coded all 4,582 protest events occurring between January 2003 and December 2010 from the police archive. Brussels is flooded by protest events: every three out of four days at least one protest event takes place. On these demonstration days, on average two demonstrations are held; on 60 percent of the days with a demonstration, two or more actions occur. Table 3.2 sheds light on the demonstration context of Brussels.

Most protests in Brussels are small and static. Six in ten protest events draw one hundred or fewer people to the streets and 85 percent of the protest events are static demonstrations. The distribution of demonstrators across events is extremely skewed: a small percentage of the protests (five percent) accounted for seventy-five percent of the demonstrators in the data. Migrant organizations and organizations of asylum seekers demonstrate most frequently. This confirms the image of protest as a weapon of the weak. Old social movements, like unions, welfare organizations, and professional organizations stage half as many demonstrations yet draw twice as many participants to the streets. New social

movements organize the smallest actions, and have a distinct action repertoire: 50 percent of all symbolic actions are organized by new social movements. The "other" organization category, finally, includes demonstrations without a formal organizer, events staged by local organizations, or events staged by anarchists.

Table 3.2

Distribution of independent variables for protest events in Brussels, 2003-2010 (N= 4582)

	N	% OF EVENTS	% OF DEMONSTRATORS
Logic of Numbers			
Less than 26	1092	23.8	0.8
26 to 100	1810	39.5	7.0
101 to 500	835	18.2	12.3
501 to 1000	149	3.3	7.2
1001 to 5000	137	3.0	20
More than 5000	57	1.2	52.6
Logic of Disruption			
Disruption	202	4.4	17.7
Anticipated Disruption	804	17.5	57.7
Unexpected	251	5.5	0.9
Logic of Bearing Witness			
Symbolic Actions	410	8.9	7.4
Sponsoring Organizations			
Old Social Movements	1049	22.9	49.8
New Social Movements	811	17.7	12.9
Migrant and Asylum Seekers	2058	44.9	27.0
Other	664	14.5	10.3
Demonstration Timing			
Weekend	962	21.0	41.9
Demonstration Form			
Static Actions	3849	84.7	28.4
Demonstration Year			
2003	372	8.1	15.7
2004	433	9.5	13.5
2005	564	12.3	16.9
2006	655	14.3	10.3
2007	585	12.8	11.2
2008	672	14.7	6.2
2009	679	14.8	11.3
2010	622	13.6	14.9

~In 89% of all demonstrations an indication of demonstration size was incorporated in the police document.

The demonstration context of Brussels is largely peaceful. About five percent of the protest events are disruptive in nature. Disruption was operationalized as whether there were any arrests or any use of violence by the demonstrators (material damage, throwing eggs, setting garbage cans or cars on fire, blocking traffic, and wounded demonstrators, police officers, or bystanders). I also introduced a measure of anticipated disruption. In the run-up to an event, police forces perform a risk analysis and decide whether the deployment of a water cannon is necessary. If the demonstration atmosphere is expected to be especially contentious, a water cannon will be stationed to disrupt and disband demonstrators. The anticipated disruption variable also includes a measure of whether a counterdemonstration is expected. Water cannons were reserved in one out of every six demonstrations. One action in ten was considered to be a symbolic event. Unexpected events are those events where patrolling police officers caught the activists in the act, without a demonstration permit.

Television coverage of protest

How many protest events succeeded in making it from the street to the screen? How many make the headlines? What is the average duration of a protest item? As expected, many protests are organized, but few end up on the screen: only 11 percent (497 protest events) of all organized protests ends up in the evening newscast on at least one of both television stations. Journalists show only the tip of the iceberg (Hocke 1998); the vast majority of protest events were ignored. Table 3.3 shows the details.

Table 3.3

Presence, Prominence and Volume of Protest Event Television news coverage

	ANY MEDIUM	VRT COVERAGE			VTM COVERAGE		
		ALL	UNIQUE	BOTH	ALL	UNIQUE	BOTH
N of protest Events	497	414	218	196	279	83	196
% of Protest Events.....	10.8	9.0	52.7	47.3	6.1	29.7	70.3
Total N	4582	4582	414	414	4582	279	279
Prominence (%)	32.6	34.3	20.6	49.5	21.9	8.2	27.8
Volume (sec.)	150	107	76	142	108	77	122

In line with expectations, the public broadcaster (VRT) is more sensitive to protest. It covers many more protest events. About half of the demonstrations covered by the public broadcaster do not make it onto the commercial channel. Both media outlets clearly differ in their propensity to cover protest, with the selection threshold for protest on the public channel being considerably lower. Hypothesis 1 is confirmed. Not only does the public broadcaster cover more protest events, actions that succeed in entering public TV are also featured more prominently.[16] When only those demonstrations covered by both stations are taken into account, the result is even stronger: the public channel gives headline status almost twice as much compared to the private channel. Hypothesis 3a is therefore rejected and H3b is confirmed.

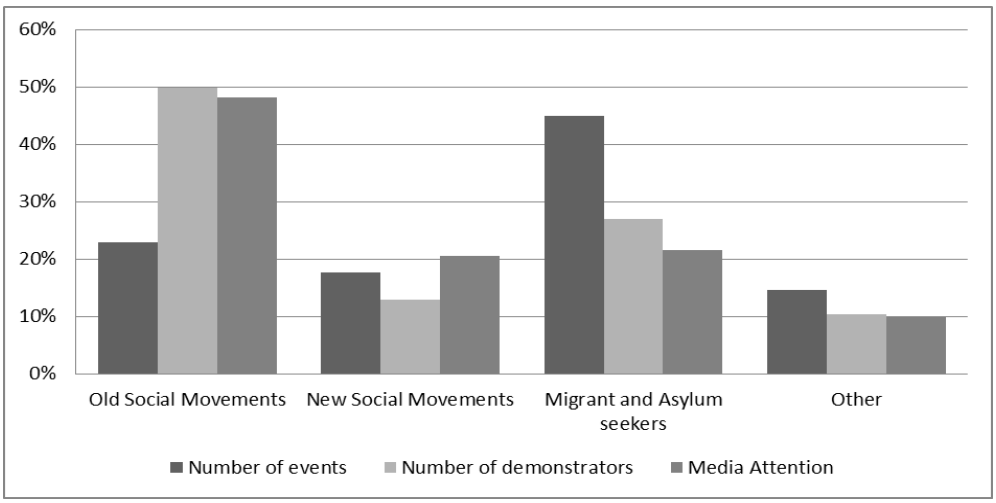
Exactly how much exposure do protest actions generate? The average attention across all demonstrations on both stations is 150 seconds; 107 seconds if the amount of attention on both stations to the same particular event is not added up. The public and commercial stations do not differ significantly in the amount of exposure they provide when all demonstrations are taken into account. Yet in those cases where both stations cover the same demonstration, it is the public station that covers protest more extensively.[17] This is remarkable, as the average news item on the public station (97 sec.) is somewhat shorter compared to the average commercial news item (101 sec.). Hypothesis 4a is rejected while hypothesis 4b is confirmed. The bottom line is clear: not only does the public station cover more protest events, it features protest actions more prominently and more extensively.

Determinants of Coverage

Why are some events covered and others not? Or, formulated differently: which event characteristics succeed in securing the media spotlight? Figure 3.1 gives a first clue. The ability of protest to break through the media gates varies strongly across type of organization, and is clearly a function of demonstration size, not protest frequency. For every type of organization, event size closely mirrors media presence. Migrant organizations stage many small demonstrations, yet few are deemed newsworthy. Old social movements on the other hand, protest far less frequently but in far greater numbers in attendance. Whereas migrant organizations far more frequently take to the street, old social movements are far more

prominent on the screen. Journalists' perceptions of newsworthiness seem particularly sensitive to large demonstrations.

Figure 3.1
Distribution of real world and mediated protest event frequency



Interestingly, size seems to play a far less important role when it comes to media selection of new social movement events. As shown by the bars in Figure 1, there is a large discrepancy between the number of demonstrators at NSM protest and their representation in the mass media arena. Whereas for all organization types demonstration size overestimates media coverage, NSMs appear more frequently than the size of their actions would suggest. Current literature suggests that NSMs are especially eager to stage symbolic actions, a finding confirmed by data on protest events in Brussels. The descriptives also show that these are rather small demonstrations.[18] In order to specifically tease out the determinants of media selection, table 3.4 shows the outcomes of several binary logistic regressions and gauges net effects of the different independent variables.

Table 3.4

Coefficients of logistic regressions predicting coverage of protest events in Brussels

	Model 1 **Any media**		Model 2 **VRT**		Model 3 **VTM**		Model 4 **Unique VRT**		Model 5 **Unique VTM**	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
Logic of Numbers										
Size	.553***	.044	.564***	.047	.582***	.055	.294***	.053	.172*	.084
Logic of Disruption										
Disruption	1.123***	.204	.828***	.210	1.307***	.225	.146	.278	1.149**	.355
Anticipated Disruption	.674***	.147	.635***	.153	.702***	.182	.358	.195	.418	.326
Unexpected	.317	.247	.410	.259	.329	.332	.350	.312	-.072	.568
Logic of Bearing Witness										
Symbolic Actions	1.298***	.174	.957***	.190	1.453***	.217	.666**	.224	1.602***	.297
Sponsoring Organizations										
OS Movements	1.071***	.219	1.096***	.236	.958**	.293	.945**	.284	.548	.456
NS Movements	0.758**	.235	.743**	.256	.809*	.303	.503	.307	.471	.462
Migrant	-.368	.223	-.356	.241	-.445	.303	-.203	.289	-.224	.461
Other (= ref.)										
Demonstration Timing										
Weekend	.626***	.137	.562***	.146	.685***	.178	.403	.177	.578*	.278
Demonstration Form										
Static Actions	-.355*	.145	-.282	.153	-.518**	.183	-.015	.203	-.431	.325
Demonstration Year										
2003 (=ref.)										
2004	.213	.277	.368	.292	.297	.352	.087	.355	-.395	.594
2005	.018	.269	.091	.287	-.023	.351	.111	.338	-.080	.529
2006	.108	.266	.282	.283	.240	.343	.030	.345	-.486	.571
2007	.037	.274	.103	.294	-.076	.365	.169	.341	-.063	.531
2008	.744**	.247	.843**	.264	.814*	.317	.551	.314	.221	.480
2009	.501	.251	.434	.272	.567	.325	.348	.319	.506	.459
2010	.067	.266	.292	.281	.041	.344	.125	.337	-.774	.597
Constant	-3.91***	.333	-4.24***	.360	-4.81***	.441	-4.2***	.428	-4.73***	.652
Model Chi^2	820.38**		698.04***		632.90***		156.10***		101.11***	
Pseudo R^2	.285		.272		.330		.096		.138	

*Note: * p < ,05 ** p < ,01 ***p < ,001; df = 17; Due to missing values total N = 4080, Media N = 469; Size log transformed because of negatively skewed distribution*

As indicated by figure 3.1, demonstration size is an important predictor of mass media coverage, corroborating hypothesis 5a. Protestors who want to pass the media gates must aim for high numbers. If only demonstration size is taken into account, the pseudo R-square is .174. By including the categorical measure of demonstration size presented in the descriptives section, we can get a better grip on the effect of demonstration size. Both predicted probabilities and odds ratios constantly rise over the different categories of demonstration size. When all other variables are kept at their means, demonstrations with less than 26 participants have a 4.3 percent chance of receiving media coverage, whereas demonstrations with more than 5,000 participants succeed in passing the media gates 51 percent of the time. Bivariate results obviously result in even stronger findings. 77% of the largest demonstrations (more than 5,000 participants) make it into the news. Media coverage is not only a numbers game, however. Adding other variables significantly improves the model.

Besides size, the organizer or sponsor of the demonstration is also important in predicting media coverage. Who demonstrates clearly matters, with protests staged by old social movements more easily making it onto the screen than new social movements (H11a), and with NSM being more often singled out as newsworthy than migrant protests (H11b). Whereas evidence for the first is only marginally significant ($p = 0.072$), evidence for the latter is strongly significant. Two mechanisms can account for this finding. The first argument is one of professionalization. Migrant organizations, asylum seekers, and the organizations grouped under the "other" umbrella (local organizations, demonstrations without formal organizer, anarchists) are definitely the least resourceful and least institutionalized organizations. They are in a far less comfortable position to stage events that correspond to media routines. Moreover, the old social movements are primarily unions (51% of all OSM protests in the database are staged by unions, accounting for 27% of all protest events in the news) and professional organizations (staging 14% of all OSM protest, accounting for 7% of all protest events in the news). The protest events of unions and professional organizations—being the most resourceful and institutionalized social movement actors in neo-corporatist Belgium—have especially high chances of media selection (26% and 24% respectively). A second, more issue-related argument might also be at play. First, the issues of old social movements are already far more prominent in the news. This favorable opportunity structure increases the odds of media exposure. Second, migrant organizations make claims about issues that are

rarely considered relevant for the Belgian audience, which obviously raises media-selection thresholds (Wouters, De Swert, and Walgrave, 2009).

Previous accounts of the impact of the logic of disruption were mixed. In this case, however, when protest events pose a threat and are disruptive, television coverage becomes more likely. Protest events with demonstrators behaving violently, getting arrested, holding up traffic or blocking entrances of buildings, more easily pass the media gates. Chances of media coverage rise to 21 percent when demonstrators are disruptive. In order to be judged newsworthy, behaving in ways authorities perceive to be disruptive helps. In the same vein, demonstrations that need the deployment of at least one water cannon, or when a counter demonstration is expected, are more likely to become news, albeit to a lesser extent (a rise of 5%). Hypothesis 6a is confirmed. Demonstrations that were not given permits, finally, do not make it more easily in the news: results for hypothesis 7 were not significant.

What about the logic of bearing witness? Results show symbolic actions are significantly more newsworthy than actions without such elements. Symbolic actions have a 17% chance of making it into the news. Chances of media coverage rise 12% if demonstrators use symbolic action. In order to test whether the different logics of protest operate independently or affect each other, interaction terms were computed (not presented in the table). Whereas the logic of numbers and disruption (B = – 0.076; sig = 0.486) and disruption and bearing witness (B = 0.471; sig = 0.506) were not significantly related, the logic of numbers is negatively related to actions being symbolic or not (B = – 0.212; sig = 0.028). In other words, the positive effect of symbolism holds for small actions. For organizations that cannot or choose not to rely on the logic of numbers or the logic of disruption, staging symbolic actions thus clearly stands out as an alternative route towards media attention. Finally, weekend protests, make it into the news more easily (H12). Weekend protests appear to be somewhat larger, although controlling for demonstration size shows that it is slow news days that account for this higher rate of coverage. Across the different years under study, media selection appears to be quite stable. Only the year 2008 sees a significant increase in the number of protest events being covered.[19]

Next, models 2 and 3 allow us to assess differences in the filtering mechanisms between both television stations. By and large, the same input variables hold for the commercial and public broadcaster. The form of an event only loses significance (p = 0.066) for the public

broadcaster, which covers more protest events. Of greater interest, however, are the differences in coefficients. Media ownership matters for the selection of protest events, and does so in the expected direction: events that do make it into the commercial newscast score higher on almost every determinant included in the model. Variables that measure violence and theatrics have much stronger predicted effects in the public broadcaster model.

In brief, the commercial station predominantly selects those protest events that offer the drama factors our determinants measured, therefore generating the better fit of the model and the higher coefficients. Finally, models 4 and 5 further corroborate this conclusion.

Focusing only on those events that were deemed newsworthy on one particular newscast, the models clearly show a more sensationalist and entertainment-oriented selection mechanism on the commercial channel (disruption and symbolic actions as highly significant predictors) and a more institutionally oriented (old social movements) media filter on the public broadcaster. Media ownership matters for news selection, and the effect goes in the expected direction, confirming hypothesis 2.

Besides the mere selection of protest events, it is clear that coverage of protest can vary greatly. Here I test for two types of news item "packaging" (Wilkes, Corrigall-Brown, & Myers, 2010). More precisely, I assess whether the determinants of media selection are related to the length of protest coverage and whether they affect the prominence of the event in the newscast.[20] In other words, can these factors also predict a second step of media selection—volume and prominence of media attention? Results in table 3.5 show that even among those events that are singled out as newsworthy, large and disruptive demonstrations more easily make headline news and are discussed at greater length. The disruption finding positively confirms the saying "if it bleeds, it leads." Hypotheses 5b and 6b are confirmed.

Who demonstrates seems to have no importance when it comes to making headlines. More professionalized organizations more easily pass media selection hurdles, but they do not make headlines more easily. This is somewhat different for the volume of coverage: coverage of migrant and asylum-seeker protest is significantly shorter than coverage of protest staged by every other organizer. Although migrant organizations and asylum seekers protest the most, they are least likely to make it into the news, and even when they make it onto the screen, attention will be short. The logic of bearing witness, finally, allows events to enter the mass media arena, yet symbolic events are not more likely to result in headlines or more

Table 3.5

Coëfficients of Logistic Regression (Prominence) and Negative Binomial Regression (Volume) (N= 461)

	PROMINENCE		VOLUME	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
Logic of Numbers				
Size	0.421***	0.076	0.156***	0.023
Logic of Disruption				
Disruption	0.646*	0.289	0.296**	0.101
Anticipated Disruption	-0.082	0.255	0.065	0.088
Unexpected	0.914	0.470	0.246	0.165
Logic of Bearing Witness				
Symbolic Actions	-0.166	0.328	0.031	0.103
Sponsoring Organizations				
OS Movements	0.175	0.436	-0.056	0.143
NS Movements	0.366	0.465	-0.157	0.151
Migrant	-0.196	0.452	-0.418**	0.151
Other (= ref.)				
Demonstration Timing				
Weekend	0.571*	0.259	0.027	0.087
Demonstration Form				
Static Actions	0.347	0.265	-0.016	0.090
Demonstration Year				
2003 (=ref.)				
2004	-0.668	0.487	-0.176	0.162
2005	0.049	0.473	-0.108	0.160
2006	-0.515	0.499	0.016	0.161
2007	-0.688	0.521	-0.198	0.166
2008	0.520	0.429	0.278	0.147
2009	-0.197	0.445	-0.231	0.148
2010	-0.296	0.469	-0.204	0.157
Constant	-2.355***	0.638	4.616***	0.207
Alpha			0.568	0.035
Model Chi²	70.78***		133.98***	
Pseudo R²	0.097		0.024	

*Note: * p < ,05 ** p < ,01 ***p < ,001; df = 17; Size variable log transformed because of negatively skewed distribution*

lengthy coverage (H9). Differences between both stations are small: for the public broadcaster, weekend demonstrations more easily make headlines. In the case of the commercial station, unexpected events became significant as headline predictors. Table 3.6 summarizes the multivariate findings for all hypotheses.

Table 3.6
Summary table of hypotheses

	News Routine	News Value	Likelihood of TV Coverage	Pres.	Prom.	Vol.
H1	☑	☐	VRT > VTM	+		
H2	☑	☐	Sensationalist: VRT < VTM	+		
H3a + 4a	☑	☐	VRT < VTM		-	-
H3b + 4b	☑	☐	IF (VRT & VTM), VRT > VTM		+	+
H5a + b	☐	☑	Numbers ↗	+	+	+
H6a + b	☐	☑	(Anticipated) Conflict ↗	+	+	+
H7	☐	☑	Unexpectedness ↘	ns	ns	ns
H8	☐	☑	Symbolic Action ↗	+		
H9	☐	☑	Symbolic Action ↘		ns	ns
H10	☐	☑	Static ↘	+	ns	ns
H11a	☑	☑	OSM >NSM	ns	ns	ns
H11b	☑	☑	NSM > Migrant	+	ns	+
H12	☑	☐	Weekends ↗	+	+	ns

Conclusion and Discussion

This study scrutinized the selection of protest events by television news. Competition over media access is high and chances of media coverage are slim. I systematically assessed the impact of a wide host of theoretically relevant predictors on media selection, prominence, and volume. Results based on data spanning eight years of protest show that only a few demonstrations make it from the street to the screen. About one demonstration in ten passes the media gates; the vast majority of protests are ignored. The public broadcaster, with its focus on hard news, covers many more protests than the commercial station. The latter has a more distinct and sensationalist selection profile. Media ownership matters for what is singled out as newsworthy.

In line with previous findings for the press, television attention for demonstrations is far from arbitrary. Demonstration size appears to be the single strongest predictor of news-worthiness. Demonstrations that succeed in drawing many people to the street signal a relevant social issue journalists cannot ignore. Who demonstrates matters as well. Protests organized by more professionalized organizations—OSM in this case—more easily survive media selection hurdles. Yet, the fact that the issues of old social movements are featured more frequently in the news can also account for this result.

Findings about the relevance of disruption in earlier newspaper research are mixed. Results for the television news in Brussels shows that disruption matters. Protest events that involve arrests, violence, or blockage of traffic are more likely to gain coverage. Disruptive demonstrations result in spectacular images. However, it is doubtful whether these outbursts of violence and disruption generate public sympathy for the activists' cause.

Most protest actions, however, do not succeed in drawing many people to the streets, and violent and disruptive demonstrations are rare. Beside the logic of numbers and the logic of disruption, this study also assessed the logic of bearing witness. No previous studies have looked at protest events that follow this logic and their likelihood of becoming news. This lack of evidence is strange, as it is clear that symbolic events are keen adaptations of traditional protest forms to the operational logic of mass media. Results show that carefully staging and scripting drama makes television exposure more likely. This finding should encourage activists who cannot rely on numbers or do not want to act violently. They can increase their chances of securing television coverage by clearly staging and scripting protest events that offer compelling images and theatrical drama. New social movements especially have adopted this logic of bearing witness, making their presence in the media arena less a function of demonstration size. Whether the logic of bearing witness also works for activists seeking print coverage requires further investigation.

Besides the selection of protest events, this study focused on the packaging of protest by television stations as well. Which factors determine prominence and length of news item(s) on protest? Both the logic of numbers and the presence of disruption account for higher profile (i.e., headlines) and lengthier coverage. Interestingly, when it comes to making news headlines it does not matter who demonstrates. This finding does not hold for the volume of coverage, how-ever. Protest organized by asylum seeker and migrant organizations are given significantly less airtime. Interestingly, the logic of bearing witness is a significant and strong factor for the selection of events, but is insignificant in determining media volume and prominence. This finding provides room for speculation. Sobieraj (2010), interviewing journalists and activists at presidential conventions, concluded that media-friendly activist groups appear less appealing to the press because they are perceived by journalists to be less authentic. Whereas the results reported here counter the finding of Sobieraj when it comes to media selection, it could be that her conclusion is confirmed when it comes to media prominence and volume. Because of the ready-made character of symbolic actions,

journalists feel tricked into covering these events, and want to restore the journalist-source power balance by denying these events headline status or lengthy coverage.

Although these findings on media packaging certainly contribute to our understanding of the representation of protest groups in the mass media arena, this study does not engage more qualitative and content-related features of protest. The impact of protest is not only a function of being singled out as newsworthy, but also of how protest is filtered and presented through the journalistic lens. Does the spin of the news item favor the activist perspective? Or do media portrayals of protest marginalize and criminalize activists, their purposes and means? Both public and political reactions to protest are likely to depend on these descriptive characteristics of television coverage and therefore should be explored in future research.

Nevertheless, further inquiry into media selection of protest events is also much needed. This study started from a very static perspective of newsworthiness. It looked at characteristics of protest events to determine likeliness of television coverage. Newsworthiness is not merely the product of objective characteristics of an event, however. Events also make it into the news because of their relation to other events. Newsworthiness then is not so much an objective quality of a particular event, but the interpretation by journalists of event characteristics in the light of other events. In other words, the outcome of journalistic gatekeeping activity is influenced by what already made it into the news. Social movement and media scholars have there-fore emphasized the dynamics of media and issue attention cycles, a term coined by Anthony Downs (1972). Issue dynamics are rarely empirically tested, however, and the degree to which different kinds of organizations depend on a favorable and suddenly sympathetic media environment remains by and large unexplored. Future research should therefore do more to incorporate the dynamics of past media attention when trying to explain likelihood of media coverage. Such research will acknowledge to a greater degree the importance of timing for protestors working to diffuse their claims, just as it would allow researchers to explore whether and when protest actions ride the waves of previous media attention, or instead cause the swell and set the agenda. Only by proceeding along these lines of research and conducting rigorous empirical tests, news making will become the substantive building block of social movement theory Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986) desired it to become more than twenty-five years ago.

Appendix

Table 3.7

Descriptive Statistics of independent variables

VARIABLE	VARIABLE DESCRIPTION	MEAN	SD	MIN	MAX	N
Size	Number of expected participants, log transformed	4.424	1.577	0	11.408	4080
Conflict	1 in case of arrests, violence, material damage, or blockage of traffic	0.043	0.003	0	1	4080
Anticipated Conflict	1 in case of water cannon deployment, expected counter protest	0.165	0.006	0	1	4080
Unexpected	1 in case of not permitted, activists caught in the act by police	0.061	0.004	0	1	4080
Symbolic Action	1 in case of reference to theater or use of symbols in police report	0.090	0.004	0	1	4080
OSM	1 if organizer is union, professional organization, welfare organization	0.229	0.007	0	1	4080
NSM	1 if organizer is environmental, animal, human rights, north-south, peace, women, LGTB organization	0.173	0.006	0	1	4080
Migrant/Asylum	1 if organizer is migrant organization or asylum seeker organization	0.477	0.008	0	1	4080
Other	1 if organizer is a single person, a local organizer, anarchists, or unknown	0.121	0.005	0	1	4080
Weekend	1 if demonstration is organized on Saturday or Sunday	0.199	0.006	0	1	4080
Static	1 if demonstration does not go from point A to B	0.840	0.006	0	1	4080

Table 3.8

Descriptive Statistics of independent and dependent variables

VARIABLE	VARIABLE DESCRIPTION	MEAN	SD	MIN	MAX	N
Media Coverage	1 in case of television coverage on any station	0.108	0.311	0	1	4582
VRT Coverage	1 in case of VRT coverage, public broadcaster	0.090	0.286	0	1	4582
VTM Coverage	1 in case of VTM coverage, commercial station	0.061	0.240	0	1	4582
Prominence	1 if the protest event made the headlines on at least one of both stations	0.326	0.469	0	1	497
Volume	Sum of the length of media coverage of the protest event on both stations (in seconds)	149.9	174.8	17	17	1666

Table 3.9
Correlation Matrix of independent variables

VARIABLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
(1) Size	1										
(2) Conflict	.195*	1									
(3) Anticip.	.272*	.208*	1								
(4) Unexpected	-.132*	.112*	.318*	1							
(5) Symbolic	-.080*	-.190	-.100*	-.018	1						
(6) OSM	.238*	.088*	.049*	.022	-.027	1					
(7) NSM	-.193*	-.027	-.068*	-.021	.293**	-.253*	1				
(8) Mig/Asyl.	.014	-.061*	-.019	-.019	-.195**	-.492*	-.419*	1			
(9) Other	-.104*	.011	-.042*	.024	-.010	-.224*	-.191*	-.372*	1		
(10) Weekend	.099*	.020	-.095*	-.061*	.009	-.095*	.052*	-.037*	.109*	1	
(11) Static	-.479*	-.145*	-.216	.055*	.017	-.216	.061*	.118*	.026	-.125	1

*Note: * p<.01; ** p<.05*

[1] Generally, a news carrousel consists of a number of very short news items that quickly follow each other, accom-panied by up-tempo background music and a continuous voice over.

[2] Though I write Belgium, I actually mean Flanders, the northern part of the country. It contains 60% of the population.

[3] The term "newshole" is used to indicate the amount of space or time in a paper or a newscast.

[4] The fact that scope matters can be the consequence of two mechanisms. First, a news routine mechanism can be at work: journalists can more easily report nearby events. The reason for selection then is purely a matter of logistics. Second, a news value mechanism might play as well: audiences are less interested in distant news, as it is considered to have a less powerful impact on their personal life.

[5] Each newscast on both stations lasts approximately half an hour, and deals with the same amount of items. For the entire 2003-2010 period, a typical VRT (public broadcaster) newscast lasts about 2,164 seconds (36 minutes) and shows 23 news items. A VTM (private station) newscast lasts about 2,166 seconds (36 minutes) and shows 22 news items. In other words, the stations are extremely alike when these formal features are taken into account.

[6] The fact that symbolic actions clearly adapt to the logic of mass media does not mean that the sole purpose of these events is attracting media attention. Just like any other type of protest activity, participation in symbolic actions can be a bonding activity, reinforcing collective identity and boosting commitment. Because of the explicitly scripted nature of the action, which suggests media attention is a core objective, I regard these effects on participants more as byproducts, however important they might be for the sustainment of the movement.

[7] The location of the protest is also crucial in this respect: static protests at symbolic locations—in front of embassies or parliaments, for example—are obviously more directly persuasive and specifically targeted than static protest on a symbolic yet large square.

[8] I would like to thank Commissioner Hannelore Hochepied and Head of the Archive Walter Reniers for invaluable support.

[9] The share of After-Demonstration Reports—or so-called Post-RARs (*Rapport Administrative / Administratief Rappport*)—was not evenly distributed across years. For the period 2006-2010 high degrees of Post-RARs were incorporated (on average 70%). For 2005, the share of Post-RARs was only 20%. The year 2004 contained 52% Post-RARs, 2003 had a high level of after demonstration information (67.3%). Regression results did not change when only those demonstrations with Post-RAR were included.

[10] This is not necessarily problematic as journalists only know the estimates in advance when they decide to cover the protest. Moreover, if protest organizers fail miserably and a disappointing turnout is the mobilization outcome, this will also be news. Using estimates is only problematic when a protest was expected to draw a small number of participants but instead attracted many. Yet as mobilization (at the individual level, at least) is thought of as a process involving different stages with potential participants dropping out from one stage to the next, this latter situation can be thought of as least frequently occurring.

[11] In total, 82 protest actions were reported but not incorporated in the police records, an average of 10 actions a year, or 14 percent of all demonstrations with media coverage. A look at these missing demonstrations does not show a systematic bias: big as well as small events,

organized by all kinds of groups are covered by mass media, but were not found in the police archive.

[12] For the 1999-2009 period, digital data (with limited information) were made available about all the records in the police archive (including the nonprotest records). In this period, 35,637 records were created in the archive. On average 15.5% of all police records mentioned synonyms of "protest" or "protestor." Interestingly, the share of protest records in the database increased over time.

[13] Data from the study centers of both the VRT (public broadcaster) and the VMMA (commercial group) reported in Wouters, De Swert, and Walgrave, 2009, "A window on the world," Flemish Peace Institute report.

[14] The file that performs the needle haystack word search and creates the protest dummy variable in the news media database is available upon request. The syntax was run on both a full text and a keyword summary variable of the database. The police database and news media database were manually linked. I would like to thank Dr. Jonas Lefevere for his help with the construction of the syntax.

[15] Oliver and Myers (1999) and Oliver and Maney (2000) used two different operationalizations of media coverage. In the 1999 article they focused on "timely coverage" as references to an event in an interval of 31 days around the event. In the article published in 2000, they use a reference in the 12-month period around the day of action as a measure of media coverage. The authors conclude that many events get covered independent from their day of action (25%). This characteristic seems to be idiosyncratic to (local) newspaper coverage. In this study, prior media references to future protest events in the television database were found only when unions announced a general day of strike, with focus on potential traffic jams and other discomfort. Post demonstration coverage was limited to reports about damage, arrests, or court decisions about the latter. Generally, televised coverage of protest is a same-day attribute, completely in line with the more fast and current affairs focus of television.

[16] Note that both the public and commercial station have about the same amount of "headline" items every newscast (4.7 on average for the commercial station, that is, about 22 percent of all news items within a typical newscast; 5.7 on average for the public broadcaster, that is, about 26 percent of all news items).

[17] VRT (Min = 15; Max = 1,192; St.dv = 106; 5% trimmed mean = 93); VTM (Min = 18; Max = 775; St. dev. = 96; 5% trimmed mean = 95).

[18] Average number of expected participants over all demonstrations is 437 participants (5% trimmed mean is 129 participants). Non-symbolic Actions mean = 444 participants / 5% trimmed mean = 133 participants. Symbolic Actions mean = 360 participants / 5% trimmed mean = 94 participants

[19] Although it is difficult to relate this increase in amount of coverage to a single cause, I speculate that the start of the economic crisis (more protest, and, protest could be another angle for journalists to cover the crisis) together with a lack of a federal government (resulting in less official news), may have been potential grounds for higher media selection of protest.

[20] Both prominence and volume are strongly correlated; that is: prominent items are also more voluminous. Logically, news headlines are treated more in length (Pearson r = 0.673; Sig. = 0.000).

4

Gaining Access Yet Communicating Little?

On Episodic and Thematic Coverage of Protest Events in Belgian Television News

Abstract

Media attention is a crucial political resource for protest groups. This study examines the presentation of protests in Belgian television news. It analyzes whether coverage of protest is more episodic (event or exemplar oriented) than thematic (focus on the issue) and looks into the factors that drive these coverage types. Protest event data from police archives (Brussels) is combined with television news data (public and private broadcaster) in order to analyze media description (N = 564). Results show that coverage of protests is foremost thematic. Episodic coverage is dominated by coverage about the details of the event; the personal close up is rarely used. Protest that is disruptive, staged by organizations with low media standing and that is covered by the commercial station is more event oriented. Large demonstrations lead to more episodic-exemplar coverage. Results are discussed in light of the conditionality of the "protest paradigm".

Gaining Access Yet Communicating Little?

On Episodic and Thematic Coverage of Protest Events in Belgian Television News

Introduction

Protest actions are communicative acts (Etzioni, 1969). Not the direct use of power, but appealing to a target's reference public and setting in motion a process of indirect persuasion is at the heart of protest politics (Donatella della Porta & Diani, 1999; Lipsky, 1968). Generating media attention is key in this process. Media attention allows for the diffusion and amplification of movement claims; it expands the scope of conflict. Koopmans (2004) argues that authorities only react to protest *if* and *as* it is presented in the media arena. Put differently, the filter media apply is crucial for the impact of protest (Andrews & Caren, 2010; Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012).

This study focuses on the *description* of protest in television news. Extant research has found that protestors are depicted in ways that tend to undermine their substantive agenda (Boyle et al., 2012; Gitlin, 1980; Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn, 2001). Communication scholars speak of a 'protest paradigm': a routinized pattern or template that journalists use in their coverage of protest (McLeod & Hertog, 1998). A central aspect of the paradigm is that news reports of protest events mostly focus on the characteristics of the event itself. Reporters cover the behavior and appearances of protestors -the noise, drama, conflict and spectacle- not the social critique or context that caused the demonstration. In the words of

Iyengar (1991), coverage of protest is foremost *episodic*, rarely *thematic*. Media attention goes to particular characteristics of the event, not to the point it tries to raise.

Smith and colleagues (2001) remark that demonstrations exactly are events or *episodes* staged by movements to draw attention to a particular problem or *theme*. By staging an event, protestors hope to place their issue on an already crowded agenda. In the media arena, however, especially protestors' tone of voice, not their message appears to come across. McLeod and Hertog (1998) argue that devoid of the issue context, protest may appear senseless to the audience. Iyengar (1991), in studies unrelated to protest coverage, found episodic coverage of social problems to result in individualistic rather than societal attributions of responsibility. Many social movements exactly blame systemic factors for ongoing injustices and inequalities. Episodic coverage –with its "blame the victim" effect- as such would be a detrimental outcome for movements; viewers will hold protestors and not the system accountable, and will discard the grievances of protestors as a matter society should deal with. Other effect studies specifically focusing on protest coverage established how subtle changes in protest reports affect public perceptions of protest and hence the success chances of protest groups (Detenber et al., 2007; McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Nelson et al., 1997). In sum, extant research has established that protest coverage tends to be stripped of contextual information; experimental evidence has proven that such coverage is more harmful than helpful.

This study aims to contribute to the literature on the protest paradigm in three specific ways. Most previous studies of media coverage and protest have been case studies of particular movements or marches and took a rather qualitative, discourse analytic approach. (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; McLeod & Hertog, 1992). In this paper I compare television coverage across a large number of protest events that differ in terms of issues, staging organizations, number of attendants, and degree of conflict. As such, I put the generalizability of the paradigm to a much needed test, and aim for teasing out the conditions that drive adherence to a crucial factor of the paradigm: the episodic or thematic nature of protest coverage. Second, in this study episodic and thematic coverage is measured in much more detail compared to previous studies. More specifically, I conduct a second-by-second content analysis of original newscast imagery instead of relying on the more frequently used but less precise abstracts of newscasts. Finally, I argue that, at least for the analysis of protest events, it is meaningful to distinguish between two types of episodic coverage. Both types are

acknowledged in the literature, but never empirically singled out. Specifically, I suggest to divide episodic coverage in coverage that deals with the details of the *event* on the one hand (episodic-event) and personal *testimonies* of movement constituents on the other (episodic-exemplar). I elaborate on this distinction in a later section.

The first research question this paper addresses is descriptive. Is protest coverage indeed more episodic than thematic as the literature would cause one to expect? In a second step, this study teases out factors that might drive why journalists pay more attention to one coverage type than to the other. In order to answer both questions, I rely on two data sources. Police record data allows to determine the real world situation of the protest event (Were there any arrests? How many people attended? Who organized the event?) [1]. A media content analysis of the protest events that made it into the news presents information on how these real world events got molded by the media machinery. The setting of this research is Belgium[2]. All protest events are staged in its capital –Brussels. The period under investigation runs from 2003 to 2010.

Result show that, contrary to the expectations in the protest paradigm, protest coverage is far more thematic than episodic. Most attention in the items on protest goes to the causes, antecedents and context of the event, not to the noise made by the protestors or other details of the event. Zooming in on personal testimonies -the woman depending on healthcare; the farmer who has to sell milk below its production price – is a story telling technique only rarely used in protest reports. More discordant protest results in more attention to event information. Interestingly, large demonstrations do not result in more event focused coverage, but do result in more attention to personal testimonies. When confronted with a large demonstration, journalists seem to "sample" participants for quotes and want the mass to have its say. Controlling for disruption and the number of attendants, actions of organizations with higher media standing receive more thematic attention, corroborating the principle of cumulative inequality (Wolfsfeld, 1997). The commercial channel, finally, covers protest events in a more event-focused fashion, pointing to the more sensationalist nature of commercial TV.

Protest mediation: Selection and Description

Media attention is a matter of life and death for social movements (Kielbowicz & Sherer, 1986). Protesting often is the only means available for movements to make news, reach out and seek social support. The path towards successful media coverage for movements is an uphill struggle, however. It exists of two subsequent battles (Wolfsfeld, 1997): a struggle over access (*selection*) and a struggle over meaning (*description*). Both phases of this process have been studied, albeit by researchers from relatively isolated fields.

Social movement scholars foremost have focused on the first step of the process: how media *select* some actions over others and which event and newsroom characteristics drive media selection. Relying on data that are independent of media-such as police records- these studies show that only few protest events get singled out as newsworthy. Especially demonstrations that succeed in attracting many attendants, that are disruptive or offer symbolic drama, that are organized by strong sponsoring organizations and staged at the right time and place in an issue-attention cycle, are more likely to make news[3] (Hocke, 1998; McCarthy et al., 1996; Oliver & Maney, 2000). Also, differences in selection patterns were found between local and national newspapers (Barranco & Wisler, 1999), newspapers and television news (McCarthy et al, 1996) and commercial and public service broadcasters (Wouters, 2013). In sum, the results on media selection of protest events nicely tie in with findings of media scholars on the importance of news values and news routines (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Communication scholars, on the other hand, foremost have focused on the *description* of protest. Whereas selection studies show that few demonstrations succeed in making news, description studies hold that protest coverage communicates little substantive. After the pioneering work of Tod Gitlin (1980) and Chan and Lee (1984), Douglas Mcleod and James Hertog (1998) coined the “protest paradigm” concept. This label refers to a routinized pattern or template journalists use to report protest events. This fixed script or narrative[4] guides journalists “where to look and where not to look, and informs them what to discover” resulting in a number of traits that are typical for protest news items (Chan & Lee, 1984: 187).

Characteristics of the paradigm are for instance the use of derogatory news frames: the event is framed as a confrontation between police and protestors, as a riot, a circus or a freak show. Only rarely the debate frame is used, presenting the protest as a legitimate controversy. Similarly, journalists rely on official sources (police, politicians, experts) to define and elaborate on the event, not giving standing to the protest organizers. Bystander portrayals, as well as other invocations of public opinion, are used to belittle protest participants. Overall, one could say that the core characteristic of the protest paradigm is a focus on the noise, performance and the particulars of the event and a neglect of the underlying reasons and antecedents that fueled the action. As a consequence, news items or articles following the protest paradigm tend to marginalize, trivialize, and even demonize protestors. Experiments confirm that adherence to the protest paradigm is not without consequences (Detenber et al., 2007; McLeod, 1995; Nelson et al., 1997).

Mcleod and Hertog (1992; 1998) stress the role of mass media as agents of social control and supporters of the status quo as the main reason for mass media's adherence to the paradigm. In line with this reasoning, adherence to the protest paradigm is presented as a default condition: curtailed by the power of political and business institutions, mass media *always* closely mirror the paradigm and rarely deviate from it[5] (McLeod, 2007). Theoretically, however, it is postulated that the more radical (purpose) and militant (behavior) a protest group is, the more easily and closely journalists follow the paradigm. This conditionality of the protest paradigm has only recently started to be put to the test. Boyle and colleagues (2012), for instance, found that especially group tactics, and not so much group goals affected adherence to typical paradigm coverage. In an earlier contribution, group goals were found to matter too: status quo protests were treated more thematically than moderate and radical reform protests (Boyle et al., 2004). Dardis (2006b) performed the first cross-national comparison of protest coverage. He found that coverage of protest against the imminent 2003-war in Iraq by the US press more closely followed the paradigm than coverage by the UK press, reflecting sociopolitical differences between both countries. Weaver and Scacco (2013), finally, found adherence to the paradigm to vary by the ideological leaning of different US-cable TV news programs. All of these finding point to the fact that it is hard to speak of "the" protest paradigm.

Although recent contributions have started to examine the paradigm's conditionality, the question of which factors and conditions drive media's adherence to it still begs for a more conclusive answer. This chapter sets out to do so for the central characteristic of the paradigm: the thematic or episodic nature of protest coverage. In contrast to the studies above, it does so by comparing media independent information about protests to television news coverage of protest, in a non US-context and across many events that differ in terms of issues, staging organizations, number of attendants, and degree of conflict. As such, this paper is the most robust test of the paradigm to date.

Episodic vs. Thematic Coverage

In his seminal study *"Is Anyone Responsible?"* Shanto Iyengar (1991) established that two different types of news "frames" or formats[6] tend to affect how individuals assign responsibility for political issues. News items are either *thematic* or *episodic*. Content analyses showed the episodic news format to dominate American TV news; experiments demonstrated exposure to episodic coverage to elicit individualistic attributions of responsibility for social problems. Thematic coverage, on the other hand, transferred responsibility to society (Iyengar, 1991: 16).

According to Iyengar (1991) news is thematic if it places political issues and events in a more general context. It pays attention to trends, presents general evidence and focuses on the structural antecedents of an issue. Features of thematic news coverage are 'talking heads' and 'statistics'. Episodic news focuses on specific events or particular cases and takes the form of event-oriented reports or case studies. An example of episodic coverage is for instance a close-up look at an unemployed auto-worker. Thematic coverage presents the same issue with information about rising unemployment figures and by considering the implication of unemployment for the national economy (Iyengar, 1991: 18). Interestingly, Iyengar explicitly refers to protest coverage when developing the episodic and thematic coverage concepts:

> *"The dominance of the episodic frame in television has been established in a number of studies. For example, television news coverage of mass-protest movements generally focuses more closely on specific acts of protest than on the issues that gave rise to the protest. […]The identical pattern is observed in television news coverage of labor-management disputes, where scenes of picketing workers received more airtime than discussions of the economic and political grievances at stake."* (Iyengar, 1991: 14-15)

Two observations need to be made with regard to Iyengar's typology in relation to this study. First, the premise of Iyengar's study is that news items are either completely episodic or fully thematic. Of course, news items rarely are that black-white. Iyengar proves, however, that US news items most of the time are clearly tilted in one direction or the other. In this study, I would like to step away from this simple dichotomy and use a more refined operationalization. Two reasons warrant this approach. First, this chapter deals with how journalists report demonstrations. The main focus is not on the effect of exposure. As human subjects need not to be classified in episodic or thematic conditions I operationalize episodic and thematic coverage as continuous variables. Second, one might argue that also the specific subject under study requires a more detailed approach. In a sense, protest events exactly are episodes staged by movements to generate issue-coverage. Strictly speaking, protest items then nalways are *"concrete events that illustrate issues"*. They are episodic by definition. I therefore measure episodic and thematic coverage by the seconds of airtime devoted to them. As such, a much more fine-grained picture will emerge on how journalists narrate protest[7].

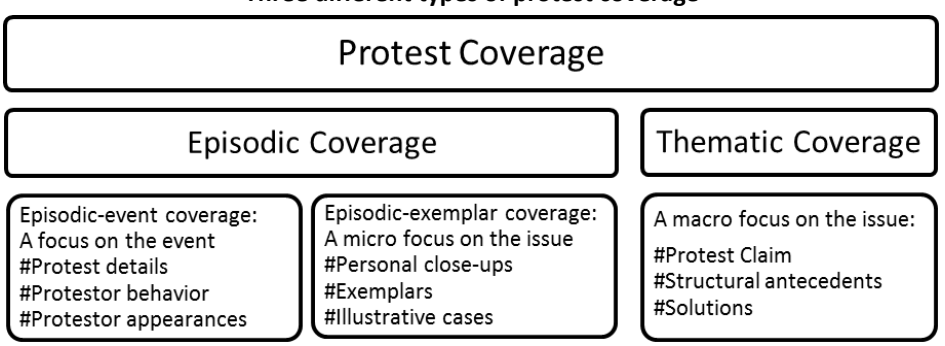
Second, I believe Iyengar's definition of episodic coverage is too broad to be applied to protest events. I therefore suggest distinguishing between two types of episodic coverage: (1) a focus on the event and (2) a focus on personal testimonies. For example, a poor person narrating on her living conditions in an anti-poverty march is fundamentally different from information about the number of attendants, their appearance, and the peacefulness of the march. The latter tells something about the protestors and the protest group's identity (their unity, commitment, numerical strength). The personal close up, on the other hand, presents the audience with issue information "from below". Personal close-ups, or "exemplars" offer the audience a micro perspective on a particular social problem (Zillmann & Brosius, 2000). Such exemplars are stylistic devises journalists use to illustrate and accompany base-rate information in a news report (Daschmann & Brosius, 1999). Exemplars have been found to

increase the vividness and comprehensibility of a news message. They work as attention commanders, produce arousal and therefore are strongly persuasive (Lefevere, De Swert, & Walgrave, 2012). Iyengar and Kinder (1987) conclude that such a vivid presentation does not increase issue salience, yet results in a blame the victim rationale transferring responsibility to the individual case (Iyengar, 1991).

Summarizing, this study examines the thematic and episodic nature of protest coverage. It does so by a content analysis using airtime as a measure of analysis. Because of the specific nature of protest, episodic coverage is split into two distinct types, resulting in three different coverage types: (1) thematic coverage or "base-rate information", being information about the issue at stake; (2) episodic-event coverage, being information about the event; (3) episodic-exemplar coverage, being personal close ups of aggrieved people that deal in their everyday life with the problem the march is addressing. Figure 1 presents the different dependent variables of this study.

Figure 4.1

Three different types of protest coverage



Distinguishing between these three types is relevant, because we can expect them to have differential effects. Thematic coverage is the sort of coverage social movements would prefer: it puts their claims up front, pays ample attention to the issue and its causes, and results in societal responsibility attribution. Episodic-event coverage communicates the behavior of demonstrators. It can communicate force and commitment, or, in the case of violence, madness and mayhem. If news reports are overtly event oriented, the issue will be

underdeveloped, and chances increase that the audience can hardly make sense of the protest and the motives of its participants. Episodic-exemplar coverage, finally, makes reports more vivid, commands attention and stimulates arousal. Focusing on exemplars has the effect of pulling the audience in the particular case, however, leading them to miss the bigger picture and attribute responsibility to the individual.

Hypotheses

The first question this chapter addresses, is simple and descriptive: Do protest reports focus primarily on the issue that gave rise to the protest? Or do event coverage or exemplars dominate? The event focus of protest coverage has been established by several studies, making use of a diverse set of measuring techniques[8] (Gitlin, 1980; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; McLeod & Hertog, 1992; Smith et al, 2001; Boyle et al, 2004). Media attention for the details of the event is logical from a gatekeeping perspective. Two factors can be singled out in this respect. A first one relates to the mundane aspects of news making. Journalists have to work against daily deadlines, have to find sources and judge their trustworthiness. Such work is time intensive. The process of finding sources, of ordering and of balancing viewpoints is much more time intensive than simply marching out of the newsroom and covering the event.

A second factor relates to the professional standards of journalists. Key in this respect is the standard of objectivity. Especially for protest events, that tend to polarize and are clearly opinionated, balancing can be difficult. Only the challengers are present at the event, the challenged ones whose reaction is needed to make a balanced news item are not. Therefore, merely reporting the concrete actions on the spot is relatively safe: no interpretations need to be made, the report appears to the audience as relatively "value-free" as the journalist merely covers what is enrolling in front of her eyes (Mcleod & Hertog, 1998). Of course, this "objective" representation is merely an impression. Protest actions are complex gatherings and mediation makes bias inevitable. Journalists and camera crews can only observe and record a small portion of an event. In survey language, journalist only take samples of what is happening. These samples are not random but guided by journalists' nose for news (McCarthy, McPhail, Smith, & Crishock, 1998). Put differently, a few hotheaded protestors can

hijack an otherwise peaceful demonstration, resulting in a biased description of the event. Wrapped up, the first expectation of this chapter is that television news coverage of protest will foremost be episodic-event oriented (H1).

Hypothesis1: Television news reports of protest events are foremost episodic-event oriented.

A second step is explaining the particular circumstances under which journalists decide to cover protest in one way or the other. I the next few paragraphs, I present four blocks of hypotheses based on distinct theoretical levels of gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). A first block relates to news value theory and takes event characteristics as a starting point. A second block is based on news routines, and takes the relationship between sources and journalists as a base to hypothesize. A third block deals with the news format of a protest report. Editorial decisions and newsroom dynamics are key here. A last block looks at characteristics of news organizations and more specifically media ownership as a determinant of media content.

News Values

News value theory considers event characteristics, and the degree to which they correspond with news criteria, as drivers of media coverage. The founding fathers of news value theory, Galtung and Ruge (1965: 71) hypothesized that if an event possesses a certain news factor which makes media selection more likely, this factor will also be accentuated in the resulting news report. Besides a selection effect, news factors thus also possess a distortion effect: media will reflect protest events that match news factors, and will inflate these factors in their reporting of the event.

Protest that follows a logic of disruption, and thus involves demonstrators that violate norms of conduct and laws, clearly match television news' fascination for news factors as drama, conflict and spectacle. Following the distortion hypothesis, events that are disruptive will result in news items that focus on the disruption. The journalistic end product in case of misbehavior therefore is expected to be more episodic and less thematic (H2). Smith and colleagues (2001), for instance, found that coverage of protest events that included confrontation (violence, arrests) or where confronted with counter demonstrations, paid less attention to the issue of the protest.

Hypothesis2: Television news reports of protest events that are disruptive are more episodic-event oriented.

The effect of numbers, being large demonstrations, on the presentation of an event is expected to go in the same direction. First, large protests are exceptional. Journalists will focus on the big number fact, leading to storylines about whether the group is representative for society as a whole, whether the composition of the march is diverse or not and how this mass mobilization was set up. Also, mass mobilizations bring inconveniences for the city that hosts the demonstration. How the march blocked traffic and annoyed local shopkeepers are obvious storylines when demonstrations are large (H3).

Hypothesis3: Television news reports of protest events that are large are more episodic-event oriented.

News Routines

A second block of predictors ties in with news routine research, and takes the day-to-day practicalities of the news production process into account. Tuchman (1978) defined news making as routinizing the unexpected. News is created and the result of a production process. The working conditions of journalists influence the product they make. How sources facilitate the newsgathering process is key from a news routine perspective.

Gandy (1982: 8) in this respect speaks about "information subsidies", being carefully crafted messages ready tailored to be picked up in the news cycle. By subsidizing and as such controlling information, sources hope to gain leverage over journalists in the news production process. Some sources are better at this than others. Thrall (2006) speaks about the news making capability of advocacy groups. Organizations that have bigger budgets, that employ communication staff members, that develop ties with journalists and know the media from within are far more likely to get covered (Andrews & Caren, 2010; Thrall, 2006). Whether such groups also better succeed in striking a responsive chord with journalists and thus more easily get thematic coverage is unknown. It is plausible, however, that protest groups that are insiders of the media game are better positioned to get their claim up front. In sum, I expect coverage of groups with high media standing (and thus high news making capability) to be

more thematic as they facilitate the difficult and time intensive process of gathering issue information.

Hypothesis4: Television news reports of protest events staged by organizations with greater news making capability are more thematically oriented.

News Format

News format characteristics refer to editorial decisions related to the composition of a newscast. Two such editorial decisions are taken into account. First, whether a protest event is a lead item or not. Behr and Iyengar (1985) found lead items to be strong public agenda setters. Selection studies established that especially disruptive protest events make headline news. The description of lead news items therefore is expected to be a consequence of a selection effect, leading to a more event-oriented focus in lead news items.

Hypothesis5: Television news reports of protest events that open a newscast are more episodic-event oriented.

Whether a protest report gets a follow-up item in the same newscast or not is a second news format characteristic taken into account. Some protest events result in short news items, other are discussed at length. In some cases, a protest event results in more than a single news item. The choice to gather information and present a protest item with a follow-up item is an editorial decision. Although it is a long shot, I expect protest reports that include a follow-up item to contain more exemplar coverage. If editors decide to air follow up items, journalists are given the opportunity to present the issue from a different angle. I expect follow-up items to present the issue from below. After dealing with the demonstration in one item, the follow up item tackles the issue of the protest by showing the particular. For instance, after a march that criticizes housing conditions of poor people, a follow-up item would zoom in on the particular housing condition of a particular poor person. It is because of the very different nature of this type of information that distinct items will be made of it. I therefore expect protest reports with follow-up items to contain more exemplar coverage.

Hypothesis6: Television news reports of protest events that include a follow-up item are more episodic-exemplar oriented.

Media ownership

A final level that might influence how protest events are covered is the organizational level. Journalists do not operate in a vacuum but are socialized in the newsroom. Important in this regard is how the ownership structure of media organizations influences newsroom decisions of *what* events are news and *how* these events should be covered. Whether a television station is publicly funded or depends on private revenues is crucial in this respect. Research holds that public broadcasters focus more on "hard" political and institutional news whereas commercial stations tend to have a more "soft" news approach, that is, a more sensationalist, human interest and drama -oriented focus (Brants, 1998; Gamson et al., 1992; Reinemann et al., 2012). Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) similarly hold that commercial media favor entertainment values over hard journalistic values.

Hypothesis7a: Television news reports of protest events on the commercial station are more episodic-event oriented than similar reports on the public broadcasters.

In the same vein, I expect exemplars to be used more frequently as a story telling technique in news items on the commercial station. Literature on "infotainment" (Brants, 1998) exactly sees this kind of personalization as a feature of commercialization. By packaging an issue as a personal testimony via an exemplar, hard information is made more easily digestible. This causes me to expect that commercial stations will take a less thematic and more an episodic approach to news coverage.

Hypothesis7b: Television news reports of protest events on the commercial station are more episodic-exemplar oriented than similar reports on the public broadcasters.

Finally, this study also controls for the issue of the demonstration. As such, we can see whether media description is stable across issues and our findings hold across the board, or whether some issues in fact are more likely to receive a particular kind of coverage.

Data and Methods

In order to test the abovementioned hypotheses two datasets are used. A first dataset contains non-media data. Data was gathered in police archives of the police jurisdiction *"Brussel Hoofdstad Elsene"*. Brussels is the capital and political heart of both Belgium and Europe. All the major political institutions of the Belgian state, as well as the European institutions and many foreign embassies are located in this jurisdiction. This context makes Brussels particularly attractive for demonstrators willing to show their discontent. The major methodological strength of using this dataset is that it presents media-independent information about protest event characteristics. Previous studies foremost relied on information in the media report to predict media description, and therefore run the risk of being tautological. Information about the number of attendants, disruption and the organizers of the event is drawn from the police archive dataset (for a detailed description of the police archive data gathering process see Wouters, 2013).

The second dataset contains media data. The University of Antwerp and Leuven host the Electronic News Archive (ENA; www.nieuwsarchief.be). It is a census dataset that codes every daily 19 o'clock newscast of the most important commercial (*VTM*) and public broadcaster (*Eén*) of Belgium. News reports about the protest events mentioned in the police archive were retrieved from the news archive and were subjected to an extensive secondary coding with an elaborated code scheme[9]. The unit of analysis is not a single news item, but a "protest report" being all the items in the newscast of the day of the protest that referred to that particular protest action. For the entire 2003-2010 period, 428 unique protest events resulted in 564 protest reports (as some appeared both on the commercial and public station)[10]. Coding was done by the author (master coder; 51% of all reports) and three trained MA students. Intercoder reliability was calculated by means of Krippendorff's Alpha on a random sample of 20 percent of all reports the students coded.

Dependent variables. Every second of every protest report was assigned to one of three mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories (thematic, episodic-event and episodic-exemplar coverage). If visual information and spoken information conflicted, the voiceover was coded, not the visual[11]. Dependent variables in this study are proportions of one type of coverage in relation to the total length of the protest report. Naturally, this makes the

different dependent variables related. News reports are zero-sum games; time spent to one type of coverage logically decreases the weight of another type of coverage. In the results section, these proportional measures will be used in the models. If relevant, results of models with absolute dependent variables are referred to in text. *Episodic-event coverage* (Krippendorff's alpha: .81)[12] was operationalized as the attention in the item to the 'incidental' or 'particular' of the protest event. Information about the number of participants, protest location and itinerary, weather conditions, mobilization process, appearances of protestors, behavior of protestors, composition of the demonstration and incidental details of the demonstration was coded as event coverage. *Episodic-exemplar coverage* (Krippendorff's Alpha: .74) or a micro perspective on the issue, was operationalized as information about the personal experience of someone with the issue at hand. Not all interviews with a protestor constituted exemplar coverage. Only if someone narrated how the issue/problem affected his/her personal life (and all the introductionary references to this personal testimonial by the journalist) was coded as such. Also non-protestors who narrated about their experience with the issue were coded as exemplar coverage. *Thematic coverage* (Krippendorff's Alpha: .90), finally, is the attention to the issue or theme of the march. Thematic coverage is about the claim of the protestors, the broader context and background information about the issue that fueled the protest.

Independent variables. Police archive data is used to get media independent information about event characteristics; Electronic News Archive data is used to construct media related independent variables. *Demonstration size* is the effective amount of participants in the demonstration as counted by the police. Because of a negatively skewed distribution this variable is log transformed. *Disruption* is a dummy variable that turns 1 in case of arrests, violence (property damage, people wounded) or blockage of traffic. *Media Standing*, or an organization's news-making capability is the natural log of the amount of news items of the main organizer of the march during the entire research period as found in the electronic news archive (ENA). *Lead items* are those items that open a newscast. The *follow-up* variable refers to whether a protest report included a follow-up item (1) or not (0). The *public broadcaster* variable is a dummy variable that is 1 if the report was made and aired by the public broadcaster (Eén) and 0 in case of the commercial station (vtm). Finally, we test for the issue stability of the findings by controlling for 5 issues: Poverty and Welfare protest (5% of all

protest reports), Foreign Nationals protest (11.5%), Asylum seeker protest (12.4%), Employment protest (36%) and Peace protest (7.1%). All protest dealing with other issues (environmental issues, student protest, women rights,…) are grouped into an "other" category that is used as the reference group. In order to predict the proportion of coverage type, linear regressions are used. Standard descriptives and a correlation matrix of dependent and independent variables are shown in Appendix.

Results

Descriptive Findings

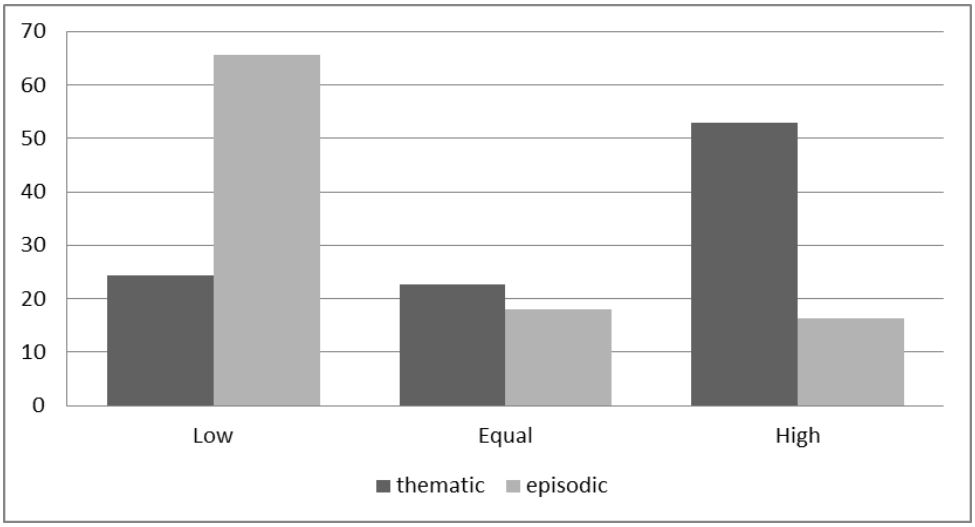
Does protest coverage pay more attention to details of the event compared to general information about the issue? In other words, is protest coverage foremost event-oriented (H1). On the aggregate level, protest reports clearly contain more thematic than episodic information: 58 percent of coverage in an average protest report is thematic, 42 percent is episodic. This goes against our first hypothesis. Results show that episodic coverage predominantly deals with information about the event (35% of an average protest report) and far less with personal testimonies (7% of an average protest report). The personal close-up is not ubiquitously used, although in about one protest report in three (36%) an exemplar who narrates about first-hand experience with the subject of the demonstration is presented[13]. Literature holds that exemplars are used to make news items more vivid. It could be that protest items already are considered vivid enough without exemplars, making their inclusion less needed in order to get and keep a viewer's attention.

Looking at individual protest reports brings additional evidence to the table. In two protest reports out of three (66%) the share of thematic airtime outweighs the share of episodic airtime. This tilt towards thematic coverage is not a minor one: for all protest reports with a larger share of thematic than episodic coverage, the average difference between episodic and thematic information is 44 percent. In 41 percent of the protest reports the share of thematic coverage is at least double the proportion of episodic coverage. The same logic only holds for one protest item in 6 (17%) when it comes to episodic coverage. Figure 1 gives a visual cue

about the distribution of thematic versus episodic coverage in protest reports. The x-axis indicates the proportion of a protest report that is devoted to either coverage type. Three categories are distinguished: a low (0 to 39 percent), equal (between 40 and 60 percent) and high (61 to 70 percent) share of episodic or thematic coverage. The y-axis shows the percentage of news items that falls into a particular category.

Figure 4.2

Proportion of reports with low, equal or high share of thematic/episodic coverage(N=564)



For instance, in about 70 percent of the protest reports, the share of episodic coverage is low, whereas for thematic coverage this is only the case for about 25 percent of the protest reports. A fifth of all protest reports are equally thematic and episodic, and more than half of all protest reports have a clear thematic tilt. This figure shows that if a (positive) tilt is present in a protest report, it far more frequently is in the thematic direction. Moreover, thematic tilts also appear to be more severe than episodic tilts. For instance, whereas five percent of all protest reports has at least an eighty percent proportion of episodic coverage, this same figure holds for 17 percent of all protest reports when taking thematic coverage into account. Wrapped up, hypothesis 1 needs to be rejected. Contrary to conclusions of previous research, media reports on protest events are covered more thematically than episodically. A second conclusion is that episodic coverage is predominantly about details of

the protest event. Personal close-ups are used as a story telling technique (they appear in one protest report in 3), yet such close-ups or rarely really airtime-consuming.

Four reasons can be put forward for this divergent finding. First, the finding could be due to a measurement effect. No research to date has measured thematic versus episodic coverage of protest events so precisely as this study. Whereas previous research worked with scales and asked for coder judgments, the measure employed here is more mechanical. It could be that previous research in one way or another already tapped media-effects, and that this measure is more value-free. Second, the finding also could be a medium effect. Previous research primarily investigated press coverage. Newspapers have to describe the event and its details, whereas television merely has to show. Television communicates visually and audibly simultaneously, and therefore more easily communicates episodic information without having to stress it in its voiceover. Third, the findings may stem from a selection effect. This study is one of the first to examine protest coverage across all protest items during a longer period of time. It may be the case that previous, mainly US studies, selected specific and not very representative cases. Fourth, and theoretically most interesting, the finding could be caused by a media and political system effect. Belgium has a strong public broadcaster and a strong civil society (Elchardus et al., 2001; Hooghe et al., 2007). Both contextual elements could explain why coverage of protest events in Belgium is more thematic than episodic, and as such goes against results found in an American context, characterized by a far more market-based media system and less strong ties between state and civil society (Curran et al., 2009; D. C. Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Lijphart, 1999).

Explanatory Findings

Under which circumstances are protest reports more episodic or thematic? This paper distinguishes four blocks of theoretically relevant predictors in the literature review: news values (event characteristics), news routines (facilitation of news production), news format (editorial decisions) and media ownership (public vs. commercial station). Controlling for the issue of the demonstration, three linear regressions are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Linear Regressions predicting coverage types in protest reports (N=554)

	THEMATIC			EPISODIC-EVENT			EPISODIC-EXEMPLAR		
	B	S.E.	SIG	B	S.E.	SIG	B	S.E.	SIG
News Values									
Size	.006	.005	.244	-.012	.005	.015	.006	.003	.029
Disruption	-.137	.025	.000	.153	.024	.000	-.016	.014	.251
News Routines									
Media Standing	.009	.004	.014	-.006	.003	.065	-.002	.002	.240
News Format									
Follow-up item	-.057	.029	.051	.008	.028	.769	.048	.016	.003
Lead item	-.103	.037	.006	.080	.037	.028	.022	.021	.283
Media Ownership									
Public Broadcaster	.092	.019	.000	-.073	.018	.000	-.018	.010	.084
Issues									
Poverty and Welfare	.018	.044	.684	-.084	.043	.052	.066	.024	.007
Foreign Nationals	-.019	.032	.560	.039	.032	.217	-.020	.018	.258
Asylum Seekers	-.037	.031	.228	.020	.030	.509	.017	.017	.319
Employment	.016	.026	.538	-.008	.025	.746	-.008	.014	.595
War	-.108	.039	.006	.116	.039	.003	-.008	.022	.702
Constant	.426	.045	.000	.510	.044	.000	.065	.025	.010
Adjusted R^2		0.175			0.165			0.044	

A first block of predictor variables deals with news values and takes event characteristics as a starting point. Hypothesis 2 posited that coverage of disruptive protest would be more event-oriented. This hypothesis is clearly confirmed. If demonstrators misbehave, the message of the event gets lost in a focus on the event itself: the proportion of thematic coverage decreases and that of event coverage increases. With all other variables kept at their means, predicted probabilities show that 32% of the coverage of non-disruptive demonstrations deals with event-information. For disruptive demonstrations, on average 47% of the report is event-oriented. Disruption is the strongest predictor in both the thematic and episodic-event models, explaining respectively eight and nine percent of total variance. Selection studies already established conflict to be a key predictor of media selection, and showed that disruptive protest tends to result in longer news items (Barronco and Wisler, 1999; Wouters, 2013). It could therefore be that by staging disruptive protest, activists not only succeed in gaining media attention, but also succeed in gaining more thematic attention in absolute

terms. This absolute thematic increase then could be washed away by a stronger increase in event-oriented attention. Put differently, the cake gets bigger, but more so for event oriented coverage. Analysis of the absolute measures partly confirms this reasoning. Disruptive protest items tend to be longer (+31 sec.). The amount of thematic airtime does not decreases significantly (- 5 sec.) yet the event-oriented airtime strongly increases (+34 sec.) In other words, disruptive protest does not wash the substantive message away, at least not in absolute terms. Disruption has no significant effect on exemplar coverage, finally, although the direction is negative: if a demonstration runs out of control, journalists probably are less eager or face greater constraints in getting an exemplar in front of the camera.

A second event characteristic is demonstration size. It was expected (H3) that large demonstrations would lead journalists to focus on the numbers of the demonstration, and thus would lead to event-oriented coverage. Hypothesis three cannot be accepted. In fact, larger demonstrations lead to less event-oriented reporting, have no significant effect on the proportion of thematic coverage, and lead to a significantly larger proportion of coverage devoted to exemplars. It appears that if confronted with a large demonstration, journalists want the mass to have its say. Journalists sample the demonstration, interview many more rank-and-file protestors[14], and end up with a report that is more likely to present a bottom-up perspective. Replacing the present numerical size variable with a categorical size variable shows that the effect is only significant for the largest demonstration size category (>5000 participants). Predicted probabilities show the proportion of episodic-exemplar coverage to rise from six to eleven percent if demonstrations cross the 5000 participants barrier. In sum, the larger the demonstration, the more exemplar oriented its coverage. Again, if we look at the absolute increase in airtime, it is confirmed that larger demonstrations receive lengthier coverage. The absolute increase is strongest for thematic coverage (+31 sec), followed by event coverage (+20 sec) and exemplar coverage (+ 13 sec) if we compare across the 5000 participants threshold.

A second block of independent variables focuses on news routines. It was argued that some organizations have higher news making capability than others. Activists groups with higher media standing tend to be more resource rich in terms of members, finances and communication staff. Hypothesis 4 posited that organizations with higher media standing,

would receive more thematic coverage. The fact that these organizations are “insiders” in the media game and are better positioned to provide the press with information subsidies would lead to more attention for the group’s message and claim. Results confirm hypothesis 4. Reports on demonstrations of organizations with no media standing (.55) on average receive 7 percent less thematic coverage (about 15 seconds) compared to organizations with highest media standing (.62), with all other variables kept at their means. As such, the mass media arena does not seem to constitute a level-playing field, but confirms the principle of cumulative inequality: those who have will get more (Wolfsfeld, 1997).

A third block of predictors deals with news format characteristics. Both hypothesis 5 and 6 are confirmed. First, lead news items (H5) tend to be less thematic and more event-oriented. Selection and description clearly work together here. As especially disruptive protests make headline news, lead item content obviously turns out to be event oriented too. Follow-up items result in an interesting dynamic: if a protest event gets a follow up item, especially the proportion of episodic-exemplar coverage increases; from six to eleven percent to be precise. Chances of episodic-exemplar information increase most in case of the presence of a distinct follow-up item, suggesting that the personal close-up indeed deals with a different kind of information putting the issue of the march in another perspective.

Hypotheses 7a and 7b dealt with the ownership structure of media outlets. More specifically, it was argued that a commercial station, dependent on private revenues and viewer ratings, would cover protest actions more episodically, both in terms of event-orientation as in terms of exemplar-orientation. Results show that on top of event and messenger characteristics, the mediator also matters for how protest reaches a broader audience. In fact, the media ownership variable proves to be the second most powerful variable in explaining thematic and episodic-event oriented coverage, with an increase in R^2 of four percent. In short, protest reports on the public broadcaster contain more substantial information about what caused activists to take to the street. Protest reports on the private station focus more on the behavior and appearances of protest participants . Hypothesis 7a is confirmed. Hypothesis 7b expecting more episodic-exemplar coverage on a commercial station cannot be supported. Although the sign goes in the expected direction, the difference in episodic-exemplar coverage between both stations is only very marginally significant ($p = .084$). In order to reassure that the impact of station on information in protest report truly is a matter of

description (distortion) and not selection (the public broadcaster covers many more protest events compared to the commercial channel) analysis was redone by only including those protest events that got covered by both stations (N = 272). Results prove the impact of station to be robust, leading to the same conclusions.

Finally, the analysis also tested for the stability of findings across issues. Issues do not greatly increase the fit of our models and foremost turn out to be insignificant. Two points need to be made however. First, protest reports dealing with poverty are more likely to include episodic-exemplar coverage. The fact that exactly poverty is covered more frequently from below is no surprise. Iyengar (1991:47) also found poverty to be an issue that was predominantly covered episodically whereas related welfare issues like unemployment and racial inequality were not. Apparently, there is something about the issue of poverty that makes journalists use exemplars. Second, peace protests tend to get more event-oriented than substantial coverage, controlled for event characteristics as size and disruption. A closer look at peace related protests in the research period shows it to be clearly Iraq-war dominated, peaking in 2003. Most probably, protest events offered journalists a new perspective to keep on covering the imminent Iraq war, resulting in protest event-centered news reports that focused on the protest as being part of a world-wide mobilization, the composition of the march and its colorfulness or atmosphere.

Conclusion and Discussion

In 1970, Amitai Etzioni argued that the efficacy of demonstrations as a mode of political expression became self-evident with the rise of television. With the latter being fond of vivid pictures and the first seeking the “ear and eye of the country”, the needs of both were found to be intimately intertwined. Research however established an important crack in what was thought to be a marriage made in heaven. Whereas activist hope to get their message across, the protest paradigm research concluded that journalists mostly tend to focus on the noise and spectacle that the event produces. In the words of Iyengar (1991), coverage of protest events is *episodic*, rarely *thematic*. This paper has put this premise to a systematic empirical test. It analyzed television news description of protest events across a

large number of events that differ in terms of issues, staging organizations, number of attendants and degree of conflict. It used an innovative research design by relying both on media and media independent data, and developed a nuanced and precise measure of both episodic (event and exemplar oriented) and thematic coverage using airtime as a measure of analysis.

Results show that television coverage of protest is more thematic than episodic. Most information in protest reports deals with the issue and the underlying causes of protest, not with the protest event itself. Journalists quite frequently use a personal close-up as a story telling technique (one protest report in three), but exemplars are not dominating if airtime is taken into account. Probably protest coverage already is sufficiently vivid, making exemplars less needed. Besides measurement (seconds versus scales) and medium (television versus newspapers) arguments, this divergent finding can be a consequence of case selection: whereas previous research focused on single movements or protest events, this study took an approach that explicitly aimed for a more representative and generalizable notion of protest coverage.

The issue of generalizability leads us to two context related factors the can explain the thematic dominance. First, most previous results were established in a US context, known for a more market-driven media system, whereas this study was conducted in a media system with a strong public broadcaster (Curran et al., 2009; D. C. Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The fact that the commercial station covers protest in a more episodic-event oriented fashion strengthens this explanatory mechanism. Second, there could also be a time factor at work. The data of the studies which established the episodic nature of protest coverage date from the late sixties (Gitlin, 1980 on anti-Vietnam war) and seventies (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989 on the anti-nuclear movement). In the meanwhile protest has 'normalized', albeit more in Europe than in the United States (Caren, Ghoshal, & Ribas, 2011; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2001). An increasing number of people, from more diverse segments of society report in national surveys that they have participated in protests. Similarly, protest is increasingly regarded as a legitimate form of political expression. In such a context, the claims of protestors cannot simply be ignored or distorted by audience dependent mass media.

The main thrust of this chapter was to push forward the debate on the conditions under which protest coverage is more or less thematic or episodic. By scrutinizing media coverage of

all protest events in Brussels over a longer period of time, the conditionality of the protest paradigm was put to a robust test. More disruptive protests result in more episodic-event coverage. Demonstration size was found to have an unexpected effect. Large demonstrations do not result in more event-centered coverage. Instead, journalists tend to sample participants in large demonstrations, interested in the "gut feeling" of the mass. Coverage of large demonstrations therefore is more exemplar focused. Also the news-making capability of protest organizers matters. Protests staged by sponsors with high media standing are more thematic. As such, the mass media is not a level-playing field. Also for protest, typically seen as a weapon of last resort for the weak, media coverage follows the principle of cumulative inequality (Danielian & Page, 1994; Wolfsfeld, 1997). Besides characteristics of the event and its organizer, also newsroom dynamics matter. Lead items focus more on the event while follow-up items tend to include a higher proportion of exemplar coverage, establishing that the latter truly is regarded by journalists as a distinct information type. The public broadcaster under study, finally, reported more on the issue than on the details of the event. The mediator matters, with a public broadcasting service reporting more substantively about protest than its commercial competitor.

Social movements stage protest events because they want to gain support for their position on a particular issue. Thematic coverage is the *nec plus ultra* for social movements. Also if one takes the media as a forum for substantive discussion as a yardstick to measure media quality, less thematic coverage points to a deterioration of news quality. This study brings evidence to the table that public broadcasters perform better from a democratic point of view, as they try to be substantive and meaningful agenda-setters . Although evidence comes from comparing only two stations in a single country, the findings are robust. They hold across issues, pointing to some generalizability. A promising avenue for future research would be comparing the thematic and episodic coverage of (protest) coverage across countries and media systems. It is expected that as empirical evidence accumulates, speaking of media coverage of protest in terms of "the" protest paradigm will become less acute.

As noted in the introduction, both social movement scholars as well as students of (political) communication have studied the relationship between social movements, protest, and mass media. Strikingly, both fields have done so in relative isolation, not really communicating with each other. As research on social movements is increasingly starting to focus on the political impact of social movements and protest (Amenta et al., 2010), the relationship between

movements and media and more specifically the agenda-setting perspective and terminology gain importance in the social movement field (McAdam & Su, 2002; Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). This means that the time for more intensive collaboration and cross-fertilization between social movement and media studies is now. One possible line of inquiry and collaboration between both research fields could be situated in media effect research. For instance, future research should investigate how different types of audiences react to news reports that vary in their thematic and episodic nature. It could be that in order to convince the citizen public and get public opinion on their side, social movements are best served with thematic accounts of protest events. Authorities, on the other hand, can be supposed to be readily familiar with different stances and positions on a particular issue, and find a description of the attendants a crucial determinant in whether they react to protest or not (Lohmann, 1993). Although these are simple speculations, if authorities only react to protest *if* and *as* presented in the media arena (Koopmans, 2004), the circumstances and the consequences of this *as* deserve up close investigation.

Appendix

Table 4.2:
Descriptive Statistics of dependent variables.

VARIABLE	VARIABLE DESCRIPTION	DATA	MEAN	SD	MIN	MAX
Proportion						
Thematic	Proportion of report airtime spend to the issue (context, problem, solution, claim)	M	.581	.232	0	1
Episodic-event	Proportion of report airtime spend to the event (noise, spectacle, atmosphere, incidents,…)	M	.350	.228	0	1
Episodic-exemplar	Proportion of report airtime spend to personal testimonies (close-up, exemplar)	M	.069	.120	0	.690
Seconds						
Thematic	Total airtime spend to the issue (context, problem, solution, claim)	M	55.9	53.4	0	455
Episodic-event	Total airtime spend to the event (noise, spectacle, atmosphere, incidents,…)	M	35.5	49.6	0	539
Episodic-exemplar	Total airtime spend to personal testimonies (close-up, exemplar)	M	10.2	2.02	0	149

Note: [a] P stands for Police Archive Variable, M stands for Media Variable

Table 4.3:
Descriptive Statistics of independent variables (N = 564).

VARIABLE	VARIABLE DESCRIPTION	DATA	MEAN	SD	MIN	MAX
Size	Number of effective demonstrators counted by the police, log transformed	P	6.013	2.027	1.10	11.16
Disruption	Turns 1 in case of arrests, violence (property damage, people wounded) or blockage of traffic	P	.176	.381	0	1
Media Standing	Number of news items in News Archive mentioning staging organization, log transformed	P+M	2.487	3.153	0	7.28
Follow-up item	Turns 1 if the protest item has a follow-up item in the same newscast	M	.135	.342	0	1
Lead item	Turns 1 if the protest report contains the opening news item	M	.0798	.271	0	1
Station	1 for commercial station (vtm); 2 for public broadcaster (Eén)	M	1.617	.486	1	2
Poverty and Welfare ...	Issue typology based on description of demonstration issue in police archive dataset	P	.0496	.217	0	1
Foreign Nationals	Issue typology based on description of demonstration issue in police archive dataset	P	.115	.320	0	1
Asylum seekers	Issue typology based on description of demonstration issue in police archive dataset	P	.124	.330	0	1
Employement	Issue typology based on description of demonstration issue in police archive dataset	P	.360	.480	0	1
War	Issue typology based on description of demonstration issue in police archive dataset	P	0.071	.257	0	1

Note: [a] P stands for Police Archive Variable, M stands for Media Variable

Table 4.4
Correlation Matrix of independent variables

VARIABLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
(1) Size	1										
(2) Disruption	.112*	1									
(3) Standing	.201*	.016	1								
(4) Follow-up	.197*	.184*	.107°	1							
(5) Lead	.245*	.194*	.011	.388*	1						
(6) Station	-.096°	-.087°	.026	.056	.002	1					
(7) Poverty	-.094°	-.107°	-.087°	-.044	-.068	.114	1				
(8) For. Nat	.044	.079	-.259*	-.031	-.045	-.001	-.084	1			
(9) Asylum	-.133*	-.049	-.190*	-.057	-.011	.010	-.088°	-.138*	1		
(10) Employment	.212*	.085	.557*	.141*	.060	-.023	-.172*	-.271*	-.283*	1	
(11) War	.109°	.148*	-.123°	.096°	.102°	-.015	-.063	-.100°	-.104°	-.205*	1

*Note: * p<.01; ° p<.05 (two-tailed)*

[1]Of course, police archives do not present researchers with perfect pictures of the real world. Yet at least the data is media independent, and it is this latter fact that is crucial. Only by means of media independent data, one can make safe predictions about the content of the coverage without risking to run into tautological explanations.

[2]Belgium is a linguistically segregated federal country. There are Dutch-speaking and French-speaking people, forming two communities, each with its own media landscape. When I speak of Belgium in this paper, I actually refer to the largest community, which is the Dutch-speaking community. It contains 60 percent of the population.

[3] At first the interest of social movement scholars in media coverage of protest was merely motivated from a methodological perspective: social movement scholars strongly rely on newspaper data for protest event analysis, and in order to scrutinize the validity of their data, mass media's selection bias became a topic of interest (and discussion). For further reading on selection bias see recent contributions of Earl et al, 2004; Oritz et al, 2005.

[4] Such a script or narrative is not uniquely related to the coverage of protest. See for instance Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) on local tv news coverage of crime. They also find a repetitive coverage patterns and bring evidence to the table on the cognitive psychological effects of repeated exposure to such scripts.

[5] It should be noted that McLeod and colleagues especially studied radical, anarchist marches. In a way, they sample on an important independent variable, which leads them to stress an ideological logic more than a media logic as an explanatory mechanism for adherence to the protest paradigm.

[6] As Vliegenthart and Van Zoonen (2011) rightly assert, Iyengar uses the 'frame' and 'framing' vocabulary; but his notion of what constitutes a frame differs from what sociologitsts and media scholars understand as framing. That is, the substantive persuasive appeal of a message or argument. Episodic and thematic frames are more a sort of narrative style figures or scripts that journalist choose to present an issue to their audience. On pg 2 of his book Iyengar himself points to this ambiguity: *"Specifically, the present research explores the direct impact of "episodic" and "thematic" news formats or "frames", on viewers attribution of responsibility"*. Therefore I speak of episodic and thematic "coverage" or even "information". See also endnote 19 on pg 163 about different conceptions of frames, framing and framing effects in "Is Anyone Responsible".

[7] Measuring episodic and thematic coverage in this particular fashion is not new. In fact, Iyengar performed such a "visual" examination to validate the text based classification of news items (based on news Abstracts), exactly by using airtime as a measurement for the degree of episodic and thematic framing.

[8] Some authors use newspaper snippets that illustrate the event oriented nature of protest coverage. Others use dummy variables, or three, five or seven point scales.

[9] The codebook is available upon request.

[10] Between 2003 and 2010, 497 protest events or 11 percent of all protest events in the police archive (4.582) got media coverage. Of 428 of these 497 protest events (86%) video material could be retrieved from the archive (because of loss or damaged .wmv or.avi files stored on cd-roms, DVD's, harddisks and online servers respectively) to perform a secondary content analysis. An up close investigation shows no particular bias for the retrieval of protest image files. The author would like to thank head of the ENA, Julie De Smedt, for assistance in collecting the news imagery.

[11] As a matter of fact, most of the protest reports consisted of a continuous stream of imagery that dealt with the protest action, being demonstrators walking or demonstrators being interviewed.

[12] Krippendorf Alpha for dependent variables is a ratio variable measure as it is measured at the level of a second.

[13] In almost all protest reports that included direct quotation, protest participants or protest leaders were quoted (89.7%). The average number of direct quotations of protestors in news items that included direct quotation is 3.2. It appears that most demonstrators narrate about the issue, and journalists only rarely put the own personal experience of a participant center stage.

[14] Also actors in protest items were coded. A regression analysis with the number of speaking demonstrators as a dependent variable shows that the larger a demonstration, the more protestors are directly quoted.

5

Do Targets React and Third Parties Comment?

Responsiveness and Scope Expansion in Television News Reports of Protest Events

Abstract

Most of the interaction between movements and elites nowadays takes place in the media arena. This study deals with reactions of political targets (responsiveness) and third parties (scope expansion) in news reports on protest events. It asks whether targets and third parties respond to protest, how they respond, and when they are more likely to respond. To date, scholars have studied media selection *and* description *of protest events. Data spanning eight years of protest coverage of both the Belgian public and commercial broadcaster (N=564) is used to test hypotheses drawn from journalism and protest impact literature. Results show that protestor voices dominate protest coverage, that political targets are more prominent than third parties, and that accounts of targets more frequently contain negative elements compared to accounts of third parties. Demonstrations that are large, reactive, not staged by unions and which have a domestic and specific target are more likely to trigger responsiveness. Disruptive demonstrations have no consistent impact on responsiveness whatsoever, yet trigger negative third party reactions. Large demonstrations trigger positive third party reactions, union demonstrations trigger negative third party reactions.*

Do Targets React and Third Parties Comment?

Responsiveness and Scope Expansion in Television News Reports of Protest Events

Introduction

This chapter deals with reactions of targets and third parties in news reports on protest events. Most of the interaction between movements and elites nowadays takes place in the media arena (Koopmans, 2004). The word 'arena' is not chosen incidentally. In the media, all kinds of actors compete for attention and struggle over meaning. This competition *in* and *over* the news is best seen as part of a larger contest over political control (Wolfsfeld, 1997; Wolfsfeld & Schaefer, 2006). In this context, triggering reactions in the news is an important outcome of protest activity. This chapter seeks to extend the booming literature on protest impact by putting the media arena and the mechanisms that reign the arena more center stage (Giugni, 1998; Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). It asks whether targets and third parties respond to protest in the media, captures these responses in a substantive typology and looks into the circumstances that make responsiveness more likely.

At the heart of protest politics lies the fact that groups take to the streets because their claims are ignored by elites. Protestors use unconventional tactics to draw attention, to win third party support and to achieve responsiveness anyway (Donatella della Porta & Diani, 1999; Lipsky, 1968). Eliciting media attention is crucial in this respect. At its most basic level, media attention contributes to the diffusion of contestation. This signaling function of mass

media in turn facilitates scope expansion; that is, the activation of other parties (Kollman, 1998). Especially for weaker groups, going public and influencing who is in and out of a struggle is key in goal achievement (Schattschneider, 1960). A third function of mass media is that it validates the subjects of its coverage (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) speak of the "status conferral function" of mass media. Mass media attention bestows prestige, it signifies noteworthiness.

In this chapter, I contend that reactions of targets and third parties boost the signaling, scope expansion and validation functions of media for movements. Reactions of others in the media need to be catalogued as *discursive victories* for movements. Positive reactions signify that grievances of protestors are relevant and need to be taken seriously. They point to acceptance and recognition (Gamson, 1990: 31). Positive reactions also endorse protestors and their claims. Negative reactions only at first blush seem *worst case scenarios*. At least they push a conflict forward –they turn movement monologue into dialogue and may trigger other actors to join the conversation. No reactions, finally, point to indifference and communicate irrelevance: nobody cares so nobody reacts. The basic tenet of this chapter is that protest thrives by triggering reactions and that these reactions deserve up close investigation.

To date, social movement scholars have studied mass media's *selection* (*make my news*) and *description* (*tell my version of the story*) of protest (McCarthy et al., 1996; Oliver & Maney, 2000; Smith et al., 2001; Wouters, 2013). No explicit attention has been paid to mediated reaction to protest. Koopmans (2004) without doubt has moved farthest in this direction. According to Koopmans, three mechanisms affect the diffusion of movement messages in the public sphere. *"Visibility"* refers to the number of communication channels that include a message and coincides with basic selection theories. *"Resonance"* deals with the reproduction of messages. In reacting to protest, other actors partly reproduce a message and as such drive its diffusion. Such reproductions can be positive, expressing sympathy *(consonance)* or negative, showing disapproval *(dissonance)*. Over the course of a claim's lifetime, the balance between consonant and dissonant reproductions is called *"legitimacy"*. In line with Koopmans, I believe reactions of others to matter and believe them to be empirically underexplored. Contrary to Koopmans, I am not interested in the diffusion of claims but in the immediate reactions to protest. If political targets react, I speak of responsiveness. If third parties react, I speak of scope expansion.

In sum, this study investigates the accounts (McGraw, 1990, 1991) targets and third parties give in the media arena in reaction to the blame communicating strategy of protest. This chapter presents, to my knowledge, the first systematic and quantitative take at this subject. Three questions are set out to be answered: First, do targets and third parties react to protest in the media? Second, *how* do they react? Third, *when* do reactions of targets and third parties become more likely? In order to answer these questions, two datasets are used. One dataset is gathered in police archives and contains real world information about protest events (Brussels; 2003-2010). Dataset two consists of coded television news data of both the major public and commercial station in Belgium[1]. Results show that protestor voices dominate protest coverage, that political targets react more frequently than third parties, yet that targets react also are more frequently negative than third party reactions. In reacting to protest, targets often combine positive (expressing sympathy or understanding) with negative elements whereas third parties more clearly pick sides. Demonstrations that are large, reactive, that are not staged by unions and which have a domestic and specific target are more likely to trigger responsiveness. For scope expansion, only demonstration size matters. Predicting whether targets reacted positively or negatively proved to be unsuccessful with the dependent variables at hand. Third parties, however, react more frequently positively in case of large demonstrations without disruption are organized by other organizations than unions.

The Stakes of Targets, Third Parties and Journalists in Protest Coverage

Whether targets and third parties react to protest in the news is a consequence of their interaction with journalists. In order get a better grip on the phenomenon of reactions to protest in the news it bears fruit to consider what is at stake for targets, third parties and journalists in the specific process of protest news construction.

From the perspective of *targets*, it is crucial to see that protest demonstrations are very specific forms of blame communication. Protest events names, shame and communicate blame. According to Weaver (1986) politicians are not so much motivated by seeking credit as they are by trying to avoid blame. McGraw (1990), following in the footsteps of Weaver, holds that the success and survival of modern politicians strongly depends on their ability to deal with blame. By giving explanations or 'accounts' in the media, politicians hope to influence

public opinion when confronted with a potentially damaging situation. Such blame management can be done by diffusing or deflecting blame; by reacting positively, negatively, ambivalently or by not going public at all. Whereas reacting positively satisfies demonstrators, reacting negatively favors opponents. Not reacting keeps all options open, yet involves the danger that *third parties* can more prominently have their say. In this latter case, it is relevant to consider protest as "voting with the feet". Demonstrations then are issue-publics (Popkin, 1991) or highly committed issue-specific voting blocs. This makes third parties with congruent stances eager to endorse protest events. By reacting, third parties position themselves, can win sympathy, can add momentum to a topic of social concern that is in their interest and may even secure some votes- that is, if the third party in question is a political party. This in turn makes targets again keen to get involved. Although it might be more profitable to avoid association with blame communicating coverage, Wolfsfeld & Sheafer (2006: 337) argue that "*no one can afford to leave the playing field to their opponents"*. And this holds as well when coverage is running against you.

Besides targets and third parties, also journalists have to gain when it comes to incorporating reactions in news reports. Basically, gathering reactions is the most essential part of the journalistic profession. First, reactions strengthen journalists in their conviction that they are right in deciding to cover the event. The fact that others care to react, signifies relevance and newsworthiness. Second, reactions also inject stories with conflict, which, from a news value perspective (Galtung & Ruge, 1965), allows for the construction of better and more interesting news reports. Third, a central aspect of journalism is that news coverage is expected to be "balanced" instead of "biased" (De Swert, 2011; R. M. Entman, 2007). Journalists aim for objectivity and to this purpose often use a voice-counter-voice structure (Niven, 2005). If journalists quote only demonstrators, they can be accused of being advocates. If they quote only officials, they can be dismissed as mouthpieces of the powerful.

Wrapped up, for all three actor types –targets, third parties, journalists- incentives are present which encourage them to react or to gather reactions in case of protest (coverage). This brings up questions of whose reactions are in the news more frequently, what these reactions exactly look like, whether different types of actors react differently, and under which circumstances what kind of actors are more likely to end up in protest reports. The next sections exactly deal with these questions.

Protesters, Targets and Third Parties as Sources in Protest Coverage

News content is the result of a co-production between news promoters and news assemblers (Molotch & Lester, 1974). Much of the debate in the literature deals with who has the upper hand in this relationship: do journalists lead sources? And which sources are more powerful than others (Reich, 2006; Strömbäck & Nord, 2006)?[2] Although journalists decide what to cover and how to cover it (Tresh, 2009), the power of sources and journalists is thought to vary across contexts (*media systems; political systems*), circumstances (*who initiates the news?*), and across the aims (*journalistic vs commercial*), routines (*deadlines*) and selection criteria (*personalization, dramatization, unexpectedness*) that guide the news production process (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Interestingly, extant literature is not on the same page about the power ratio between sources in protest coverage. The protest paradigm literature holds that protest reports are characterized by an implicit template which tends to marginalize and trivialize protest (Boyle et al., 2004; Boyle et al., 2012; McLeod & Hertog, 1992, 1998; D. Weaver & Scacco, 2013). One characteristic of the paradigm is the reliance on official sources. Officials add prestige to a story, increase the efficiency of news gathering and maintain the illusion of objectivity. Mcleod & Hertogh (1998: 314) argue that protest coverage is *"heavily laden with official sources"*. Consequentially, protest reports also foremost present the official take on the situation at the expense of the protestors point of view. Literature on news initiation, in contrast, contends that event-driven news -such as protest coverage- is less likely to be shaped and controlled by official voices (Shehata, 2010; Wolfsfeld & Schaefer, 2006). Protesting from this perspective is seen as one of the few avenues available for movements to catch elites off guard. Whereas social movements normally need to start their race for news coverage much further back on the track (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993), staging protest events gives movements the advantage of the initiative.

Although little empirical evidence on a non-case study basis deals specifically with sourcing patterns in protest coverage, two studies need to be mentioned. Boyle and colleagues (2004) found that target sources are less frequently present than protestor sources in local newspaper articles of protest in Wisconsin (1960-1999, N=280). Also McCluskey et al (2009) found targets less quoted than protestors in protest stories (N =377). Despite this scant

empirical evidence, results point to a protestor dominance in protest reports. This leads to hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis1: Protestor sources are more frequently used than political target and third party sources in protest reports on television news.

Given the fact that media follow the trail of political power when selecting sources (Van Dalen, 2012), I expect political targets to be more frequently part of protest reports than third parties. Not only are reactions from targets logical given the blame communicating nature of most protest; reactions of targets also are more loaded with conflict which makes them interesting from a news value perspective. Also from the normative point of view that pleads for balanced, voice-counter-voice coverage, target responses are more likely. Moreover, journalist textbooks advise the construction of coherent stories. Including the reaction of the target brings a story full circle making it comprehensive for the audience.

Hypothesis2: Political target sources are more frequently used than third party sources in protest reports on television news.

Besides *whether* targets and third parties react to protest in the media arena, this study also sets out to answer *how* they react. McGraw (1990, 1991) called for a substantive and systematic analysis of real world accounts that politicians give in reaction to blame communicating situations instead of solely focusing on the effects accounts have on public opinion. In the empirical section I answer this call and present a substantive inductive typology of accounts in reaction to protest. One final descriptive hypothesis deals with the positive or negative valence of accounts targets and third parties give. Reactions can be consonant (positive, expressing sympathy) or dissonant (negative, showing disapproval) with the claims of protestors. I expect targets and third parties to react differently. Because targets are under fire when confronted with protest, I except them to react more frequently negatively. Third parties, on the other hand, are expected to react more frequently positively. Their major incentive to step into the media spotlight as described above is to win sympathy of protestors or the audience at home. Therefore I expect third party reactions to be more frequently consonant with protestor claims.

Hypothesis3: Political target sources react more frequently negatively to protest whereas third party sources react more frequently positively to protest on television news.

Predicting Target Response

When are political targets more likely to react in news reports on protest events? The primary focus here is on *whether political targets* react, not on the positive or negative valence of accounts or the reactions of third. These latter ones nonetheless are treated in the empirical section. Both theoretical and empirical reasons warrant this approach. First, theory on target responsiveness is far more developed and leads to clear-cut expectations. For third parties this is far less the case and an inductive approach is more appropriate. Second, predicting the positive or negative valence of accounts requires at least some incorporation of the exact claim of the protest, requires that one relates the claim to the issue's history and to the targets position on that very same issue. Such daunting substantial data collection was beyond the scope of this study. As a consequence, the hypotheses in this section will focus solely at responsiveness, that is, whether political targets react or not. In order to develop these hypotheses, literature on protest impact is tied to literature on news production. More specifically, this study takes event, target, and media characteristics as well as a policy cycle argument into account in trying to predict mediated responsiveness.

In the literature on protest impact, a crucial question deals with whether protest power resides in numbers or in disruptiveness (De Nardo, 1985; McAdam & Su, 2002; Tilly, 2004). From a target's point of view, protest that is *large* follows the logic of representative democracy. If many people care and show up, targets that are eager to get re-elected are inclined to be attentive and responsive (della Porta and Diani 1999). Lohmann (1993) reasons that political leaders especially take size, and more specifically, the estimated number of 'activist moderates' (instead of extremists[3]) into account when deciding to react to protest. For journalists too, numbers matter. The more people involved, the more relevant journalists judge the event. Large demonstration hence are more likely to fall into the sphere of legitimate controversy, a sphere that incites balanced coverage (D. Hallin, 1986).

Hypothesis4: Protest events that are larger are more likely to trigger target reactions compared to protest events that are smaller.

The impact of *disruption* is of a different, more direct nature. Disruptive protest obstructs the normal course of events or even inflicts material damage. Responsiveness to disruptive protest is seen as trading "concessions for tranquility" (De Nardo, 1985: 35). Piven and Cloward (1993) found violence to be positively related to the success of movements of the

poor. Also Cress and Snow (2000), in the case of homeless mobilization, found disruption to be a viable strategy leading to movement success, albeit only under specific circumstances. What about reactions in the media arena to disruptive protest? According to Wolfsfeld (1997) disruption and disorder lead to back gate entrance in the media arena: protestor portrayal will be negative (Danielian & Page, 1994; Thrall, 2006). Although speculative at best, I expect it to be easy for targets to react to protestors who misbehave. In case of disruptive protest, coverage is likely to run against protestors. In such a situation, targets will be eager to react as the claims of protestors can easily be dismissed on grounds of the inappropriate behavior. Moreover, targets will feel safe to react as the blame communicating features of the protest are likely to be washed away by a focus on the event itself in the news story (Smith et al 2001).

Hypothesis5: Protest events that are disruptive are more likely to trigger target reactions compared to protest events that are non-disruptive.

A third protestor controlled factor is movement organization. Gamson (1990) found organizations that are centralized and bureaucratized to be more successful. In Belgium, labour unions are textbook examples of strong, professionalized organizations with a large constituency. Moreover, Belgium is a neo-corporatist country. Unions have a strong representative function and have gained insider positions in the Belgian political machinery (Martens et al., 2002). Because of the political weight and organizational capacities of unions, I expect political targets to be more eager to react to the signal communicated by union protests. Also journalists will judge protest of unions as a serious signal because the sender is credible. Therefore they will be eager to confront targets with union claims.

Hypothesis6: Protest events staged by unions are more likely to trigger target reactions compared to protest events not staged by unions.

Besides clear cut protest characteristics, this study takes two target characteristics into account. First, protest can to different degrees be specifically targeting persons or institutions. The more specific the target (and in close relation, the movement's claim and hence framing tasks (Snow, Burke Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986)), the higher chances of mediated response. Galtung and Ruge's (1965) news value theory clarifies this expectation. Both personalization and elite status are key news values. Moreover, Galtung and Ruge's

distortion hypothesis holds that what makes an event newsworthy will be accentuated in the resulting news report. Translated to the protest report context: the more clearly protest addresses a specific target (personalization), the more likely journalists will try to make the target part of the news report. The same logic holds from the target's perspective: the more specifically the protest pinpoints at a target, the more inclined the target will be to make a public defense.

Hypothesis7: Protest events that have a specific target are more likely to trigger target reactions compared to protest events that have no specific target.

Next, I expect protest aimed at domestic institutions to trigger reactions more frequently compared to events aimed at foreign *(embassies)* or international *(European)* institutions. The reason for this expectation from the target's perspective is straightforward: what is at stake in terms of accountability for actors on the domestic level is higher than what is at stake for actors at the international and for sure the foreign level. Moreover, as domestic decisions to a greater extent impact the citizen public, journalists will judge reactions of domestic targets as more relevant, and therefore will be more eager to include them.

Hypothesis8: Protest events that target domestic institutions are more successful in triggering mediated responsiveness compared to protest events that target foreign or international institutions.

A sixth predictor is of a more contextual and politcal nature. Giugni (1995) argues that outcomes of movements do not directly depend on the level of mobilization yet are mediated by certain aspects of the political context. Here, I take one political opportunity element into account: the stage of the policy making process in which the protest occurs. The argument is that reactive protest is more likely to trigger mediated responsiveness than proactive protest. According to Kriesi (1995) reactivity has to do with the prevention of already politicized disadvantages. Proactivity deals with the introduction of new advantages that need to become politicized. In more concrete terms, reactive protest is staged at the end of the policy making process against a measure that is in the pipeline, just about to be implemented or only just implemented.

Higher mediated responsiveness at the end of the policy making process has to do with the flip side of responsiveness: accountability (Bühlmann & Kriesi, 2013). Representative

democracy requires that policy-makers explain and justify their decisions. Especially in the current "audience democracies" politicians face an increasing pressure to respond publicly to signals coming out of society in between elections (Kriesi, Tresh, & Jochum, 2007). Consequentially, if (to be) taken policies are under attack, politicians will feel more strongly pressured to react. Also the negativity bias of voters (McGraw 1986), that is, the fact that citizens are more sensitive to losses than to gains, helps to understand political target's eagerness to respond to reactive protest. Reactive protest exactly is staged against measures that bring along losses for demonstrators. Especially in such situations, blame can stick and politicians need to go public in order to manage blame. Similarly, journalists as fourth estate will feel urged far more strongly to play their watchdog role in case of reactive protest: as policy changes or is about to change, journalists are extra vigilant and will make sure that both sides of the conflict can have their say.

Hypothesis9: Protest events that are reactive are more likely to trigger target reactions compared to protest events that are not reactive.

As it is mediated responsiveness that is dealt with here, also one media variable is taken into account. The data used in this study deal with two different television stations. Important in this regard is how the ownership structure of media organizations influences news routines and as such news content. Whether a television station is publicly funded or not is crucial in this respect. Research holds that public broadcasters focus more on "hard" political and institutional news whereas commercial stations tend to have a more "soft" news approach, that is, a more sensationalist, human interest, entertainment and drama-oriented angle in their items and reports (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Reinemann et al., 2012). Consequentially, I expect journalists of the public station to be more eager to include and go after reactions of political targets, as it is in tune with their more institutional approach to news.

Hypothesis10: Protest events aired on the public broadcaster are more likely to contain target reactions compared to protest events aired on the commercial station.

Data and Methods

Two data sources are combined to answer the abovementioned hypotheses. Dataset one contains media independent information on protest events and is gathered in police

archives. All events that took place in the police district *"Brussel-Hoofdstad-Elsene"* (2003-2010) were retrieved from a paper archive and digitalized (N = 4582). The police archive reports contain standardized fields with information on the number of protestors, whether disruption occurred (material damage, people wounded, blockage of traffic), whether arrests were made, what the main claim and who the target was, and whether a delegation wanted to be received by the target. The asset of using police archive data is that its information is unfiltered by mass media and much more systematically complete (Rucht et al., 1998).

Dataset two contains coded television news data of the 19 o'clock flagship newscasts of both the most important commercial (vtm) and public broadcaster (Eén) of Belgium. All protest events of the archive that succeeded in eliciting media attention were retrieved from the Electronic News Archive (ENA)[4]. All news items of the day of the protest event in the newscast that dealt with the protest event directly or with the issue of the protest event constituted the video material that was subjected to an extensive secondary coding with an elaborated code scheme. In total, 428 unique protest events resulted in 564 protest reports (as some appeared both on the public and commercial station). Coding was done by the author (51% of all protest reports) and three trained MA students (who coded about 90 protest reports each). After initial coder training sessions, inter-coder reliability tests were performed on a sample of 20 protest reports and produced good results (for specific Krippendorf α values see below).

Dependent variables. In order to compute the dependent variables (responsiveness and scope expansion), every actor that was directly quoted or explicitly attributed a statement to in the protest report was coded. The name of every actor, his/her specific function, the function broadly conceived and whether the actor was quoted or not got coded. Also the 'account' every actor gave was literally transcribed. Recoding of these accounts led to 10 non-mutually exclusive dummy account variables. Double coding of these account variables led to highly satisfactory reliability scores (all Krippendorf α's between .710 and .953;). Every account variable also got attributed a positive, negative or ambivalent valence. Accounts that contained elements of substantial disagreement (α =.901), formal disagreement (α = .953), references to the fact that no budget is available (α = .897) or that this demand is others' responsibility or that one has other priorities (α= .766) or that one will stick to the earlier measure (α = .821) all got the label of *negative* accounts. Account elements that were considered *ambivalent* referred to the political process and the need of negotiations (α =

.718). *Positive* account elements made reference of substantial agreement (α =.799), formal agreement (α =.743), the availability of budget to meet demands (α = .827) or the expression of sympathy and understanding (α = .710). IN appendix, examples of accounts and their coding are given. In order to arrive at a single valence for every account, negative elements in an account got priority over ambivalent ones, which in turn got priority over positive ones. This resulted in clear-cut dissonance, ambivalence and consonance variables on the actor level, which then got aggregated to the protest report level using the same rationale.

The *responsiveness* variable is a dummy variable that has a value of 1 if at least one political target reacted in the news item (α = .834). The *scope expansion* variable is a dummy variable that has a value of 1 if third parties reacted (α = .607; 89% pairwise percent agreement)[5]. Civil society groups, celebrities, experts and a range of more established official actors like party leaders, parliamentarians and spokespersons of government institutions were considered third parties on the condition that they were not targets. Responsiveness and scope expansion in a final step were combined with dissonance, ambivalence and consonance variables to arrive responsiveness and scope expansion with a positive, negative and ambivalent tone.

Independent variables. All but one independent variable was retrieved from the police archive dataset. *Demonstration size* is the effective amount of participants at the demonstration as counted by the police. The variable is log transformed because of a negatively skewed distribution. *Disruption* is a dummy variable that turns one in case of arrests, violence (property damage, people wounded) or blockage of traffic. *Union* is a dummy variable that turns 1 if the protest was staged by a union. *Delegation request* is a dummy variable that turns 1 if the protest group requested for a delegation to be received by the target. It is a proxy variable for the specificness of the target that is addressed by the event. *Domestic target* is a dummy variable that turns one if the target is a domestic political institution (party headquarter; parliament; executive branch). *Reactive protest* is a dummy variable (α =.776) that is coded 1 if the protest is staged against a measure that is in the pipeline or just implemented. In order to know whether a protest was reactive or not, the thematic description of the protest event in at least the police archive dataset or the ENA dataset had to refer to measure implementation. The *public broadcaster* variable (α = .951), finally, is a dummy variable that has value 1 if the protest report is made and aired by the public

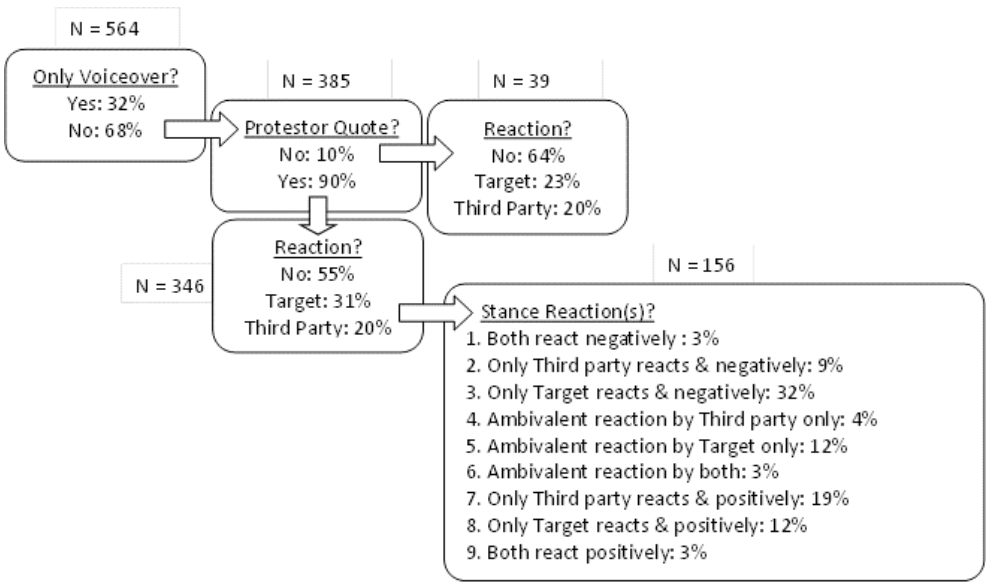
broadcaster (Eén) and zero in case of the commercial station (vtm). In order to predict responsiveness, logistic regressions are used.

Results: Action-Reaction

Descriptive Findings

Do demonstrations succeed in triggering reactions? Do protestor voices dominate protest coverage or do target sources have the upper hand? And, if others react, what do these reactions look like? In the first part of the results section I present descriptive results and answer hypotheses 1 to 3. Figure 5.1 presents different scenarios of sourcing patterns in protest coverage as a funnel of success, going from news reports with only a voiceover, over direct protest quotation, to protestor quotation and reactions of others. The final stages of the last presents a discursive *dream scenario* for any protest organizer: protestors get quoted and positively reacted to.

Figure 5.1
Sourcing Patterns in Protest News Reports



Of all protest demonstrations that made it into the news during the research period, about one third (32%) is completely narrated by means of a voiceover, not making use of any direct quotation. 90 percent of the protest reports with direct quotations, feature at least one direct protestor quote. If protestors are quoted, more than half of the time (55%) nor the target, nor a third party is part of the news report. Put differently, in 33 percent of all cases, protesting leads to monopoly positions, with protestors raising their voice and having their view uncontested (nor supported) by a direct quotation of or statement attribution to any other source. Evidence clearly supports hypothesis 1: protestors (present in 61.3% of all protest reports) dominate protest reports, not targets (22.5%; t (1126)=14.36, p= .000) or third parties (14.4%; t(1126)=18.58, p=.000). Also hypothesis 2 is corroborated: targets are more frequently part of protest reports than third parties; mediated responsiveness outweighs mediated scope expansion (t(1126)=3.55, p= .000).

Further down the funnel presented in figure one, 31 percent of protest reports with protestor quotation also includes the voice of a political target, having the opportunity to rebut. The same holds for third parties in 20 percent of the cases. The latest stage of the figure displays different scenarios of sourcing patterns. What first strikes the eye is that reactions in protest reports most of the time come either from targets or third parties. Media attention is a zero sum game, and only very rarely both types of sources are present in the same report (9%). One other pattern is clear in the results. First, if only a target reacts, this reaction most frequently is negative (32%), not positive (12%). For third parties the opposite is true: of all protest reports that received reactions, 19 percent gets a consonant third party reaction whereas only 9 percent receives a dissonant third party reaction. Hypothesis 3 expected targets and third parties to have different roles in protest reports. Further analyses confirm the results of figure 1 and support hypothesis 3: 54 percent of all protest reports with any reaction get a target reaction that is negative, whereas only one fourth (27%) is positive (t(252)=4.51, p=.000). Third parties on the other hand react about twice as frequently positively (60%) as negatively (31%) (t(160)=3.94, p=.000).

Finally, table 5.1 presents a more substantial take on the question of how targets and third parties react. The unit of analysis is the individual account of an individual actor as source in the news. As explained in the methods section, every account could fall into one or more categories, account number one to four are positive, whereas five is ambivalent and six to ten are negative. Over the entire period, 170 political targets and 126 third parties reacted in

news coverage of protest. Also from this perspective, reactions of *third parties* are most frequently substantially positive: they communicate agreement with the stance of the demonstrators (66%), agree with protesting as a form of claims making (12%), or express sympathy and understanding (8%).Third parties far less frequently communicate disagreement with the goal of protestors (10%) or with protest as a mode of political expression (11%). A closer look at the data shows that such negative third party reactions especially come from professional organizations that defend employers' rights, and who look upon protest as damaging the economy or even as a way of blackmailing.

Table 5.1
A substantial categorization of accounts in reaction to protest

	Political Target		Third Party	
Account Category	N	%	N	%
1. Substantial agreement with diagnosis and/or solution	40	23.5	83	65.9
2. Agreement with protest as form of expression	-	-	15	11.9
3. Reference to (some) budgetary maneuvering space	20	11.8	-	-
4. Shows sympathy and understanding	45	26.5	10	7.9
5. Refers to political process or need of compromise	49	28.8	10	7.9
6. Substantial disagreement with diagnosis and/or solution	37	21.8	13	10.3
7. Reference to proposal not in line with protest	20	11.8	3	2.4
8. Reference to no budgetary maneuvering space	10	5.9	-	-
9. Reference to other priorities or other responsibility	13	7.6	2	1.6
10. Disagreement with protest as form of expression	7	4.1	14	11.1
Total N	170		126	

Note: account categories are not mutually exclusive; percentages exceed 100 percent.

The accounts *political targets* give are more evenly distributed across the positive – negative spectrum. In fact, accounts of targets show to have rather ambivalent elements fairly often: politicians acknowledge the signal protestors are giving, yet make sure to make clear that in the end politics is about reaching compromise which is something politicians do (29%). If political targets disagree, two types of accounts dominate: the first one is substantial disagreement (24%): politicians deny or reframe the problem, or disagree with the solution. A second dissonant stance is referring to previous policy implementations (12%): political

targets argue that previous measures already meet (some of) the protest demands (and that there is no need for change), or hold on to a proposal as it is now and refuse to change it. Only rarely political targets use the argument that there is no budget to implement the measures protestors are asking for (6%). When protestor demands can be met, however, politicians do refer quite frequently to budgetary maneuvering space (12%). The most common positive reaction, however, is a simple but vague statement that contains elements of understanding and sympathy (27%). Interestingly, political targets combine far more frequently different account categories in their statements. They answer frequently vaguely or evasively, rarely commit themselves to concrete (budgetary) announcements, and their reaction often swings either way (combination of "understanding" with dissonant remark). In other words, politicians keep their cards close to their chest when responding to protest in the news.

Predicting Responsiveness

When are political targets more likely to react? Put differently, under which circumstances do chances of mediated responsiveness increase? Table 5.2 presents four logistic regression models predicting reactions of targets and third parties in protest reports. Hypothesis 4 to 10 are tested in model 1, which deals with whether political targets react or not. Model 2, 3 and 4 show results for third party, negative target and positive third party reactions to protest.[6] In the next paragraphs, hypothesis 4 to 10 will be dealt with in chronological order, results of the other models will be referred to if appropriate.

Table 5.2

Predicting Responsiveness and Scope Expansion in Protest News Reports

POLITICAL TARGET REACTIONS	MODEL 1 **RESPONSIVENESS**			MODEL 3 **NEGATIVE RESP.**		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Constant	-2.633	0.548	0.000	-1.109	0.901	0.218
Demonstration size	**0.124**	**0.056**	**0.028**	0.127	0.098	0.195
Disruption	0.063	0.278	0.822	0.747	0.513	0.145
Union	*-0.433*	*0.258*	*0.093*	-0.285	0.460	0.536
Specific target	**0.768**	**0.254**	**0.003**	-0.467	0.406	0.250
Domestic target	**0.924**	**0.241**	**0.000**	0.579	0.442	0.190
Reactive protest	**0.601**	**0.241**	**0.013**	0.251	0.434	0.564
Public broadcaster	-0.089	0.222	0.689	0.055	0.386	0.887
Nagelkerke R^2		13.5%			.09%	
N		564			126	

THIRD PARTY REACTIONS	MODEL 2 **SCOPE EXPANSION**			MODEL 4 **POSITIVE EXPANSION**		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Constant	-3.324	0.638	0.000	-1.227	1.325	0.354
Demonstration size	**0.247**	**0.064**	**0.000**	**0.306**	**0.131**	**0.020**
Disruption	0.216	0.308	0.485	**-2.025**	**0.709**	**0.004**
Union	*-0.598*	*0.344*	*0.082*	**-2.664**	**0.828**	**0.001**
Specific target	-0.148	0.368	0.687	0.938	0.875	0.283
Domestic target	-0.270	0.277	0.329	0.249	0.654	0.704
Reactive protest	-0.316	0.339	0.351	-0.401	0.876	0.647
Public broadcaster	0.197	0.259	0.445	0.324	0.577	0.575
Nagelkerke R^2		7.5%			34.7%	
N		564			80	

Hypothesis 4 argued that larger protest events would be more successful in triggering mediated responsiveness. This hypothesis is clearly supported by the data. When demonstrations succeed in mobilizing many participants, political targets are more likely to enter the media arena and react. Bivariate results show that once the threshold of 1000

participants is passed, chances of mediated responsiveness rise significantly. Demonstrations with 1000 participants or more succeed in triggering target reactions twice as frequently as demonstrations with 100 participants or less. Clearly, representative democracy is a numbers game. If a demonstration is large and the claim is backed up by many, politicians feel more pressured to react. Model two shows that size is the only significant predictor of third party reactions. Moreover, if protest is large, chances increase that third party reactions are supportive(model 4).

Hypothesis 5 dealt with the effect of disruption. Results show disruption to have no significant impact on mediated responsiveness whatsoever (p=.822). The insignificance of disruption, although considered relevant in protest impact studies, maybe should not come as a surprise. Both journalist and target related factors might explain the insignificance. First, as drama and spectacle are key news values, disruption provides journalists with excellent material to develop interesting storylines which do not need target reactions in order to appeal. Second, although it was argued that politicians would be quite eager to respond to disruptive protest, it can also be so that targets find disruptive protest unworthy of response. Reacting would give protestors too much 'credit', even in case of dissonant reactions. Results from a simple crosstab show that in either case, responsiveness is elicited in about a fourth of all protest reports. Most probably both the mechanisms put forward above as in the hypothesis (targets are likely to react to disruption as it is easy and relatively safe) are very likely, operate some of the time, and hence explain the insignificant result. Surprisingly, disruptive protest even does not discriminate between positive and negative reactions of targets (Model 3). In fact, none of the independent variables used in the model is able to distinguish positive from negative target reactions. This is not the case when it comes to third party reactions: if protest is disruptive, chances of positive third party support steeply drop (model 4) and chances of negative third party comments rise (not shown in table).

Hypothesis 6 expected union protests to succeed in triggering responsiveness more frequently than non-union protest. Unions are strong organizations and possess insider positions in neo-corporatist Belgium, suggesting capability to enforce reactions in the media arena. Interestingly, the opposite is true, although the result is marginally significant (p=.093). Unions receive less frequently responses by targets and have more chances of receiving ambivalent target reactions (not in table). It might be that exactly because unions have insider positions, political targets feel less inclined to react publicly and prefer to negotiate

behind closed doors. In fact, reactions of targets to union protest exactly are very likely to refer to the political process, to negotiations and the need of compromise. Apparently, unions use protest as a tool to put pressure when insider negotiations are likely to fail, yet this tactic makes targets not go public. Union protest events also get less frequently responses of third parties (again marginally significant; p =.082) and if they do so, such reactions are more likely to run against them. For non-union protests third party support in contrast is more likely. A closer look at the data shows that quite often professional organizations defending employers' rights react to union protest and unsurprisingly, their reactions most of the time are at odds with union preferences.

All in all, the results of the union hypothesis confirm the special position of unions in the Belgian political system, yet run counter to traditional protest impact expectations. Unions might dominate the "smoke filled back rooms" of political negotiations, might have an easier job in eliciting attention, yet results show them to be relatively isolated once in the media spotlight: targets and third parties are less likely to react/interact, and the reactions of the latter are more easily negative. These results hint at the possibility of mass media as a 'level playing field'. It shows that the 'principle of cumulative inequality' is relative rather than absolute, and that, in the media arena at least, there seems to be much more to gain for resource poor groups –supposed that they succeed in eliciting attention in the first place- than for to unions (who might actually not need media attention and external support that much).

Hypotheses 7 and 8 dealt with characteristics of the target. Results show that if a group puts more effort in specifically addressing the target, then targets are more likely to react in a news report. Hypothesis 7 is confirmed. Hypothesis 8 expected domestic targets to be more responsive to protest. For domestic targets, accountability pressures are higher, as they have to bear the next election in mind; for journalists their watchdog role in situations of domestic interest was thought to be more prevalent. Results confirm hypothesis 8. The odds ratio shows that domestic targets are three times as likely to react to protest compared to non-domestic targets. Whether a domestic target is addressed or not in fact is the strongest predictor of mediated responsiveness, explaining 7 percent of total variance.

Hypothesis 9 presumed that if protest is reactive, political targets would be more inclined to go public. This hypothesis is confirmed. If protest tackles decisions that are in the pipeline or

only just implemented, responsible political targets are more likely to step up and defend what is (about to be) decided. The fact that hypothesis 9 is confirmed means that politicians are less likely to go public when protest is trying to set the agenda, and instead mostly react to protest that deals with problems that are already subject of political work. Political target reaction to protest from this perspective has less to do with responsiveness and more to do with accountability. It also adds evidence to the expectations of McGraw (1986): politicians are more likely to react in case of serious blame communicating situations (which is likely in case of reactive protest), and less in potential credit claiming situations (which is likely in case of proactive protests, politicians then can react symbolically by showing willingness).

Hypothesis 10, finally, expected to find a difference between both television stations. The more institutional focus of the public broadcaster led to the expectation of more mediated response in protest reports on the public station. The journalists of the public station would be more eager to get political targets in front of the camera, and because of their more regular interaction with politicians and their staff, they would more easily succeed in getting access to politicians. Results do not confirm this reasoning. In all models, adding station information fails to explain reactions. Even if only the protest events that made it into both newscasts were analyzed, results remain the same, pointing to the fact that no selection effect can explain the similarity between both stations. Although hypothesis 10 needs to be rejected, the fact that the result is insignificant proves insightful. A lot of the debate in the literature on the relationship between sources and journalists is about who has the upper hand in this relationship. Supposing that public broadcaster journalists put more effort in getting targets in front of the camera, the insignificant difference in mediated responsiveness cautiously suggests that targets only react if it suits them and when it is on their terms.

Conclusion and Discussion

It is widely accepted that media attention is a crucial political resource for social movements. Most of the interaction between movements and elites nowadays occurs in the media; movements that do not succeed in eliciting media attention simply do not exist. In this era of increased mediatization (Strömbäck, 2008), the media arena is considered to be a critical site of contention for all kinds of political actors. Social movement scholars to this end

have studied both the *selection* and *description* of protest events by mass media. No study to date explicitly dealt with the related and intriguing question of *reaction* to protest in the media arena. The basic tenet of this chapter was that protest thrives by triggering reactions; that reactions in the mass media boost the signaling, scope expansion and validation functions of media for movements; and therefore, that reactions to protest in the news deserve up-close investigation.

In order to study the accounts targets and third parties give in reaction to protest, this study used two datasets (police archive and media data) spanning a substantial time period (2003-2010) gathered in a single country and city (Belgium/Brussels). Theoretically, it addressed the stakes of targets and third parties to react to protest in the news and shed light upon the motivations of journalists to gather such reactions. It drew on literature from two distinct fields: journalism and social movement studies. Whereas social movement scholars would regard reactions of targets and third parties as a matter of protest impact, journalism scholars look at the presence of actors in news reports more as a matter of sourcing and balancing. This chapter brought both different strands of literature together. What conclusions can be drawn from this study?

When it comes to sourcing in protest reports, the findings reported here indicate that one protest report in three is completely narrated by a voiceover, without any source being directly quoted. Social movements often complain that they do not have a voice in the media arena. Results in this study show that even if movements mobilize, chances of being granted 'standing' remain rather slim. On the upside, however, results indicate that if any actor in a protest report is directly quoted, 90 percent of these items contain direct social movement quotes. However, in more than half of these items, protestors are not rebutted nor supported by any other source and actually are the only sources with direct quotation. Protestors clearly dominate protest reports yet more often than not fail to elicit reactions of targets and third parties in the news.

The finding of protestor dominance is at odds with earlier findings related to the protest paradigm. It has to be said, however, that most of the protest paradigm findings were gathered in an American context, on a case study basis and on a specific form of protest (anarchist) solely. In short, the official dominance in the news in general does not seem to hold for protest coverage in the context of Belgium at least. The finding that protestors quite

frequently (33%) have their views presented uncontested (nor supported) by any other source can be interpreted positively: the fact that journalists do not balance protest reports can be the result of a *compensation* mechanism. Journalists know that movements have a difficult time in gaining media access so grant them monopoly positions. Yet these monopoly positions can also be interpreted negatively: having ones view uncontested nor supported in the news can also be a sign of *isolation* rather than compensation. It would be of particular interest if future research would complement the focus on the analysis of news *content* that is taken here, with a more in-depth and qualitative approach that focusses on the news production *process* in order to gain insights in the mechanisms that drive the sourcing patterns in protest coverage.

Besides establishing sourcing patterns in protest reports, this study questioned how and under which circumstances targets and third parties are more likely to react. Political targets are more likely to react in case of large protests (exceeding one thousand participants) that address a specific, domestic target and that deal with a measure only just or soon about to be implemented. Demonstration size thus clearly matters in eliciting response, confirming that representative democracy is a numbers game. The finding that reactive protest events are more likely to result in protest reports that involve political targets is insightful, as it means that especially if problems are already subject of institutional political work also news reports will incorporate reactions of politicians. Continuing this argument, it seems that reactions of targets to protest in the news have more to do with political accountability than with political responsiveness.

The fact that no differences were found between the commercial and public broadcaster despite both having a distinct editorial profile cautiously suggests that political targets react only to protest if it suits them and if it is on their terms. Interestingly, disruptive protest could not be associated significantly with more or less responsiveness, nor could any of the predictor variables discriminate between positive and negative reactions of targets. It could be that this incapability to discriminate between positive and negative reactions of political targets has to do with the fact that political targets combine more frequently different account elements in their responses to protest. Indeed, their reactions were often vague expressions of sympathy and understanding combined with a more negative element (disagreement with solution or problem). For third parties this was far less the case. Third

parties react foremost positively in protest reports, especially if demonstrations are large, but less so if protest is disruptive or staged by unions.

This chapter focused on the accounts targets and third parties give in the news in reaction to protest. Besides *selection* and *description*, *reaction* in the media arena appears as a promising avenue for studying the relationship between media and movements. If protest impact is indirect and operates via mass media coverage, incorporating reactions of others in the media arena in the study of media attention for protest more explicitly brings the potential impact of protest into focus. This study wanted to make a beginning with taking a closer and more explicit look at whether and how protest succeeds to trigger external support (or and clearly was explorative. It would be of great interest if future research could carry out similar studies in other countries with another media and political context in order to see whether the findings reported here hold beyond the context of Belgium. In a next step, experimental research could assess the effects different sourcing patterns in protest reports have on public support for protest and perceptions of protest effectiveness. If media coverage truly is a matter of life and death for social movements then the question of how protest gets represented in the media arena, and which effects this has on different types of audiences should be of the utmost importance and interest of both scholars of political communication and social movements.

Appendix

Table 5.3

Descriptives of dependent and independent variables (N=564)

VARIABLE	VARIABLE DESCRIPTION	MEAN	MIN	MAX	S.D.
Responsiveness	1 if political target reacts	0,225	0	1	0,418
Negative	1 if political target reacts negatively	0,121	0	1	0,326
Ambivalent	1 if political target reacts ambivalently	0,044	0	1	0,206
Positive	1 if political target reacts positively	0,060	0	1	0,238
Scope Expansion	1 if third party reacts	0,144	0	1	0,351
Negative	1 if third party reacts negatively	0,044	0	1	0,206
Ambivalent	1 if third party reacts ambivalently	0,012	0	1	0,111
Positive	1 if third party reacts positively	0,087	0	1	0,282
Size	Demonstration size log transformed	6,013	1,1	11,2	2,027
Conflict	1 in case of arrests, violence, traffic blockage	0,176	0	1	0,381
Union	1 if union organized protest	0,294	0	1	0,456
Specific Target	1 if delegation requested	0,220	0	1	0,412
Domestic Target	1 if target is domestic political institution	0,510	0	1	0,500
Reactive Protest	1 if protest against measure (to be) implemented	0,241	0	1	0,428
Public station	2 in case of public broadcaster	1,620	1	2	0,487

Table 5.4

Correlation Coëfficients

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(1)Size	1						
(2)Conflict	.112**	1					
(3)Union	.206**	.019	1				
(4)Specific Target	.044	.041	.341**	1			
(5)Domestic Target	.123**	-.059	.331**	.292**	1		
(6)Reactive Protest	.142**	.023	.300**	.237**	.239**	1	
(7)Public Broadcaster	.096*	-.087*	.029	.077	.036	.001	1

*Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). No VIF-score above 1.308; VIF scores of about 5 point to multicollinearity*

Table 5.1
Examples of account coding

PROTEST CLAIM	TARGET/ THIRD PARTY	ACCOUNT TRANSCRIPT	CODING
Hunger strikers demand government to work out clear regularization criteria for asylum seekers.	Yves Leterme, Prime Minister (Target)	*"I understand the demand, but I do not agree with the method. A hunger strike is an unautharized pressure tactic in a democracy."*	understanding; disagrees with form
Against plans to liberalize the non-profit sector. Demonstrators fear privatization of public services and downgrading of social rights.	Annemie Neyts; Minister of Foreign Trade (Target)	*"The demonstrators exaggerate. (sums up, counting on fingers) Education: nothing to fear; Audivisual sector: nothing to fear; cultural sector: nothing to fear; Health sector: again, nothing to fear."*	substantive disagreement
80,000 union demonstrators do not agree with the "Generation Pact", a range of measures which deal with amongst others retirement age.	Guy VerhofstadtPrime Minister (Target)	*"I understand the concern uttered today in the streets of Brussels. The Generation Pact is an important and a thorough reform, which highly impacts the careers of employees. But it is also a necessary reform. It is necessary for safeguarding the future of our country, and most especially, for the future of our social security system. We will therefore execute it, and execute is completely, because it is necessary, for future generations."*	understanding; stick to measure
the social profit sector wants better wage and working conditions of the federal and flemish government	Freya Van den Bossche; Minister of Employment (Target)	(journalist voiceover) The government, however, is willing to negotiate: *"It is important to negotiate. Not with everybody at the same time and at one table, but with everybody separately. We should discuss what is important for them, but also, what is feasible for us. As such, we can see whether there is any room to find and make an agreement.*	political process
unions demonstrate against the proposal to allow child care by commercial institutions and employement agencies; quality will lower, will become more expensive	Renaat Landuyt; Flemish Minister of Work (Target)	*"The starting point is that is does not matter who provides the service, as long as it is meets the standards. Who provides the service is sideshow, the service needs to be provided. I will continue to defend this proposal."*	substantive disagreement ; stick to measure
protest against Bush, the imminent war in Iraq, and the weapon transports	Jos Geysels; party leader AGALEV (Third party)	*"If Bush decides unilaterally to attack Iraq, then we will have to see whether we still can allow this weapon transports on Belgian territory."*	Substantive agreement
protestors demand more purchasing power, a new indexation of the wages, stable prices and financial support for the skyrocketing energy prices.	Pieter Timmermans; VBO, employer organization (Third party)	Employer organizations do not understand the union reaction. They say that already many important measures are taken. *"Wages are indexed about three times a year, the government will inject from October first 100 million euro in purchasing power, the Flemish government pays 700 million euro on a yearly basis. We have calculated that this means 500 euro extra per capita. I do not think we need more measures".*	substantive disagreement ; stick to measure

[1] Belgium is a linguistically segregated federal country. There are Dutch speaking and French speaking people, forming two communities, each with its own media landscape. When I speak of Belgium, I actually refer to the largest community, which is the Dutch speaking community. It contains over 60 percent of the population.

[2] It should be noted that power balances in the news production *process* are not necessarily reflected in the news *content* of a news item (amongst others: Strombäck and Nord, 2006). This study analyses the latter and speculates about the first. Although combining insights of both phases would improve understanding of the interaction in the process of protest news construction, the choice for focusing on news content is obvious given the fact that only the content reaches an audience, and it is this audience and its potential support protest leaders are foremost interested in.

[3] Lohmann (1993) holds that political reactions to the demands of extremist or radical activists do not increase and might even decrease correct representation. Therefore, politicians will try to judge the number of activist moderates in demonstrations when deciding to react or not.

[4] The Electronic News Archive is a continuous media monitoring service hosted by the University of Antwerp and the Catholic University of Leuven. It is funded by the Flemish Minister of Media. More specifically, the ENA-database is a census dataset that includes all 19 o'clock newscasts since 2003. These newscasts are coded by trained coders following a generic codescheme on both actor and issue level. The ENA database was used to retrieve the protest events that gained media attention and also delivered the media footage (imagery) which then was coded with a specific codescheme for this specific research.

[5] Although this Krippendorf Alpha value is rather low, pairwise percentage agreement is 89%. Third party sources were far less frequently present in the intercoder sample compared to the entire dataset; and the third party in it was attributed a statement too (not directly quoted) making it somewhat easily missed by the coders and explaining the relatively low Krippendorf Alpha.

[6] Model 3 and 4 filter on target and third party reactions respectively. All the protest reports in these models in fact triggered reactions of targets or third parties. Within these reports model 3 and 4 try to discriminate protest events that trigger positive reactions from protest events that trigger negative reactions.

Conclusion

This study dealt with the question of how television news covers social movements and protest. It examined the relationship between media and movements alongside two dimensions. Both *selection* and *description* of movements and protest were thoroughly and comprehensively analyzed. Previous research on media and movements foremost took a qualitative, case-study approach. Scholars followed a single movement, took the movement organization as the starting point and examined the difficulties it encountered in getting its message across. Media content was mainly analyzed by means of political discourse analysis, studies were executed in the United States and newspapers were the mass medium under scrutiny. Although these studies were detailed and unlocked the interaction between activists and journalists, they scored low on generalizability and were weak in teasing out conditionality. The conclusions of these studies nevertheless have been reiterated uncritically ever since and gained the status of established general truths.

This study took a more quantitative and empirical approach. It compared media coverage across many issues , many movements and many protest events that differed in terms of organization, disruption and size. It did so over a prolonged period of time. It focused on television news, compared between television stations and was performed in the non-US context of Belgium. That being said, it is fair to say that this study presents the most robust test of long-held assumptions that tend to consider the relationship between media and movements unconditionally and monolithically as a tale of gloom and doom. The unique selling point of this dissertation is that it teased out the conditions that regulate media coverage of movements and protest in a systematic, comprehensive and innovative way.

In this concluding chapter I present an overview of the key findings of every single chapter. Next, I integrate these findings into an over-arching conclusion. Finally, I also draw attention to some limitations of this study and point to promising avenues for future research.

Summary of Key Findings

In Chapter 1 I looked at the presence of six families of advocacy groups across the entire domestic news agenda. I compared the presence of advocacy group families within and across issues to the presence of elected officials, public servants and experts. As such, I putted the acclaimed underdog status of advocacy group news sources to a tough test. Results showed that the presence of advocacy group families in the news is segmented by issues and that sourcing patterns differ strongly across issues. Whereas vocational groups (unions and professional organizations) are at least as present as elected officials on economic issues; human rights and environmental groups are far less prominent on their core issues. Findings indicate that the underdog status of advocacy groups in the news hence is not generic but issue-specific. More powerful families appear more prominently on more newsworthy issues, supporting the idea that the media arena is not a level playing field. Across most issues, however, advocacy groups always are more present than civil servants and experts. In other words, advocacy group families are routine sources in Belgian television news, their presence significantly contributes to the diversity of sources in the news, and this is good news for the health of the public sphere. On the level of individual groups, however, attention for advocacy groups appears to be extremely skewed (see also Wouters, De Smedt, Hooghe, & Walgrave, 2011), and it is questionable whether the lion's share of advocacy groups make enough news to speak of successful outsider strategy employment.

In Chapter 2 I compared attributes of protest and non-protest news items across three types of advocacy groups (unions, environmental organizations, peace organizations). More specifically, I tested whether source selection patterns (balance), volume (item duration), prominence (headline status) and standing of groups (direct quotation) differed across protest and non-protest news items. Two general laws of protest coverage were established: protest items tend to be shorter and less frequently balanced than non-protest items. Of course, both are interrelated: it is exactly because items are not balanced that they tend to be

shorter, and vice versa. These two findings held across all group families which suggests that they can be considered as rather robust laws, for the Belgian case at least. Protest results in shorter news items but movements are very much at the center of these items.

Both standing and prominence showed to be not unidirectionally affected across groups and strategies. Unions have more frequently standing and are featured most frequently prominently in the news. Protest of these giants of civil society has little to no substantial impact on both news item features. Environmental groups, on the other hand, have less standing when protesting and are featured least prominently. For peace organizations, finally, protest has a positive impact both on standing and prominence. Although speculative, these findings exhibit a logical and interpretable pattern. Unions are powerful actors in Belgian politics. Journalists hence treat them with respect irrespective of whether caught protesting or not. The peace movement was especially active during the Iraq war years. Belgian public opinion and political elites clearly were aligned with the peace movement stance, hence the positive impact of protest coverage on prominence and standing. Environmental groups, finally, tend to protest more disruptively and could not enjoy momentum like the peace movement did. Hence the rather negative impact of protest. Wrapped up, Chapter 2 contributed to extant knowledge in two particular ways: it provided protest coverage with a baseline (non-protest coverage of the very same advocacy groups) and explored the conditionality of protest coverage (do findings hold across all group families). It discovered two general laws and was able to present a logical interpretation of the conditions that regulate the differences in coverage across movements and strategies.

In Chapter 3 the *selection* of protest events by television news took center stage. I compared police record data to television news data, tested for presence, prominence and volume of protest coverage, and compared a public broadcaster to a commercial station. Results showed that few protest events pass the television gates (about 11%), that the public broadcaster covers many more protest events than the commercial station, and that the public broadcaster treats protest more at length compared to its commercial competitor. The most important predictor of news coverage without doubt is demonstration size. The bigger a demonstration, the stronger the signal that is coming from society and the more relevant journalists will judge the claim. Although size matters, this proved to be less the case for new social movements. These movements cannot count on a big constituency. I found that especially these organizations adapt to a media logic by staging protest events that display

symbolic elements. It is the colorfulness and theatrical nature of symbolic actions that make them attractive for television news and compensate for the lack of numbers. Disruption proved to be an important predictor as well, confirming 'conflict' as a consistent news value, and also demonstrations staged in weekends -known as slow news days- more easily succeeded in attracting the media limelight. Only size and disruption were consistent predictors of the prominence and volume of protest coverage. As a final note, the models presented in chapter 3 were better at explaining media selection of the commercial station, all in all suggesting that the commercial station applies a more outspoken filter to reality, and, taking the predictor variables into account, offer a more strict selection of events that are more likely to provide (theatrical) drama and conflict.

In Chapter 4 I tackled *the* central characteristic of the protest paradigm. Does protest coverage focuses on the issues and claims of demonstrators? Or on the particularities of the event, like for instance the appearances and the behavior of the participants? Chapter 4 scrutinized the *description* of protest events. I distinguished between three types of coverage: thematic (issue attention), episodic-event (event attention) and episodic-exemplar (attention for personal testimonies) coverage. Contrary to extant literature, I established that Belgian television news covers protest foremost thematically. Literature on the protest paradigm did not yet scrutinize the conditions that regulate the description of protest events. I found that both news value, news routine, news format and media ownership related variables significantly affect protest description. Unsurprisingly, protest that is disruptive leads to less thematic and more event coverage. Demonstration size matters too, although in a somewhat unexpected direction: if protest is big, journalists tend to sample many more participants for direct quotes which increases the odds of exemplar coverage. Also protest reports with follow-up item(s) contain more exemplar coverage, showing that this indeed is a distinct type of attention that journalists elaborate preferably in distinct news items. Lead items display more event coverage, and, organizations that are already successful in the media arena get more issue attention when staging protest. The public broadcaster, finally, on top of all these other effects, treated protest events more substantially thematic than the commercial station. Findings proved to be stable across issues, with two minor exceptions: peace protest turned out to be more event focused; poverty protest more frequently takes a close-up at exemplars. Again, this chapter showed that media do not treat protest monolithically:

different events get a different treatment, and different media treat the same events differently as well.

Chapter 5, finally, added *reaction* to "selection" and "description" as a way of analyzing the struggle of movements in the media arena. It was argued that most of the interaction between elites and movements nowadays occurs in the media arena, that reactions of targets and third parties boost the functions of media for movements, and that therefore, reactions deserve up-close examination. In Chapter five I asked whether targets and third parties react to protest in the news, how they react if they do, and under which circumstances they are more likely to react. Results first of all confirm findings of chapter 2: one protest item in three is completely narrated by voiceover and is unlikely to contain reaction. However, if any source is directly quoted, protestors are by definition given voice in the news. In about half of the protest items with direct protestor quotation, reactions of targets and third parties are part of the news item as well. Whereas third parties foremost react positively, reactions of targets tend to contain more frequently negative and ambivalent elements. Demonstrations that are large, reactive, not staged by unions and which have a domestic and specific target are more likely to trigger responsiveness. Only demonstration size is a significant predictor of third party reactions. Taken together, these results bring news content analysis a step closer to protest impact analysis.

Integrating Selection, Description and Reaction

The main aim of this study was putting the conditionality of television news coverage of social movements and protest to the test. I studied selection, description and reaction in a quantitative, systematic and comprehensive way. The structure of these three final chapters was very much alike. They relied on two types of datasets (police and media data) and used (to a certain extent) overlapping predictor variables which makes them very well-suited for profound integration. In the next few paragraphs, I make a "meta-analysis" of the three studies and scrutinize how the predictors of selection, description and reaction behave across these studies. Interspersing this integration with the findings of chapter 1 and 2, this section presents the reader with a detailed and at the same time over-arching conclusion.

Table 6.1

Integrating Selection, Description and Reaction

	Selection			Description			Reaction	
	Presence	Prominence	Volume	Thematic	Event	Exemplar	Response	Expansion
Protest Characteristics								
Size	+++	++	++	ns	--	+	+	+++
Disruption	++	+	+	---	+++	ns	ns	ns
Symbolic Action	+	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
OSM/standing/union	++	ns	ns	+	-	ns	ns	ns
Static	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Specific Target	ns	ns	-	ns	ns	ns	++	ns
Domestic Target	++	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	+++	ns
Reactive	x	x	x	+	-	ns	+	ns
Stability								
Years	+	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	-	ns
Issues	++	+	+	-	+	+++	+	+
Media Characteristics								
Public Broadcaster	++	++	+	++	--	ns	ns	ns
Lead Item				-	+	ns	++	++
Follow-up item				-	ns	+++	++	++
R^2	28.5	9.7	2.4	17.5	16.5	4.4	13.5	7.5

Table 6.1 presents selection, description and reaction variables in columns and predictor variables in rows. Significant relations are indicated with plusses and minuses. More signs point to a stronger relationship (based on comparing z-scores and Wald Statistics within regressions). Grey backgrounds refers to additional (multivariate) tests as the original chapters did not make use of these specific predictor variables. As such, table 6.1 summarizes the entire dissertation on a single page.

Remember the logics of protest that were presented in Chapter 3? According to Donatella della Porta and Diani (1999) three logics of protest could be distinguished: a logic of numbers, of disruption and of bearing witness. How do these logics fare in the media arena?

Results of this study show that the *logic of numbers* without doubt has the most pervasive impact on media coverage of protest. Demonstration size is the only variable that has an effect across the board. First, size is the most important predictor when it comes to media selection of protest. Large protest events are more frequently singled out as newsworthy, more frequently placed up-front in news casts and more easily treated at length. Second, protest size affects media description as well: total airtime increases together with the airtime of all different coverage types. Yet this is especially the case for the share of exemplar coverage. If demonstrations are big, journalists tend to sample the protestors for direct quotes in order to let the mass have its say. This increase in direct quotations also increases the chances of a bottom-up perspective being present. It should be noted, however, that especially protest reports with a follow-up item are more likely to contain exemplar coverage, demonstrating that this truly is a different type of attention. Although not producing multicollinearity, it is easy to see how these phenomena (size, volume and follow-up item) are interrelated: big demonstrations are the news of the day, leading editors to air lengthier and multiple items in order to clarify the issue to the audience from multiple perspectives. In doing so, journalists tend to present the issue by a particular case. Third, also reaction to protest is affected by the logic of numbers. Holding large demonstrations is the only significant way of eliciting third party interest, and it is the only variable under relative direct protestor control that incites target responsiveness. Wrapped up, large demonstrations set the conditions for movements to score media arena *homeruns*. In the eye of journalists, protesting in the first place is a numbers game.

Mobilizing big is easier said than done and the outcome of the mobilization process always is uncertain. Movements that decide to walk the *path of disruption* definitely are more in control (one only needs a few hotheads) and results shows that disruption is very likely to seduce the media spotlight. However, forcing the media gates by means of disruption is likely to have negative descriptive effects. The impact of disruption is biggest on event description. Disruptive action leads to higher shares of event-information in news reports. This focus on conflict and arrests washes away information about the issue and claims of the protest. Moreover, disruption does not lead to responsiveness but to negative third party reactions (Chapter 5). In other words, breaking the media gates by means of disruption is relatively easy and effortless yet it comes at a price. Protest most likely will be negatively portrayed and – lacking substantial issue information- will come across as rather meaningless. Just like the trash bins and cars turned upside-down, protestors get burned in the media arena if they misbehave. It should be noted that violence is not necessarily scripted or planned. A peaceful march can be hijacked by a few frustrated individuals, and results show that these individuals are likely to determine the image of the general protestors that will be projected in the living room.

A more fruitful route to the eye and ear of the country is following the *logic of bearing witness*. Protestors that enact their claims symbolically are like candy journalists find hard to resist. Symbolic actions are theatrical happenings, carefully scripted and performed, in order to respond to mass media criteria of news judgment. Especially new social movements make use of this logic of protest (chapter 3) and it seems that they succeed to compensate for their lack of numbers by carrying out the "media logic" to its extremes. Although symbolic actions are executed by professional activists that follow a strict script, reactions of targets and third parties seem not be part of the screenplay. Symbolic actions do not perform better when it comes to eliciting reactions. Moreover, also media description is left unaffected by the logic of bearing witness, nor does it result in lengthier or more prominent news items. In other words, of the three logics, the logic of bearing witness has the least pervasive impact in the media arena, yet chances of offensive coverage remain slim as well.

Besides these logics of protest, strongly stressing the agency of social movements, several other protest characteristics were taken into account throughout this study. Chapter 1 and 2 brought evidence to the table of media not being a level playing field. The principle of cumulative inequality was found to be at work, making stronger organizations stronger. With

organizations and *issues* being strongly interrelated (Chapter 1) let us have a look at their (joint) effect on protest coverage. The difficulty in discussing how organizations and issues relate to media attention is that on the one hand issues can be seen as a window of opportunity and that some windows are more opened than others. Movements undergo issue dynamics. Chapter 1 clearly showed how issues set limits to the media access possibilities of advocacy groups. Yet on the other hand, it should also be clear that the contours of this "discursive opportunity structure" not only imply stability but also possess chances of variability (Gamson, 2004). On top of this short-lived variability Chapter 3 to 5 focused foremost on the agency-component of social movements. The starting point of these chapters was studying how movements succeed in conquering a spot on the media agenda. Instead of undergoing issue-dynamics, movements can attract attention by means of protest and set the agenda. Is it possible to integrate and reconcile these –at first sight- seemingly diametrically opposed starting points?

Organizational strength -measured in diverse ways- turned out to affect both selection and description. Organizations that are more professionalized have the resources to ease the news gathering process. Results show that old and new social movements are better placed to elicit media attention compared to migrant and asylum seeker organizations who most definitely are more resource poor. Additional analyses show that especially protest events dealing with issues of old social movements (state of the economy; employment; welfare) are likely to get picked up by mass media. Chapter 1 evidenced that these are issues of constant newsworthiness. In other words, the window of opportunity is more open to organizations that already are rich in resources.

For media description, the same rationale applies. Organizations that already have high media standing and thus have a routine status in the news get more easily substantial thematic coverage. The effect of issues on media description, however, does not follow the cumulative inequality rationale. The effect of issues on media description manifests itself most prominently in the relationship between poverty-issue protest and exemplar coverage. Although no union effect was found in the analyses of mediated reaction to protest, bivariatly, union protest gets marginally significantly more reacted to (B= .406; p=.057). Adding issues to the equation brings stronger evidence to the surface: again, employment, welfare and economy protests are more frequently reacted to by political targets. This is very much in line with what Duyvendak and Giugni (1995) label high-profile policy domains: these

domains have priority over others because of the amount of resources involved, the centrality of the "national interest" and the electoral consequences they bring along. Naturally, political targets are more on top of these domains. Interestingly, although targets are more likely to react to protest dealing with high-profile policy domains, no such effect was found for third party reactions. The only issue that significantly affected third party reactions turned out to be the asylum issue, an issue populated with weaker organizations that fare well by third party support.

All in all, issues and organizational strength seem to have a pervasive impact and set the boundaries of media coverage. To say it somewhat bluntly, some problems simply are born in the wrong family and encounter more friction in trying to get their message successfully across. Yet this does not mean that strong organizations are not treated critically (the negative third party reactions to unions in Chapter 5) or that weaker organizations cannot have momentum (for instance the peace movement in Chapter 2). Nor does it mean that everything boils down to issues or resources (the absence of significant differences between old and new social movements in Chapter 3). And it certainly does not mean that movements lack maneuvering space or agency (the impact of the logics of protest across chapter 3, 4 and 5). What it does mean, however, is that some movements start their race to media coverage somewhat earlier on the track, and, most certainly in the Belgian context, these differential starting points seem to have less to do with ideological agenda's or individual journalistic preferences, but more with a reflection of high and lower policy domains, media's role as watchdog of those whose decisions affect a great number of people, and media's preference for domestic stories.

Next, also *target* characteristics were taken into account. Unsurprisingly, but until this conclusion untested, protest tackling domestic targets resonates better in the media arena. Media attention mainly is a matter of national affairs, journalists follow audiences and these are preoccupied with the local. Once the media gates are passed, the domestic character of protest does not affect media description. This does not mean that in the media arena domestic and "foreign" protests are equal: protest that tackles at domestic targets is more successful in eliciting mediated responsiveness compared to protest that tackles non-domestic targets. Obviously, ambassadors and euro-politicians can be more reluctant to journalists begging for a quote. Addressing a specific target, next, affects receiving reactions

too, but is of no importance in gaining media access or in getting one's claim up front in a news item.

A more subtle protest characteristic was whether protest was *reactive* or not. That is to say, whether protest was staged against a policy measure that is only just implemented, or soon about to be implemented. Unfortunately, only description and reaction of protest were coded alongside this line. The police archive proved to be too unspecific to measure this characteristic. First of all, protest that is reactive has higher chances of receiving reactions of political targets. As institutional politics more than in other cases already is the starting point of reactive news reports, targets more likely are part of the item too. As such mediated responsiveness could be interpreted more as a matter of accountability. Moreover, additional analyses revealed that on top of all other predictors, coverage of reactive protest also tends to be more thematically oriented (B=.045; p = .048). In other words, protest on topics that are already politicized receive more substantive coverage (most probably because it is more likely to include a substantive reaction of a politician). Although not directly tested, it seems quite likely that reactive protest is also better armed to survive the media selection process. Journalist tend to follow the trail of political power. At moments when protest and politics strongly congregate -like in the case of reactive protest- it could be logical that media coverage becomes more likely as well. Again, these findings add evidence to the table that compared to institutional politics, non-institutional challengers are somewhat more ill-positioned when it comes to the struggle in the media arena.

In the selection bias literature, the stability of selection patterns is a hot issue. Scholars therefore tend to control for years in their analyses. Results in Chapter 3 revealed no instabilities to be present (except more attention for protest in 2008). Including years as controls in description and reaction analyses revealed no telling yearly differences either. Only in 2007 and 2010, both federal election years, political targets tended to react less frequently (than in 2003, which was also a federal election year). All in all, it seems that media selection is quite stable. Results are constant across years, also in separate regressions.

Finally, several *media characteristics* were scrutinized. Let us first have look at two news story characteristics: the prominence of a news item and whether the news report included a follow-up item or not. First of all, reactions to protest are affected by these news item characteristics. Both scope expansion and target responsiveness are positively related, yet

most probably the causation runs the other way around. It is exactly because of the reaction of politicians that a protest report receives headline status or a more in-depth treatment. More interestingly is that protest reports that make headline news also are more likely to have a higher share of episodic coverage. The fact that especially large and/or disruptive demonstrations make headline news most probably lies at the origin of this finding (chapter 3). Nevertheless, on top of this effect journalists seem to pay more attention to characteristics of participants and particularities of the event if protest becomes leading news.

Lastly, this study compared two television stations with different ownership structures. The Belgian television news market is known for its duopoly situation, which has led to a rather strong convergence between the public and private news provider. This study took a very detailed look at how both stations treat contentious non-institutional politics. Despite the great similarities between both stations established in earlier research (Hooghe et al., 2007), this study finds differences to be at work, both on the level of selection and description, yet not on the level of reaction. In a nutshell, it seems that protest finds a safer harbor on the public broadcaster. The public broadcaster covers more protest events, gives protest more frequently headline status (those events that are covered by both stations receive twice as much headline status on the public broadcaster) and treats protest more at length (although this difference is only significant for protest events covered by both stations). The public broadcaster covers protest also differently: more thematically and less episodically, and this finding holds even if only those protest events that appear on both stations are taken into account. It could be the more viewer oriented focus of commercial television, its lower budget or the smaller newsroom with fewer specialists that account for these findings. Finally, no differences were found between both stations when it comes to reactions of targets and third parties, despite the more institutional focus of the public broadcaster. Indirectly, this points -although speculative at best- to the possibility that in the dance between journalists and politicians in case of protest coverage, politicians only tend to react if it is on their terms and if it suits them.

Also the final line in table 6.1 deserves some words of explanation: how well did the models presented succeed in explaining the total variance? In simple terms, did the predictor variables get a grip at what they tried to explain? In the introduction I argued that the concepts of selection, description and reaction tapped to a mounting degree the discursive

success of movements in the media arena. Placing the models next to each other, table 6.1 shows that these concepts besides mounting success also present us with diminishing predictability. In concrete terms, the models presented can predict to quite an extent whether a demonstration will be picked up or not by mass media but are far less precise in capturing description and reaction. Although this can be a consequence of the precision of measuring description and the frequency of reactions, I do suspect that this very much reflects the experience of protest organizers themselves. They know to quite an extent when a demonstration will be picked up by mass media, but nevertheless are very much subjected to a "dilemma of weak control" when it comes to how journalists mold the event (description) and whether (and for sure how) other actors react to the event (reaction).

Limitations and Further Research

Doing research means making choices. The style and form of the output of all the decision-making to a major extent obscures all the choices and very reasonable doubts that lay below the surface. The myriad of choices made, even if well-argumented, inevitably lead to limitations. This study is no exception. Although I am very confident in the solidness of the design and in the analyses presented in the different chapters, I would like to draw attention to some limitations of this study. These limitations are mostly a consequence of prioritizing and for sure would not change the key findings explained above. Yet they nevertheless deserve elaboration as they very precisely position this study in the broader literature and point out promising directions for future research.

The *first* limitation of this dissertation is that it rests on content analysis only: the *outcome* of the news production process is scrutinized not the news production *process* itself. Strömbäck and Nord (2006) argue that it is useful to make such a distinction as the journalistic end product only partially and imperfectly reflects the mechanisms that operate behind it (see also for instance Örebro, 2002; Reich, 2006). In none of the chapters I directly observed nor directly studied such mechanisms. Instead, I made interferences about these mechanisms based on contributions of other scholars. Although the input-output structure of especially chapter 3 comes as close as one can get to the mechanisms of the news (selection) process in a quantitative, non-experimental way, the actual mechanisms during this entire study

remained in the proverbial black box. Therefore, doing interviews with journalists or communication staffers of social movements would make a very nice complement to this study. It would give the reader more a kind of insider, personalized and perhaps even more compelling perspective on the relationship between journalists and activists.

I nevertheless believe that the focus on content analysis followed here was the right one. Most of the social movement literature on news making exactly deals with this more bottom-up, qualitative process-like approach. Consequentially, much about the hurdles and difficulties in news making for social movements is known. Yet another focus on these processes in my opinion would have led to more particularities and thick descriptions, whereas I believe the field in its current state benefits more from quantitatively testing general assumptions and teasing out conditionalities. This makes this study also more a study in communication sciences than in social movement studies: it is foremost the toolbox of communication scientists that I have applied to the subject of social movements and protest.

Aware of this imbalance –the focus on product over process- I contacted the most experienced journalist present in (and according to) the database, joined him for a day of protest coverage and confronted him with the results of the five chapters. Although talking to one journalist on one day comes not even close to a systematic inquiry of the news production process, the meeting nevertheless proved insightful. First of all, it was reassuring that many of the mechanisms alluded to in this study were recognized and practiced. One remark nevertheless needs to be made. Scholars like to talk about *'the battle in and over the media arena'* and this might very well capture the experience of the sources involved. Yet for journalists, it seems that making news foremost is doing work and routinizing the unexpected (Tuchman, 1973). Journalists have to work quick, they select sources and sound bites, edit, rephrase and re-edit faster than one could imagine possible. News items can last only a fixed amount of seconds and if the editor in chief decides minutes before airing that only a shorter timeslot is available–which means cutting the reaction of a counter-protestor, or deleting phrases on the circumstances that led to the demonstration– one cannot but reflect about the hasty and cursory character of the object of analysis of this study. In other words, news production despite all its (attributed) excitement essentially is rather mundane. With all the scholarly interest in struggling and battling and dancing in the media arena, the practical aspects for a great deal affect how media molds reality and should not be lost out of sight.

The *second* limitation of this study closely relates to the previous one: the analyses presented in this study can be considered as exorbitantly *static*. They make abstraction of the inherent dynamic nature of current affairs and news production. This holds especially for the chapter on selection, but is also consequential for the chapters dealing with description of and reaction to protest. Whether something becomes news depends not only on the static characteristics of the event. Also the other occurrences of that day and similar occurrences that succeeded in gaining coverage in the recent past affect the chances of events becoming news. They most likely affect the packaging and the information presented in a news report as well. Journalists interpret new occurrences against the background of past work. This study did not include this factor in explaining selection, description and reaction.

Empirically incorporating such dynamics is very rare in current research. Most studies simply refer to the classic work of Anthony Downs (1972), who coined the word "issue-attention cycle". They allude to the dynamic but do not test it (but see McCarthy et al., 1996 for crude, preliminary evidence). Integrating these more dynamic aspects of issue-attention would open a box of intriguing questions: do protest events surf waves of attention? Or do they cause the swell? Is media attention foremost cause or consequence of protest events? And how does protest description varies depending on the placement in an issue-attention cycle. Not only is the question complex, also statistically disentangling and modeling such dynamics is a challenge. With statistical software programs increasingly giving users the opportunity to compute loops in datasets (which allow for the calculation of moving averages of issue attention for whatever period of time) and with agenda setting scholars making use of lagged variables and time series that control for past issue-attention, it seems that scholars will be more likely to focus on these intriguing questions in the near future. First attempts in demarcating issues and creating moving averages in the media dataset showed previous issue attention to increase chances of media coverage of protest actions, especially for weaker groups like migrant organizations or asylum seeker groups. For these weaker groups, gaining media attention certainly has to do with grabbing momentum and being in the right place at the right time in an issue attention cycle. The greatest challenge, however, is the fickleness and unsteadiness in fitting a statistical model, as it turned out that each issue-attention cycle has its very own dynamic (duration, amount of increase in attention). Essentially, short term spikes of attention are rather unpredictable: something that is hot one day is not the next and the mechanisms that keep such a dynamic going (new events, other actors reacting, lack of

new news) prove to be complex. Nevertheless, the question of protest as cause and/or consequence of media attention is an intriguing and relevant question that deserves elaboration.

A *third* limitation of this study foremost is an avenue for further research, and actually is a strength in comparison with previous studies. That is, the fact that this study only deals with Belgium and television news. Extant research was foremost executed in a US-context and dealt with newspaper coverage. It focused on one issue, one movement organization or a limited number of protest events. A major contribution of this thesis is that it brought these concepts to another ground. Compared to these studies, this dissertation –comparing across many issues, movements and protest events- is very *comparative*. Yet although testing assumptions in the Belgian context and for television news proved insightful, no direct comparison was made between countries and different types of media. We know now, for instance, that selection processes in Belgium to a very great extent resemble selection processes of protest in America, yet that the description of protest differs tremendously. Yet we do not know whether Belgium is merely an exception to the rule, or whether broadcasters in similar "Democratic Corporatist" media systems would behave alike. Some characteristics of Belgian society clearly are at odds with the American system – for instance the strong public broadcaster, the news duopoly, the insider position of unions, the continuing strength of civil society and the normalization of protest. Yet only direct comparative research can assess whether and how such systemic characteristics affect media molding of movements and protest. The same holds for different types of media. For instance, does the finding that symbolic actions increase television news selection holds for newspapers? And what about the description of protest in the press? Moreover, although this study broadened the concept of mass media for movements by putting television news center stage, there is a new kind of media -social media- that is flourishing. With social movements being networks of networks and the internet being the new medium of the networked world, some researchers consider the *wählverwandshaft* between both as a prelude for a match made in heaven (Van De Donk, Loader, Nixon, & Rucht, 2004). Yet the consequences of this dream marriage for movements are not yet well mapped. Although new and social media without doubt might drive diffusion and allow resource poor groups to more easily make noise, it is doubtful to which extent these messages succeed in producing spill-over effects without at least some support of traditional mass media.

A *fourth* limitation has to do with the imbalance the reader must have noticed in this dissertation, and which is apparent in figure 0.1: protest events got the lion's share of attention, organizations were far less thoroughly scrutinized. Future research could gather real world information about organizations and try to predict media presence of these organizations inductively rather than deductively. Organizational resources (*membership size, size of the communication staff, having a research unitt, years of existence, part of a coalition*), tactics (*direct action or not*) institutionalization (*number of seats in government advice councils if any*) and media efforts (*knowing journalists, number of press releases*) are likely to boost newsworthiness of organizations (Andrews & Caren, 2010; Rohlinger, Kail, Taylor, & Conn, 2012). Also how organizations make it into the news (is it foremost in reaction to an event or disaster or policy decision; or do organizations foremost bring new issues to the fore) would be a promising avenue for future research. In other words, a shift from event to organization would allow for a fuller understanding of the relationship between movements (and their different organizations) and media. For instance, it could be that the stakes of asylum seekers are defended by very professionalized organizations that tend not to protest, that these organizations do succeed in gaining exposure, and that hence the grievances of asylum seekers actually are represented in the public sphere. This study focused strongly and in great detail on protest politics and in far less detail on organizations.

A *final* limitation, not so much of this thesis but more of the entire research field, has to do with the premise on which this dissertation is based. Media attention matters for movements, so much is clear. Yet few studies have explicitly tackled this impact of media on and for movements. One way to do so is by adding media attention as an intermediary variable in agenda setting studies of protest (Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). But also the effect of media coverage on the citizen public needs examination. Smidt (2012), for instance, shows how protest coverage across two contentious issues outperforms other types of news coverage in setting the public agenda by relying on news and polling data. Other scholars have conducted experiments (Boyle et al., 2006; McLeod, 1995; McLeod & Detenber, 1999) showing how subtle differences between news reports influence audience perception of particular protest marches. These experiments, however, always dealt with media coverage of extremist groups (but see Detenber et al., 2007). For a better understanding of the impact of media coverage on perceptions of protest, one should test not only those circumstances in which one is most likely to find effects, but also the circumstances that are most present in

society, that is, protest on high-visibility issues. It could also bear fruit to present these protest reports to different audiences. It might be that some characteristics of news reports are very appealing to the general public, whereas these same characteristics fail to inspire politicians to take action. If, as Koopmans (2004) argues, politicians only react to protest *if* and *as* covered by mass media, the effects of media coverage on different audience types deserve up-close investigation.

Final words

This study essentially was a study about dogs. About watchdogs and underdogs, more specifically. Social movements are considered to be underdog news sources, having difficulties in gaining access and getting their message undistorted through the media gates. Mass media, on the other hand, are supposed to be watchdogs. They have to be meaningful agenda-setters, offer pluralistic debate and hold elites to account. Whereas previous studies considered the mediation of movements and protest unconditionally as a story of gloom and doom, this study sought to tease out the factors that regulate media selection and description of movements and protest.

The arising picture is more nuanced than the assumptions put forward at the outset of this study. Rather than a lapdog, or a protector of the status quo, the results of this study align with the words of Gamson (2004: 249): "*The mass media arena is not that flat, orderly and well-marked field in a soccer stadium but one full of hills and valleys, sinkholes, promontories, and impenetrable jungles. To make matters even more complicated, the contours of the playing field can change in an Alice-in-Wonderland fashion in the middle of the contest because of events that lie beyond the control of the players; and players can themselves sometimes change the contours through actions that create new discursive opportunities.*"

By looking at television news coverage of movements and protest in a systematic and comprehensive way, this study established conditions that regulate the selection and description of movements in the media arena, rather than monolithically presenting the struggle of movements as a lost cause. Although it cannot be denied that some players in the struggle over access and the contest over meaning are better positioned than others, this

study lay bare the mechanisms that tend to shape media coverage of movements and protest. With media coverage being a crucial intermediary variable between movement activity and movement outcome, this study hopes to have contributed to the question of *"the extent to which, and the conditions under which, relatively powerless groups are likely to be effective"* (Lipsky, 1968: 1148). At best, this dissertation invites social scientists to conduct further research in the directions spelled out above (or write merciless attacks on the findings presented here); encourages activists to continue the struggle and makes the media jungle somewhat less obscure; and presents journalists with a mirror and a moment or two (only shortly, the next deadline is calling) to dwell on how to inform the audience on matters that tend to matter.

Walking soothes. There is a healing power in walking. The regular placement of one foot in front of the other while at the same time rowing rhythmically with the arms, the rising rate of respiration, the slight stimulation of the pulse, the actions required of eye and ear for determining direction and maintaining balance, the feeling of the passing air brushing against the skin – all these are events that mass about the body and mind in a quite irresistible fashion and allow the soul, be it ever so atrophied and bruised, to grow and expand.

Patrick Süskind, *The Pigeon*

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