

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara

The Protest News Framing Cycle:
How News Attention and Framing Change over the Course of a Protest

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Political Science

by

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By

Julian D. Gottlieb

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DEDICATION

To my parents and my best friend, David Wohlleben

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.” –Nelson Mandela

A dissertation is a huge undertaking. I would not be in a position to complete this research without the help of a large community of faculty members, friends, family and colleagues. I want to express deep gratitude for the people who have helped me flourish and grow as a scholar and a person during my time at UC Santa Barbara.

I want to especially thank my adviser and committee chair, Bruce Bimber, for his mentorship over the last six years. I am a difficult person. I can be a fireball of anxiety, impatience, self-doubt, and discontent. I ask deep existential questions about our profession, the value of the research we produce, and about navigating the path to fulfillment as an academic. Though he tries valiantly, Bruce can’t always answer these difficult questions. Yet, he does me a better service. He buys me lunch! Then, he speaks with candor and we ruminate together about the small actions we can take to live our professional lives with purpose and make our work more meaningful. That time has been invaluable to me. I cherish it. His guidance has taught me to turn my frustrations into programmable action, breakdown the great unknown into smaller, more manageable pieces, show more persistence and resolve in the face of challenges, and to *enjoy the ride*. Most importantly, with his support and insight I am encouraged to continue facing the grand challenges and the big questions...and when I find some of the answers, he will be the first to know. Thank you, Bruce.

My dissertation committee members, Miriam Metzger and Eric R.A.N. Smith, also deserve a lot of credit for helping me realize this project. I am a better researcher because of the critical comments Miriam provided for my prospectus defense. I came into the defense with some feelings, hunches, and conspiracies; I left the defense recognizing that proof of a theory needs to be concrete and compelling. Her insight and attention to detail has helped me craft a much more convincing and credible dissertation. Thank you, Miriam.

Eric has also been quite perceptive in his feedback and I particularly appreciate his pragmatic advice about seeing the project through to completion. It was Eric’s idea to pivot away from having an “occupy” dissertation and adding other protests to the analysis. This helped me see the forest when I was lost in the trees. He also provided some valuable insights about publishing: you have to *own your theory* and highlight your contribution to the conversation if you want to be successful in this profession. I wouldn’t have gotten my first publication without that advice. When the dissertation train derailed, Eric helped me get it back on track. Thanks, Eric.

I also benefitted from the knowledge and expertise of many political science and communication faculty members at UCSB. M. Stephen Weatherford has been a strong advocate for me during my time in Santa Barbara. He welcomed me to “the community of scholars” and has shown much interest and enthusiasm for my research agenda. He asked some brilliant questions at my prospectus defense and has been super accommodating when I needed help or had questions. I appreciate the support he has provided. Along with Stephen Weatherford, Garrett Glasgow, Heather Stoll and M. Kent Jennings whipped me into shape my first year as a graduate student. I demonstrated poor

aptitude at learning data analysis and methods, but I am making leaps and bounds at these skills because of them.

I also want to thank the professors from the communication department who welcomed me into their courses, including Miriam Metzger, Scott Reid and Ron Rice. I benefitted immensely from stepping outside my comfort zone and seeing how the field of communication approaches the topics and research questions that interest me the most. They are all prolific scholars who run graduate seminars like a well-oiled machine. Those courses inspired me to elevate my game.

I would also like to thank all of the professors I have been a teaching assistant for, including John Woolley, Amit Ahuja, Jessica Feezell, Lorelei Moosbrugger and Al Wyner. I am a better teacher because of their guidance. Steve Wiener has also had a profound impact on my development as a teacher and a young man. He has a simple philosophy: be kind and devote yourself to helping everyone reach his or her potential. His joyful attitude is contagious. He also taught me open door policy is the best policy. I wish him the best in his retirement. He is an amazing role model, professionally and personally. Some of my professors from the University of Arizona, Jan Leighley, Gregory Dixon, and Sarah Strand, who are all in different places now, deserve some credit as well for helping me get into graduate school. I hit the ground running in Santa Barbara because they prepared me well.

I especially want to thank Ted Anagnoson, a.k.a. Grandpa Ted. He is a beacon of knowledge and wisdom. He has the sharpest wit I know. His mentorship has been a blessing to me. We have lively discussions about the professional obstacles and obligations of academia, family, and love, but most of all; I enjoy our jovial banter about the absurdity of life. It is truly poetic when our minds unite. He is a crotchety old man and I am a young ignoramus...you can imagine how our conversations play out. Knowing Ted has been one of the great joys in my life.

So many graduate students over the years have shared pearls of wisdom, listened to me complain, made me laugh and been good friends to me: Tabitha Benney, Pavel Oleinikov, Lauren Copeland, Mario Guerrero, Meredith Conroy, Jason Pfeifle, Josh Dean, Jessica Feezell, Chris Welton, Skylar Covich, Carlos Suarez, Christine Kim, Maggie Safranova, Anne Pluta, Emiliana Patlán, Jeannette Harvie, Nikki Filler, Lila Faz, Colin Kuehl, Heather Hodges, Natasha Bennett, Yanira Pineda, Andrew Johnson, Amanda Brush, Matt Jenkins, Greg Blascovich, and others.

My former research assistants (or code monkeys as I liked to call them) worked so hard and helped me so much with my data collection. Big thanks to: Leeron Israel, Anne Sawiris, Rigoberto Mejia, McKinley Krongaus, Ashleigh O'Sullivan, and Angela Cuseo. All of them have a bright future ahead.

I want to send a very warm thanks to the international students who attended UCSB over the years including: Britta Rottbeck, Emily Hsu, Hyunsook Moon, Lisa Wessa, Mathilde Hulgard, Marta Guillaumet, Francisco Brandão, Zeynep Tuna, Jaedong Choi, and Everardo Diaz Gomez. I consider them to be some of my closest friends. They taught me that community and compassion are not geographically or linguistically bound. Marc Esteve del Valle in particular deserves special thanks for commenting on my first journal publication and sharing with me the delight of surfing. The ocean is sublime. Riding a wave is spiritual...we will surf again, my amigo.

I am blessed to have so many wonderful women in my life who point me toward the path of righteousness. María Jesús Prieto-Arriagada, my former roommate and colleague, has been a light in my life. I love her like a sister. Her and her partner, Diego Vargas, welcomed me to their home in Santiago, Chile and treated me like family. That trip to South America nourished my soul and reenergized me to finish graduate school. Gracias por todo, Tutú.

Carly Thomsen has also been a particularly good friend to me. She is an amazing chef, a fierce racquetball opponent, a brilliant scholar, and most of all she has a warm heart and a good soul. I know I can tell her anything. I always feel better after our conversations. That's worth a lot. Thanks, Carly.

Michael Albert, Geoff Allen, E.G. Garay, Jovian Radheshwar, Bobby Musgrave, Brian Lovato, Galen Stocking, and Marvin Spencer...thanks for putting up with my BS. You guys bring out the best in me. I love you all dearly. Through success and failure, love and loss, if we can still laugh about everything, we have more than enough.

My best friend, David Wohlleben, has been my greatest ally over the years. I don't always believe in myself, but he believes in me and pushes me to keep going. He is the most loyal friend I have and he means everything to me. This dissertation is dedicated to him.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my parents. My parents have been so supportive of my endeavor to get a Ph.D. I am blessed that they encourage me to chase my dreams. My love of news and media comes from my dad. I dedicate myself to doing what I love so I can make him proud, that is the measure of my success. My mom is my rock. Her strength and resolve know no bounds. She has made so many sacrifices for my brother and me to grow up in a good environment. We would not realize our potential without her dedication and commitment and love. She has taught me the two most valuable things I can possibly learn: how to read and how to treat women with respect; both of which have served me well so far. I love you both so much. My little brother, Marshall, also deserves props. His swag is off the charts and his drive to be successful motivates me to do better. I love you bro! Finally, I want to thank my Nana, my Papa, and Grandma Lil for all the phone calls and letters...they brighten my day. I am so blessed to have such a wonderful family. Much gratitude and love for everyone's support. Thank you all!

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ABSTRACT

The Protest News Framing Cycle:

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by

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When protests are successful, they force us to realize another world is possible. To be successful they have to communicate their message effectively and be persuasive. News coverage can often determine whether a protest will be successful or unsuccessful at amplifying its message and persuading audiences.

This dissertation examines the relationship of news organizations and protest movements. It asks three primary research questions. First, how does news attention to a protest rise and fall over time? Second, do news organizations pay attention to the causes and grievances of protesters? Third, how does news framing of a protest change over time? To answer these questions, I develop a theoretical model, the *protest news framing cycle*, and present the results of a longitudinal analysis of news attention and framing of protest movements.

To identify the frame-changing dynamic occurring over time, I conducted a content analysis of the news coverage of Occupy Wall Street and the G20 protests in London, Pittsburgh and Toronto. The study identifies longitudinal changes in news frames about the substantive issues of a protest and the conflict that ensues between protesters and city

officials during a protest. Findings suggest that conflict has a significant impact on the number of news stories about protests. Further, the results demonstrate how news framing opportunities change as a movement reaches different stages of the news attention cycle. The cases studied here illustrate that when the protests grew, journalists focused on the protesters' grievances, including economic inequality, bank bailouts, ending the Iraq War, and climate change. As the movements peaked, news attention shifted to the intensifying conflict between city officials and protesters. Ultimately, prolonged conflict is typically followed by a decline in protest news interest.

These results reveal the small window of opportunity protesters have to attract public support before news attention wanes and underscore the importance of protester tactics in shaping the narratives of coverage. Protesters have to strategically weigh the costs of confrontational tactics because such tactics can elicit more news attention to the protest, but these tactics might overshadow the core message of the protest itself.

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Chapter One:

Introduction

If protest tactics are not considered significant by the media, or if newspapers and television reporters or editors decide to overlook protest tactics, protest organizations will not succeed. Like the tree falling unheard in the forest, there is no protest unless protest is perceived and projected.

–Michael Lipsky (1968, p. 1151)

This dissertation examines the relationship of news organizations and protest movements. It is based on the following premises. Most importantly, news attention, more specifically, the kind of news attention that can amplify of the claims of protesters, plays a crucial role in whether a protest is successful or unsuccessful. As a result, protesters recognize the key role of news coverage in protest outcomes and therefore actively try to seek news coverage that highlights their issues and bolsters their claims. Consequently, the strategies and tactics of protesters have a direct influence on the dominant narratives in the news coverage. There is considerable variation in how successful protesters are at influencing the news coverage of their actions. A substantial portion of this study is dedicated to untangling why there is such variation across protests.

Though there is no reliable way to directly assess the impact of news coverage on protest outcomes in the cases examined here, the evidence I review points to the importance of journalistic practices and protest tactics in shaping the amount of news coverage of a protest, determining the extent to which news organizations highlight protest issues and grievances, and establishing when protesters have the best opportunities to amplify their claims to journalists and the broader public. To unpack why this is the case, I begin by underscoring the importance of news attention for movements.

Then, I give an overview of the theoretical foundation of the research. Finally, I give a brief rundown of each chapter and specify the contributions of the study to the social movements literature.

News Organizations and Protests

Protests push the boundaries of our collective imagination, of what the current reality is and what is politically and economically possible. Protests are an important source of progressive social change (Gamson, 1990). They give voice to the unseen and the unheard (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). Effectively, they give the marginalized a fighting chance in the marketplace of ideas. At the same time, the extent to which marginalized groups can expand their political and social influence often hinges on whether and how mass media consider and amplify the ideas of protest movements.

Essentially, news organizations serve as a gatekeeper in the marketplace of ideas, in which journalists decide whether or not to elevate particular issues on the news agenda. Subsequently, news attention to particular issues determines how important the public perceives those issues to be, which is commonly referred to as the agenda setting effect (McCombs, 2004). Given the role of news organizations in influencing the public's agenda, it seems reasonable to suggest the news coverage a protest receives can exert a strong influence on whether a protest is able to enlarge the scope of public support necessary to realize social and political changes.

Consequently, a variety of studies have addressed how and why media attention matters for protests. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) identify three important functions of media attention for movements: mobilization, validation, and scope enlargement. Protests typically need broad public sympathy and support to have leverage against their targets.

Media attention can attract like-minded supporters to the cause (Vliegenthart et al., 2005). This can create a positive feedback loop in which the broadening of the mobilization creates more news attention; news attention validates the movement (Wouters, 2013); the validation of the movement energizes and mobilizes more potential supporters. Eventually, when the public support reaches a critical mass, protests can expand the scope of conflict, which makes their targets more vulnerable to defeat. When protests have the capabilities to be extremely menacing and disruptive to the status quo, then they have the support and resources necessary to yield concessions from elites.

Given the significance of news coverage for protest outcomes, “it is imperative for researchers to understand how journalistic processes might inhibit [protests’] influence” (Boyle et al., 2012, p. 129). Consequently, media scholars have taken up the question of how much news coverage of protests is warranted and what considerations should be emphasized in the coverage. Many of them have found coverage to be insufficient on a number of levels (Boykoff, 2006). This is especially the case when considering the extensive protest paradigm literature, which indicates protests do not always receive fair treatment by journalists.

Protest Paradigm

Studies have long observed the tendency for news organizations to ignore, marginalize or delegitimize protests; something scholars have termed the “protest paradigm” (Chan & Lee, 1984; Di Cicco, 2010; Young, 2013). The protest paradigm has been demonstrated across a variety of news platforms and protests. One of the most common manifestations of the protest paradigm is the notion that “news stories about protests are framed to emphasize deviant behavior, violence, and confrontations between

police and protesters, even if the majority of the protesters have been peaceful” (Harlow & Johnson 2011, p. 1361; McLeod & Hertog, 1999). As one illustration, Giuffo (2001) concluded in a study of four globalization-related protest events, that the news coverage of the events focused too heavily on “the small percentage of protesters who acted violently” and “glossed over or misrepresented” the underlying issues that led to the protests (p. 14). Other studies have come to similar conclusions about the focus on violence over substance (Cammaerts, 2013; Boyle et al., 2012).

Yet, some scholars disagree about whether emphasis on violence and conflict will inherently marginalize protesters’ claims. DeLuca and Peeples (2002) examined the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference protests in Seattle and found that the (sometimes) violent clashes between police and protest expanded news coverage of the larger issues that triggered the WTO protests. In another study of the news coverage about WTO protests in Seattle, Rojecki (2002) observed that while “mass arrests could easily have become the focus of coverage,” news organizations provided broad coverage about the essential issues and legitimacy of the protest (pp. 162–163). Overall, there is some dispute about the degree to which the news focus on violence and conflict among protesters and police serves to marginalize the protest or draw attention to the broader themes of the protest. The degree to which news organizations balance their attention to protest themes and the conflicts protests tend to generate is the subject of this dissertation because the consequences of news framing on protests are substantial in terms of a protest’s success or failure.

Collective Action Frames

It is well established in the social movements literature that framing is a major strategic activity of protest movements (Snow & Benford, 1988). Specifically, movements want their frames to resonate with the public (Snow & Benford, 1992). Given the agenda setting capacity of the news media, one of the most effective ways for protests to have their frames resonate with the public is to compel news organizations to adopt their preferred frames, including collective action frames. Collective action frames provide people with an “interpretive schemata” to organize the meaning of participation, which serve to motivate and legitimate collective action (McAdam et al., 1996; Snow & Benford, 1992, p. 137; Swart, 1995). Previous studies have demonstrated the degree to which media framing and movement framing are congruent or divergent can have a big effect on a protest’s ability to mobilize supporters (Holmes-Cooper, 2002). Thus, the stakes are high for protests when it comes to having news organizations embrace their preferred collective action frames. Of particular interest in this study is the extent to which the opportunities for protests to influence news organizations’ adoption of particular frames can change over time.

The amount of news coverage a protest receives can vary significantly due to a variety of factors including tactics of protesters, the size of the protests and the location of the protests (Andrews & Caren, 2010; Maney & Oliver, 2001; McCarthy et al., 1996; Wouters, 2013). However, there has been relatively little attention to temporal factors that affect protest coverage (Wouters, 2013). Some protests, like the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protest in Seattle or the G20 protests are particularly short-lived because they are linked to specific events, the WTO Ministerial Conference or the G20

Summits. The major protest events occur within several days of the meetings, and then end abruptly.

On the other hand, some protests can last indefinitely like the Arab Spring protests that rocked the Middle East or Occupy Wall Street (OWS). In the OWS case, the movement did not experience time pressures to dissolve because it was not linked to a specific event. As a result, it lasted more than three months, remobilizing several times after the physical occupation had ended. As Oliver and Maney (2000) have argued, “much more information is needed about temporal and other variations in patterns of media coverage” (p. 495).

This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature on social movements and media by providing more insight about temporal variations in news attention and framing of protest movements. It is focused on several big questions: How does news attention shift over the course of a protest? Do news organizations pay attention to the causes and grievances of protesters? If so, when are they most likely to pay attention to the protesters’ causes and grievances? How and why do the news frames change over the course of a protest? Are long-term, flexible, spontaneous protests susceptible to the same frame-changing dynamics as short-lived, event specific protests?

To help answer these questions, I develop a theoretical model of how news attention and frames change over the course of a protest, which I call the general model of protest news. The model introduces a “protest news framing cycle” (PNFC). I test the model on two case studies: the Occupy Wall Street movement and the G20 Summit protests in London, Pittsburgh and Toronto. To evaluate the news coverage of these protest movements, I perform a content analysis of five newspapers: *The New York Times*

coverage of Occupy Wall Street, *The Guardian*'s coverage of the G20 protest in London, *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*'s coverage of the G20 protest in Pittsburgh, and *The Toronto Star*'s coverage of the G20 protest in Toronto.

Plan of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 lays the theoretical foundations of the entire investigation. It synthesizes research about journalistic practices, media framing, and social movements. It begins with a discussion of why journalists are attracted to conflict between police and protesters. Then it explains how news attention moves in a cyclical pattern and that the frames journalists employ in covering protests are likely to change at different stages of the news attention cycle. Next, it describes the difficult dilemma protesters face when it comes to attracting news attention. Disruptive, confrontational tactics may attract news coverage, but the coverage may ignore a protest's collective action frame and instead focus on conflict, violence or rioting. This dilemma sets up the crucial task of the study: determining how journalists balance attention to the claims of protesters and the conflicts protesters become entangled in.

To understand both the rise and fall of news attention to protests as well as how journalists adopt and employ substance frames and conflict frames during different stages of a protest, I develop a novel theoretical model of protest news, which is based heavily on the work of Downs (1972) on issue attention cycles and Tarrow's (2011) work on cycles of contention. The major contribution of this chapter is the development of the PNFC, which explains the cyclical changes in news framing of protests between substance, conflict, or a combination of both that occur at different stages of a protest.

The model also fills a gap in the social movements literature by explaining some of the temporal variations in patterns of protest news coverage.

Chapter 3 is methodological. It begins by describing my approach for testing the theoretical model. To test the general model, I follow the plausibility probe approach of Eckstein (1975), which is outlined by Levy (2008). Levy (2008) describes a plausibility probe as something akin “to a pilot study in experimental or survey research” (p. 6). Basically, the researcher tests a theory on an illustrative case to sharpen a theory or hypothesis, before extending the analysis to other cases. I describe why *The New York Times* coverage of Occupy Wall Street is a compelling case to test my theory and answer research questions posed in Chapter 4. The rest of Chapter 3 explains the methods I use to examine *The Times* coverage of the OWS protest as well as the additional case studies.

The contribution of Chapter 3 is a novel approach to content analysis. I propose an innovative technique for performing content analysis of *The New York Times*’ coverage of OWS from September 2011 to July 2014. The process by which I determine a news story’s overall frame involves using a formula to extract the overall news frame of a story from smaller passages within the story. I supplement the content analysis with a discourse analysis (DeLuca et al., 2012; Xu, 2013) in order to examine the frames journalists used, as well as portrayals of protesters’ issues, and the conflict that occurred between protesters and city governments. I replicate this analytical approach for examining the news coverage of the G20 protests, though I utilize discourse analysis less in my analysis of these secondary cases.

In Chapter 4, I introduce the first case study for testing the model, Occupy Wall Street. The goal of this chapter is to examine how journalists balanced their attention to

the Occupy movement's issues and grievances with the conflict between protesters and city governments throughout the course of the protest and after its dissolution. It starts with a brief descriptive history of the protest, leading to my first hypothesis, which states that conflict, measured in the form of arrests, drove the number of news stories about the protest.

I also pose three research questions. First, I ask what the effect of confrontational protest tactics (measured in the form of arrests) is on the frequency of economic and conflict frames? Then, I ask two related questions: what is the frequency of economic (substance) frames and conflict frames over time and during which stage of the issue attention cycle are these frames most likely to be present? I then proceed to describe the results of my analysis, which confirm my hypothesis and provide preliminary answers to my research questions.

In brief, the results indicate that protesters can increase the salience of their issues in the news by escalating conflict and getting arrested, but that journalists tend to focus on the conflict instead of the protest issues. This is especially true when protesters fail to adopt innovative tactics to accomplish their protest goals. In addition, state repression in the form of heavy policing and arrests, as well as a decline in public interest can further lead to the dominance of conflict frames over collective action frames. These findings lend support to the applicability of the general model and the PNFC in particular. The OWS news coverage followed the PNFC quite closely: with conflict frames initially, as protesters engaged in contentious behaviors to draw attention to the movement, then economic frames as news and public attention to the movement increased and journalists delved into the collective action frames of protesters, followed by a return to conflict

frames, in which protesters and police clashed, resulting in the dissolution of the Occupy Movement and the decline of overall news coverage.

This chapter makes several contributions. First, it provides empirical evidence of Oliver and Maney's (2000) expectation that media coverage of protest events will change across time and be sensitive to ongoing political processes such as the response of the government to contentious protest behavior. Second, it offers an initial answer to a question posed by Rojecki (2011) that asks, "Which tactics are most successful for achieving success as measured by issue salience and issue frames?" (p. 97). My findings suggest that confrontational tactics, measured here in the form of protester arrests, can have positive effects on issue salience, but deleterious effects on the framing devices journalists employ. More specifically, this research substantiates previous findings that as conflict between protesters and police heighten; substantive coverage of protest issues starts to decline (Murray et al., 2008). Chapter 4 concludes with a discussion of the implications for international protests and whether the general model holds in other contexts. This sets up a few hypotheses, which I test on additional cases in Chapter 5.

Feeling confident that the OWS news coverage largely conforms to the theoretical model, I proceed to performing a more robust test of the generalizability of the model in Chapter 5 on three additional cases, the newspaper coverage of the G20 Summit protests in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto. The chapter begins with a comparison of the G20 protests and the Occupy Movement, which involves looking at their strategic aims, the organizational features of the protests, and their actions. I argue they are similar enough ideologically, but different enough organizationally to provide a rigorous test of the generalizability of the general model of protest news. Specifically, I hypothesize that the

short-lived, event-bound G20 protests follow the same frame-changing dynamic as the longer, more spontaneous and flexible OWS protest. Next, I make the case that the Toronto protests were the most confrontational of the G20 protests and predict that conflict frames would comprise a higher proportion of the total number of newspaper articles compared to the newspaper coverage of the London and Pittsburgh protests.

Subsequently, I describe the results of the analysis. To give the reader a better sense of how patterns of news coverage from the content analysis correspond to protest events, I offer a descriptive history of each protest. For the most part, I find support for my hypothesis that the general model explains variations in the amount of coverage and the frequency of different frames present in the news coverage of the G20 protests. The results also suggest that protests with less confrontational tactics tend to elicit more focus on substance than conflict, which ultimately benefits protesters interested keeping the news focus and public attention on their concerns and grievances.

This chapter makes four contributions to the literature on news framing of social movements. It is the first study to compare news coverage of G20 protest news across multiple countries and protests. Second, it bolsters evidence of the wider applicability of the general model to horizontal and vertical protests (Garrett, 2006; Juris, 2005). Third, it offers some initial evidence that event-bound, short-lived protests are susceptible to the same frame-changing dynamic as longer, non-event driven protests. Fourth, it provides a preliminary indication that the general model, and more specifically, the PNFC apply internationally, beyond the US context. Finally, it bolsters a previous finding that protests with more conflict between protesters and police tend to have less substantive coverage of protest issues (Murray et al. 2008; Gottlieb, in press).

The final chapter, Chapter 6, revisits the big questions and summarizes the key findings of the study. It assesses the generalizability of the theoretical model, as well as its significance in the protest paradigm literature. I also note several limitations of the research, including the notion that the investigation is limited to newspaper data. I conclude by suggesting some directions for future research including: extending the analysis to other types of protests and analyzing other news platforms like television or online citizen journalism. The research could also benefit from a mixed methods approach with additional methodologies such as interviews with activists and journalists as well as utilizing other techniques for text analysis like language modeling and topic modeling.

Chapter Two:

The General Model of Protest News Coverage

Journalistic Practices

Scholars have noted that depictions of social movements in the news are for the most part guided by journalists' professional norms, rules, and values (Boykoff, 2006; Oliver & Maney, 2000). For example, the size and disruptiveness of a protest increases the probability of news coverage, as well as the proximity of the news event to the news organization (McCarthy et al., 1996; Oliver & Myers, 2003). Most protests do not receive extensive coverage until they mobilize many participants.

In addition to the size of a movement, studies have documented that news organizations are attracted to protests because of the news value of conflict or controversy (Bennett, 1988; Gamson, 1992; Graber, 1993; Price, Tewksbury & Powers, 1997; Oliver & Maney, 2000). As Gans (2004) observes, if protesters engage in confrontational or militant tactics

The reportage is apt to be about militancy. If citizens upset the police that are always present at citizen protests, their participation may be coded and reported as "trouble," even if the trouble does not originate with the citizens. Trouble stories always trump those reporting peaceful protests, and often peaceful protest stories are limited to the information that there was no trouble. **The issues that protesters represent obtain much less attention [emphasis added]... (p. 48).**

Similarly, Teune (2014) argues, "Aspects of social movements that attract media interest, such as mass demonstrations and images of conflict, are more or less incompatible with the activists wish to see their story told" (p. 302). This is consistent with previous research on news values. Galtung and Ruge (1965), as well as others (Cole & Harcup, 2010), describe how unexpected or negative features of an event that make the story newsworthy will also be emphasized in the reporting. In the case of protests,

conflict between protesters and police can attract news interest, but might take precedence over the claim which initiated the protest (Wouters, 2013).

Issue Attention Cycle

The amount of news attention to issues of public importance can fluctuate immensely over time. Journalistic practices and news values can influence what stories will receive attention (Cammaerts, 2013). Among the early studies to examine the temporal quality of issue salience in the media was Downs' (1972) work on the 'issue attention cycle'.

Downs developed the concept of an issue attention cycle to highlight how specific issues surface and decline in news and public discourse in a cyclical pattern. Issues start in a latent, 'pre-problem stage' (Downs, 1972), in which a political problem largely remains unnoticed by the public until a dramatic series of events elicit news and public concern about the problem. This leads to 'alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm,' in which the issue enters the news agenda and the public agenda, typically in dramatic fashion. The public experiences euphoric enthusiasm upon discovering the particular evils of a problem because they start believing solutions to the problem are available and politically possible.

Unfortunately, frustration mounts quickly when people realize the costs of *solving* a problem are high. In the 'realizing the cost of significant progress stage,' the public weighs whether they are willing to make major sacrifices (i.e. money, time, etc.) to alleviate a problem. Downs suggests this stage transforms "almost imperceptibly" into the fourth stage: a 'gradual decline of intense public interest' (p. 40). Intense public interest and media scrutiny decline for many reasons including: discouragement,

boredom or a combination of the two. At the same time, other competing issues shift attention away from the initial problem. Here, the issue enters a ‘post problem stage’, in which attention to the issue is dormant unless new developments occur. Downs claimed one of three factors would determine the duration of each stage in the cycle: the nature of the issue itself, public opinion about the issue, and journalistic approaches to covering the issue.

Though Downs’ (1972) model has been influential, a number of scholars have questioned its core assumptions and applicability (Oh et al., 2012). Chyi and McCombs (2004) find the unit of analysis is too broadly defined as a social issue rather than a specific news event. Some have questioned Downs’ articulation of the mechanisms underlying the issue attention cycle (Nisbet & Huge, 2006). Others have recommended a simplified version of the model with three stages: waxing interest, maintenance, and waning interest (McComas & Shanahan, 1999). At least one study has questioned the applicability of the model in an international context. Brossard et al. (2004) found a cyclical pattern in US coverage of global warming, but less of a cyclical dynamic in the French coverage, suggesting the issue attention cycle may be bound to the U.S. context only.

Despite concerns about the generalizability of the model, the cyclical nature of news coverage has been demonstrated on a variety of issues (Shih et al., 2008). However, there has been little scholarly attention to how protest coverage conforms to the issue attention cycle.¹ As Wouters observes (2013), the majority of studies about the reaction

¹ McCarthy et al. (1996) is an exception. This study compares police records of demonstrations in Washington D.C. in 1982 and 1991 and finds that television coverage of the protests was subject to the impact of media issue attention cycles.

of the media to protests treat the protests as *static* rather than *dynamic*. Further, he suggests that integrating “dynamic aspects of issue-attention would open a box of intriguing questions” (p. 175). One such question involves the framing of protest at different stages in the issue attention cycle.

Nisbet and Huye (2006) argue framing is a crucial mechanism underlying the issue attention cycle. Framing is “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Previous work has shown that an issue’s place in the issue attention cycle can heavily influence the type of frames that arise in news coverage of an issue (Shih et al., 2008). There is reason to suspect not only that protests coincide with the issue attention cycle, but also that different frames emerge in the news coverage of protests at different stages of the protest. Chyi and McCombs (2004) ‘frame changing’ concept is helpful for understanding why this might be the case.

Frame changing is the notion that journalists often reframe a news event by emphasizing different attributes of an event “to keep the story alive and fresh” (Chyi & McCombs, 2004, p. 22). Concerning protest coverage, a number of studies have documented that journalists utilize a variety of different news frames in protest coverage, including depictions of the substantive matters, especially the grievances of protesters (Boykoff, 2006; Harlow & Johnson, 2011), and frames emphasizing the conflict between protesters and institutional actors (Oliver & Maney, 2000). In the case of the protests considered here, OWS and the G20 summit protests, there was an abundance of

opportunities for these two types of frames: economic (substance) frames and conflict frames. Tarrow's (2011) 'cycle of contention' theory about the ebb and flow of contentious collective action is useful for determining when journalists would be likely to switch between these two frames.

Cycle of Contention

Tarrow's (2011) 'cycle of contention' theory posits that a conflict between challengers and the state can become a cycle of contention when it contains the following elements: a stage of heightened conflict in a social system involving rapid diffusion of collective action, innovation in the forms of contention employed, new or transformed collective action frames, the coexistence of organized and unorganized participation, and information flow between challengers and authorities. Tarrow (2011) argues that such contention produces externalities, which are advantageous to challengers, and require states (or other authorities) to be repressive, facilitative, or some combination of the two. Ultimately, this produces an outcome to the collective action, which will either satisfy or fall short of the demands of the challengers. At each stage of the cycle, the opportunities and constraints for challengers can increase or decrease based on the timing and adoption of particular tactics. Of crucial importance in the present study is the role of news organizations in amplifying the collective action frames of protesters to those in power and the public. However, the relation of protesters to the state will influence the way news media respond to protest; amplifying protest claims or focusing on escalating conflict (Oliver & Maney, 2000).

Herein lies what I call the 'protester's dilemma'. Boyle et al. (2012) explains this in the following passage:

Ultimately, protesters face a difficult challenge. News coverage is important to achieving protest goals, yet such coverage may not be forthcoming unless protesters engage in dramatic and even violent action. However, those very actions that attract media attention are often central features of stories that delegitimize the protesters. (p. 130)

Thus, protesters do not want to attract the *wrong kind* of attention. In spite of this difficulty, the literature suggests successful protests will engage the broader public by actively seeking a positive representation in the news. By seeking positive representation, I mean the ability of protests to compel news organizations and ultimately the public to adopt their preferred framing. In other words, protests want news organizations to highlight the legitimacy of their aims and concerns, as well as emphasize the proactive and effective measures taken by protests to remedy their concerns. For example, Edgerly et al. (2011) observed that the May 1st, 2006 US immigrants' rights march and rally organizers were able to "control the [media] portrayal of the marches and rallies as "peaceful" rather than violent by using specific visual elements to enhance the media's reception of the protests as non-deviant" (p. 328). Tactics such as "having many children in the marches...and waving many U.S. flags" appeared to be "an effective way to gain positive news coverage" (Edgerly et al., 2011, p. 328).

Like the immigration protests of 2006, OWS also went to great lengths to avoid portrayals of the movement as violent. For example, one of the early blog posts from *Adbusters* about the movement's tactics called for participants to "bring signs, flowers, food and a revolutionary mood...and a commitment to absolute nonviolence in the Gandhian tradition" (Adbusters, 2011b). OWS also made substantial efforts to garner positive news coverage as exemplified by its Occupy Sandy relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Such efforts help protests elicit more public sympathy, broaden the

scope of concern for the protest's goals, mobilize people to join the collective action, and exert a strong influence on whether the public perceives the protesters' escalation of conflict as legitimate (Boyle et al., 2012). To summarize, journalists may change the framing devices they use to report on protests. This may in part be a result of two things: protest strategy and tactics change over time in a cyclical pattern (Tarrow, 2011) and protesters actively work to influence journalists' framing of their protest.

To better illustrate the complex relationship between journalistic practices, the issue attention cycle, frame changing, and the cycle of contention, I introduce a general model of protest news coverage. There are five elements to the model. The first element is Downs' (1972) five stages of the issue attention cycle, which traces the development of an issue in the public and news agenda. The second element is Tarrow's (2011) cycle of contention, which refers to the cyclical rise and fall of collective action. The third element details changes in the size of a protest. The fourth element describes the rise and fall of news attention to a protest. Fluctuations in news attention are the result of a protest moving through different stages of the issue attention cycle. The fifth element is the *protest news framing cycle* (PNFC).

By "protest news framing cycle," I mean the cyclical changes in news framing of protests between substance, conflict, or a combination of both, which occur at different stages of the protest. The model suggests not only that there is a general pattern to the cyclical changes in substance and conflict frames which applies for all protest news coverage, but also that there will be some variation in the pattern based on how the protest moves through Downs' issue attention cycle as well as the strategy and tactics of protesters indicated by Tarrow's cycle of contention. Table 2.1 illustrates the model.

Stages of Issue Attention Cycle	Cycle of Contention	Protest Size +/-	News Attention +/-	PNFC Dominant News Frame
Pre-Problem	Opportunities for challengers to instigate conflict with state and rapidly diffuse collective action	Small/Limited	None	No dominant frame
Alarmed discovery/ Enthusiasm	Innovation in tactics of contention	+	+	Conflict
	Development of new or transformed collective action frames	+	+	Substance
Realizing Costs of Significant Progress	Organized and unorganized participation	+	+	Substance
	Heated exchanges of information and communication between protesters and the state	=	+	Conflict
Decline of Public Interest	Repression, facilitation, or a combination of	-	-	Conflict

	both by the state			
Post-Problem	Collective action produces a successful or unsuccessful result	–	–	No dominant frame
Key + increase = no change – decrease				

Table 2.1. General Model of Protest News Coverage

The protest news framing cycle (PNFC) is premised on the following propositions: first, in the ‘pre-problem stage’ of the issue attention cycle, both public and news attention to the underlying issue(s) behind the protest and collective action itself are latent or completely absent. In this stage, a protest might be in the planning stages, but there is not likely to be a physical manifestation of the protest yet. Thus, journalists do not perceive the protests as a potential news story and no dominant news frame will emerge in the ‘pre-problem stage.’

Second, in the ‘alarmed discovery stage’ of the issue attention cycle, public and news attention to the underlying issue(s) behind the protest increase rapidly, especially when the protest begins, engages in contentious or disruptive actions, and introduces a collective action frame that illustrates the ethos of the protest cause. In the ‘alarmed discovery stage,’ journalists will employ conflict frames in stories about the contentious actions of the protest and substance frames when considering the novel claims of the

protesters. In other words, there are opportunities for both substance frames and conflict frames to emerge in the second stage of the issue attention cycle. This stage is really the beginning of the PNFC. Here, the first dominant frame can emerge in coverage. The degree to which conflict or substance frames dominate depends on how confrontational protesters are at the onset of collective action. Some movements deliberately decide not to be confrontational throughout a mobilization and this significantly decreases the likelihood of conflict frames in the coverage.

Third, in the ‘costs of significant progress stage’ of the issue attention cycle, public and news attention peak, corresponding with the boiling tension between the state and protesters. In this stage, many protesters’ initial enthusiasm changes to disillusionment and cynicism about the prospects for realizing change, though some movements maintain optimism in the face of significant obstacles.² Many participants have endured challenges (i.e. facing arrests) and made intense personal sacrifices (i.e. losing a job) to sustain the protest. The size of the mobilization of protesters is at its maximum. Mass participation in collective action produces journalistic focus on the issues, ideas, and grievances of protesters. However, as the mobilization reaches its height, the exchanges between protesters and the state become tense and antagonistic; here, the PNFC indicates conflict frames are likely to dominate coverage.

Fourth, in the ‘decline of public interest stage’ of the issue attention cycle, public and news attention fade after a drawn out conflict, protest demands are facilitated at the local or national level, or a lengthy stalemate ensues. In any of these scenarios, the PNFC suggests conflict, its persistence, or its resolution, is likely to be the dominant news frame

² The African-American Civil Rights Movement is an example of a movement that was not deterred despite setbacks and obstacles.

until coverage fades for a host of reasons. To begin with, the state's choice to repress a protest will likely amplify the conflict and heighten the newsworthiness of the conflict. In addition, even if the state responds to the protesters' demands, it is unlikely that all of the protesters' demands will be met or that all of the protesters will be satisfied, which may produce newsworthy intra-protest conflicts. In the end, the decline of public interest likely signals the substantive claims of the protest has been exhausted from a news perspective.

Finally, in the 'post-problem stage' of the issue attention cycle, the issue reaches a conclusion or enters a dormant period. Here, collective action produces a result that places the protest somewhere on the spectrum of success or failure. News attention further declines and is largely absent in the aftermath of the protest unless ongoing mobilizations help morph the problem or identify new solutions to mitigate the problem. The PNFC indicates a dominant frame is no longer present unless the protest chooses to remobilize or new facts come to light about the protesters' claims or actions.

To demonstrate the applicability of the PNFC, I examine the news coverage of the Occupy Wall Street movement in Chapter 4 and the G20 Summit protests in Chapter 5. Examining these protests should illustrate how the news coverage of each protest conforms to the general model as well as how the strategy and tactics of each particular protest produces variation in the PNFC. Each chapter offers a series of research questions and hypotheses relating to the PNFC model as well as the particular protests.

Chapter Three:

Methods

Case Selection

To test my theoretical model, I chose *The New York Times* coverage of Occupy Wall Street as an initial case study. In particular, I examine whether *The New York Times* coverage of the Occupy Wall Street movement adheres to the general model of protest news coverage. Then, if necessary, I will refine the theory based on the results of my analysis to produce a set of hypotheses about the applicability of the model to the newspaper coverage of the G20 Summit protests in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto. This approach has been described in previous works as a *plausibility probe* (Eckstein, 1975). The logic of the approach is to test a theory on an illustrative case in order to sharpen the theory or develop hypotheses, before extending the analysis to other cases (Levy, 2008). In other words, I will examine the news coverage of OWS as a pilot study before testing the general model on additional cases. Before detailing my content analysis procedure, I will provide some justification for selecting OWS as a primary case study and the G20 Summit protests as secondary case studies.

Occupy Wall Street. OWS is a suitable case study to examine the general model for a host of reasons. First, it is reasonable to expect the news coverage of the protest moved through the issue attention cycle. OWS introduced a novel issue to the news agenda. They steered our economic conversation toward the themes of economic inequality and financial regulatory reform -- themes that were largely unnoticed or under-attended to in the mainstream news before OWS (Knefel 2012). Further, they advanced a variety of collective action frames to illustrate their concerns, many of which were quite

provocative and powerful, including the 99% meme. These frames created a lot of media and public buzz. Yet, after lengthy clashes with police and a forceful eviction, public interest in the protest declined after the physical occupation ended. All things considered, these factors give some indication that there would be a rise and fall of news attention to OWS, as the issue attention cycle suggests.

Another reason to study OWS is the nature and extent of the conflict resulting from the occupation. The protesters engaged in confrontational, disruptive tactics that were likely to attract a lot of news coverage. Local governments used aggressive policing and arrests to forcefully evict the protesters. Though this showdown between city officials and police on one hand, and the protesters on the other, ultimately led to OWS' unraveling, the mass media spectacle it created played a complex, but important role in shaping the movement's identity and amplifying the movement's message (Young, 2013). This message was not always easy for journalists to decipher.

As former *New York Times* media reporter Brian Stelter (2011a) observed, "lacking a list of demands or recognized leaders, the Occupy movement has at times perplexed the nation's media outlets" (p. B1). Journalists had a daunting task when it came to striking an appropriate balance of taking the claims of protesters seriously, but also being critical when they faltered. Nonetheless, the battles protesters engaged in with police signaled to reporters the dedication and seriousness of purpose amongst the protesters. Ultimately, their perseverance and prolonged struggle against police-led evictions gave journalists a sense of urgency to dig deeper into the causes behind the movement and underscore the significance of their bold efforts.

As a consequence of its prolonged struggle, OWS is also strong case because of its lengthy event horizon. In contrast to many short-lived protests like the 1999 anti-globalization protests in Seattle, OWS lasted more than 3 months. This allows me to examine the fine-grained changes in framing that occurred gradually over time.

Finally, one more reason OWS is an appropriate case is because the protest engaged in innovative tactics, which is an important aspect of Tarrow's (2011) cycle of contention. The development of a long enduring, festive protest camp in urban city parks across the country was a tactic without many precedents.³ Consequently, it was not obvious how city officials and police would react to the protest and this produced opportunities for a variety of frames to emerge in the news coverage of the protest events as they unfolded in a somewhat unpredictable manner. Ultimately, this is probably the best reason to examine the news coverage of OWS: the strong likelihood that both substance frames and conflict frames would emerge, especially as the clashes between police and protesters intensified.

G20 Summit protests. I have chosen the newspaper coverage of the G20 Summit protests in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto as my secondary cases because they differ in some key strategic and tactical ways from OWS, which provides a more robust test of my general model. I elaborate on the organizational differences between OWS and the G20 protests more in Chapter 5, but I will briefly summarize the key differences here.

OWS arose spontaneously while the G20 protests were planned before the summits took place. This strategic difference may reveal variation in the pattern of news

³ The protests and demonstrations by the Free Speech Movement and anti-Vietnam War demonstrators at People's Park in Berkeley, California in the late 1960s and early 1970s are a notable example of a festive protest camp in a park.

attention and framing indicated by the general model. Second, while OWS was adaptive and not tied to any specific event, the G20 protests were temporally bound to the G20 summits, and their success or failure hinged on whether they could disrupt or prevent the summits from taking place. After the summits, the protests were obsolete. On the other hand, OWS planned to stay active indefinitely, or at least it could dissolve at anytime it wanted. Consequently, the G20 protests were relatively short-lived compared to the several month occupation of OWS. Demonstrating that the theoretical model applies to protests with different event horizons should substantiate the generalizability of the model and potentially illustrate the ways in which coverage varies according to the duration of the protest.

Content Analysis

The method I use to examine my primary case study is a content analysis of news frames of *New York Times* (*NYT* hereafter) articles and editorials. I supplement this with discourse analysis to provide a deeper look at the prevailing themes, ideas, and opinions that comprise each news frame by building on recent scholarly works about OWS (DeLuca et al., 2012; Xu, 2013).

Newspaper Selection

I chose the *NYT* because it is the “paper of record” for the United States (Harlow & Johnson, 2011), adheres to traditional journalism norms and ethics, and it was in closest proximity to the most vibrant and disruptive encampment of the Occupy Movement. I examined coverage from September 17th, 2011 to July 18, 2014. I chose this period because it covers the beginning of the protest through the time at which I began writing the present study so I could obtain the largest sample of stories possible.

A series of LexisNexis searches of “Occupy Wall Street” and “Occupy movement” yielded 265 relevant results. Overall, this study includes 37 editorials and 228 reports.

For examining the G20 Summit protest coverage in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto, I tried to focus on the most influential newspapers in each G20 host city. Such newspapers have the resources to cover the event and an obvious interest in political events taking place in their city or country. They may also be influential for when and how other news outlets cover the protests. Though arguably no paper in London, Pittsburgh or Toronto has the international influence of *The New York Times*, the leading paper in each city has a roughly analogous relationship to the G20 protests in their respective cities as the *New York Times* did to OWS in New York.

In Toronto, I chose *The Star*, because it is not only the highest circulation paper in Toronto, but also in all of Canada. In Pittsburgh, I examined two papers, *The Post-Gazette* and *The Tribune-Review*, because these are the two highest circulation papers in the city. It is not easy to determine which paper is more influential so I included them both. In London, I chose *The Guardian* for slightly different reasons. *The Guardian* is not the highest circulation paper in London or in the UK, but it is known as a center-left newspaper and it has a history of taking a keen interest in protest movements (Ashley, 2008). *The Guardian* paid attention to the G20 London Summit and protest in a way that other larger papers from the UK did not.⁴ In particular, its coverage of the G20 London was influential on other newspapers because it scooped the story about Ian Tomlinson, the man who died at the protests. The paper received video footage of police beating the

⁴ A NewsBank and LexisNexis search of “G20 London” or “G20 protest” for the two larger papers in the UK, *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, yielded fewer than 25 stories for each paper during the time period of interest.

man shortly before his death, which drastically changed the narrative about the police and led to investigations about the policing of the G20 protests.

To obtain a sample of news articles about each protest, I performed a NexisLexis search of the terms “G20 London (or other city)” and/or “G20 protest.” I narrowed the search to articles written the month before, during, and after each G20 Summit took place, which amounts to a three-month time frame. This query yielded 110 articles about the G20 London protests in *The Guardian*, 56 articles about the G20 Pittsburgh protests in *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, as well as 121 additional articles about the G20 Pittsburgh protests from *The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, and 40 articles about the G20 Toronto protests in *The Toronto Star*. Table 3.1 provides a more detailed look at how I obtained my sample for each newspaper.

Protest	Search Terms	Newspaper	LexisNexis Story Count	Dates
London	“G20 London” OR “G20 protest”	The Guardian	110	March 1, 2009- May 31, 2009
Pittsburgh	“G20 Pittsburgh” OR “G20 Protest”	The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	56	August 1, 2009- October 31, 2009
Pittsburgh	“G20 Pittsburgh” OR “G20 Protest”	The Pittsburgh Tribune- Review	121	August 1, 2009- October 31, 2009
Toronto	“G20 Toronto” OR “G20 protest” OR “G20 Toronto Protest”	The Toronto Star	40	May 1, 2010-July, 31, 2010

Table 3.1: Sample of G20 Protest Newspaper Coverage

Coding Procedure

Following the strategy of Nisbet and Huge (2006), which is outlined as the manual holistic approach by Matthes and Kohring (2008), I identified the relevant frames by reviewing a variety of newspapers, magazines, television reports, official statements, and activist media content. To further guide this process, I relied on previous studies

about the news framing of OWS and other protests (DeLuca et al., 2012; Xu, 2013). Once I identified the two most relevant frames, I coded the full content of each story, looking for discussion of conflict and of substance concerns. To perform the coding, I used *Dedoose Version 4.5*, which is a web application for analyzing qualitative and mixed method research data (Dedoose, 2013).

While previous studies have utilized an entire story or article as the coding unit (Xu, 2013), the coding unit in this study is a smaller unit within each story, which I call a passage. Passages vary in length from a line of text, to a few sentences, or even several paragraphs. This approach resembles the linguistic approach to studying frames, in which the sentence or a paragraph is often the unit of analysis (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). Entman (1993) outlines the logic behind using passages by noting that often a single sentence can perform the basic function of framing. To examine these passages, I used a deductive approach, in which I identified passages with the help of a coding scheme that contained criteria for what constituted substance and conflict passages. When a particular word, clause or sentence contained the criteria for substance or conflict passages, I highlighted all of the words, clauses or sentences fitting the criteria until I could identify a clause or sentence that did not fit my criteria, at which point I stopped highlighting. This constituted a complete passage.

My criterion for substance passages was that the text emphasized the economic grievances of protesters including economic inequality, financial regulatory failure, outrage about government bailouts of banks, Wall Street greed, poverty, or unemployment. For conflict, my criterion was that the text had to discuss disagreement between government officials and protestors or the disagreement between police officials

and protesters. I considered any reference to any of these substance or conflict elements of a story as a “passage.”

I used the coding of substance and conflict passages to make an inference about the overall frame of the article. Upon identifying all of the economic and conflict passages in an article, I used a simple formula to infer an overall frame for each article. The advantage of this approach is that the frame extraction process is more objective and reduces effects of ambiguity that can arise when an article must be assigned a single overall frame by the researcher. As Matthes and Kohring (2008) put it, “frames are not ‘found’ by the researcher but ‘computed’ by the computer program” (p. 261).

I used a simple majority criterion for passages. When the number of conflict passages was greater than the number of substance passages in an article, I designated the article as having a *conflict frame*, and vice versa for substance frames. When the number of conflict and economic passages was equal, I designated the article as having a *mixed frame*. By providing a mixed frame category, I could more accurately account for framing elements that would otherwise be missed in a dichotomous coding scheme. If an article contained neither substance nor conflict passages, no frame was applied.

I tested for sensitivity by changing the 50% threshold to 65% and 75%, and then compared this with the 50% level.⁵ The results differed little, so my approach appears robust with respect to changes from a majority of passages to higher levels. I also tested this passage-based scheme against a traditional coding approach by hand coding 20 articles for an overall frame based on title and lead paragraph. The correspondence between the hand-coded frame and the frame extracted from counting the passages for

⁵ Figures A.1-A.3 in the Appendix illustrate the results of this sensitivity test at different thresholds.

each article was 85%. Concerning the 15% of articles in which the hand-coded frame did not correspond with the frame extracted from counting passages, I attribute the discrepancy to only coding the frame based on the title and lead paragraph when examining the entire article would have eliminated differences in each case.

As a result of this discrepancy, a motivation behind using the “frame extraction” approach, which is premised on the notion that frames are really composed of smaller passages in a news story, is that merely extracting a frame from the title or first paragraph of a news story (Nisbet & Huge, 2006) often misses critical elements and details of a story (Althaus et al., 2001). Many stories include multiple interpretations of news events, making it difficult to justify coding a news story with a single frame. Using the qualitative analysis tool, *Dedoose*, I was able to account for these mixed stories and measure the exact balance of economic and conflict passages.

For my content analysis of the G20 protest coverage, I replicated the same coding procedure outlined above, except I broadened the scope of *substance* frames, to encompass the diverse and often non-economic concerns of G20 protesters. My criteria for substance passages in coding the G20 protest coverage were that the text emphasized the concerns and grievances of protesters including disapproval of the aims of the G20 Summits, global financial regulatory failure, outrage about government bailouts of banks, poverty, and a host of other issues including climate change, globalization, indigenous rights, and ending international conflicts.

For conflict, my criterion was that the text had to discuss disagreement between government officials and protesters or the disagreement between police officials and protesters. I considered any reference to any of these substance or conflict elements of a

story as a “passage.” Again, I used the coding of substance and conflict passages to make an inference about the overall frame of the article. Upon identifying all of the substance and conflict passages in an article, I used the simple majority formula to infer an overall frame for each article.

Validation Technique

To test for inter-coder reliability of this procedure, I first trained five undergraduate political science students in the coding procedure and had each code 41 randomly selected passages; 21 of these were substance passages and 20 were conflict passages. This amounted to roughly 11% of the total number of substance passages and 12% of the total amount of conflict passages in the overall sample. All of the pooled Cohen’s kappa’s were 1.00, meaning all of the coders tagged the passages in the reliability test exactly as I had tagged them.

Two of the undergraduate coders were selected to code 70 (26%) of the 265 NYT articles Dedoose had already coded for substance and conflict passages. Using the 50% threshold I discussed above, Dedoose extracted the overall frame from the articles the undergraduates coded and compared the results with the frames extracted by Dedoose of the same articles. The inter-coder reliability test yielded a Cohen’s kappa above .8 for both economic and conflict frames.

Chapter Four:

Principal Case Study: How *The New York Times* Covered Occupy Wall Street

Introduction

Amidst a global economic downturn with waning public confidence in the largest financial institutions, and what many see as the corrupting influence of corporate money on our political processes (Gitlin 2012), there has been a recent wave of economic and anti-government protest activity stretching across many cities around the world from London to Cairo; Hong Kong to New York City. Embodying the spirit of this global economic discontent, The Occupy Wall Street Movement (OWS) offered a refreshing blend of boldness and provocation long dormant in American politics.

OWS was a culmination of socially-conscious political activists, traditional mobilizing organizations, disenfranchised poor people, the unemployed, and young participants who expressed outrage over the lack of accountability in the aftermath of the recession, bank bailouts, and importantly, rising economic inequality (Castells, 2012; Gitlin, 2012; van Gelder, 2011). Initially, the OWS movement was conceived with a blog post on July 13, 2011 from *Adbusters*, a Canadian magazine and global anti-consumerist, activist network. *Adbusters* created the #occupywallstreet hash tag on Twitter and called on thousands to converge on September 17, 2011 in lower Manhattan (Adbusters, 2011a). Within less than a month of the occupation, protests had spread across the country in cities like Oakland, Boston, and Chicago—and resonated globally—in London, Tokyo, and Sydney (Young, 2013). Though the timeliness of the protesters' message of political equality and economic fairness galvanized widespread public support, cities resisted accommodating the protests.

There was plenty of tension between local governments and the protests that spanned the country, which journalists could easily package into dramatic, event-driven stories about the protest. The conflict was relatively easy to quantify, at least in terms of protester arrests. For example, early in October, over 700 protesters were arrested on the Brooklyn Bridge, drawing considerable media attention and catapulting the movement into the national spotlight (Sorkin, 2011).

The New York Times noted that the protesters' conflict with city officials and police treatment of the protesters likely helped fuel more media attention. In a self-reflexive article, former *Times* writer Brian Stelter (2011a) observed, "Press coverage, minimal in the first days of the occupation in New York, picked up after amateur video surfaced online showing a police officer using pepper spray on protesters" (p. B1). Given journalists' propensity to cover protests that are large and disruptive, as well as the dramatic clashes between Occupy protesters and police, there is reason to believe that conflict, measured by protester arrests, drove the amount of Occupy related coverage.

This implies the following hypothesis:

H1: Variation in the frequency of OWS stories was driven by conflict, measured as variation in the number of arrests over time.

In addition to testing this hypothesis, the goal of this chapter is to apply the *general model of protest news* outlined in Chapter 2 to OWS. This requires looking at how protest tactics impact the news frames that appear in coverage. More specifically, I am interested in whether confrontational tactics lead to more conflict stories or provide openings for substance frames as well. To examine the assumptions posed in the general

model and determine whether there is evidence for the PNFC outlined in the model, I ask the following questions about the OWS news coverage:

RQ1: What is the effect of confrontational protest tactics, measured in the form of arrests, on the frequency of substance and conflict frames?

RQ2a: What is the frequency of substance and conflict frames over time?

RQ2b: During which stage of the issue attention cycle are substance and conflict frames most likely to be present?

Results

With a hypothesis and three research questions about the coverage of OWS, I now turn to discussing the results of my content analysis to test my hypothesis and answer the research questions. I begin by examining the frequency of news stories and arrests of protesters over the course of the protest, which allows me to confirm or reject my hypothesis. Then, I discern whether the news coverage of OWS follows the PNFC and attempt to answer my research questions. In the end, I briefly discuss the results of the plausibility probe and the limits of the research.

Frequency of Coverage

The solid black line in Figure 4.1 illustrates the rise and fall of *The Times*' attention to the Occupy Movement. Between September 17, 2011 and September 30, 2012 there were 265 articles and editorials in *The New York Times* containing the phrase 'Occupy Wall Street' or 'Occupy Movement.'

Though it has been estimated that over a thousand protesters converged on the park and pitched their tents when the occupation began on September 17, 2011 (DemocracyNow!, 2011), OWS received little coverage from *The Times* in the first week.

On September 23rd, Ginia Bellafante (2011) wrote a dismissive piece, questioning the motives of the protests entitled “Gunning for Wall Street, With Faulty Aim.” From September 17th through the end of September, just four articles about OWS appeared in *The New York Times*. The lack of OWS coverage at the movement’s inception seems consistent with the idea that journalists are reluctant to cover protests until they reach a tipping point and become extremely disruptive.

To better understand how the disruptiveness of the protest shaped *The Times* coverage of Occupy, we can look at the data on arrests, which is plotted in the dotted line in Figure 4.1. By one count, there were over 7500 arrests at Occupy protests in 122 different cities (Occupy Arrests, 2014).⁶ The gray dotted line in Figure 4.1 shows the number of arrests at OWS in New York from the beginning of the protest through its one-year anniversary. Over 2,100 arrests took place in New York during this time span. About one-third of the arrests in New York occurred in the first two weeks of the protest, with a second peak in mid November 2011. As Figure 4.1 suggests, it took many arrests at the outset of Occupy to gain *The Times*’ attention, with a lag of several weeks between the peak of arrests and the peak of attention from *The Times*. But later, during the November surge in arrests, with *The Times* already committed to Occupy as a news event, coverage surged immediately as arrests rose.

⁶ OccupyArrests.com includes “only confirmed arrests specific to Occupy Events” (Occupy Arrests, 2014). The website posts links to news articles that corroborate the numbers.

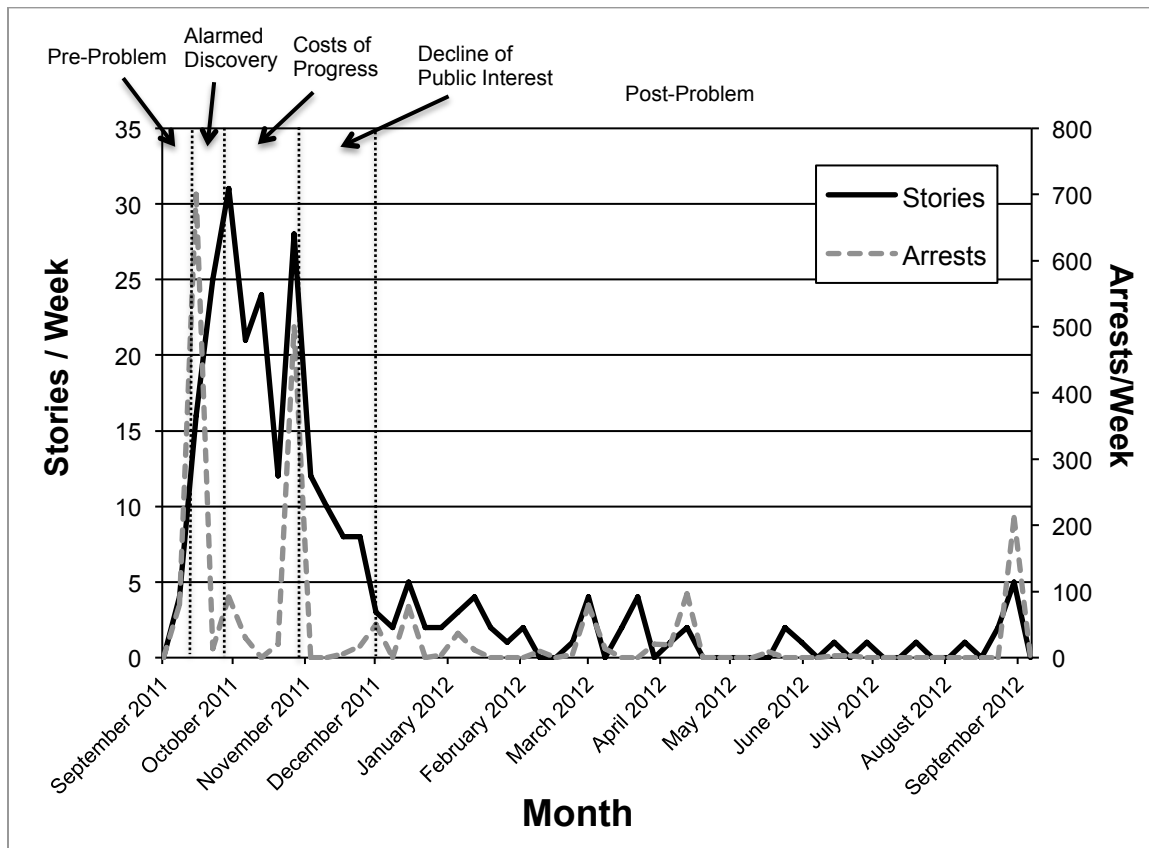


Figure 4.1. Arrests of Protesters at OWS in New York and Frequency of NYT Stories per Week about OWS

My hypothesis stated that the number of stories would be driven by variation in the number of arrests. Visually, Figure 4.1 suggests that this is the case, and to test for significance of the relationship I examined simple correlations. Table 4.1 shows the results, namely that the number of news stories about OWS and the number of arrests of protesters are positively correlated and the relationship is significant at the .001 level. Because the unit of time is the week, and stories typically appear the day following an event, I did not lag the arrests figure when computing the correlations.

Table 4.1: Correlations of Story Frequency and News Frames with Protester Arrests

Variable	n	%	Pearson's Correlation Coefficient	df	p
Stories	265	--	.508	146	<.001
Economic	102	0.38	.323	146	<.001
Conflict	124	0.47	.623	146	<.001

Until October 2011, OWS was largely a local phenomenon. The message had not yet materialized into the catchy 99% meme and most of the protesters were just beginning to articulate their outrage. The story moved quickly from the City/Metropolitan Desk to the National Desk with headlines such as “More Than 700 Arrested as Protesters Try to Cross Brooklyn Bridge” and the apropos “On Wall St., A Protest Matures” (Baker et al., 2011; Sorkin, 2011). Indeed, the protest was maturing and growing in size. Subsequently, *The Times* coverage of Occupy was growing rapidly by the middle of October 2011 and journalists were paying closer attention to the movement’s activities. While only 8 articles appeared over the first two weeks of coverage, there was about 5 times as many articles in the subsequent two weeks. From October 3 to October 18, there were 57 articles.

Coverage peaked the week of October 11, 2011, at 36 stories, with as many as 7 stories on October 15, 2011 alone. Following that peak, as the solid line in Figure 4.1 shows, coverage declined until the week of November 12, 2011, which featured 29 OWS stories. At this point, there was still an average of about 3.5 stories per day, making Occupy a regular presence on *The Times* agenda. During this period in November 2011, cities were beginning to elevate their rhetoric about evicting the protesters, which reinvigorated the coverage and led to a second peak in news stories from November 11, 2011 to November 18, 2011. At this time, the lag in stories after conflicts between police

and protesters shortened considerably because journalists were already embedded at the encampments and they had become hypersensitive to the mounting confrontations. The second peak from November 11, 2011 to November 18, 2011 was followed by another decline to about 6 stories at the end of November 2011. During this stage of the protest, the weather was beginning to dampen the conditions at the protest camps and many of the evictions across the country had already taken place. Very few protesters remained. Many of the prominent storylines about the protest had been exhausted by December.

Overall, the story of *The Times* coverage, told in terms of the sheer number of stories can be summarized as a slow and skeptical start, a quick rise after mass arrests on The Brooklyn Bridge, with two peaks spaced about a month apart, but with typically daily coverage over the whole two-month period until the end of November, 2011. By early 2012, coverage largely disappeared, until the one-year anniversary of the Occupy movement in September of 2012, when over 200 protesters were arrested. Since then, there has been little attention to the movement's activity, with only 12 stories appearing after the one-year anniversary of the movement. Lending support to H1, the variation in the amount of coverage followed major confrontations between police and protesters. While coverage lagged behind conflict in the form of protester arrests at the movement's inception, the coverage eventually corresponded with the arrests of protesters quite closely between mid-October to the end of November 2011.

A significant topic of inquiry in the media and social movements literature has been centered around which protest tactics are most successful at increasing protest issue salience (Rojecki, 2011). The results here provide some indication that confrontational protest tactics, such as getting arrested, will increase news attention to a protest,

measured in the frequency of news stories. Yet, there are two caveats. The first is that there appears to be diminishing returns concerning how much attention arrests can elicit. In the first third of the time period, from September 2011 to January 2012, arrests do seem to produce a similar spike in stories. However, in the later half of the time period, it appears as though peaks in arrests are not matched with the same magnitude of coverage as there was during the first major confrontations. The implication is that there might be an initial novelty factor to arrests at the beginning of a protest, which fades when the public and journalists grow weary of protesters' repeated efforts to seek out confrontation and get arrested. The second caveat is that as previous literature (Gans, 2004; Teune, 2014) and the subsequent findings show, confrontational tactics that lead to arrests can come at a considerable cost; the loss of a protest's narrative control over the dominant news frame in protest coverage.

RQ1 asks what effect confrontational protest tactics have on the frequency of economic and conflict frames. The correlation between arrests and both types of frames shown in Table 4.1 is positive and statistically significant. This reiterates the notion that arrests can increase attention to the protest and its message, but it can also increase the news attention to conflict as well. In this case, the contentious strategy of OWS produced more conflict framing than attention to the protesters' economic concerns. However, as I elaborate on in the following section, at different stages of the protest, confrontational tactics were quite successful at shedding the light on the protesters' claims, particularly at the beginning of the protests, in the aftermath of the Brooklyn Bridge arrests.

Protest News Framing Cycle

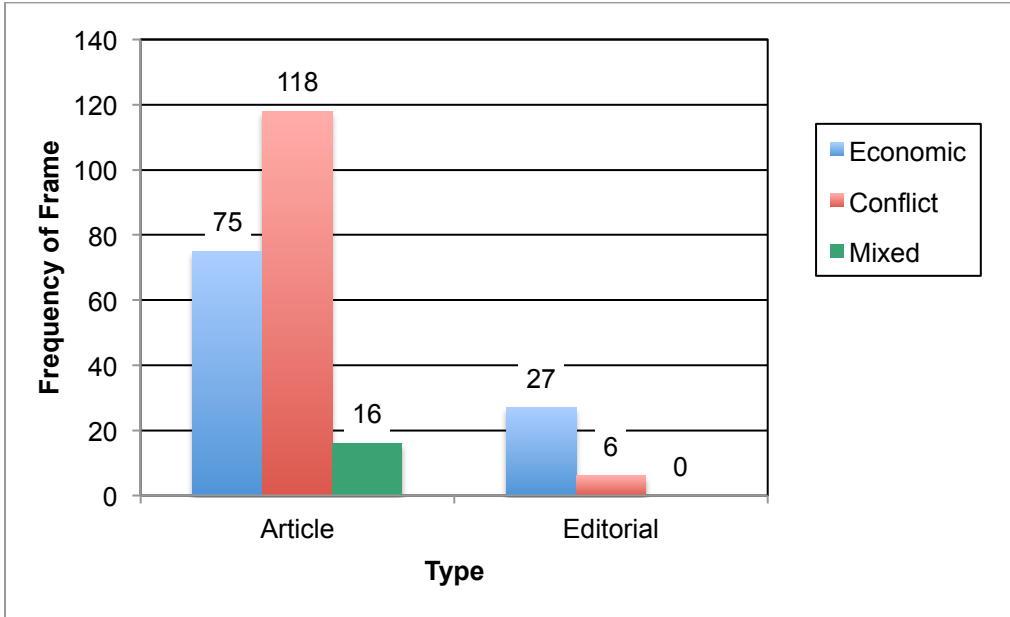


Figure 4.2: The Frequency of News Frames in NYT Coverage from September 2011 to July 2014

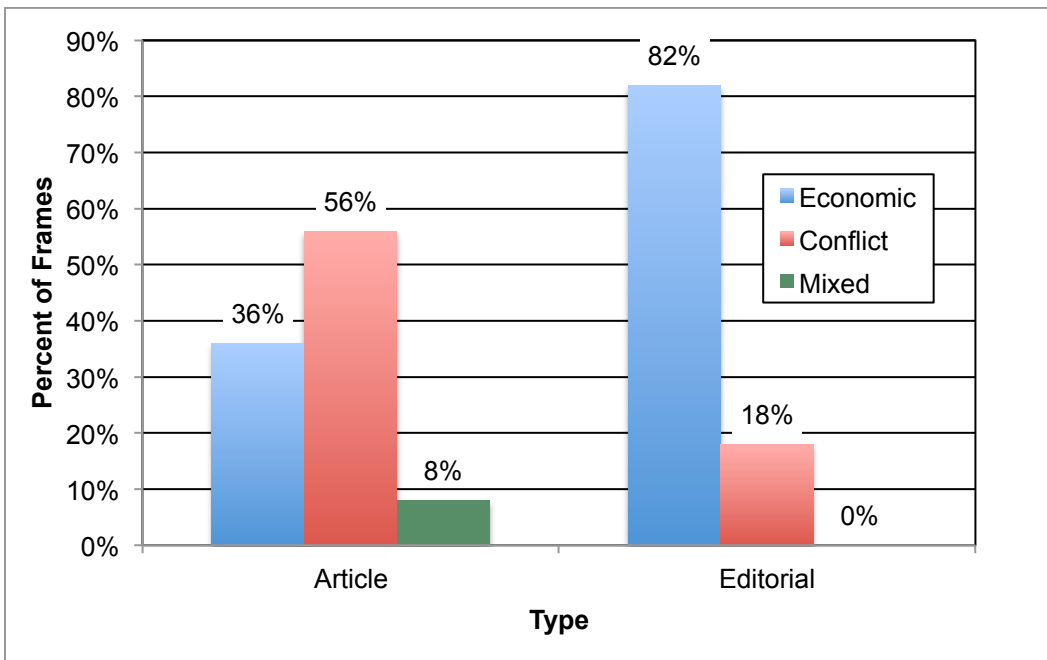


Figure 4.3: The Percentage of News Frames in NYT Coverage from September 2011 to July 2014

RQ2a asks what the frequency of economic and conflict frames is over time.

Figure 4.2 and 4.3 give a partial answer to RQ2a by showing the overall frequencies of each frame, both as a total count (Figure 4.2) and as a percentage of all articles and

editorials (Figure 4.3). The dominant news frame in the reporting is the conflict frame (n=118, or 56%). As David Carr (2011a) stated bluntly “Media coverage has tended to focus on civil disobedience because that is where the action is” (p. B1). Headlines like “Some Cities Begin Cracking Down on ‘Occupy’ Protests” and “Across U.S., Demonstrators Face Arrests and Evictions” signal the strong newspaper focus on the conflict between city officials and protesters (Foderaro, 2011; McKinley & Goodnough, 2011).

While fewer in number, the overwhelming majority of the 33 editorials were substance frames (n=27, or 82%). This suggests articles and editorials played a different role in the news coverage. The event-driven reporting was more apt to focus on the protester clashes with police while the editorials were better suited to carefully consider the economic themes of the protest like inequality. At the same time, the frequency of frames was not static throughout the coverage.

To fully address RQ2a and RQ2b, which asks about when in the issue attention cycle are economic and conflict frames most likely to appear, I plot the frequency of economic frames and conflict frames over time, distinguishing articles in Figure 4.4a and Figure 4.4b from editorials in Figure 4.5. In addition, Figures 4.4b and 4.6 looks closely at a subsample of the first 10 weeks of the protest during its zenith and abrupt dissipation.

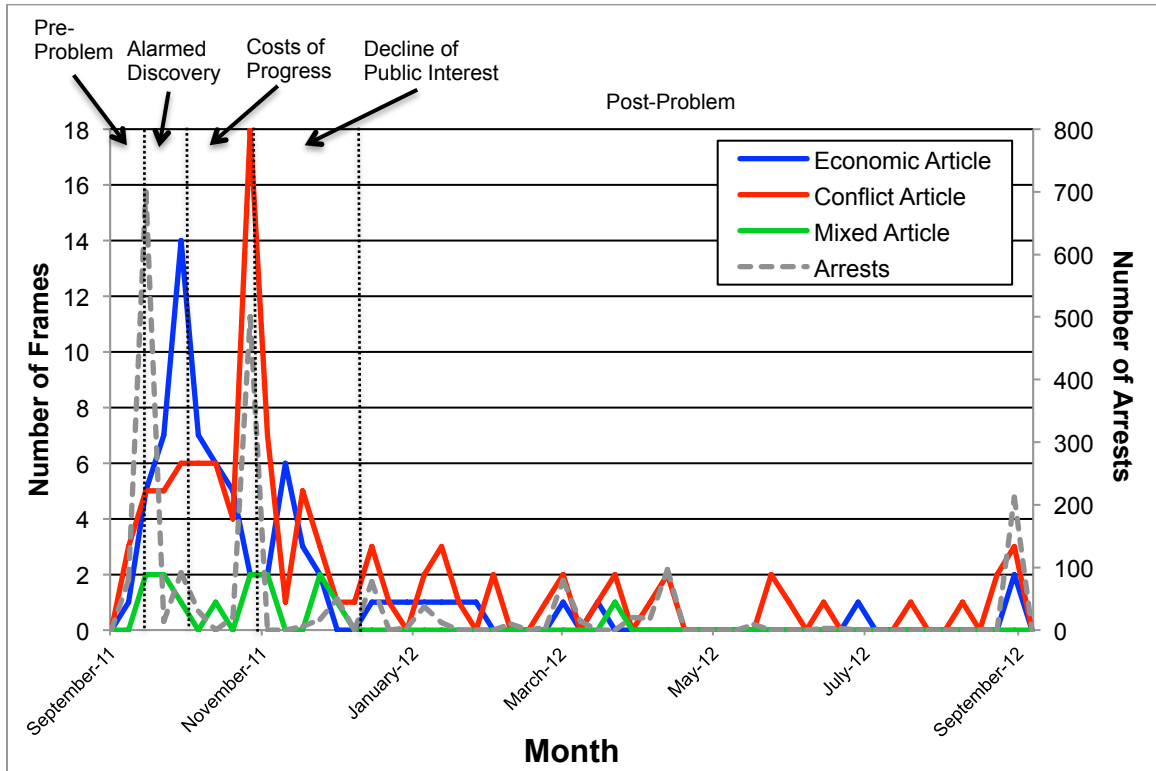


Figure 4.4a: NYT Article News Frames From September 2011 to September 2012

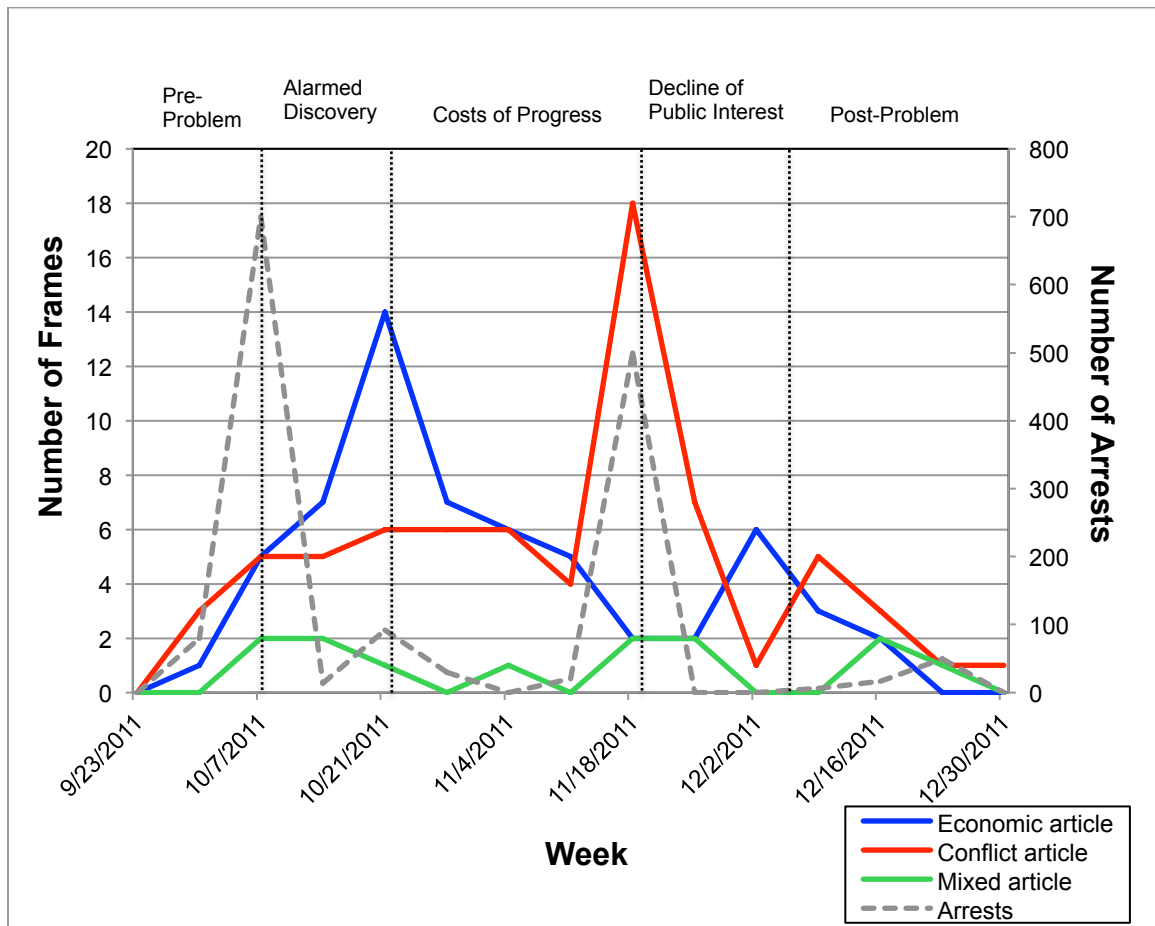


Figure 4.4b: NYT Article News Frames From September 2011 to December 2012

Figure 4.4a shows the distribution of frames over time and Figure 4.4b zooms in on a subset of the sample during the first 3 months of the protest to emphasize how frames changed over time. As Figure 4.4b shows, from the outset, the contentious behaviors like the blocking of the Brooklyn Bridge in early October 2011 and subsequent arrests elicited some articles with conflict frames around the week of October 7, 2011. At the same time, the protesters fundamental claims about inequality also received a lot of attention from journalists and the first dominant frame that emerged in the news coverage around the middle of October was the economic frame. It is reasonable to consider last week of September 2011 through the end of October 2011 the ‘alarmed discovery’ stage

of the issue attention cycle. In part, the protesters shrewd transformation of a complicated inequality problem into the 99% meme⁷ helped journalists discover a compelling storyline to capture the economic concerns of the protesters. The increasing size of the protest over this period of time gave journalists an extra sense of urgency to shed light on their grievances.

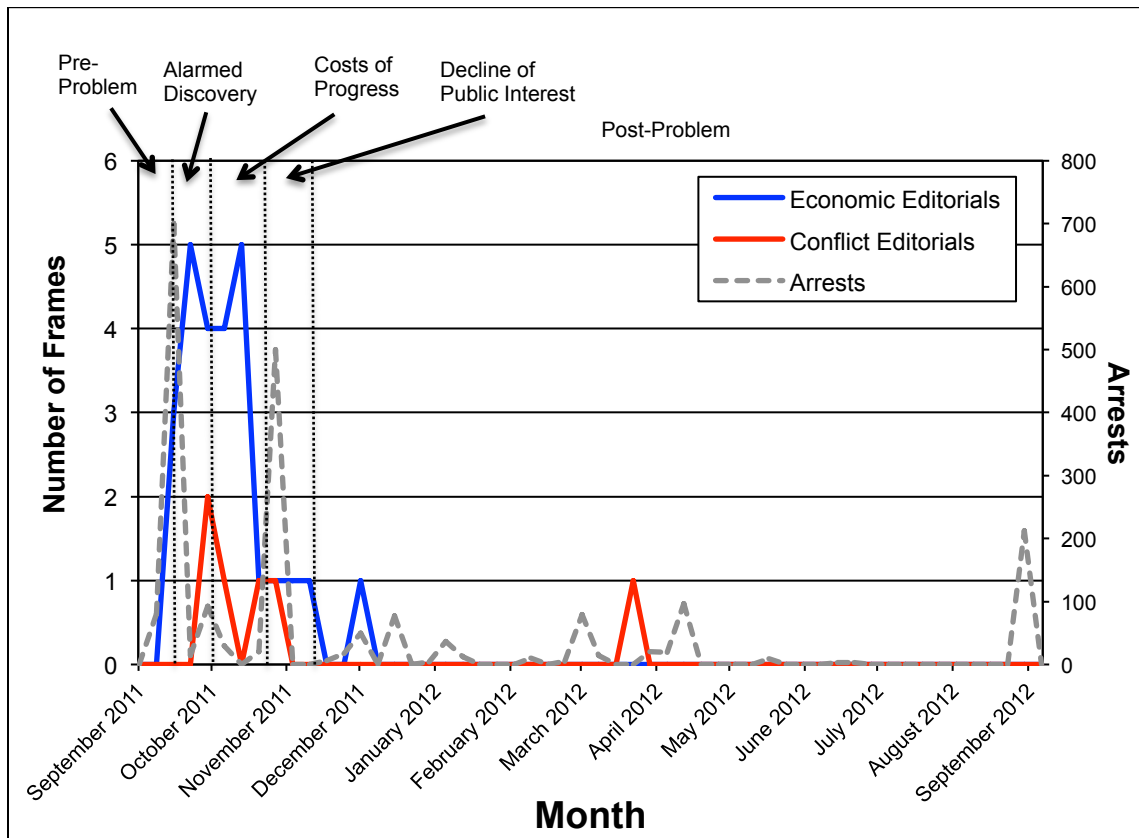


Figure 4.5: NYT Editorial News Frames From September 2011 to September 2012

⁷ There is some dispute about the origins of the term “99%” Some have attributed the origin of the term to anthropologist David Graeber (Sharlet, 2011). Others have suggested economist Joseph Stiglitz may have popularized the term in a Vanity Fair article titled “Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%” (Stelter, 2011b; Stiglitz, 2011). Regardless, the term was adopted early in the movement and largely embodied the spirit of the movement during the physical occupation and aftermath.

As Figure 4.5 illustrates, there was a sharp increase in economic editorials following the Brooklyn Bridge arrests. This reveals a lot about the payoff of confrontational protest tactics in the context of the issue attention cycle. While a few early stories heavily focused on the conflict during the showdown on the Brooklyn Bridge, the choice to be confrontational elicited a lot of attention to the protest's substantive claims, especially in *The Times*' editorial section. In other words, the Brooklyn Bridge arrests led to the alarmed discovery of the protest and subsequently created an opening for news attention to the issues fueling the protest.

In the alarmed discovery stage of the issue attention cycle, *The New York Times*' editorial staff started to delve deeply into the economic complaints that induced the protesters to choose Wall Street as the target of its indignation. The protesters called into question Wall Street's role in the financial crisis, banks' cozy relationships with regulators, dubious lending practices that exacerbated the housing crisis and widespread foreclosures.

There were two prominent editorial perspectives on the protest's economic grievances. One perspective that emerged early in the coverage from journalists like Ginia Bellafante, reporter for *The Times*' Metropolitan Desk and financial columnist, Andrew Ross Sorkin, and David Brooks could generally be characterized as dismissiveness and hostility toward the protest; the dismissiveness took two forms.

First, journalists raised doubts about the seriousness of the cause. Both Bellafante and Sorkin used the term "street theater" in describing the flashy and sometimes outrageous tactics of the protesters (Bellafante, 2011; Sorkin, 2011). Bellafante fixated on some protesters' outrageous costumes and dress. She also suggested the cause of the

protests was “virtually impossible to decipher” and that protesters were “clamoring for nothing in particular to happen right away” (Bellafante, 2011). David Brooks (2011) derisively wrote, “The Occupy Wall Street movement may look radical, but its members’ ideas are less radical than those you might hear at your average Rotary Club.”

Second, reporters conveyed skepticism about the protesters’ actual knowledge of the financial system and how the economy works. Bellafante (2011) insisted that the protesters had attempted to “pantomime progressivism rather than practice it knowledgably.” Sorkin (2011) wrote about a protester that had demanded a fairer tax regime but was unfamiliar with the proposed “Buffett Rule” which would raise income taxes on top earners. Upon noting the hypocrisy of protesters who were seen using a Bank of America A.T.M., he wittingly observed, “As much as this group [OWS] may want to get away from Wall Street and corporate America, it may be trapped by it” (p. B1).

The other perspective about OWS was more supportive and encouraging; columnists such as economist Paul Krugman and Nicholas Kristof even offered guidance about how the protesters could formalize demands and enact tangible reforms on Wall Street and in financial regulatory institutions. Both of these columnists saw the protests as legitimate and timely. Economist Paul Krugman (2011a) wrote several op-eds defending the protesters’ indictment of Wall Street and offering advice about specific economic policy demands including investment in infrastructure and education, as well as improving the financial regulatory framework to reduce big banks’ capacity to engage in risky financial decisions. In “A Manifesto for Protesters” Richard Beales, Edward Hadas, Peter Thal Larsen, and Antony Currie (2011) were unabashedly blunt about their

enthusiasm for OWS. They wrote “make banks safer, and let them fail...name and shame fat cat salarymen...free legislators from special interests...and probably least realistic, change the United States’ two party system” (p. B2).

In addition to reporters filling in the details of the protest’s economic agenda, the fallout resulting from the public’s indignation about bonuses and executive compensation became a topic of intense debate. Again, Krugman (2011a) provides a shrewd synopsis of this discussion, noting, “...The paychecks of the wizards of Wall Street were appropriate, we were told, because of the wonderful things they did. Somehow, however, that wonderfulness failed to trickle down to the rest of the nation -- and that was true even before the [financial] crisis” (p. A25). This topic and other difficulties on Wall Street were also taken up in columns such as “The Bankers and the Revolutionaries” (Kristof, 2011), “At Top Colleges, Anti-Wall Street Fervor Complicates Campus Recruiting” (Roose, 2011), and Thomas Friedman’s (2011) op-ed “Did You Hear the One About the Bankers?”

Beyond the unscrupulous behavior of Wall Street, there was a consistent, though often complicated and unfocused concern with economic inequality. While the scope of concerns about inequality was broad and vague, it was exemplified by the protesters’ 99% meme. The pithy 99% meme and the broader issue of economic inequality was a central message of the protesters. However, many related economic concerns reached beyond this particular issue.

Some protesters demanded a tax on millionaires, often referred to in policy circles as ‘The Buffett Rule.’ Headlines such as “Despite Protests, Cuomo Says He Will Not Extend a Tax Surcharge on Top Earners” and “Events Erode Hope of a Tax Overhaul

Before Election Day” hinted at the difficulty of achieving tax reform (Harwood, 2011; Kaplan, 2011). It makes sense that the newspaper would focus on taxes because reforming the tax code and tax rates for earners in the top income bracket has been on the political agenda for a long time and it is one example of a redistributive policy that can have a significant effect on the size and scope of economic inequality.

In addition to taxes, one of the most worn-out economic topics and clichéd campaign speech centerpieces was also a major thread in some stories—jobs. One of the earliest articles to surface in *The Times* that tried to document the reason why people had joined the movement, “Wall Street Occupiers, Protesting Till Whenever,” detailed how a lot of young protesters got involved because they were unemployed and wanted to shed light on the lack of job opportunities for young people and recent graduates (Kleinfield & Buckley, 2011). “Protesters Against Wall Street: It’s obvious what they want. What took so long, and where are the nation’s leaders?” echoed a similar sentiment (The New York Times, 2011).

Aside from inequality and traditional economic staples like taxes and jobs, many Occupiers could not verbalize their economic concerns in a concrete way. Some exhibited a general hopelessness about the way capitalism works. As Kleinfield and Buckley (2011) phrased it, “Not all of [the Occupiers] can articulate exactly why they are here or what they want. Yet there is a conviction rippling through them that however the global economy works, it does not work for them” (p. A1). Others espoused anti-corporate attitudes and concern about corporate greed. Ginia Bellafante (2011) talked about several protesters “fighting the legal doctrine of corporate personhood...” Mark

Landler (2011) observed a protester with a sign that referred to the Chamber of Commerce as the “Chamber of Corporate Horrors” (p. A13).

Some did not malign corporations or the market but pointed to the moral failure of allowing poverty to persist. One article tried to capture this sentiment with a story about the homeless community joining the protests titled “Dissenting, or Seeking Shelter? Homeless Stake a Claim at Protests” (Nagourney, 2011). In sum, the early gambit of protesters to be confrontational with city officials and seek mass arrests paid off in the sense that it elicited news attention from *The Times*. More specifically, these tactics inspired a wide range of editorial perspectives which carefully considered claims of many different actors within the OWS movement, including well-read activists with narrowly defined economic concerns as well as poorly informed newcomers who only faintly perceived a sense of economic injustice that tied the protesters together. Though many of the editorials did not endorse the protests and their message, many did. Overall, *The New York Times* tailored its economic stories to capture the viewpoints of all types of Occupiers with nuance and depth.

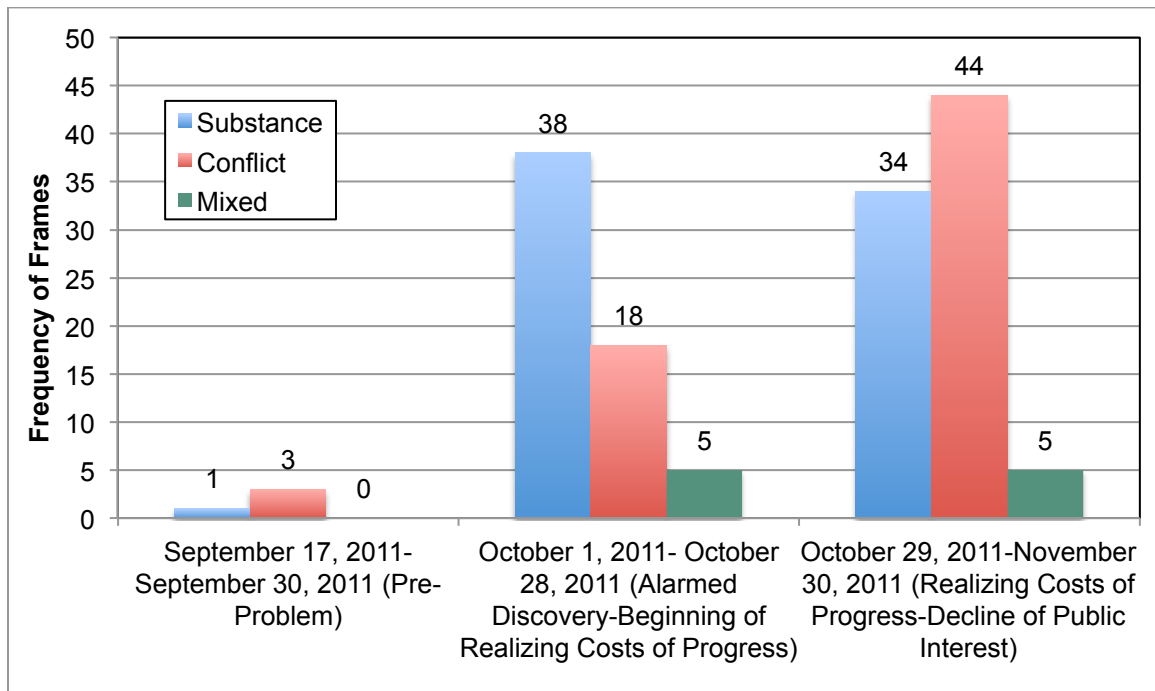


Figure 4.6: Frequency of Article and Editorial News Frames from September 2011 to November 2011

Figure 4.6 depicts the distribution of frames at different stages of the issue attention cycle. The beginning of the protest in the middle of the September 2011 through the end of that month could roughly be considered the pre-problem phase, in which news organizations and the broader public largely ignored the protests. This is represented by the first set of bars in Figure 4.6. Though there were few news frames overall, conflict frames outnumbered substance frames because there were a few intermittent clashes between protesters and police as the protest began to take shape.

The mass arrest of protesters on the Brooklyn Bridge on October 1, 2011 catapulted the OWS story into the alarmed discovery stage of the issue attention cycle. The alarmed discovery stage of the OWS story in the issue attention cycle is represented in the second set of bars in Figure 4.6. During the alarmed discovery stage of the issue attention cycle and the beginning of the subtle transition into the realizing costs of

significant progress stage of the issue attention cycle from the beginning of October 2011 through the end of October 2011, the articles and editorials focused on substance by almost a two to one ratio. This coincides with the movement's peak in terms of protest size and news attention, which is consistent with the PNFC. The PNFC suggests substance frames should appear when mass participation in the protest takes place.

The focus on substance quickly waned as the protest moved into the third and fourth stages of the issue attention cycle, represented by the third set of bars in Figure 4.6. The very end of October 2011 to the third week of November 2011 could be characterized as the realizing the costs of significant progress stage of the issue attention cycle, when protesters recognized that initiating economic reforms would prove to be difficult and any attempts to change the existing order would face powerful institutional resistance.

In this third stage of the issue attention cycle, substance frames fell behind conflict frames, especially as the exchanges between New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the protesters intensified, which produced a November 2011 surge in protest arrests. This finding replicates work from Murray et al. (2008), which demonstrated that coverage of protest issues declines when conflict escalates. Almost one-third of all the conflict stories appeared in the month of November 2011. At this time many of the protesters substantive claims had been well explored and attention shifted to the looming showdown between cities and protesters over their permanent encampments. By the middle of the month, there was a story about police arresting protesters or evicting camps almost everyday. This fits the expectation of the PNFC, which illustrates conflict

frames should dominate coverage when exchanges between protesters and officials intensify.

In the last third of November 2011, the protest entered the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle, in which public interest in the protest declined after evictions of OWS camps across the country. Figure 4.4b illustrates that conflict frames still dominated coverage at the end of November 2011, though overall coverage was receding by early December 2011.

Considering all of these results together, the answer to RQ2b appears to be that the focus on the economic concerns of the protest and the emergence of the first dominant frame, the substance frame, coincides with the protest's growth during the alarmed discovery stage of the issue attention cycle throughout most of October 2011. As the movement increased its size and formulated the problem, the newspaper delved into Occupy Movement's origins and the protest's potential to materialize political and economic reforms. However, it became clear at the end of October 2011 and the beginning of November 2011 in the third stage of the issue attention cycle that the protesters could not organize well beyond the confines of their encampments. Public support subsided and the narrative shifted. Though some economic frames still appeared, conflict frames dominated the coverage in the realizing the costs of significant progress stage of the issue attention cycle. Journalists realized it would not be so easy for the protest to actualize demands and yield concessions from elites, especially toward the middle of November, when protest eviction plans materialized and communication exchanges between cities and protesters intensified. Had the protests succeeded at forcing officials to address economic inequality and offer policy remedies locally and nationally,

the coverage may have looked quite different and more sustained attention to their cause would have been likely. Yet, as this was not the case, scrutiny from city governments intensified as stories emerged about cities' protest eviction plans and looming showdowns between police and protesters.

As November 2011 faded, *The Times* continued to report on the desperate struggle of the protesters to resist evictions by police at the end of the third stage of the issue attention cycle and the beginning of the decline of public interest in the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle. When the protest marked its two-month anniversary on November 17th 2011, it was clear that the gesture was mostly symbolic and most Occupiers could sense their days were numbered. As David Carr (2011b) ruminated, “[after the Zuccotti Park eviction] it is inevitable that Occupy Wall Street will eventually become more of an idea than a place” (p. B1). Carr and others reflected on how the movement's physical dissolution would impact its future legacy.

Public interest further declined and news organizations focused on life after the occupation in late November and December of 2011. OWS had reached the final stage of the issue attention cycle by the beginning of 2012, when most protesters packed up their tents and went home. Despite an ambitious agenda, the movement would not be able to tackle many of the issues it wanted to and could not withstand the harassment of unsympathetic city officials.

Discussion

The goal of this chapter was to analyze when journalists' adopt different news frames during the course of a protest. To accomplish this goal, I tested a theoretical model of the protest news, which suggests that the degree to which coverage focuses on

substance or conflict at different stages of the protest in the issue attention cycle will depend on whether protesters engage in confrontational tactics, introduce powerful collective action frames, and sustain participation. To test the model, I examined news coverage of the Occupy Wall Street protest in *The New York Times*. The results of my analysis show that the model can explain changes in news frames as a protest progresses through stages of the issue attention cycle, though in the case of the OWS coverage, the pattern does not perfectly conform to the model, which reveals some limitations to the theoretical framework.

Ultimately, this chapter wrestles with how journalists balance attention to the issues that mobilize protesters with the conflict protesters escalate against the targets of their indignation. A large debate in the literature focuses on whether journalists delegitimize or marginalize protests by drawing attention to conflict at the expense of the substance of a protest (Boykoff, 2006; Rojecki, 2002; DeLuca & Peeples, 2002). The results in this chapter suggest that when protests engage in conflict and clashes with police it doesn't always marginalize the protest or its message. In fact, conflict can actually draw attention to protesters' claims and messages as much as it draws attention to the conflict itself. Running simple correlations of arrests and news frames suggests that confrontational protest tactics, measured in the form of arrests, helped produce both substance and conflict frames in the case of OWS.

Another big task of this chapter was not only to look at how the tactics of protesters influence the frames journalist use, but also how those frames change over time. The PNFC element of my theoretical model of protest news coverage suggested contentious actions in the alarmed discovery stage of the issue attention cycle would

produce conflict frames and the development of collective action frames would produce substance frames in the protest coverage. Indeed, both types of frames were present in the second stage of the issue attention cycle.

There were some conflict frames in the alarmed discovery stage of the OWS story because of confrontational protester tactics. However, the findings here indicate that shortly after OWS began, protesters' escalation of conflict with police led to substantially more substance frames than conflict frames in the alarmed discovery stage of the issue attention cycle. This demonstrates one of the limits of the model. While the model accounts for the opportunity for both types of frames in the second and third stage of the issue attention cycle, it does not indicate that contentious tactics can lead to both substance and conflict frames. The model in Chapter 2 suggests confrontational tactics should just produce conflict frames.

One of the problems with the model is that in the real world, many protest tactics are happening simultaneously and not in rigid stages. In the case of OWS, protesters were developing collective action frames, participating in an organized and unorganized manner, and being confrontational all at the same time, not in a succession of stages as the model crudely depicts. As a result, the evidence for the PNFC element of the theoretical model is somewhat limited in light of the Occupy news coverage. Both substance and conflict frames emerged in the second and third stage of the issue attention cycle as the PNFC indicates, but contentious actions played a role in increasing substance frames during the alarmed discovery stage, which does not fit with the expectation of the PNFC. Nonetheless, at the end of the third and fourth stage of the issue attention cycle,

conflict frames dominated as clashes between protesters and the city officials intensified, which is consistent with the PNFC.

Another problem with the theoretical model was that the effect of confrontational tactics on news framing changed over the course of the protest, which the model did not account for. While the initial confrontational tactics of protesters caught the attention of journalists at major newspapers like *The New York Times* and led reporters to explore the substance behind the protest, this effect diminished over time. After several confrontations between police and protesters throughout the course of the protest, journalists eventually began focusing only on the conflict instead of the protest issues, especially when exchanges between the protesters and officials intensified, when the state repressed the OWS protest, and when public interest in the protest diminished.

When tactics grow repetitive, the response of journalists and the types of stories they write can change over time. Journalists need new information to keep a story fresh (Cole & Harcup, 2011). When arrests of protesters become a routine practice to draw attention to the cause, journalists eventually wise up to this strategy. In the case of OWS, journalists shifted focus away from the claims of protesters to the question of how long the protesters would be able to endure threats of eviction as well as how severe the police response would be. This seemed less a result of journalists (sub) consciously delegitimizing the protest and more about journalists rightly sensing that the protest's days were numbered. Considering the worsening conditions at the encampments (Flegenheimer, 2011), poor weather becoming a big factor on the East Coast, as well as souring public opinion and annoyed local residents (Enten, 2012), journalists didn't have

to be clairvoyant to know the protests would end soon. Considering the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical model, more testing and refining of the model is warranted.

One important test for the future is to examine how the balance of substance frames and conflict frames changes when the scope of substance is broadened. A serious limitation of the data here is that I relied on a relatively narrow scope of substance frames, the economic concerns of the protesters. This is problematic because while economic concerns were central to the protest, many protesters were concerned with a variety of other issues. Incorporating non-economic concerns into coding substance frames might reveal that more substance frames were present in the coverage than what the results in this chapter indicate.

Another useful test of the model would be to compare similar protests that vary substantially in the degree to which they are confrontational or passive and peaceful. This would allow me to thoroughly determine how much effect confrontational tactics have on the dominance of conflict or substance frames. In examining other cases, it also seems necessary to see if I can replicate the finding here that confrontational tactics can draw attention to a movement's issues as a protest begins, but that over time the effect diminishes and will eventually produce more conflict frames. This requires examining protests with an event horizon similar to OWS that sustained confrontational tactics. Occupy Central in Hong Kong could potentially be an appropriate case for such an examination.

Concerning what the model and this case means for the protest paradigm literature, the idea that news framing often works to delegitimize protest is not settled, particularly in the international context (Cottle, 2011). A cross-national comparison of

news coverage on the Iraq War protests found that the US press invoked the protest paradigm far more than the UK press (Dardis, 2006). In work on news coverage of protests in Belgium, Wouters (2013) suggests the US political system “thrives far more on conflict than the Belgian political system” (p. 12). Consequently, the balance between protest issues and conflict might vary substantially depending on the country, the protest, and the media, especially when protests are short-lived or linked to specific events like G20 or WTO meetings. Further inquiry about the degree to which news organizations in different countries attempt to marginalize protesters or even report on conflict would provide an indication of whether findings in the United States about the protest paradigm and other framing devices hold in countries with a different media and political system.

I conclude by noting one limitation of this study is that it is limited to an analysis of *The New York Times*. In addition to studying other newspapers and protests, a promising line of scholarly inquiry would be to examine the robust activist media content produced by protest participants and independent citizen journalists. As Martin (2010) observes, examining movement publications gives scholars a sense of what movement actors consider “newsworthy.” Such an investigation could provide a more nuanced look at how activists develop innovative collective action frames. From Occupy Wall Street, to Occupy Central in Hong Kong, protests have produced their own newspapers and press releases. This phenomenon may even call into question the extent to which protests must rely on traditional news organizations at all to promote their messages, which could have huge implications for persistence of the protest paradigm.

Chapter Five:
Extended Case Studies: International Newspaper Coverage of the G20 Protests
in London, Pittsburgh and Toronto

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I introduced the general model of protest news to illustrate how news attention to a protest increases or decreases over the course of a protest, as well as the *protest news framing cycle* (PNFC) to identify how journalists employ different news frames during different stages of a protest. The model proposes that protest coverage conforms to a cyclical pattern in which the news framing of protests switches between substance, conflict, and sometimes, a combination of both. This frame changing dynamic occurs at different stages of a protest. To test this theoretical model, I examined *The New York Times* coverage of the Occupy Wall Street Movement as a preliminary case study in Chapter 3. The results of my analysis suggested that *The Times* coverage only adhered to the PNFC in some ways. In the early part of the OWS story, conflict frames appeared, as protesters engaged in contentious behaviors to draw attention to the movement, as the model suggests. But then, confrontational tactics and subsequent mass arrests led to economic frames dominating in the second stage of the issue attention cycle as news and public attention to the movement increased and journalists delved into the causes of the protest, followed by a return to conflict frames, which does not entirely fit with the model. Nonetheless, at the end of the third stage and the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle, conflict frames appears when protesters and police engaged in heated clashes, which contributed to the dissolution of the Occupy Movement and the decline of overall

news coverage. This frames in the latter part of coverage fit the model of protest news more closely than in the early coverage.

In this chapter, I further assess the generalizability of my theoretical model by examining three related protests and the news coverage of those protests in two international newspapers and one national newspaper. Specifically, I examine the G20 Summit protests London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto. As in the previous chapter, I perform a content analysis of the news coverage of each protest to identify the frame-changing dynamic (the PNFC) outlined in the theoretical model.

This chapter is organized as follows. I begin by comparing the G20 protests to the Occupy Movement. More precisely, I compare and contrast their strategic aims, the organizational features of the protests, and their actions. Upon comparing the two protests, I argue they are similar enough ideologically, but different enough organizationally to provide a further test of the generalizability of the general model of protest news. Specifically, I ask whether the short-lived, event-bound G20 protests follow the same frame-changing dynamic as the longer, more spontaneous and flexible OWS protest. Next, I make the case that the Toronto protest was the most confrontational of the G20 protests and offer a hypothesis about conflict frames comprising a higher proportion of the total number of newspaper articles compared to the newspaper coverage of the London and Pittsburgh protests.

Subsequently, I explore the results of my content analysis. To relate patterns of news coverage from the content analysis to protest events, I offer a descriptive history of each protest. For the most part, I find support for the theoretical model, including the PNFC element of the model, which explains variations in the amount of coverage and the

frequency of different frames present in the news coverage of the G20 protests. The results also suggest that protests with less confrontational tactics tend to elicit more focus on substance than conflict, which ultimately benefits protesters interested in amplifying their claims.

This chapter makes four contributions to the literature on news framing of social movements. First, it is the only study to compare G20 protest news across multiple countries and protests. Second, it bolsters evidence of the wider applicability of the theoretical model to horizontal and vertical protests. Third, it offers some initial evidence that event-bound, short-lived protests are susceptible to the same frame-changing dynamic as longer, non-event driven protests. Fourth, it substantiates a previous finding that protests with more conflict between protesters and police tend to have less substantive coverage of protest issues (Murray et al. 2008; Gottlieb, 2015).

Theoretical Issues

Strategic Aims of Occupy Wall Street and G20 Summit Protests

The G20 is a group of twenty leading economic nations. It is comprised of heads of governments and central bank governors from twenty major economies like Brazil, China, the UK, and the United States. The group convenes with the explicit purpose of promoting international financial stability, as well as reviewing and reforming financial regulatory policies (Helleiner & Pagliari, 2009). The G20 Summits examined here took place between 2009 and 2010. The first was in London on April 2, 2009. This was followed by the Pittsburgh Summit on September 24-25, 2009. The Toronto Summit was held the following year on June 26-27, 2010. G20 protesters expressed concern about a broad array of topics including jobs (unemployment), financial crimes, globalization,

climate change, immigrant rights and some niche issues as well like the Israeli Apartheid, the Iraq War, and the Chinese repression of the Tibetan people (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011; Greer & McLaughlin, 2010; Stalker & Wood, 2013; Templeton, 2009). Some G20 protesters were simply opposed to the idea of a G20 Summit altogether. Their reasons varied from being against the idea the summits represent in terms of powerful nations orchestrating global capitalism at the expense of smaller, developing nations, to being annoyed with the cost and disruption involved with hosting the summits (Cato & Harding, 2009; Shephard & Talaga, 2010).

On the other hand, Occupy protesters were somewhat more cohesive in focusing on the issue of inequality, but many other central concerns like jobs, financial crimes, and outrage over taxpayer bailouts of private financial institutions echoed the sentiments of G20 protesters (Gitlin, 2012; Castells, 2012). Further, various OWS participants also voiced a number of non-economic concerns similar to those of the G20 protesters, including Israeli control of the Occupied Territories, food justice, indigenous rights, immigration, and US military interventions overseas (Bittman, 2011; Lacey, 2011; Anti-Defamation League, 2011). Put simply, the G20 protest news coverage is an appropriate case to compare with OWS because the grievances and causes of the G20 protests and OWS protests overlap substantially and they both forged diverse coalitions to mobilize participants. Despite these commonalities, the protests differed slightly from an organizational perspective.

Organizational Structure of Occupy Wall Street and G20 Summit Protests

Much like their 1999 predecessor, the WTO protests in Seattle, the G20 protests in 2009 and 2010 embodied the spirit of anti-globalization and were in many ways a

precursor or prototype of the Occupy Movement, at least organizationally speaking. As Raimundo Viejo, a political theorist from Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona observed about OWS,

The anti-globalization movement was the first step on the road. Back then our model was to attack the system like a pack of wolves. There was an alpha male, a wolf who led the pack, and those who followed behind. Now the model has evolved. Today we are one big swarm of people (Adbusters, 2011a).

As Viejo indicates, Occupy drew much inspiration from movements like the G20 protests, but Occupy adapted and changed their organizational model in subtle, but important ways. With the “wolf pack” analogy, Viejo alludes to the hierarchical or, “vertical” structure of the anti-globalization protests in which one or several organizations would lead and delegate tasks to subordinate organizations (Juris, 2005).

In the context of the G20 protests, the “alpha male” was typically a civil society coalition, which would plan protest events and mobilize the “pack of wolves,” a broad-based amalgamation of interest groups, non-profits, and activist organizations. For example, the G20 protests in London were largely “organized by Put People First (PPF), a UK civil society coalition of more than 160 development NGOs, trade unions, and environmental groups” (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011, p. 777). Many of the participants in the G20 protests were drawn from the memberships of social movement organizations who participated in recruitment or mobilization.

On the other hand, OWS coordinated activities horizontally, without strictly defined leadership roles, rather than vertically, with a hierarchical leadership structure (Garrett 2006; Juris 2005). OWS is an example of what Bimber (2003) calls *post-bureaucratic pluralism*. In a post-bureaucratic system, politics does not require formal organization or a hierarchical leadership structure because advances in communication

technology allow for the fluid and instantaneous transfer of information and ideas that enable people to organize resources and coordinate activities on their own. Consequently, collective action does not necessarily require substantial professional staffing, money, or formal membership. The boundaries of organizations are loosely defined, permeable, and inherently informal. Such developments allow for collective action to be spontaneous, flexible, and event-driven.

In large part, OWS embodied post-bureaucratic structure. The movement did not have any leadership in a strict sense and there was no extensive coordination regarding how resources should be harnessed prior to the inception of the movement. Moreover, participants had no formal commitment to the movement in terms of membership dues or participatory fees. Loose membership guidelines were important because the movement's live nature encouraged temporary or spontaneous participation that helped sustain the movement for several months. Anyone could participate at any time, whether they belonged to a traditional social movement organization or no formal group at all.

It is important to note that the distinction between horizontal and vertical protests is not a rigid one. Certainly G20 and OWS embodied elements of both. G20 protesters were not necessarily bound by formal membership to organizations as a pre-requisite for participation in the G20 protests even though such organizations played an important role in making the protests happen. G20 protesters also engaged in some forms of spontaneous actions without formal coordination. For example, University of Pittsburgh students engaged in an impromptu march during the Pittsburgh G20 Summit (Kerlik, 2009).

Conversely, OWS exhibited some bureaucratic, hierarchical features. OWS had a general assembly in New York, a division of labor, and specialized committees during its physical occupation. Traditional interest groups and political organizations like unions (i.e. SEIU) and Greenpeace pledged support for the movement (Kessler & Martinez, 2011; Radford, 2011), though none of these traditional mobilizing groups claimed ownership over OWS and its issues. Yet, despite elements of horizontal and vertical organization in both movements, a crucial difference seems to be the amount and extent of advanced planning and coordination of the protests.

The G20 protests in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto were all planned well in advance and were organized around a specific event, the G20 summits in each respective city. In Pittsburgh for example, the White House announced Pittsburgh would be hosting the summit in May of 2009 (Boren, 2009). Immediately after the announcement, established activist organizations like the Pittsburgh Organizing Group (POG) and some anarchist collectives established the Pittsburgh G20 Resistance Project (PGRP) to organize marches and events against the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh (Kutz-Flamenbaum et al., 2012). The PGRP spent the next four months hosting monthly, and sometimes weekly planning meetings ahead of the September G20 Summit.

Other groups, both national and local, also participated in planning protest events. These groups were required by Secret Service to apply for permits to hold public gatherings during the summit (Santoni, 2009). Such a process made it necessary for groups like Code Pink and 3 Rivers Climate Convergence to meticulously plan the logistics of their demonstrations and account for details like crowd size, location, activities, and resources (Hamill, 2009). Among the affordances of formalized,

hierarchical groups like those witnessed at the G20 protests is that organizations with leaders can plan actions, coordinate with other groups, and rely on group members to commit and attend those events with more reliability. Such planning is not always feasible with a loose, informal and horizontal network of activists because it can be difficult to delegate tasks to participants in a mutually agreeable way.

In sharp contrast, OWS simply asked people to “show up,”⁸ then improvise the demands and details. Their activities were less organized around a specific event and more focused on systemic problems and ideas like inequality. This allowed OWS flexibility in terms of sustaining collective action while the G20 protests had no such luxury. After the G20 summits ended, there was little to no point in continuing the protests because the target of the protests had disbanded. However, OWS could stay mobilized indefinitely and be adaptive to current events and the response of the state. This enabled OWS to expand its event horizon.

Overall, there appears to be two crucial differences between the G20 protests and OWS. The first is that the G20 protests were planned well in advance while OWS was largely improvised spontaneously. The second difference is that the G20 protest was temporally bound to a specific event while OWS was not. The success or failure of the G20 protests hinged on whether they could prevent the summits from taking place or at least have participating members of the summit incorporate their concerns into the meetings. The success or failure of OWS was substantially less constrained by any particular event. In light of these differences, it is necessary to reconsider whether the

⁸ In the initial blog post from *Adbusters*, they specifically asked “On September 17, we want to see 20,000 people flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street for a few months.”

general model of protest news and the protest news framing cycle applies to the G20 protests in the same way as OWS. Concerning how organizational differences might affect news framing of the G20 protests, I ask the following question about the overall amount of economic and conflict frames:

RQ3: What is the overall number of economic and conflict frames in the most influential newspapers' coverage of short-lived, event-specific protests like the G20 Summit protests in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto?

Given the encouraging results of the previous chapter, there is enough evidence to suggest substance (i.e. economic) frames and conflict frames will appear at different stages of the issue attention cycle. Consistent with the general model of protest news coverage, I predict the following about the newspaper coverage of the G20 Summit protests in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto:

H2: Substance frames will be more frequent during the second and early part of the third stages of the issue attention cycle while conflict frames will be more frequent during the later part of the third and fourth stages of the issue attention cycle for short-lived, event-specific protests like the G20 Summit protests in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto.

While there is reason to believe the G20 protest coverage in each newspaper should follow the same pattern as the OWS newspaper coverage, each unique G20 protest engaged in slightly different tactics and provoked distinct responses from city governments and police officers. The escalation of conflict varied substantially in each host city. In particular, the Toronto Summit had over three times as many arrests as Pittsburgh and London combined (Toronto Police Service After-Action Review, 2011).

In the previous chapter, I found some evidence that confrontational protest tactics, measured in the form of arrests is positively correlated with conflict frames and economic frames. But over time, confrontational tactics seemed to almost exclusively produce conflict frames. Since the event horizon was condensed significantly in the G20 protests, and the goal of the protests was a bit more obvious than in the case of OWS, I would expect journalists to almost exclusively focus on the conflict in the more confrontational G20 protests. This leads to my final hypothesis, which states:

H3: The G20 Toronto Summit protest newspaper coverage will have a higher percentage of conflict frames than the G20 Pittsburgh and G20 London protest newspaper coverage.

Results

The results are organized as follows: I begin by describing the overall pattern of news attention by examining the frequency of articles for each newspaper. To give a better sense of how news coverage rises and falls, I offer a timeline of the major events for each protest. The protests are organized chronologically from the oldest to the most recent. After describing the changes in the overall amount of news coverage, I look more specifically at how the news frames changed over the course of each protest. This allows me to answer my research question and test each of my hypotheses. Again, I examine each protest in chronological order. Upon reviewing all of the evidence, I summarize what the results mean for my research question and each of my hypotheses.

Frequency of Coverage

The G20 London Summit. The leaders of the G20 held a summit in London on April 2, 2009 to address the unraveling global economy, restore confidence in markets,

and promote the growth and stability of the global economy amidst the international financial crisis (G20 Leaders, 2009). Bennett and Segerberg (2011) observed, “the London Summit attracted a complex protest ecology involving multiple actors with different protest agendas and tactics” (p. 777). A wide variety of civil society groups spanning Europe met in Paris and agreed to divide the protests over a two day period on March 28, 2009 and April 1, 2009 (Paris Declaration, 2009).

Figure 5.1 illustrates the rise and fall of *The Guardian*'s attention to the G20 protests. From the beginning of March 2009 through the end of May 2009, there were 110 articles containing the phrase “G20 London” or “G20 London Protest.” As the solid black line in Figure 5.1 illustrates, the number of articles skyrocketed at the end of March in anticipation of both the summit and the protest events planned for the summit. In the last week of March and the first week of April during which the summit occurred, 42 (38%) of the 110 articles in total appeared. The UK civil society coalition, Put People First (PPF), played a central role in organizing a mobilization on March 28 including a march for “jobs, justice and climate” that drew roughly 35,000 participants (Put People First, 2009).

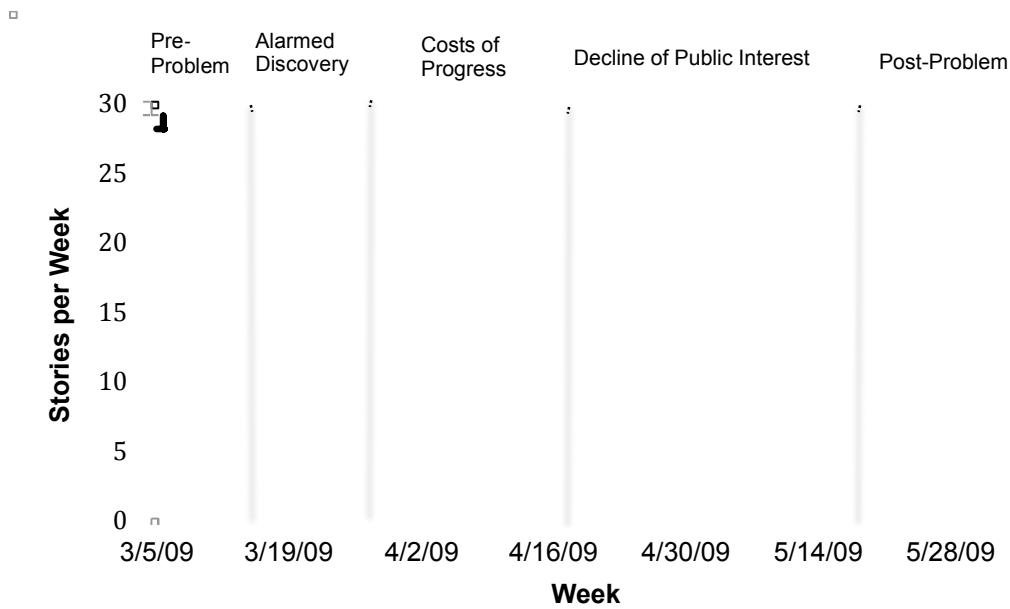


Figure 5.1: Frequency of Guardian Stories per Week about G20 London Protest

Some more confrontational events were planned for April 1. On that day, approximately 5,000 demonstrators joined the G20 Meltdown protest outside the Bank of England. There were isolated incidents of vandalism, in which protesters smashed the window of a bank (BBC News, 2010). There were several skirmishes between police and protesters at this event and police used a controversial tactic called “kettling,”⁹ in which cordons of officers contain large groups of protesters in a small area. In addition to kettling protesters, police used dogs and batons to subdue protesters.

A tragedy that drew much public outrage and news attention involved a bystander who was not involved in the protest, Ian Tomlinson, who was traversing the protest to get home from work when a police officer, mistaking him for a troublemaker, struck and killed him with a baton (Greer & McLaughlin, 2012; Pearse & Weaver, 2013). This

⁹ *Kettling* is a crowd control tactic by police to confine or corral demonstrators into a small area. Typically, police form large cordons, then move in on a crowd to condense the crowd size and control or limit the number of exits for demonstrators contained by the police.

prompted a public inquiry and a thorough investigation of policing during the protests (Rosie & Gorringer, 2009).

Following the G20 Meltdown protest, a couple thousand protesters joined the Climate Camp in the City event (Casciani, 2009). Again, there were a few confrontations between riot police and protesters and police eventually kettled the protesters before eventually clearing them (McGrath, 2009). By the end of April 1, the protest had largely ended. The following day, a small vigil was held in honor of the lone protest-related death, the newspaper vendor, Ian Tomlinson. This vigil marked the end of major protest events related to the summit.

There was a slight dip in the number of stories from 29 to 22 in the week after the summit ended, followed by a second peak of 27 in the third week of April, as new details emerged about the death of Ian Tomlinson and the role of police brutality in his death. From the last week of April through the end of May, there were only 9 stories, signifying the decline of public interest. The death of Ian Tomlinson and other policing incidents, including the arrest of at least 120 protesters¹⁰ marred the G20 Summit in London, which would put future hosts like Pittsburgh and Toronto on notice.

The G20 Pittsburgh Summit. Following the London Summit, G20 leaders decided to meet again five months later in Pittsburgh “to assess the status of the global economy” (Maher & Hagerty, 2009). Unlike London or Toronto, Pittsburgh is a midsize city with a population of just over 305,000 (US Census Bureau, 2014). Hosting a summit in a midsize city poses a unique set of challenges compared to larger, more cosmopolitan cities. This is particularly true when it comes to security and policing.

¹⁰ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2009/04/02/us-g20-protests-idUKTRE5302SN20090402>

With limited resources, the city of Pittsburgh had to rely on additional funding from the state of Pennsylvania as well as \$10 million in funding from the federal government to pay for the summit (Urbina, 2009a). In order to prevent ballooning costs, the city had to be thrifty with its limited resources and supplemental assistance. Consequently, the city implemented a tedious permit procedure for groups that wanted to protest at the summit to ensure it had the necessary security and police presence in place. This was a source of much conflict, frustration and ultimately, litigation in the months leading to the September 2009 summit. Several groups, including Code Pink and Bail Out the People, were initially denied protest permits but later granted permits after they successfully sued the city of Pittsburgh (Hamill, 2009). This conflict was taken up in many of the early stories about the planning of the Pittsburgh Summit.

Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 illustrate the number of stories per week in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, respectively. From the beginning of August 2009 through the end of October 2009, there were 56 articles in the *Post-Gazette* and 121 articles in the *Tribune-Review*. The solid black line in each figure shows the number of stories increases rapidly after the protest groups sued the city of Pittsburgh over protest permits on September 11, 2009.

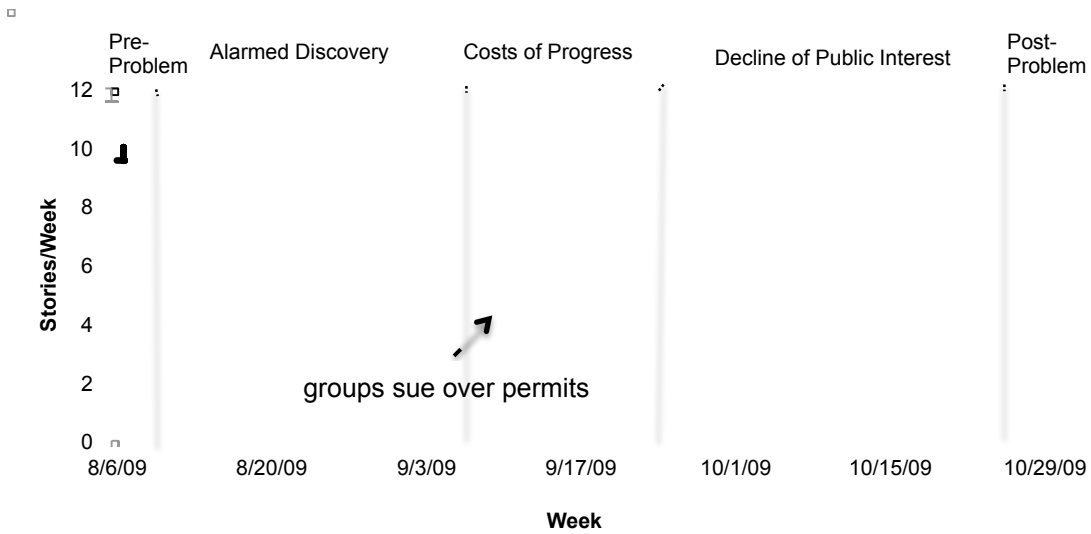


Figure 5.2: Frequency of Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Stories per Week about G20 Pittsburgh Protest

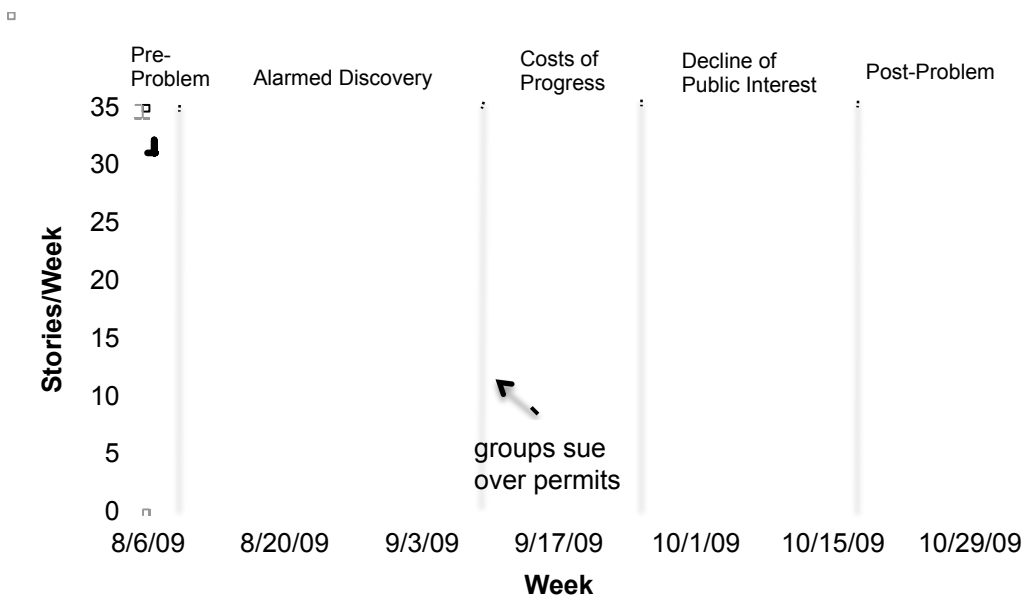


Figure 5.3: Frequency of Pittsburgh Tribune-Review Stories per Week about G20 Pittsburgh Protest

In loose collaboration with a variety of national and local organizations, activists formed an alliance to coordinate G20 protest events under the working banner, the Pittsburgh G20 Resistance Project (PGRP), which included anti-war groups, economic and social justice organizations, unions, and civil liberties advocates (Kutz-Flamenbaum et al., 2012). Protest actions were initiated the Saturday before the summit began on

September 19, 2009 with a Peoples' Summit (Prine, 2009). Over a hundred participants gathered for speakers, panels and workshops about ideological alternatives to the views expressed by G20 leaders and outright resistance to G20 policies.

Not surprisingly, coverage peaked in both papers during the week leading up to the protests from September 17th to the 23rd, then dipped slightly the following week. On the eve of the September 24-25 G20 Summit, fourteen Greenpeace activists were arrested for hanging a banner about rising CO₂ emissions on the West End Bridge near downtown Pittsburgh (Togneri, 2009). On Thursday, September 24th, the PGRP organized a march without a permit through the Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh, called the People's Uprising, and kicked off a day of direct action. An estimated 500 to 1,000 protesters attended the People's Uprising (LaRussa et al., 2009; Kutz-Flamenbaum et al., 2012).

The protest escalated in the evening when University of Pittsburgh students joined the events out of curiosity. Police fired smoke canisters and used a Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD) to disperse protesters. It is widely believed this was the first employment of an LRAD to clear a protest in the United States (Urbina, 2009b). There was some vandalism, with a number of storefront windows smashed in. Police arrested at least 42 students and protesters, and six people were injured, including three police officers (Harding, 2009).

The following day, the "People's March to the G20" proceeded through the streets of Downtown Pittsburgh. Crowd estimates suggest several thousand people participated in the march (*The Tribune-Review*, 2009a). Beyond the People's Uprising and the People's March to the G20, there were a number of splinter events and rallies for

specific causes and organizations. Perhaps the most confrontational event took place at the end of the summit on Friday, September 25th, when around 1,000 demonstrators gathered in Schenley Park to take a stand against police brutality (Earl et al., 2013).

Around 110 protesters were arrested, bringing the total for the entire summit to 193 (*The Tribune-Review*, 2009b).

Almost one-third (32%) of the protest stories in *The Post-Gazette* appeared in the last two weeks of September. Similarly, almost half (46%) of the protest stories in *The Tribune-Review* appeared over the same period of time. By the summit's end, Pittsburgh had emerged from the G20 relatively unscathed. One *Tribune-Review* article boasted, "After 48 hours as one of the biggest targets in the world, Pittsburgh emerged Saturday morning looking no worse than it does after a Steelers Super Bowl victory" (Wereschagin et al. 2009). In large part, this was due to the lower-than-expected arrival of protesters. In fact, there were more police officers (~6,000) deployed during the summit than there were protesters (~5,000) (Wereschagin et al., 2009). Moreover, despite a considerable number of arrests at just under 200, almost all but a few charges were dropped or plea-bargains were entered (Sherman, 2009).

The subdued, relatively drama-free resolution of conflicts from the summit protests brought about a decline of public interest. By the beginning of October, there was no longer daily protest-related coverage. In the aftermath of the summit, coverage thinned before disappearing completely at the end of October. About 16% of the *Post-Gazette*'s total coverage appeared during the month of October and slightly more than 10% of the *Tribune-Review*'s coverage appeared in that timespan.

The G20 Toronto Summit. Despite a tragic death at the London Summit and close to 200 arrests at the Pittsburgh Summit, the 2009 G20 protests were relatively tame compared to the G20 protest in Toronto that took place a year later. The Toronto Summit in 2010 witnessed “the largest mass arrests and investigations into police conduct in Canadian history” (Schulenberg & Chenier, 2014, p. 262). 1,118 people were arrested or detained (Toronto Police Service After-Action Review, 2011); over 300 protesters faced charges, resulting in 32 guilty convictions (Schulenberg & Chenier, 2014; Hussey & LeClerc, 2011; Monaghan & Walby 2012).

The Toronto Summit on June 26 and 27, 2010 expressed a similar goal as the previous meetings: to coordinate a “response to the ongoing world recession” (Poell & Borra, 2012, p. 696). Given the disruptive protests at past summits, Toronto was not naïve about the security provisions it would need to maintain public order at the G20 events. The city’s preparations for the summit were notable for the hefty price tag of security forces for the event. The Canadian federal government estimated the security bill was about \$676 million dollars (CTV News Staff, 2010).¹¹ The expectation of trouble between protesters and police became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The protests against the summit were coordinated by a number of different organized interests including the Toronto Community Mobilization Network (TCMN), Greenpeace, Oxfam, labor unions, and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (Stalker & Wood, 2013; Poell & Borra, 2012). Small protest events began the week before the summit, including a rally against fossil fuel subsidies and world poverty in the Financial

¹¹ Another report put that number at around \$790 million (Kitchen & Rygiel, 2014).

District. The first major protest took place on June 24, when approximately 1,000 people marched in support of indigenous rights (CBC News, 2010).

Figure 5.4 depicts the Toronto Star’s protest coverage from the beginning of May 2010 through the end of July 2010. In all, I collected 40 *Toronto Star* articles with the terms “G20 Toronto” or “G20 Toronto Protest.” The solid black line indicates a rapid rise in the number of stories in the week leading up to the summit as protest events convened and world leaders arrived to Toronto. 25 (62.5%) of the total number of articles in the coverage appeared the week before, during, and after the summit. In the same pattern as the Pittsburgh protest coverage, the number of articles peaked during the week of the summit from June 24 to June 30, 2010.

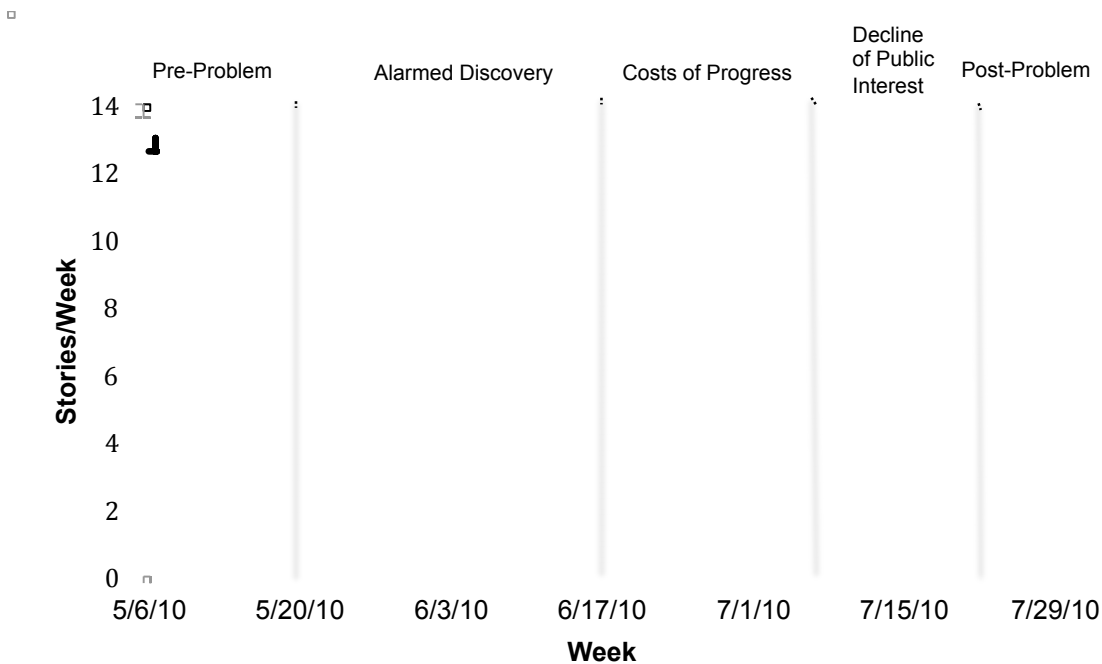


Figure 5.4: Frequency of Toronto Star Stories per Week about G20 Toronto Protest

On the eve of the summit, September 25th, protesters commenced the first of three planned Days of Action with events scheduled around a variety of causes including

environmental protections and the financial policies of the G20. Despite a few tense face-offs between police and protesters, no major incidents were recorded, though some protester weapons were seized (Toronto Police Service After-Action Review, 2011).

The protests grew as the summit opened on September 26th when around 10,000 protesters flooded downtown Toronto. Organized labor planned a peaceful, family-friendly event, the “People First! We Deserve Better G8 & G20 Public Rally and March.” However, the militant elements of the G20 resistance organized a more confrontational event at the same time called the “Get Off The Fence” event. By mid-afternoon, the militant elements of the protest were escalating their tactics. A few hundred “black bloc”¹² protesters with their faces covered and clad in black clothing began rioting, setting police cars on fire and smashing storefront windows (Poell & Borra, 2012). Sporadic arrests were made when protesters attempted to prepare Molotov cocktails and other incendiary devices (Toronto Police Service After-Action Review, 2011).

A crowd of protesters was growing near Adelaide Street West and Bay Street, which police estimated at between 1,000-1,500 participants. As much as police tried to alleviate tensions, the protesters were growing increasingly hostile, launching projectiles at officers. As night set in, police were now dealing with large, hostile crowds in several different locations. At approximately 10 p.m., mass arrests began when 200 protesters were boxed into the area of the Novotel and many were arrested (Toronto Police Service After-Action Review, 2011). As mass arrests ensued, many of the detainees were sent to a Prisoner Processing Center (PPC) for booking and processing. Some estimates suggest

¹² The Toronto Police review of the G20 policing defines “black bloc” as the following: “The Black Bloc is not an organization; rather, it is a tactic. The tactic typically involves individuals infiltrating peaceful demonstrations with the intent of using the larger group as cover and concealment for disruptive and criminal activities.” (p. 10)

between 400-500 people were arrested by the early hours of Sunday, the final Day of Action (The Toronto Star, 2010a).

On Sunday, September 27, 2010, arrests started early and continued throughout the day. Over 100 protesters were arrested around 7 a.m. near the University of Toronto campus. Police spent the day responding to a variety of tactics including some protesters rushing the security fence surrounding the summit, an out-of-town bus full of suspicious chemicals, and large crowds of bicyclists, protesters and black bloc participants hurling bottles and incendiary devices at officers (Toronto Police Service After-Action Review, 2011). By evening, heavy rain was beginning to downpour and police officers were attempting to arrest between 200-300 protesters on charges like Conspiracy to Commit Mischief. After many detained protesters were booked, all were released with or without charges by around 10 p.m.

Of the 1,118 protesters arrested, nearly 800 never faced charges (Schulenberg, 2014). The Monday after the summit ended, several hundred protesters gathered near police headquarters to voice concern over the treatment of those arrested during the summit that were held in detention centers like the PPC (Perkel, 2010). Police tactics were investigated internally by police and by an independent commission (Morden Report, 2012). Recommendations were offered on how to better accommodate mass protests and isolate incidents of violence from otherwise peaceful protests. A separate investigation was conducted after video footage emerged of police officers beating a protester, Adam Nobody, who had been arrested on June 26 and did not appear to be resisting arrest (DiManno, 2013). The assaulting officer was eventually identified, charged and sentenced to 45 days in jail (Jeffords, 2013).

The *Toronto Star's* coverage declined rapidly after the summit ended in late June 2010. There were 11 stories at the beginning of July, but after the second week of July, only 2 stories appeared before the protests and the summit faded from coverage altogether. In the end, mass arrests, violence, rioting and property damage overshadowed the economic accords of G20 member nations at the Toronto Summit. It was one of the most disruptive and violent global summits in recent history as Table 5.1 illustrates.

Year	Event	Location	Number of Arrests	Commentary
1999	World Trade Organization	Seattle	601	Delegates attacked (minor injuries), meetings suspended, heavy property damage from riots occurring over several days
2000	World Bank Summit	Washington D.C.	678	Extensive property damage and large groups of protesters
2001	Summit of the Americas	Quebec City	463	Riots, property damage, injuries. Perimeter fence was defeated by protesters
2001	G8	Genoa, Italy	329	200,000 protesters, 400 protesters injured with one fatality, 100 security officers injured. Extensive rioting and property damage
2002	G7	Washington D.C.	649	Anti International Monetary Fund protests resulted in the arrests of over 600 people in one day.
2003	E.U. Summit	Athens, Greece	106	Riots and property damage
2005	G8	Gleneagles, Scotland	358	Isolated venue outside of Edinburgh – bulk of protest activity occurred in major city
2006	G8	Russia	200	Limited info is available, still a somewhat closed government. Arrests were made prior to event.
2007	G8	Germany	1057	Property damage, summit was delayed several days by protesters who blocked access to the venue
2008	G8	Japan	44	Event was held in a remote area surrounded by 21,000 police officers - 40 arrests prior to the event, 4 during
2009	G20	London	122	One bystander death, large amount of property damage predominantly to financial institutions
2009	G20	Pittsburgh	190	Geographical location of the summit allowed police to contain the venue quite well. Protest groups were of a smaller size than other events
2009	UN Conference	Copenhagen	>1,000	On the second day of the conference

	on Climate Change			968 protesters were arrested. The average was approximately 240 arrests on other days.
2010	G20	Toronto	1,118	Riots and property damage, injuries to protesters and some police officers.

Table 5.1: Comparison of Recent Global Summits¹³

The overall story of the G20 protest news attention illustrated in Figure 5.1 through Figure 5.4 can be summarized as non-existent or sporadic in the pre-problem stage, before the summits are announced. This is followed by a gradual increase in attention in the alarmed discovery/euphoric enthusiasm stage when cities find out they will be hosting a G20 summit. Then, shortly before the summits, as cities prepare for hosting the summits, anticipate disruptions, and manage conflicts with protesters, coverage rapidly increases. Coverage peaks as the summits take place and protesters participate in organized and unorganized collective action. Next, coverage declines rapidly when the summits end and the protesters leave. Finally, within a month of each summit's end, the coverage mostly disappears as the G20 protests enter the post-problem stage, the end of the news attention cycle.

In sum, this pattern appears to fit with the expectations outlined in the issue attention cycle about news attention. In the pre-problem stage, the model suggests there should be no news attention. In *The Guardian's* coverage of G20 London and *The Toronto Star's* coverage of G20 Toronto this was especially the case, as Figures 5.1 and 5.4 demonstrate. In both of the Pittsburgh papers, there appears to be more coverage than the model would suggest, but there are two obvious explanations for this. One is that the Pittsburgh summits were announced in May 2009, well ahead of the time period studied here. Thus, journalists had already been discussing the event for a considerable amount of

¹³ Adapted from Toronto Police Service After-Action Review in June, 2011

time before August 2009, when the sample begins. This means the pre-problem stage of news attention was probably well before the coverage I selected for this analysis.

Another reason is that for a smaller, less cosmopolitan city like Pittsburgh, hosting the summit was probably a bigger deal than for London or Toronto, who have hosted big international events and meetings before. As a result, the G20 Pittsburgh summit was probably well discussed in the early stages of the issue attention cycle because of the novelty of the event. Nonetheless, in the earliest stage of news attention there was not daily coverage of the approaching G20 Summits or their accompanying protests in any of the newspapers studied here.

The issue attention cycle also indicates coverage should increase significantly as the public finds out about a protest or the themes behind a protest. Figures 5.1-5.4 all demonstrate this is the case. As cities planned the summits and protesters began organizing events to challenge the G20 Summit leaders and host cities, news attention increased drastically. This was especially the case in *The Guardian*, as illustrated by Figure 5.1, where news attention skyrocketed from no articles to multiple articles per day in the two weeks before the G20 London Summit took place.

As further evidence of the issue attention cycle's expectations about news attention, coverage peaks in all of the newspapers during the third stage of the issue attention cycle, which is when protest participation takes place. A nice illustration of this can be seen in Figure 5.3, which depicts the amount of G20 Pittsburgh Summit protest coverage over time in *The Tribune-Review*. Coverage peaks at 32 in the week shortly after protesters sued the city over permits, when tensions between the two are heightened

and the protests began to coalesce. The Toronto Star's coverage shows a similar peak in Figure 5.4.

Finally, as the issue attention cycle proposes, coverage sharply declines after tensions peak and the protests dissolve. Only a few articles appear in all of the newspapers after the protests end and the G20 Summit protests pass from the 'decline of public interest stage of the issue attention cycle to the 'post-problem stage.' In the end, the results here correspond closely with the expectations of the issue attention cycle concerning the rise and fall of news attention to protests.

Protest News Framing Cycle

Recall that RQ3 asks what the total amount of economic and conflict frames is for short-lived, event-specific protests like the G20 Summit protests in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto. Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6 provide an answer to RQ3 by illustrating the total amount of each frame, both as a total count (Figure 5.5) and as a percentage of all articles (Figure 5.6). As Figure 5.5 shows, conflict frames appear to be the dominant news frame in each newspaper. This finding replicates the results of the previous chapter in which there were more conflict frames than economic frames in *The New York Times* coverage of OWS. This is also consistent generally with expectations of the protest paradigm – though as we saw in the previous chapter, the protest paradigm fails to account for the PNFC and the presence of a stage in the issue attention cycle in which substantive coverage is important.

In *The Guardian* (n=81, or 79%) and *The Toronto Star* (n=23, or 79%), the higher frequency of conflict frames appears to be more pronounced than in either of the Pittsburgh newspapers. Conflict frames in *The Post-Gazette* (n=24) and *The Tribune-*

Review (n=46) totaled just above 50% of the total number of frames as Figure 5.6 illustrates. These results partially confirm H3, which stated the G20 Toronto protest coverage would have a higher overall percentage of conflict frames than the G20 protest coverage in London and Pittsburgh. Toronto did have a higher percentage of conflict frames than Pittsburgh, but equaled the number of conflict frames in the G20 London coverage at 79%.

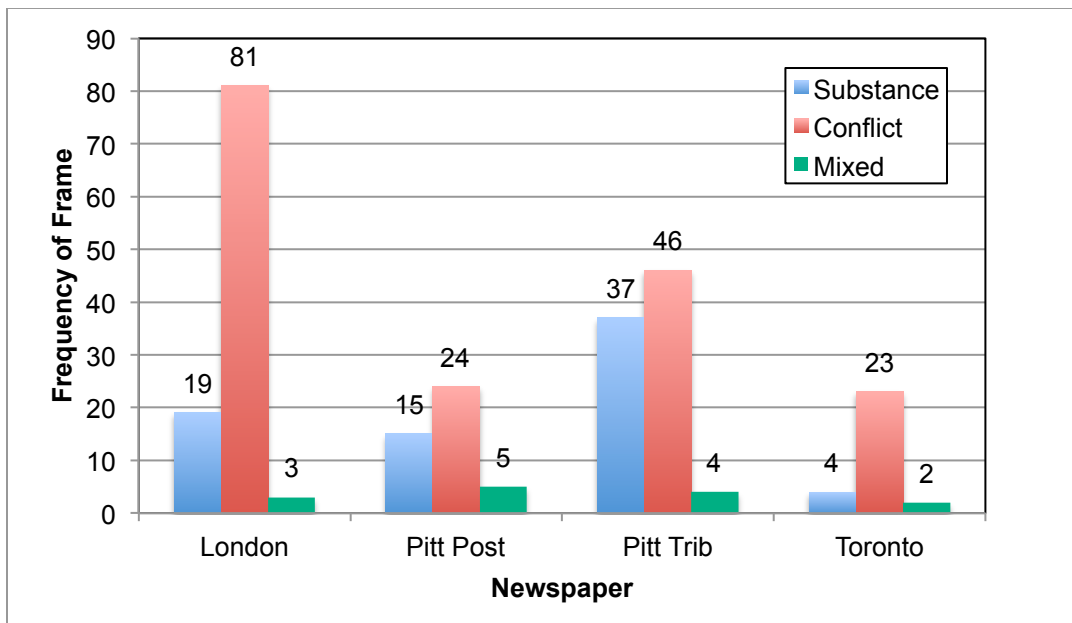


Figure 5.5: The Frequency of News Frames for All Newspapers

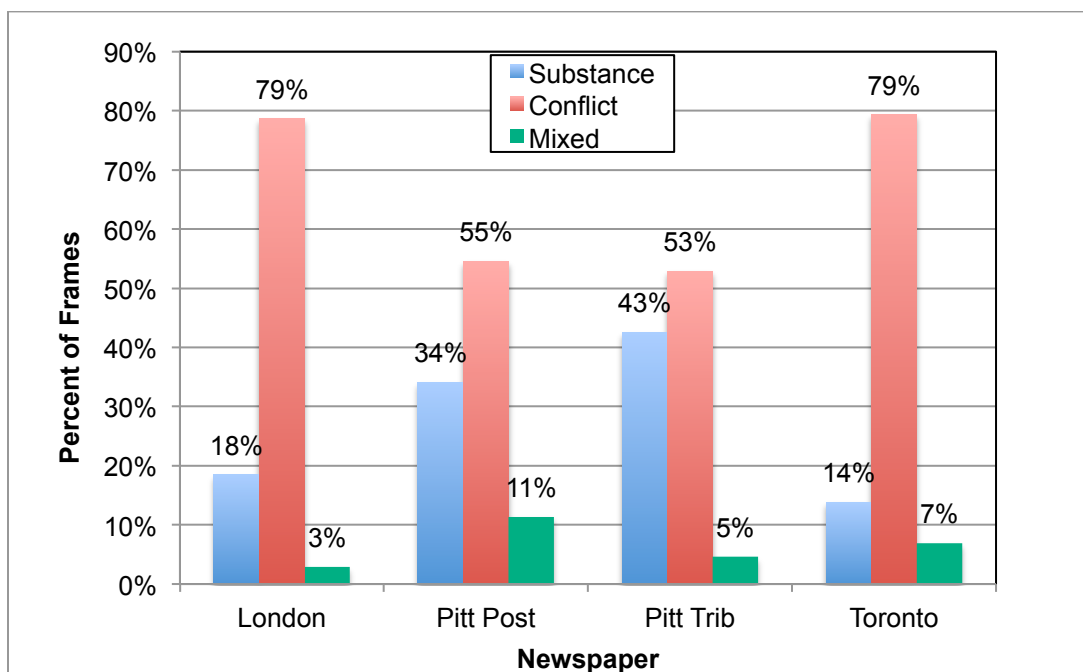


Figure 5.6: The Percentage of News Frames for All Newspapers

To test my first hypothesis (H2), which predicts substance frames will be more frequent during the early stages of the issue attention cycle while conflict frames will be more frequent during the later stages of the issue attention cycle, I plotted the frequency of substance frames and conflict frames over time in Figures 5.7, 5.9, 5.11, and 5.13. As a supplement, I also look closely at the number of frames in the month before, during, and after each summit in Figures 5.8, 5.10, 5.12, and 5.14.

These three time periods are a crude approximation of the stages of the issue attention cycle. The month before the protest takes place represents the pre-problem stage and the alarmed discovery stage. It is difficult to represent when the alarmed discovery stage takes place because in most instances, the summits were announced many months before the timeframe of my analysis. Moreover, the discovery of the summit and protests is not really “alarmed” because these are planned and staged events. In this context, a more appropriate label for the alarmed discovery stage might be “initial public

awareness” stage. Nonetheless, most public and news attention appeared only shortly before the summits occurred, which suggests that even if people knew of the summits well in advance, they probably were not paying attention to them until they were about to happen.

In each of the cases, the month during the protest corresponds to the costs of progress stage of the issue attention cycle. If the protest occurred earlier in the month, as the London Summit did on April 2, 2009, then the month during the protest also includes part of the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle, the decline of public interest stage. Finally, the month after each protest represents the decline of public interest stage and the final stage of the issue attention cycle, the post-problem stage. In sum, the month before the protests includes the first two stages of the issue attention cycle; the month during the protests is the third stage of the cycle and the month after the protests is the last two stages of the issue attention cycle.

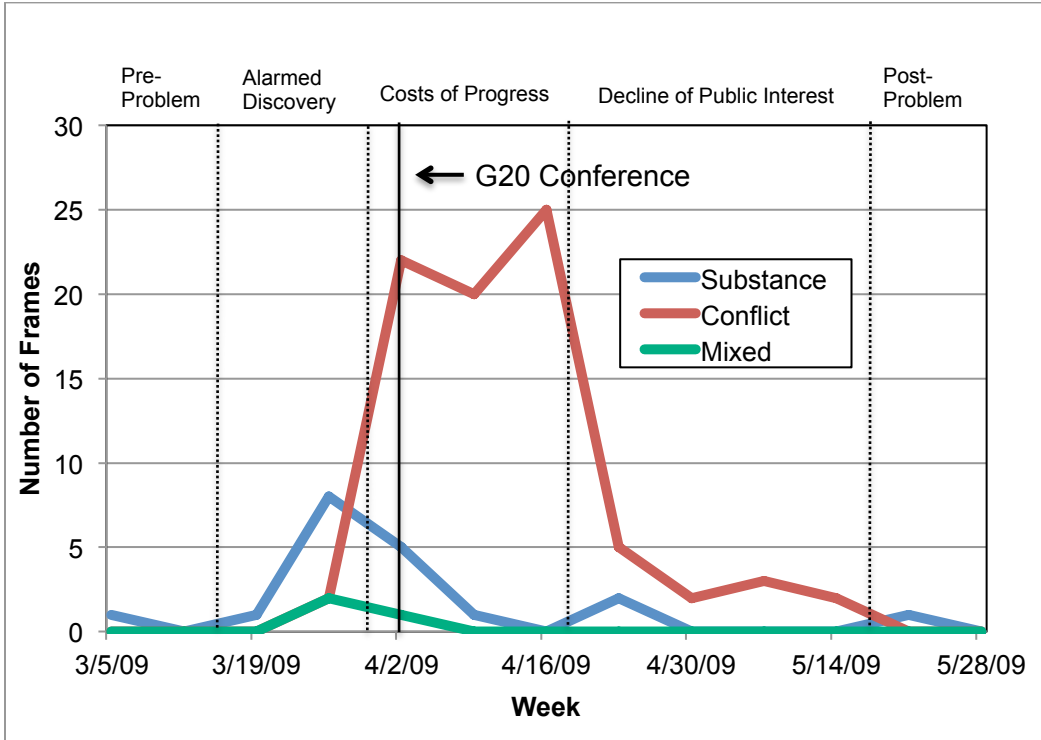


Figure 5.7: Guardian News Frames from March 2009 to May 2009

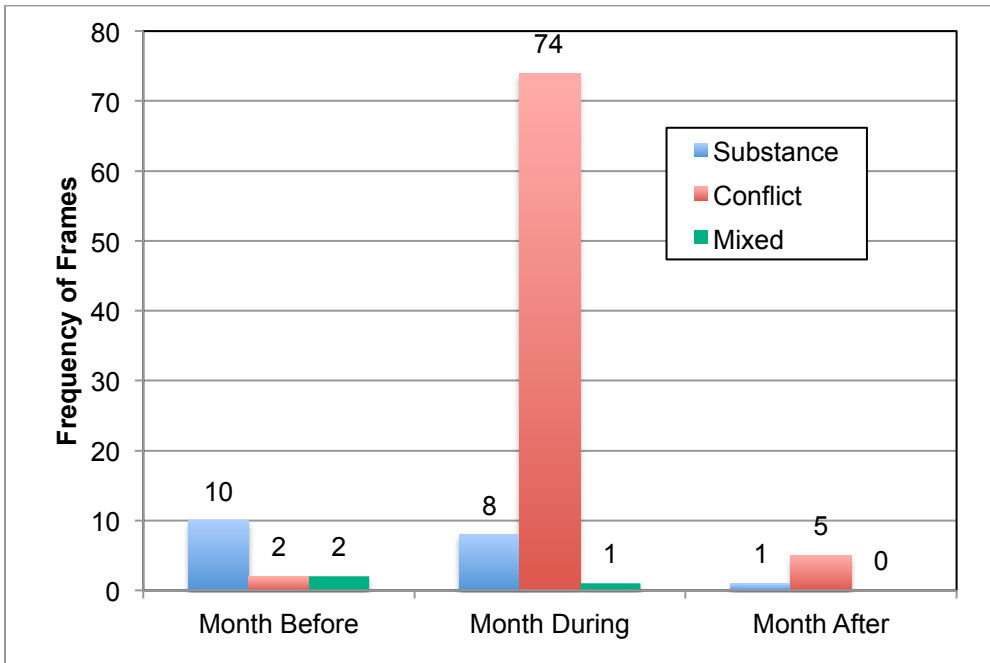


Figure 5.8: Frequency of News Frames in The Guardian in the Month Before, During, and After the G20 London Summit

The blue line in Figure 5.7 shows the peak of substance frames in *The Guardian* coverage well before the summit had taken place in the alarmed discovery stage of the issue attention cycle. Some of these stories were about the diversity of interest groups participating in the protests (Vulliamy & Rogers, 2009). Others looked at the role of banks and financial institutions engaging in risky behavior prior to the global economic crisis (Stewart & Connon, 2009). As substance frames begin to decline in late March, conflict frames ascended rapidly when the summit was approaching and the protests began. As Figure 5.7 shows, this corresponds roughly to the end of the alarmed discovery stage of the issue attention cycle and the start of the realizing costs of progress stage of the issue attention cycle. One illustrative headline read, “Fears police tactics at G20 protests will lead to violence” (The Guardian, 2009a).

From the beginning of the summit through the third week of April during the realizing costs of progress and beginning of the decline of public interest stage of the issue attention cycle, between 20 and 25 conflict frames per week appeared in *The Guardian* about struggles between the police and protesters. The initial rise of conflict frames followed clashes between protesters and police outside the Bank of England on the day before the April 2nd summit began. It was there where Ian Tomlinson, a newspaper vendor on his way home from work, was struck by police and later died as a result of the injuries he sustained. Stories delved into the causes of his unfortunate death and shared witness accounts of the scene as it unfolded. After a Youtube video and photographs emerged of Ian Tomlinson shortly before his death, conflict frames peaked at 25, then declined rapidly by the end of April (The Guardian, 2009b). In May, a few stories with conflict frames followed new developments in the Tomlinson case, including

new complaints lodged against the police over their role in his death (The Guardian, 2009c).

In the case of *The Guardian's* coverage of the G20 London Summit protests, the results appear to give a partial confirmation that substance frames were more frequent earlier in the issue attention cycle, in the month before the summit (March) when protesters were making plans to disrupt the G20 Summit and far less frequent later in the issue attention cycle, in the month after the summit with only 1 of 19 substance frames occurring in May. It is important to qualify this finding though.

In terms of the number of frames, the decline in substance frames from the month before the protest to the month during the protest was slight; there were 10 frames before and 8 frames during. However, as a percentage of all frames, the decline from the first and second stages of the issue attention cycle to the third stage is sharp. Substance frames comprised 71% of all frames in the first and second stage of the issue attention cycle, but were only about 10% of all frames in the third stage of the issue attention cycle and part of the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle. Thus, while the absolute number of substance frames did not decline significantly until the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle, substance frames comprised a relatively small part of the overall narrative of coverage after the second stage of the issue attention cycle. One plausible reason is that anticipation of the G20 Summit caused substantive coverage, but later conflict shifted attention. The red bars in Figure 5.8 show the frequency of conflict frames largely corresponds with the occurrence of the summit and protests. By the time the protests hit, conflict from clashes between police and protesters overshadowed the cause of the protesters and became the dominant G20 story.

Despite organized and unorganized participation, the protesters were mainly repressed without G20 leaders or police making much effort to facilitate protest demands. This brought about the rapid rise of conflict frames about the tense interactions between police and protesters. Conflict frames remained more prevalent in the coverage even as news attention overall subsided in the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle. Eventually both frames faded in the ‘post-problem stage’ of the issue attention cycle.

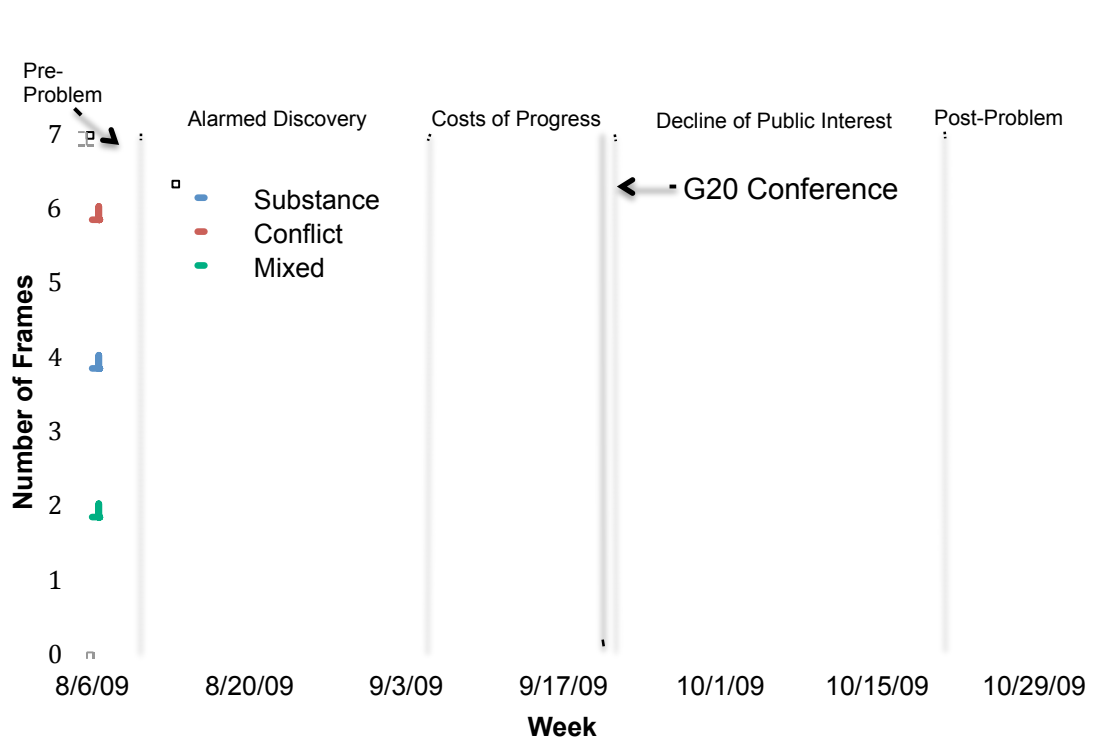


Figure 5.9: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette News Frames from August 2009 to October 2009

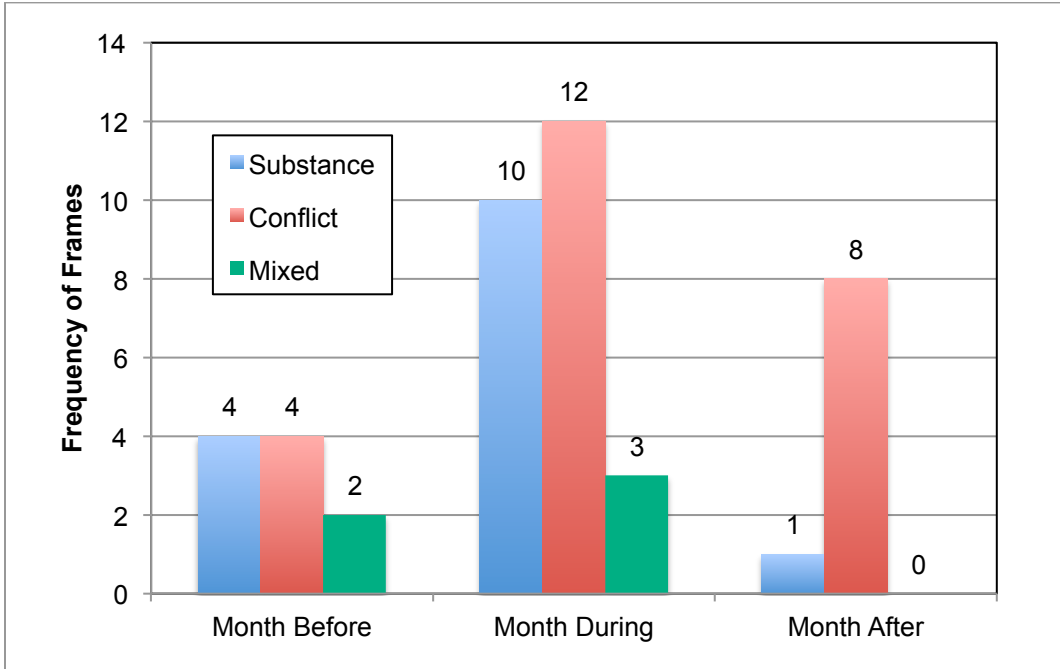


Figure 5.10: Frequency of News Frames in The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in the Month Before, During, and After the G20 Pittsburgh Summit

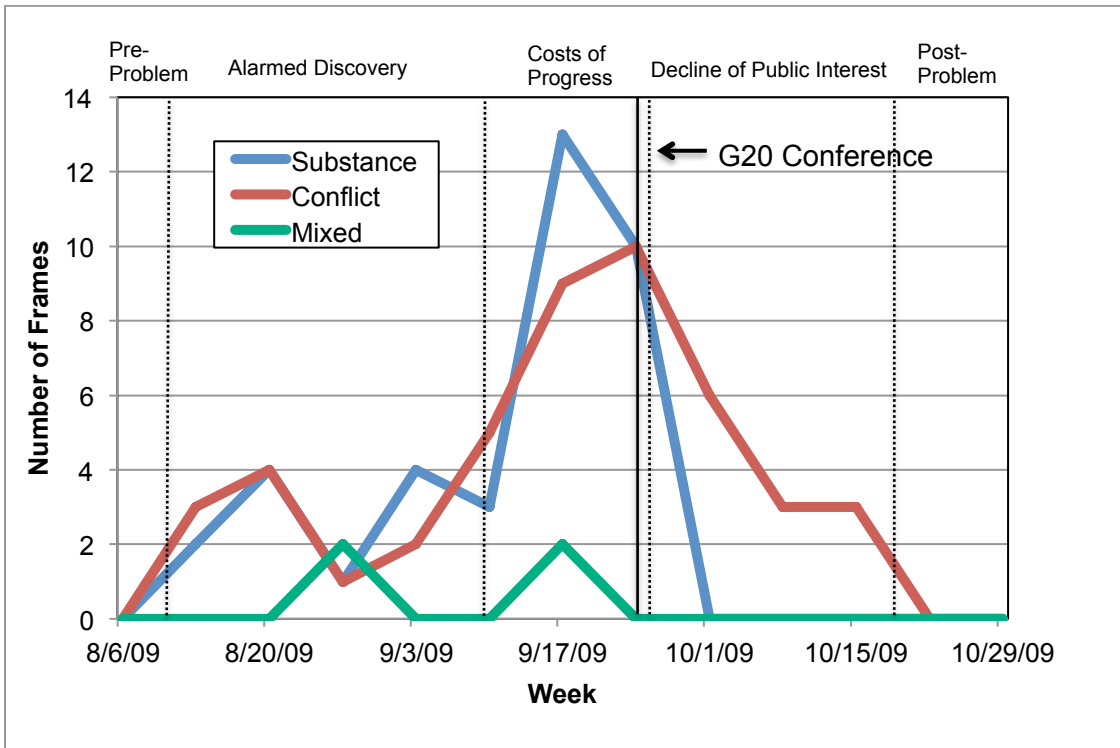


Figure 5.11: Pittsburgh Tribune-Review News Frames from August 2009 to October 2009

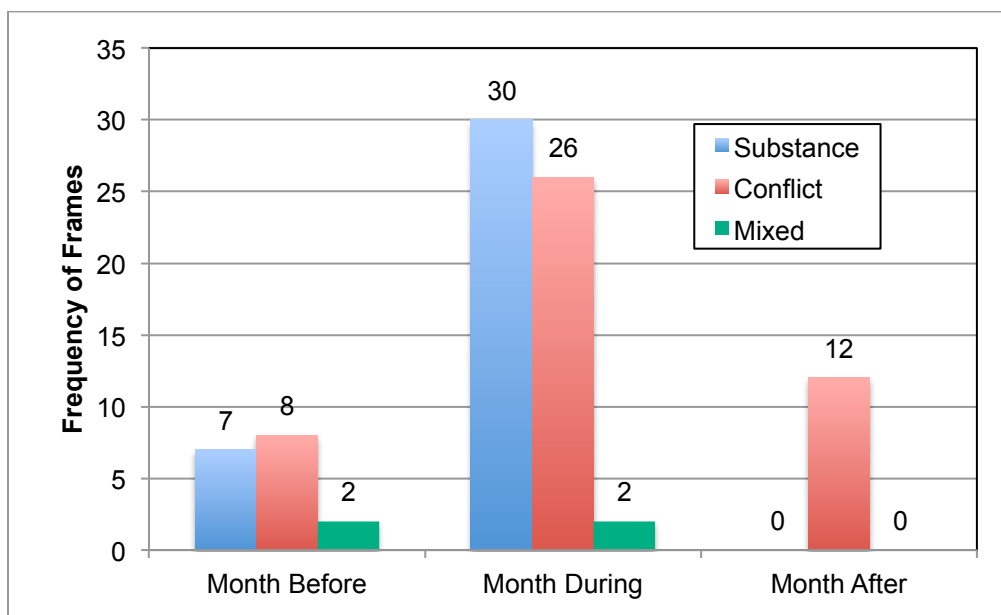


Figure 5.12: Frequency of News Frames in The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review in the Month Before, During, and After the G20 Pittsburgh Summit

The blue lines in Figure 5.9 and Figure 5.11 show the frequency of substance frames in *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* protest coverage from August 2009 to October 2009. In both cases, there is an early rise of substance frames during the alarmed discovery stage of the issue attention cycle, then a slight dip, and eventually a peak of substance frames the week before the Pittsburgh Summit on September 24 and 25 during the costs of progress stage of the issue attention cycle.

Two things stand out about the frequency of substance frames in both of the Pittsburgh newspapers. The first is that compared to the London and Toronto protests, there appears to have been more of an effort by journalists to dig into the agenda of the G20 Summit as well as the concerns fueling the Pittsburgh G20 protests, at least in the time leading up to the summit. One article with the headline “Group Wants to Focus on Urban Poor’s Plight” looked at how G20 policies impact the most economically disadvantaged (Jones, 2009). Another story, titled “Activists Want Emphasis Back on the

Economy” amplified the common claim of protesters that “city officials and local media [spend] too much time focusing on disputes over protest permits and the possibility of violence” which causes them to neglect “the serious economic concerns behind [the G20] protests” (Sherman, 2009, p. A11). At the same time, the permit application process alluded to in this passage may also have played a role in allowing protesters to attract news attention to their causes leading up to the summit. Meticulous planning of protest events required protesters to sharpen and develop their collective action frames and demonstrate a seriousness of purpose. In an attempt to give justice to the protesters concerns, a few articles like “G-20 Objectors Promoting Varied Agendas” explored the range of economic, environmental and political grievances of the protesters (Roddy, 2009).

The second thing that stands out is that in a similar, but more pronounced way than the G20 London coverage there is a rapid decline of substance frames after the G20 Summit during the transition from the third to the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle. In *The Post-Gazette*, there is only 1 substance frame after the summit and none after the summit in *The Tribune-Review*. As the red line Figure 5.9 illustrates, the narrative in *The Post-Gazette* shifted to conflict and peaked as the summit started. *The Tribune-Review* coverage deviates from this pattern slightly. Figure 5.11 is the only graph in which the peak of substance frames (13) is higher than the peak of conflict frames (10). However, as the summit begins there does not appear to be a dominant frame in the *Tribune-Review* coverage, with equal numbers of substance and conflict frames. Nonetheless, the decline of conflict frames is more gradual than the sharp drop in substance frames after the summit in the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle. Figure 5.12 shows the same trend

as the other cases, in which conflict frames dominate in the fourth and fifth stages of the news attention cycle accompanying a decline of public interest in the G20 story.

Looking at the overall pattern of coverage in both Pittsburgh newspapers and the frequency of frames over time, much like the G20 London coverage, the Pittsburgh newspapers both have a higher occurrence of conflict frames than substance or mixed frames. However, the amount of substance frames for each newspaper is substantially higher in the *Post-Gazette* at 34% and in the *Tribune Review* at 43% than in *The Guardian*. These substance frames were more likely to appear in the alarmed discovery stage before the protest and in the costs of progress stage of the issue attention cycle during the protest than after, when news attention declined in the fourth and fifth stages of the issue attention cycle.

Consistent with the expectation of H2, which looks at the stages in which substance and conflict frames were present, the results suggest no dominant frame in the early stages of the attention cycle, but ample opportunity for substance frames in the alarmed discovery stage of the cycle when protest groups planned for the summit. Then, when the summit took place in the costs of progress stage of the issue attention cycle, substance frames persisted but the narrative also shifted to conflict when protest groups realized the leaders of the summit and police would not facilitate their demands in a meaningful way. Some protesters turned to more confrontational tactics and ultimately conflict frames commanded the coverage as public attention declined and the summit protest entered the 'post-problem stage.' In sum, the results here corroborate the analysis of the G20 London protest coverage, though with slightly greater opportunities for

substance frames through the end of the third stage of the issue attention cycle in the G20 Pittsburgh protest coverage.

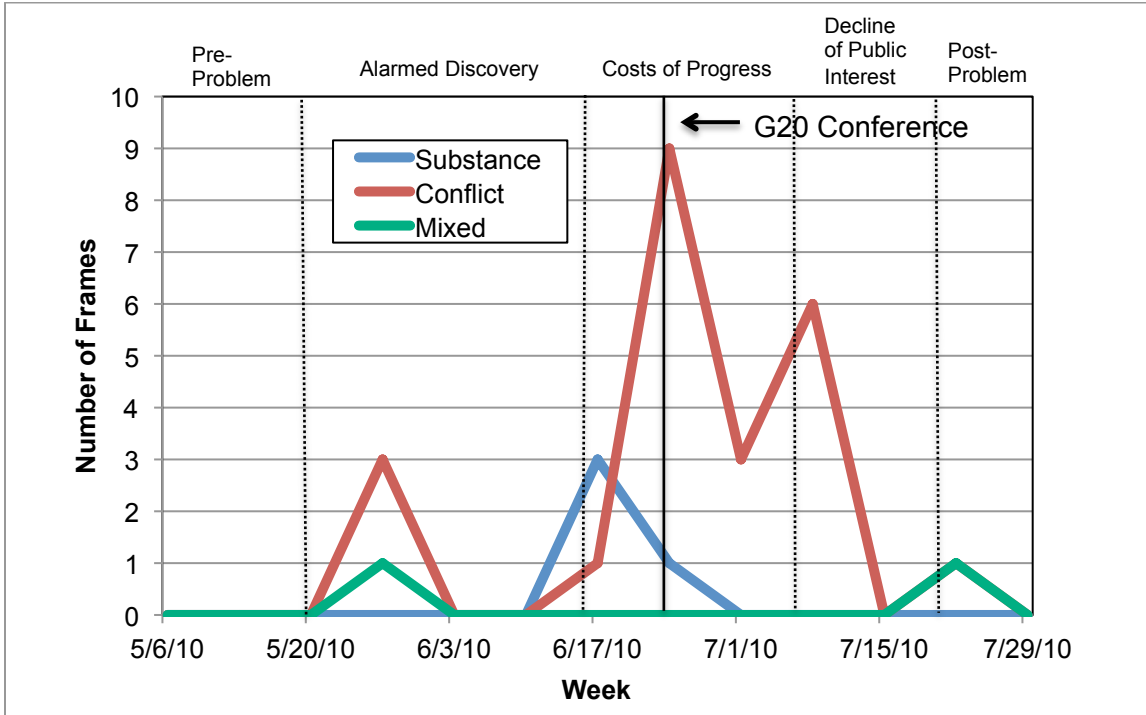


Figure 5.13: Toronto Star News Frames from May 2010 to July 2010

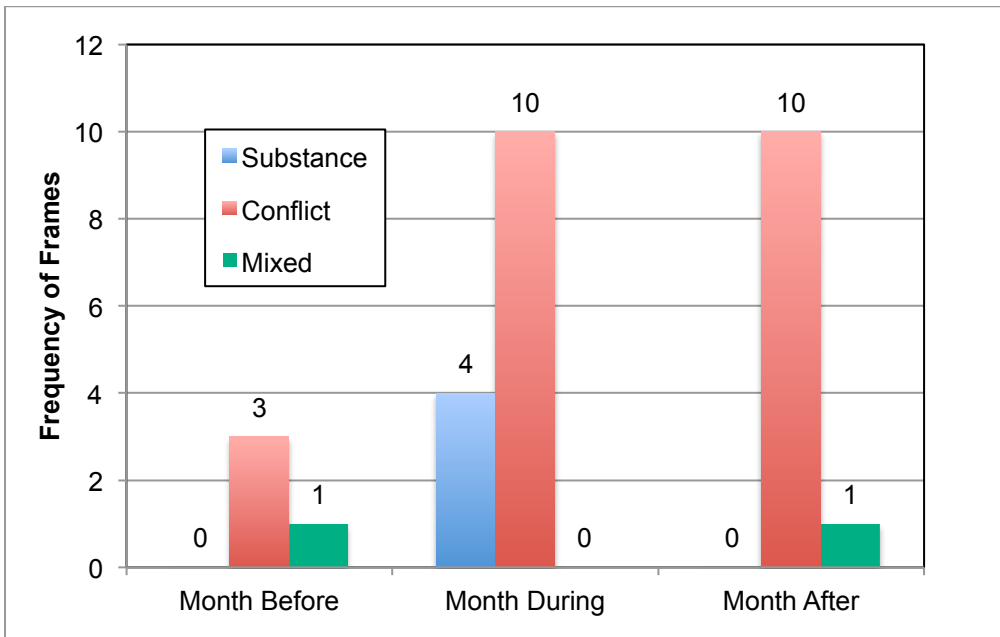


Figure 5.14: Frequency of News Frames in The Toronto Star in the Month Before, During, and After the G20 Toronto Summit

Figure 5.13 plots the occurrence of substance and conflict frames in *The Toronto Star* from May 2010 to July 2010. There was scant coverage the month before the protests during the first and second stages of the issue attention cycle, but most of the stories were conflict frames. A few articles speculated about the pending confrontations between police and protesters. One headline read, “Police ready to respond with violence” (Kerr, 2010, p. A14). Similarly, another was titled “Raucous protest a taste of what's to come?” (McLean, 2010). Some stories examined the pros and cons of police using a Long-Range Acoustic Device (LRAD), which is basically a loud sound cannon used to disperse large crowds (Goddard, 2010). Other stories expressed a general malaise about hosting the summit, as exemplified by the article “A picture and 1,000 words: Reflecting on Toronto's G20” in which one journalist lamented on the lofty goal of hosting a G20, “we aspire to be ‘world class’– but find it’s annoying, expensive and dull. Wouldn’t we all rather be watching soccer?” (Bigge, 2010).

Beyond concerns about the disruption and inconvenience of the protest, the most important thing to note is really the absolute dearth of substance frames. Figure 5.14 displays only 6 of the 29 total frames were substance frames or mixed frames. 3 of the 4 substance frames in the coverage appeared the week before the June 24 and 25 summit. Though few in number, the stories with substance frames aptly characterized the grievances of the protest in a global and local context. As one story put it:

It's all about forging grassroots alliances to step up pressure on the politicians on many fronts: to preserve jobs and social programs; to avoid balancing budgets on the backs of workers; to curb global poverty, disease, rights abuses, greenhouse gases; and to address the corrosive rich/poor gap. It is also about holding Ottawa to account on domestic poverty, social programs, indigenous rights and the oil

sands. Diverse as these issues are, they encompass the great challenges of our times. Our leaders should rise to them. The activists have every right to try to nudge them along. Peacefully, of course. (The Toronto Star, 2010b, A22)

After the small peak of substance frames at the beginning of the third stage of the issue attention cycle leading up to the June summit, no substance frames were present after the summit in July, following the pattern of coverage in London and Pittsburgh, in which the beginning of the summit signaled the narrative shift from substance to conflict. The simplest explanation for this pattern is that the focus of the protesters themselves largely shifts from mobilizing around an issue and crafting a collective action frame in anticipation of the G20, to disrupting the summit and attempting to confront the event participants in a provocative, attention-grabbing way.

Surprisingly, there was very little event-driven coverage focusing on the chess game between police and protesters during the summit. Most of the confrontational moments of the protest were examined post-hoc. The conflict frames that appeared during the summit and in the wake of the event varied in terms of focus. A few stories examined how the courts would deal with protesters arrested at the summit (Kopun, 2010; Contenta, 2010). One looked at the damage to the city from rioting (Acharya-Tom Yew, 2010), and related, whether the violent tactics and vandalism of the Black Bloc were justified (McLean & Chung, 2010). Another article questioned the police tactic of “kettling,” which was a common policing tactic at all of the G20 protests (Balkissoon, 2010). The red line in Figure 5.13 depicts a drop in conflict frames the first week in July, then a slight uptick and smaller peak in the second week of July, until conflict frames waned along with news attention and public interest in the fourth and fifth stages of the issue attention cycle.

Discussion

To give the reader a better sense of what the results signify, I consider all of the protests together and revisit my research question and each of the hypotheses. Recall that RQ3 asked what the total number of economic and conflict frames is for the G20 Summit protests in London, Pittsburgh, and Toronto. The answer to RQ3 is that substance frames are less frequent than conflict frames overall. In the coverage of the London and Toronto protests, almost four out of five stories have conflict frames. In the Pittsburgh newspapers, there were more substance frames, but conflict frames still comprised more than half of the sample in each paper.

H2 predicted that substance frames would be more frequent during the early stages of the issue attention cycle while conflict frames would be more frequent during the later stages of the issue attention cycle for the G20 protests. The data show that there is no dominant frame in the early stages of the issue attention cycle. There was substantial variation in frames before the protests began. In *The Guardian*, substance dominated in the first and second stage of the issue attention cycle; in the Pittsburgh papers it was pretty evenly mixed; in *The Toronto Star* there were more conflict stories, which undermines the PNFC, though the sample size was quite limited ($n = 4$). Thus, there is not really a clear pattern across cases. However, it is somewhat clear that substance frames, while fewer in number, were more likely to appear in the first three stages of the issue attention cycle when protesters began to plan actions and participate. As newspapers delved into the implications of hosting a G20 summit, they also considered the protests that global summits tend to attract and explored the collective action frames of protesters organizing mobilizations.

Though there is no clear trend of a dominant frame in the early stages of the issue attention cycle, the pattern is more obvious in the later stages of the issue attention cycle. When protests mobilized at the summits, they learned how difficult it would be to prevent the G20 from happening or at least have G20 leaders facilitate their demands, as well as the problem of avoiding confrontations with security and police. In all but one newspaper (*The Tribune-Review*), conflict frames dominated at the height of participation in summit protests during the third stage of the issue attention cycle. The degree of repression varied by city, but arrests did take place at all of the summits; there was a death at the London Summit and over 1,000 arrests in Toronto. Rioting and vandalism also propelled conflict frames in the coverage of each summit. Predictably, coverage declined after the summits as public attention turned to cleaning up the damage and returning to normalcy after the disruption of hosting a G20. Across all of the coverage, conflict frames greatly outnumbered substance frames in the ‘decline of public interest’ stage of the issue attention cycle, as the PNFC element of the general model suggests. In all, the results give only a partial confirmation of H2. Substance frames were more frequent in the month before the protests in only one case, the G20 London protest coverage, with a murkier picture in the G20 Pittsburgh protest coverage and almost no substance frames in the G20 Toronto protest coverage. Yet, there is strong confirmation that conflict frames were more frequent in the later stages of the issue attention cycle after the protests had subsided in all of the cases.

This goes to the heart of my main theory in this dissertation, whether the coverage of the G20 protests would adhere to the general model and in particular, the PNFC element of the model, much like the coverage in the *New York Times* of the OWS

movement. Because these were short-lived, event-specific protests in three countries that were different in structure from OWS, and because I examined several news outlets, these provide a robust test of my theoretical model.

For the most part, the results here conform to the PNFC element of the model. The evidence here indicates that coverage of the G20 protests followed the protest news framing cycle, but there was significant variation in terms of how closely each case follows the model because of the different tactics each protest utilized. In *The Guardian's* coverage of the G20 protest in London, substance dominated the early coverage then the narrative shifted to conflict as the G20 Summit took place and the protests reached a crescendo. As interest in the protest declined, conflict frames continued to dominate before overall coverage dropped off entirely. In this case, the coverage followed the PNFC quite closely with almost all of the substance frames occurring in the second and third stages of the issue attention cycle.

In the Pittsburgh papers, the early pattern of coverage was less clear than in *The Guardian*. The proportion of substance frames to conflict frames was roughly even in the second and third stages of news attention. Yet, as the general model from Chapter 2 indicates, both substance and conflict frames can appear during these stages of the issue attention cycle. Newspapers picked up on some conflict over whether the city would grant protest groups permits, but also seized the opportunity to discuss the goals and messages of the Pittsburgh protesters as well in the early coverage. In both Pittsburgh newspapers, conflict frames were greater as the protests peaked and transitioned into the fourth stage of the issue attention cycle, when news attention faded in the aftermath of G20 Pittsburgh.

Finally, of all the protests, the G20 Toronto protest coverage deviates the most from the general model's PNFC, but only because there is an absolute scarcity of substance frames in the coverage. This finding might be less about journalists ignoring the claims of protesters for insidious reasons and more about the fact that the G20 Toronto protests were drastically more confrontational and disruptive in terms of rioting, vandalism, and arrests. We know from OWS that protest coverage is very sensitive to confrontations between police and protesters. In Toronto, conflict overshadowed the significance of the summit itself. This finding suggests at least one potential revision to the general model. When a protest is extremely confrontational for a sustained amount of time and arrests are constant, substance frames may not dominate at all as the protest story moves through the issue attention cycle.

Though the overall pattern of coverage appears to be quite similar to OWS, there are some differences and variations with the G20 protest coverage. One is the timing the protests with the stages of the issue attention cycle. In the case of OWS, the protest had already been active for about a month before the OWS story entered the costs of significant progress stage of the issue attention cycle when protesters began to recognize the extent of city officials' resistance to their cause and face nationwide evictions.

In contrast, G20 protest story had already entered the costs of progress stage of the issue attention cycle when the G20 events and protests took place. News organizations knew the protests would happen because as Table 5.1 shows, there is a history of protest when world leaders meet. The alarmed discovery stage came after the summits were announced and journalists obviously knew there would be protests before they had materialized. It was a foregone conclusion that the protesters would not be able

to prevent a summit from happening or seriously deviate the G20 leaders' business agenda based on the previous history of similar summits. Because the protest events were pre-planned, police could anticipate the protesters' actions and prevent the protesters from disrupting the summits in a serious way. By the time the summits were staged to begin, the G20 story was already in the third stage of the issue attention cycle because protesters knew their prospects for altering the course of the summits were limited.

Another variation is also related to the event-specific nature of the G20 protests, involving less prevalent conflict frames early on. The PNFC posits conflict frames will dominate coverage when protesters innovate their tactics of contention in the 'alarmed discovery/enthusiasm' stage of the issue attention cycle. Recall that OWS was innovative in its tactics, developing spontaneously as many of the early actions staged by OWS caught unsuspecting cities by surprise. Such improvised tactics did produce a large number of conflict frames in *The New York Times* coverage of OWS because the police response to these unplanned actions was often clumsy and over-aggressive.

The picture is somewhat different for the G20 protests. As Table 5.1 indicates, there is a well-established history of global summit protests. The idea that there would be disruptive protests at each G20 summit did not catch city officials or, more importantly, journalists by surprise, especially in Pittsburgh and Toronto, who watched closely the mishaps of police during the London Summit. Since there really was no innovation in tactics or an escalation of conflict until just before the summits occurred, conflict frames did not really dominate the coverage before the protests, as the model would suggest. This was especially true in *The Guardian's* coverage, where substance frames eclipsed conflict frames in the early stages of news attention.

At the same time, conflict was still quite present in the ‘alarmed discovery’ stage in all of the newspaper coverage except *The Guardian*. Regardless, the model indicates there are opportunities for both conflict and substance frames depending on the collective action frames activists put forth as well as the degree to which their initial tactics are confrontational. In this respect, the G20 protest coverage in both Pittsburgh newspapers fits the general model’s PNFC more closely as there were conflict frames and substance frames in the ‘alarmed discovery’ stage, then almost exclusively conflict frames as protesters clashed with police until the story entered the ‘decline of public interest’ stage and coverage faded. More generally, event-specific mobilizations like the G20 protests still adhere to the general model, though the degree to which their tactics are inventive and confrontational will condition the frequency of conflict frames as the protest moves through the news attention cycle.

Concerning my final hypothesis, the results partially confirm H3, which stated the coverage of the G20 protest in Toronto would have a higher percentage of conflict frames than the G20 Pittsburgh and G20 London protest coverage. The G20 Toronto coverage did have a higher proportion of conflict frames than the Pittsburgh newspapers by about 25% percent, but it had the same percentage as *The Guardian*’s coverage of the G20 London protests at 79%. The broader significance of this result is that the more confrontational protests had more conflict frames and the less confrontational protest, the G20 Pittsburgh protest, had a higher proportion of substance frames. Protest tactics and strategy have big implications for the news narrative.

I conclude by noting two limitations of the data examined here. First, my selection of newspapers raises doubts about the generalizability of my findings. As I

noted, *The Guardian* is not the largest paper in London or the UK more broadly. Had I chosen the two largest circulation newspapers there, *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, I might have found quite different patterns of news attention and framing. To remedy this problem, expanding the sample to other local papers in Toronto and London as I did in examining the Pittsburgh G20 coverage would help validate the findings here or demonstrate the substantial variation in news attention and framing across different papers covering the same protest.

Another limitation of the data concerns the timeframe of my sample. Each summit examined here was announced many months before they took place. It is possible that in not extending the sample to when the summits were initially announced I have missed a lot of the early stories about the summits and why they were taking place. I speculate that the majority of these articles would have substance frames rather than conflict frames. This would not significantly change the results here in terms of when frames are likely to be present, but might have implications for the overall balance of substance to conflict frames.

Chapter Six:

Conclusion

I began this investigation with several big questions in mind: How does news attention shift over the course of a protest? Do news organizations pay attention to the causes and grievances of protesters? If so, when are they most likely to pay attention to the protesters' causes and grievances? How and why do the news frames change over the course of a protest? Are long-term, spontaneous protests susceptible to the same frame-changing dynamics as short-lived, event specific protests? After examining the news coverage of four different protests spanning three countries, I can provide some of the answers to these questions. In doing so, I also hope to shed light on what my findings mean for the social movements and mass media literature. I conclude by outlining some promising directions for future research.

Assessing the value of this research hinges on usefulness of my theoretical model, the protest news framing cycle. One of the important facets of the model specifies how news attention rises and falls over the course of a protest. The model emphasizes the sensitivity of news coverage to the size of a protest, which is based on the stage of the protest in the cycle of contention (Tarrow, 2011). Though I have no direct measure of protest size or crowd estimates, plotting the number of protest stories over time and comparing these plots with the timeline of protest events seems to indicate that the protest size has a significant effect on the amount of news coverage a protest receives in the case of OWS and the G20 protests.

As protests begin planning and staging events, news attention increases. When the protests reach their height of participation, news attention peaks. As the protests dissolve

by force, in the case of OWS or voluntarily, in the case of the G20 protests, coverage declines. This is consistent with previous research that indicates size typically accounts for the newsworthiness of a protest (McCarthy et al., 1996; McCarthy et al., 2008; Oliver & Maney, 2000; Wouters, 2013). The importance of protest size in prompting news attention provides insight to an open question for the Occupy movement: can a protest stay relevant when it no longer has a physical presence?

Nobody maintained the naïve expectation that OWS would be able to occupy a physical space and capture the public's attention indefinitely, but an underlying rationale among participants for ending the occupation was that OWS could evolve and still be relevant without a permanent encampment. The rapid decline of news attention after the movement's eviction suggests otherwise. In the aftermath of the evictions news and public attention to OWS has been scant, save a few stories about the movement's participation in Hurricane Sandy relief aid.

The lack of news attention alone does not mean OWS is completely ineffectual. After all, being the center of attention and being effective as a social movement are two different things. We are still having a national dialogue about economic inequality, especially as the economic recovery has been sluggish for the middle class. Other actors including President Obama and Senator Elizabeth Warren have championed many of OWS' issues. Yet, the degree to which OWS is a central actor in shaping the terms of that conversation, hinges on whether they can again attract public attention and support.

The Impressions once sang about keeping a romantic relationship strong, "the same thing it took to get your baby hooked, it's gonna take the same thing to keep her" (Townsend, 1975). In a way, this rings true for OWS as well. They captured the public's

imagination unexpectedly, with a refreshing message and innovative tactics. Recapturing public interest and attention may require more innovation and a new manifestation of the movement. In other words, it might require more than simply showing up, occupying and getting arrested. More than likely, it will require clearly defined strategic aims and a precise plan of action to sustain public sympathy and news attention. Specifically, crafting a clear list of demands and solutions could persuade more journalists and media personalities about OWS' seriousness of purpose, which would help the activists' message become more persuasive with the wider public.

Newspaper	Protest	Number of Stories	Number of Conflict Frames	Number of Substance Frames	Number of Mixed Frames	Changes in Dominant Frame
The New York Times	Occupy Wall Street	265	124	102	16	C→S→C
The Guardian	G20 London	110	81	19	3	S→C
The Post-Gazette	G20 Pittsburgh	56	24	15	5	NDF→C
The Tribune-Review	G20 Pittsburgh	121	46	37	4	NDF→C
The Toronto Star	G20 Toronto	40	23	4	2	C→S→C
Key C=Conflict Frame S=Substance Frame NDF=No Dominant Frame						

Table 6.1: Summary of Content Analysis Results

As Table 6.1 illustrates, it can be a difficult task for protesters to keep journalists focused on the core issues they care about. Substance frames did not comprise the majority of the total number of frames in any of the newspapers examined here. Instead, conflict frames were more numerous across all cases. This reaffirms a crucial aspect of

the protest paradigm, that coverage tends to ignore or downplay the major themes of a protest while focusing more on conflict between protests and their targets (Boykoff, 2006; Di Cicco, 2010; McCarthy et al. 1996). However, it is important to qualify this point. There were still a considerable amount of substance frames in almost all of the cases except *The Toronto Star*. The evidence reviewed here suggests less of a conscious conspiracy against protests to ignore their claims as the protest paradigm literature sometimes implies and more of a practical reason for the relative shortage of substance frames; journalists' attraction to conflict (Gans, 2004).

In Toronto and London, the protests were tense and sometimes violent. In London, an innocent bystander died at the hands of police and this fueled a lot of rightful indignation and conflict. In Toronto, mass arrests and rioting proved to be a huge distraction from the substantive issues behind both the G20 Toronto Summit and the protest. The lack of substance frames in the coverage of these protests is really about the dramatic nature of the events that occurred than the marginalization of the protesters' causes.

We can be confident this is the case because there were more opportunities for substance in the coverage of the G20 Pittsburgh protests. The choice to be more or less confrontational with city officials largely dictated the extent to which conflict was the prevailing narrative in all of the cases. This affirms the assertion of previous research that tactics have a powerful effect on whether journalists adopt protesters' collective action frames or conflict frames (Boyle et al., 2012). However, in my research, I take this notion a step further. This is where my research makes a key contribution to the protest

paradigm literature: it's not only the tactics, but also more specifically, the timing of tactics, that shapes the narrative of coverage.

The importance of temporal factors in protest coverage has long been alluded to in previous studies (Oliver & Maney, 2000; McCarthy et al. 1996), but no one has made an explicit attempt to model changes in news frames over time. By introducing a protest news framing cycle, I have made an explicit effort to illustrate how news attention and framing of a protest can change over time. The case studies examined here not only demonstrate the applicability of the model, but also how sensitive news coverage is to the actions of protesters and police.

There was nothing inevitable about conflict frames dominating coverage from beginning to end. This is especially true in the early stages of a protest. From OWS to the G20 protests, journalists appeared to be willing to consider the collective action frames of protesters initially. The coverage of the G20 protests in London and Pittsburgh provide nice examples of this. In two cases, the OWS coverage and the G20 Toronto coverage, conflict frames appeared first, but there are clear reasons why this was the case. Concerning OWS, it was conflict, in the form of protest arrests that initially attracted journalists to the protest. Yet, journalists quickly investigated the causes and themes of the protest shortly after the arrests of protesters on the Brooklyn Bridge. In the case of the G20 Toronto, conflict dominated the early coverage simply because journalists knew conflict was looming given the recent history of protest clashes with police at other G20 Summits in the previous year.

Nonetheless, in all of the cases, as the protests coalesced, most of the newspapers made an explicit effort to understand why the protesters were participating in collective

action. For protesters, this early stage of news attention provided the best opening to entice journalists to adopt their preferred frames. By the time protests have reached peak participation, the likelihood of substance frames declines significantly because at this stage of the cycle of contention, protests are typically too big and disruptive to avoid encounters with police. The message of the protest is no longer the story; but rather, how local governments will deal with the public order and safety issues that arise in such an event. This is the clearest finding across all of the cases. As Table 6.1 illustrates, conflict frames overwhelmingly dominate the news coverage in the later stages of news attention, just as the PNFC proposes. This frame-changing dynamic from substance to conflict as a protest peaks and fades has a really practical implication for social movement leaders and activists: The pitch matters.

Even if the root cause of a protest is complex and difficult, protests need a simple, elegant message to be persuasive, especially given the narrow window of time they have to set the terms of debate about their goals and ideas. This was a huge obstacle for OWS. On one hand, they developed the 99% meme, a powerful rhetorical device and rallying cry. On the other hand, many of the protesters could not articulate their concerns or demands beyond the meme and this accelerated the impatience of journalists and city governments with the occupiers.

Though it is not necessarily the job of protesters to have all the solutions for the problems they put on the political agenda, it helps to formulate some potential remedies to justify sustaining a collective action effort. When protesters lack a cohesive plan or a list of demands whose satisfaction would lead to demobilization, they don't really have a *raison d'être*. This opens the door to public disenchantment and possibly, conflict with

city officials and police, who want to restore public order and disperse large, unpredictable crowds. A well-planned protest with a clear set of goals and implementation strategies might be able to more effectively yield concessions from their targets. Unfortunately for protesters, even with a clear set of tangible objectives, this may not be enough to avoid harassment from local governments and police. My analysis of the G20 protest coverage shows this is the case.

One of the more remarkable findings in this study is that short-lived, event specific protests like the G20 Summit protests were susceptible to the same frame-changing dynamics outlined in the PNFC as the long-term, spontaneous OWS movement. Though the G20 Summit protests were also inclusive of a broad array of interests, they had a somewhat clearly defined objective: compel Group of 20 leaders to incorporate their concerns or disrupt the summit in order to deny cities from hosting events altogether. Yet, even this narrowly defined goal did not stop journalists from shifting their attention to the conflict between cities and protesters. The most obvious reason this happened has less to do with the scope of the protests' goals, but instead, their lofty ambition. The protesters felt G20 leaders were not conceding enough so they turned their efforts to disruption, resulting in conflict with police. This is a testament to the extensive applicability of the PNFC. Whether the protests were short-lived or long and drawn out, whether they were related to a specific event or not event-driven, all of the protest news coverage examined here demonstrated a narrative shift from substance to conflict. This has huge implications for the protest paradigm literature.

Journalists may very well ignore a protest's message or cause as the protest paradigm suggests, but as scholars, we have to consider more carefully whether that is

true only in a particular instance or true over time. I found that the degree to which journalists ignore the substance of a protest in favor of conflict depends on what stage of contention the protest is in and whether protests are engaging in contentious actions throughout the duration of the protest. If I had only examined the news coverage of OWS and the G20 protests at the height of mass participation or the peak of overall coverage, I would have counted a substantially lower number of substance frames than I did by extending the timeline of my sample to before and after mass participation. In other words, it is not easy to see broader shifts in the narrative of news coverage about a protest unless one expands the event horizon to account for the escalation and de-escalation of contentious behavior by protesters.

This narrative shift over time deserves further scrutiny. Future studies could investigate whether this pattern holds when protests are docile and non-confrontational. When arrests do not take place, are conflict frames still present in the later stages of news attention? If protests can sustain attention to their collective action frames for the entire duration of the protest mobilization, are they more likely to have successful outcomes to collective action? The answers to these questions might be the key to determining how protests can avoid news coverage that will marginalize their aims and make efforts to persuade the public to support their cause more difficult.

There are a number of other directions that I would like to take this research as well. One important extension of this research involves the need to move beyond newspapers as a source of data. A number of scholars have raised methodological concerns about the over-reliance on newspapers as a data source (Earl et al., 2004; Ortiz et al., 2005; Rucht et al., 1998). Moreover, newspaper circulation and revenue has

declined as a result of increasing competition in the news market from television, digital news content aggregators and non-proprietary news producers (Starr 2009; Fallows 2010; Price 2009; Rosen 2005). Consequently, Americans are increasingly turning to television or moving online to get news and information (Caumont, 2013).

To truly be able to generalize about the theoretical model and about the coverage of the protests examined here, I need to examine broadcast and network television as well as online news. Wouters (2013) makes a strong case that the visual component and the emotional arousal of television make it an important source of data for studying protests. In terms of online news, there are a variety of sources worth examining. DeLuca, Lawson and Sun (2012) examined the framing of OWS on social media including Twitter and Facebook as well as some online only news sources like *Huffington Post*. Harlow and Johnson (2011) re-evaluated the evidence for the protest paradigm in light of the emergence of citizen media (citizen journalism) websites like *Global Voices*. Thus, there is a variety of television and online platforms to further examine the framing of protests, the protest paradigm, and the general model's PNFC.

In addition to studying other platforms for protest news, it is also crucial to extend the analysis here to other types of protests. The OWS and G20 protests largely focused on economic themes. Future research could investigate whether the PNFC element of the general model occurs when protests champion other types of issues and goals. Does the news coverage of environmental protests or LGBT rights protests experience a frame-changing dynamic similar to the one described in this study? As previous studies illustrate, some protest issues are more newsworthy than others (Oliver & Maney, 2000). Some protests adopt esoteric causes, like net neutrality, that are difficult for journalists to

cover or at least difficult for their audiences to understand. In such cases, the general model might have limited application.

Beyond analyzing other types of protests, it is also important to extend the present research to protests in non-English speaking countries. Though I examine protests in two other countries, all of the cases examined here took place in the British Commonwealth or in the United States. Others have lamented on the limits of only relying on English-language media content as well as the need to extend analysis to non-English language media (Boyle et al., 2012; Harlow & Johnson, 2011). Given that the country of origin can affect how police and government treat protesters and media accounts of protests vary widely depending on a country's media system (Baum & Zhukov, 2015; Wittebols, 1996), testing the PNFC on protest coverage in non-English language news sources warrants further attention.

To analyze other types of protests and protests in different countries, there are also a variety of other methodological approaches to experiment with. In this study, I relied heavily on content analysis, in which I personally coded each news article in my sample of newspapers. Yet, there are other ways to analyze content. Computational linguistics, natural language processing, and machine learning approaches are some of the more recent developments in text analysis (Bird, Klein, & Loper, 2009; Jurafsky & Martin, 2008). These approaches have not been applied extensively to social movement research (Hanna, 2013).

Within these approaches, there is a range of techniques, which can be quite simple or more complex, depending on the concept of interest. On the simple end, computer-aided (automated) content analysis can start with simple word counts that relate to key

concepts in a newspaper article, blog or tweet. More complex techniques include language modeling, which attempts to resolve ambiguity in a text and provide context for words or phrases, or unsupervised machine learning approaches like topic modeling, in which a machine groups documents that belong together based on the statistical (co-) occurrence of particular words (Hanna, 2013). These techniques and other related approaches are particularly useful for large data sets. Utilizing a mixed methods approach with these techniques and traditional content analysis might improve the validity and reliability of coding choices in terms of choosing frames to analyze and finding those frames in a particular text or set of texts.

To further bolster the mixed methods approach for studying protests, it would be useful to conduct interviews with journalists and activists. The approach of interviewing journalists who have been influential in coverage of the topic under study has been employed in previous studies of news narrative structure and framing (Berglez, 2011). When coupled with content analysis, interviews with journalists can give a much deeper understanding of how and why they choose to cover protests (Harlow & Johnson, 2011). Interviewing activists would also be quite useful because it would provide scholars with a better sense of how movements approach press relations and how much importance movements place on getting journalists to pay attention to their cause. Further, interviews with activists could help scholars focus in on a crucial question of growing importance: whether social movements need news attention at all to be effective.

Big questions remain for activists and scholars alike about how central media attention is for the success or failure of a movement. News attention might be useful for increasing public awareness and mobilizing a large group of protesters, but it is not

entirely clear whether such mass mobilizations help or hurt the cause of a movement. As author and scholar, Evgeny Morozov observes (2011),

One cannot start with protests and think of political demands and further steps later on. There are real dangers to substituting strategic and long-term action with spontaneous street marches... The newly gained ability to mobilize may distract us from developing a more effective capacity to organize (p. 230).

Morozov's words are a sobering lesson for the organizers of OWS who saw broad participation in their movement but little long-term strategy to sustain enthusiasm and activism. Similarly, political activist, organizer, and scholar Angela Davis (2005) writes, "it seems to me that mobilization has displaced organization, so that in the contemporary moment, when we think about organizing movements, we think about bringing masses of people into the streets" (p. 128-129). Her point is not that mobilization is ineffective, but rather, if activists want to broaden their base of support, they would be keen to focus less on *how* to convince more people to join them and more on *why* people should join them and *what* they can do once they participate.

Moreover, even if activists decide mobilizing supporters is an important task for accomplishing goals, it is not clear that they need traditional news organizations to amplify their message anymore. Columbia University sociologist and journalism professor, Todd Gitlin, has argued,

The absence of broad media attention initially gave protesters a shared grievance. Since the Vietnam War, there have been many instances when protest movements have criticized the media over perceived slights...but there is less of an *obsession* [emphasis added] about that these days *because they're making their own media* [emphasis added] (Stelter, 2011a).

The rise of citizen journalism and independent media in the wake of the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle has only accelerated in the protests since then. OWS had a particularly strong citizen journalism presence and activist media production team. As one OWS

organizer, Patrick Bruner put it, “we’re fighting a system, and this media is a part of the system...and when this media doesn’t cover us in a fair light, the desire isn’t to shame them, it’s to create an alternative” (Stelter, 2011a). Whether this alternative allows protests to better accomplish their goals, amplify their message and connect with supporters will determine whether the protest paradigm becomes a remnant of the past.

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Appendix

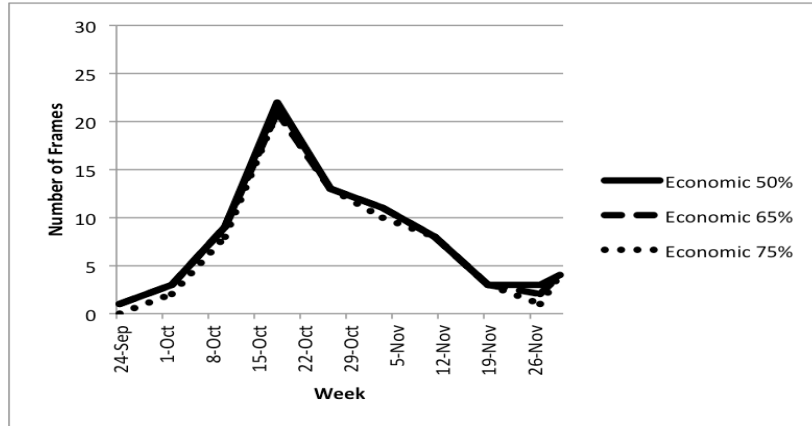


Figure A.1: Number of Substance Frames at Different Thresholds

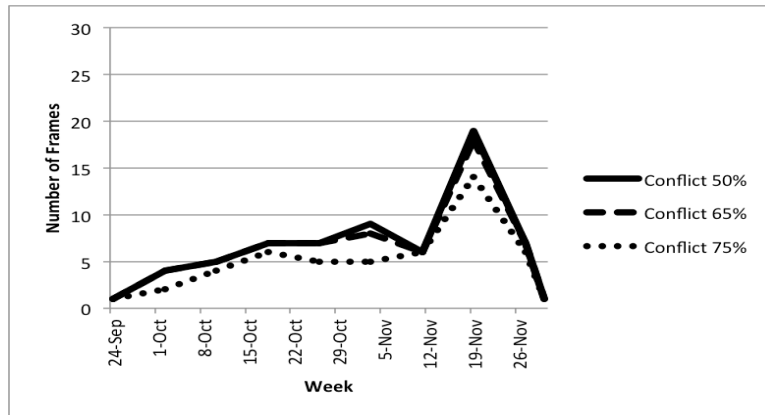


Figure A.2: Number of Conflict Frames at Different Thresholds

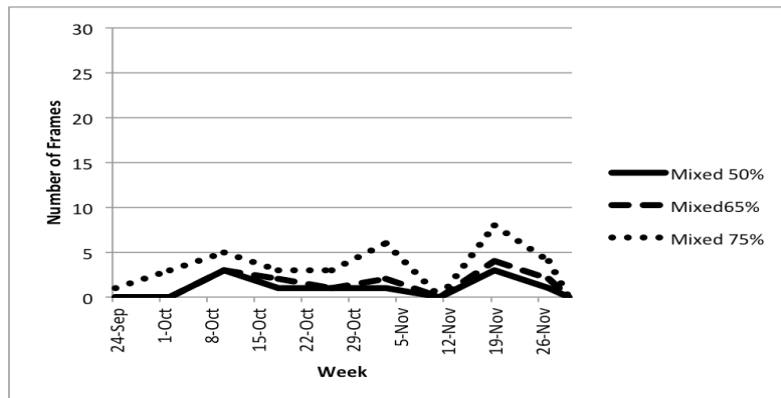


Figure A.3: Number of Mixed Frames at Different Thresholds