The authors provide a set of criteria and procedures for systematically observing and recording collective action across temporary gatherings such as political demonstrations. Their method uses trained observers, distributed across a gathering, who complete a code sheet during time interval samples. The code sheet allows observers to record the extent of participation in 40 or more elementary forms of collective action by members of six actor categories. These elementary forms were inductively generated from extensive prior observations of temporary gatherings. The data collected provide a rich record of collective action across space and time. The method can be used to investigate a number of problems facing students of collective action and social movements.

A Method for Systematically Observing and Recording Collective Action

DAVID SCHWEINGRUBER
CLARK MCPHAIL
University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign

This article describes a method for systematically observing and recording collective action within temporary gatherings. Our method uses trained observers, distributed across a gathering, who complete a code sheet during time interval samples. The data collected provide a rich record of collective action across space and time. This method has been used to collect data at three Washington, D.C., demonstrations. Revisions made after the first demonstration, the 1995 March for Life, resulted in the system reported here and were used at the 1995 National Organization for Women's Rally for Women's Lives and the 1997 Promise Keepers' "Stand in the Gap"

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Sacred Assembly. This article presents data from the March for Life but describes the refined method used at the other two demonstrations. First, we give a brief history of collective action research and present five problems faced by scholars of collective action and social movements. Second, we outline our method and how it is implemented. Finally, we revisit the five problems, providing preliminary data to address three of them and describing how we intend to address the remaining two problems using our method.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR AND COLLECTIVE ACTION RESEARCH

FROM IVORY TOWER TO FIELD RESEARCH ON "THE CROWD"

To appreciate the current problems scholars of collective action are facing, it is necessary to provide a brief history of collective action research. Despite more than a decade of pleas for empirical research on collective behavior and the crowd (e.g., Strauss 1947; Blumer 1957; Turner 1958; Bolton 1962), it was not until the early 1970s that sociologists began leaving their armchairs and venturing into the field to observe and record what people were doing in demonstrations and riots (e.g., Quarantelli and Hundley 1969; Heirich 1971; Berk 1972; Fisher 1972; McPhail 1972).[1] This yielded several reports of on-site observations and limited methodological strategies for generating even more observations. Developing these strategies was easier said than done.

Blumer (1957:135) attributed our ignorance of what occurs in crowds to the absence of "a well thought out analytic scheme which would provide fruitful hypotheses and lead to more incisive observations." Regrettably, at the crux of this admirable admonition is a paradox. Incisive observations presuppose a set of conceptual criteria specifying the phenomena to be observed; fruitful hypotheses presuppose reasoned statements of a relationship between those phenomena and their sources and/or consequences, which are amenable to empirical scrutiny. But the fruitful hypotheses and conceptual criteria of a well-thought-out analytic scheme must build on at least minimal

observations of the phenomena to which that scheme is addressed. Hence, Blumer's paradox!

In the face of this methodological paradox, most sociologists committed to empirical research on collective behavior reverted to doing what they then did best. Sometimes they ventured into the field to interview crowd or demonstration participants (e.g., Lin 1975; Seidler, Meyer, and MacGillivray 1977; Aveni 1977), or they attempted to reconstruct what happened after the fact by questionnaire (e.g., MacCannell 1973; McPhail and Miller 1973). Some combined interviews with observations to create richly detailed descriptions of gatherings (e.g., Heirich 1971; Berk 1972, 1974; Lofland and Fink 1982; Wright 1978; Lofland 1985). Others developed criteria and procedures for the systematic coding of collective action events in newspaper and other document archives (e.g., Shorter and Tilly 1974; Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975; Tilly 1978, 1979, 1995).[2] But little immediate progress was made toward the resolution of Blumer's (1957) methodological paradox, at least at the microlevel of analysis of what transpires within crowds.

A MACROSOLUTION AND ITS MICROPROBLEMS

Many political sociologists and political scientists were critical of Blumer's (1957) theoretical analysis of the crowd and collective behavior on the grounds that it discredited those purposive individuals who were acting collectively to bring about (or resist) social, political, and economic change in the societies in which they lived. These macrosociologists and political scientists not only opted for alternative models of rational individual actors engaged in collective actions, but they also sought to place those actions within larger social, political, and economic frameworks and to do so across larger expanses of space and time. In fact, *collective action*, the term we use here, has evolved as the concept of choice over what had become, for these scholars, the pejorative concept of collective behavior. They drew upon a variety of longitudinal data sets generated by governmental and private agencies for measures of social, political, and economic obstacles to and opportunities for collective action. But no such data sets existed from which to construct measures of the frequency, size, form, and consequences of collective action. These had to be created,

and ingenious efforts were undertaken to do so from daily newspapers that were national in scope and continuous across large periods of time (Gurr 1968; Shorter and Tilly 1974; Tilly et al. 1975; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1989; Olzak 1992).

What is common to all these efforts is both the high quality of their scholarship and their use of newspaper archives as sources of continuous records of collective action from which empirical data sets can be constructed on the frequency, size, form, and consequences of collective action. It is difficult to exaggerate the significance of this event analysis of collective action. Over the past three decades, it has become a growth industry among sociologists and political scientists in the United States (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Olzak 1992; Everett 1992; McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith 1996) and in Europe (Tilly et al. 1975; della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Tarrow 1989; Kriesi et al. 1995; Rucht 1990; Koopmans 1993).

The care that has been exercised in evaluating the newspaper archives and constructing the collective action data sets leaves little doubt that national papers carry valid if superficial accounts of protest events. But there have been continuing and lingering doubts about the extent to which those accounts are representative of the population of protest events to which social science investigators want to generalize with the results of their statistical analyses of those data sets. Until recently, there was no readily obvious means of establishing an independent measure of the population of protest events in a specified political jurisdiction against which to compare the sample of protest events reported in the print and electronic media samples of such events.

McCarthy et al. (1996) generated a near-exhaustive measure of the population of protest events by compiling demonstration permits issued by the three police agencies in Washington, D.C., for 1982 and 1991. They compared the characteristics of protest events described in the population of demonstration permits (and applications) in police agency records against the characteristics of those events reported in the print media (*Washington Post* and *New York Times*) and in the electronic media (national nightly news telecasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC). This research established three important facts for the issues addressed in this article. First, the mass media report less than 10 percent of the approximately 2,000 demonstrations that occur in

Washington, D.C., each year. Second, most demonstrations that occur in Washington involve fewer than 25 participants. Third, there is a positive relationship between the size of the demonstration and the likelihood that it will be reported in the mass media. Space and time considerations do not permit a further discussion of all the issues that are involved. Suffice it to say that the mass media report only the tip of the iceberg of protest events. These facts raise significant research problems. But before addressing them, we turn to another solution to the problem of studying collective action.

DEVELOPMENT OF A MICROSOLUTION: SOME ELEMENTARY FORMS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

For one sociologist (McPhail 1969), a critical conceptual breakthrough came from reading Turner's (1964) seminal discussion of "the illusion of unanimity" within the crowd and his suggestion that crowds are better characterized by what he called "differential expression." For McPhail, this offered one way of addressing Blumer's (1957) methodological paradox, and he launched an investigation of the different forms that collective behavior might take within large gatherings and the extent of participation in those forms ranging from two persons to the entire gathering. The primary obstacle was identifying what "collective" phenomena to look for and how to recognize and record those phenomena when they occurred. There was no "well thought out analytic scheme" to provide conceptual guidance or a detailed methodological recipe. McPhail's (1972) fallback strategy was to deploy multiple observers with pen and paper to record any and all instances of elementary social behavior in demonstrations and other gatherings. They were trained and directed to record descriptions of all instances of two or more persons acting with or in relation to one another. Later, these observers improved their observations by making videotape and photographic records.

This early fieldwork had two objectives. First, McPhail and his colleagues (McPhail and Pickens 1975) attempted to generate an exhaustive list of elementary forms of social behavior observed in hundreds of political, sport, and religious gatherings, as well as commonplace or prosaic gatherings. This procedure generated extensive empirical records (Pickens 1975; Wohlstein 1977a, 1977b; Wohlstein and

McPhail 1979) from which a taxonomy of elementary forms of social or collective acts was subsequently created (McPhail 1991).

Second, McPhail and his colleagues were simultaneously attempting to create criteria for identifying social or collective actions. To create a logical and empirically grounded taxonomy of types of collective actions, they needed a set of criteria that would delimit what was and what was not included. Contemporary definitions of collective behavior were problematic because they emphasized what collective behavior was not, referred to what allegedly caused or did not cause collective behavior, or were limited to extraordinary events (McPhail 1991). More helpful was Wallace's (1969:5) judgment that the common denominator of virtually all definitions of "the social" was "interorganism behavior relations . . . the regular accompaniment of one organism's behavior by at least one other organism's behavior." What McPhail and his colleagues were repeatedly observing and recording were elementary forms of social behavior. What was required was the specification of behaviors and dimensions in terms of which behaviors of two or more persons could be judged to regularly accompany one another. This resulted in the following working definition of collective action:

> Two or more persons engaged in one or more actions (e.g., locomotion, orientation, vocalization, verbalization, gesticulation, and/or manipulation), judged common or concerted on one or more dimension (e.g., direction, velocity, tempo, or substantive content) (see McPhail 1991:159).

These actions are termed here *collective actions-in-common* when two or more persons are performing the same actions at more or less the same time; they are termed here *collective actions-in-concert* when two or more persons are performing different actions that fit together to yield a sequence of concerted actions (e.g., the division of labor in conversations, two-party chants, or complex cards stunts). McPhail's (1991) observations indicate that while conversations (a sequence of concerted actions) are one of the most frequent forms of acting together in all types of gatherings, actions-in-common are otherwise more prevalent.

McPhail (1991) listed 40 frequently observed forms of collective action-in-common (see Figure 1). He grouped these into seven categories: orientation (facing), vocalization (mouth sounds other than words), verbalization (making words with the mouth), vertical locomotion (movement of the body over the same point on the ground), horizontal locomotion (movement of the body from one point on the ground to another), gesticulation (movement and configuration of fingers, hands, and arms in a manner to make a significant symbol), and manipulation (using hands to applaud or to strike, carry, throw, pull, etc.).

Although this list of elementary forms may not be exhaustive, it is empirically grounded. McPhail (1991) argued that these various forms of people acting together alternate with the actions those people take alone. Taken together, the aggregation of all those individual and collective actions constitute what has traditionally been called "the crowd" but which McPhail calls a temporary gathering. The concept of the crowd implies a uniformity of action and a homogeneity of actors that are empirically false. In view of the problems with this antiquated concept, we will use the term *temporary gathering*.[3] In turn, two or more gatherings (e.g., a rally followed by a march) make up what is called an event; the aggregation of two or more events (e.g., daily rallies followed by marches to picket line sites) make up a campaign. This cumulative sliding scale of micro- to macrounits of analysis corresponds to the intersects of micro- to macrointervals and segments of space and time and is summarized in Figure 2. Although a similar nesting of micro- within macrocollective phenomena is evident in the work of Lofland (1985) and Olzak (1992), there has been little empirical work that has spanned this scale. Tilly's project (1978, 1979, 1986, 1994, 1995; Tilly et al. 1975) is an exception. By focusing on the "action verbs" in archived newspaper reports and other chronicles of contentious gatherings, Tilly (1995) identified variations in verbs describing actions by or within contentious gatherings in Great Britain between 1758 and 1834. Tilly also nests individual and collective actions within what he calls performances (and we call gatherings and events), which in turn are nested in campaigns, phenomena that are mobilized by social movement organizations and organizers.[4]

Collective orientation	Collective vocalization	Collective verbalization
1. Clustering	1. Ooh-, ahh-, ohhing	1. Chanting
2. Arcing, ringing	2. Yeaing	2. Singing
3. Gazing, facing	3. Booing	3. Praying
4. Vigiling	4. Whistling	4. Reciting
	5. Hissing	5. Pledging
	6. Laughing	
	7. Wailing	

Collective gesticulation (nonverbal systems)
1. Roman salute (arm extended forward, palm down, fingers together)
2. Solidarity salute (closed fist raised above shoulder level)
3. *Digitus obscenus* (fist raised, middle finger extended)
4. #1 (fist raised shoulder level or above, index finger extended)
5. Peace (fist raised, index finger and middle finger separated and extended)
6. Praise or victory (both arms fully extended overhead)

Collective vertical locomotion	Collective horizontal locomotion	Collective manipulation
1. Sitting	1. Pedestrian clustering	1. Applauding
2. Standing	2. Queuing	2. Synchroclapping
3. Jumping	3. Surging	3. Finger snapping
4. Bowing	4. Marching	4. Grasping, lifting, waving object
5. Kneeling	5. Jogging	5. Grasping, lifting, throwing object
6. Kowtowing	6. Running	6. Grasping, lifting, pushing object

Figure 1: Some Elementary Forms of Collective Action-in-Common
SOURCE: Adapted from McPhail (1991).

FIVE PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

While both the macro- and microapproaches to studying collective action have made valuable contributions to our knowledge, both raise additional problems that can only be investigated by a method for which there are no precedents. In this section, we pose five such problems in the form of questions that our method can address. Later, we provide data that address three of the problems and show that our method provides the means for addressing the other two.

Problem 1: Of all the actions in which two persons in temporary gatherings could engage, in which ones do they engage, with what frequency, and to what extent? A major problem with any inductively generated empirical taxonomy, such as McPhail's (1991), is the un-

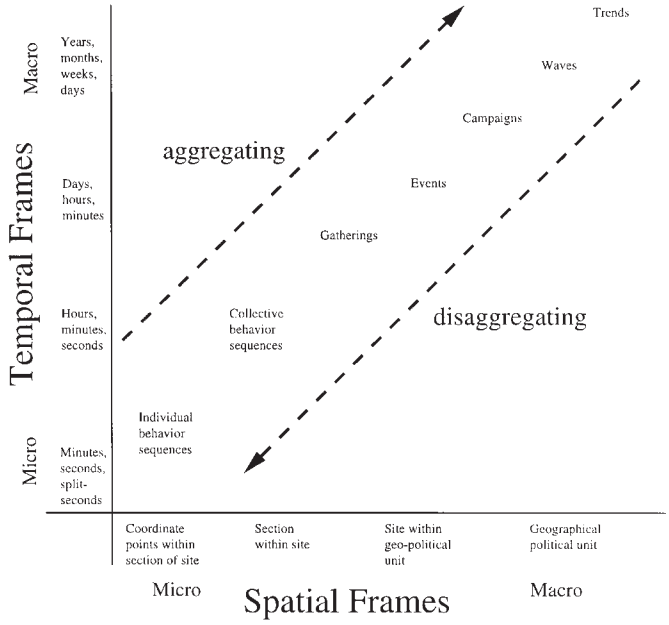


Figure 2: Units of Analysis by Spatial and Temporal Levels of Analysis
SOURCE: Adapted from McPhail (1991).

known limitations of the empirical base from which that taxonomy was created. A lone observer, or even a small number of observers working with the same criteria, can only record what occurs in small gatherings or in limited sections of large gatherings. Investigations of demonstrations using space and time sampling are necessary to determine which of McPhail's forms are prevalent, which are not, and what additional forms should be added to the list of most frequently occurring forms. Later, we present data addressing this question.

Problem 2: How do collective actions vary by space and time within demonstrations? Although Turner's (1964) discussion of "the illusion of unanimity" is more than three decades old, there has been no attempt to systematically assess the extent of variation within gatherings. The attention of most protest scholars has been limited to a few

variables—demonstrations' frequency, size, and form (e.g., rally, march, vigil, intervention, or obstruction); number of arrests; and presence or absence of violence. Researchers who have employed the microapproach have focused on more types of collective action and have addressed the issue of variation within demonstrations (McPhail 1991). However, to systematically address this question requires the collection of data with multiple observers using space and time sampling. Later, we present data addressing this question.

Problem 3: To what extent do the large protest events reported in the mass media differ from the smaller protest events, which are more common but less likely to be reported? Since the reports found in the mass media are the ones that collective action scholars have most frequently analyzed, their analyses have been biased toward large demonstrations. Whatever bias may exist does not invalidate these scholars' reports, but learning the nature of the bias will make them more useful for understanding protest events. And since small protest events go virtually uncovered by the media (and are therefore excluded from most scholarly analyses), another method is required not just to compare them to bigger ones but to conduct any systematic investigation of them.

Problem 4: What types of description bias color the media reports of demonstrations that are covered? McCarthy et al.'s (1996) investigation of selection bias addresses the issue of which demonstrations are covered by the mass media. McCarthy et al. (1998) address the question of how newspaper and television accounts of the same demonstrations have differed. But there have been no systematic empirical analyses of the extent to which the descriptions of protesters and protest actions in the print and electronic media correspond to systematic observations of protesters' actions recorded by social scientists across the space-time duration of the protest event. Any investigation of this question will require a method for identifying and recording demonstration activities so they can be compared to media accounts. Later, we present preliminary data addressing this question.

Problem 5: How can television news reports of demonstrations be made a fruitful avenue for research on demonstrations, as newspaper

reports have been for the past three decades? The transcripts of television reports can be mined for some of the same information that has been obtained from newspaper stories (McCarthy et al. 1998). However, this method neglects the valuable information in the stories' visual images. A method is needed to record this information.

A method for addressing all five of these problems must have the following features: (1) it must use space and time sampling to collect representative data throughout a demonstration, (2) it must be flexible enough to study demonstrations of various sizes and types (e.g., political, religious, sports, prosaic), and (3) it must be adaptable for coding demonstrations on television news reports. The method we present here has these features and is designed to address the five problems.

A REVISED TAXONOMY OF ELEMENTARY FORMS

The central feature of this method is the identification of the extent and variation of collective action. In developing the taxonomy for this method, we attempted to follow two principles. First, the system must include a wide variety of collective actions, both the frequent and the infrequent, and must be flexible enough to be used for different types of gatherings and research questions. Second, the system must be easy to use. This requires a taxonomy simple and clear enough that observers with a minimum amount of training will be able to identify and code the elementary forms in a few minutes. It also requires that the taxonomy can be represented on code sheets that can be easily transported and used in the field.

McPhail's (1991) initial taxonomy of elementary forms was reorganized around four regions of the body. This organization can be summarized by answers to four questions: Which direction are people facing? What noises are people making with their mouths? What are people doing with their arms, hands, and fingers? What are the positions and movements of people's torsos and legs in relationship to the ground? These four dimensions—called facing, voicing, manipulating, and locomotion/body position—subsume the seven categories offered by McPhail. In turn, the variations on each of these four dimensions yield a number of elementary forms of collective action. Our current taxonomy lists 40 of these elementary forms along with

10 "other" selections that encompass all additional variations of the four dimensions.

Actions on each of the four dimensions are more or less mutually exclusive. Normally, a person can face but one direction, can make but one noise with his or her mouth, and is in but one body position at any one point in time. However, since people have two sets of arms/hands/fingers, their manipulation actions are not always mutually exclusive.

Elementary forms that share important features are grouped together into mutually exclusive categories. Figure 3 presents the four dimensions, the two levels of categorization, and the elementary forms that belong to the dimensions and categories.

Facing is subdivided into two frequently observed types of collective facing. Facing in the same (i.e., parallel) direction includes facing people who walk together in the same direction and those facing the same direction because they are looking at (monitoring) the same target. Facing in converging directions includes people in conversation clusters, arcs, and rings.

Voicing includes vocalizing (e.g., cheering, booing, laughing, whistling) and verbalizing (e.g., talking, singing, chanting). Talking can be further divided on the basis of substantive content (praying, conversing, etc.).

Manipulating may involve objects (e.g., carrying, striking, throwing), another person (e.g., embracing, restraining, striking), one's own body (e.g., clapping, snapping), or gesturing (making symbols; e.g., #1, peace, clenched fist). Carrying objects and passing objects are further divided based on the type of objects being manipulated. For instance, two of the objects most commonly carried in a demonstration—placards and audiovisual equipment—have their own category.[5]

Locomotion/body position is divided into three categories: horizontal locomotion, vertical locomotion, and vertical position. People may move their bodies horizontally so that the point on the ground over which they are positioned changes (e.g., walking, marching, and running). People may move their bodies vertically from one position to another over the same point on the ground—for example, standing (up), sitting (down), and lying (down). Vertical body positions are stationary positions that result from types of vertical motion. These include upright, seated, and prone. Although the vertical motion and

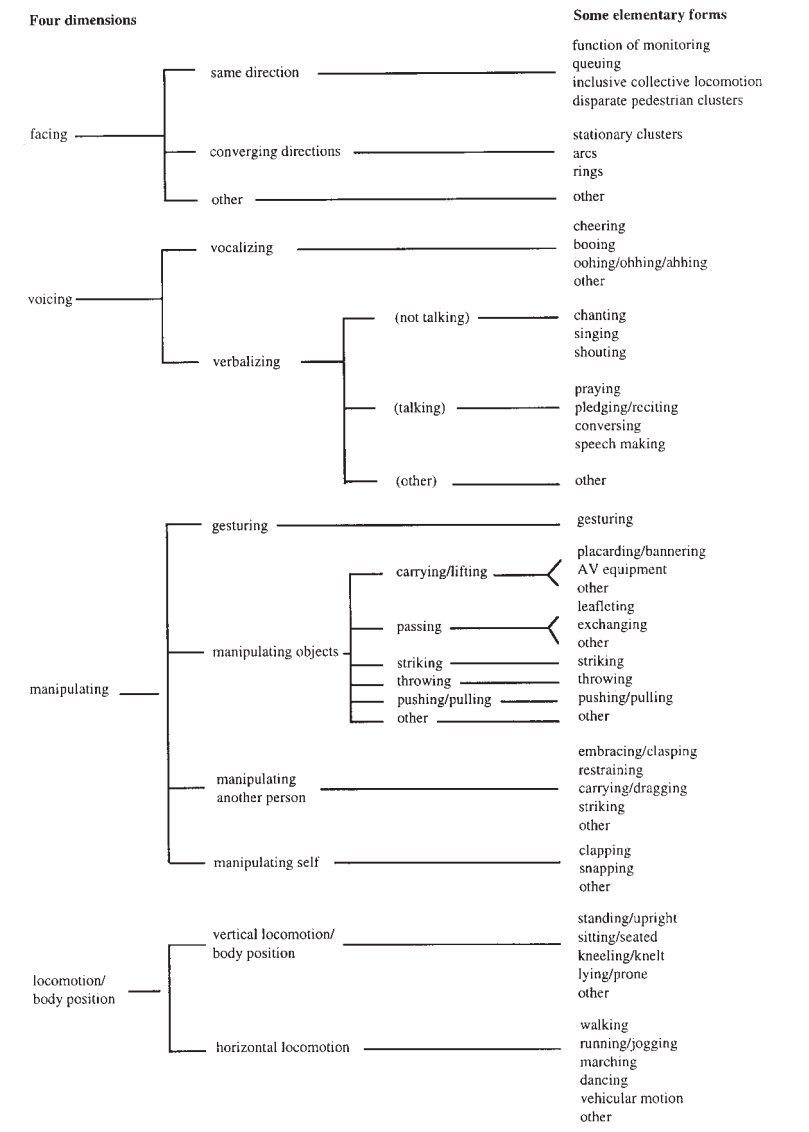


Figure 3: The Organization of the 50 Elementary Forms Used in the Coding Scheme

vertical position categories seem similar (standing vs. upright), they describe very different types of collective action. An example of collective upright would be a collection of people who are all "standing

around," while an example of collective standing would be a collection of people who are seated and then move together into a standing position. The English word *standing* obscures the difference between the two.

The four dimensions were selected because of the general meaningfulness attached to these body regions for understanding human attention, communication, and action. Nonetheless, these dimensions, the categories, and the specific elementary forms may require modification and adaptation to the particular type of gathering under investigation (e.g., religious or sport), its cultural setting, and the research question.[6] In the next section, we address how we chose elementary forms for observing political demonstrations in Washington, D.C. Then we suggest other variations to demonstrate the flexibility of the scheme.

CHOOSING LIKELY FORMS FOR A POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION

In each of the above categories and subcategories of elementary collective action, we could list dozens or even hundreds of examples that have been observed in many gatherings. Our code sheet contains only 40 elementary forms (plus 10 residual "other" categories). The number of forms on the sheet was limited by the principle that the scheme must be easy to use and transportable. Limiting the number of forms, however, required selecting those that would most likely be observed at a political demonstration. If less frequent types of action occur, observers code these in 1 of 10 "other" selections. These other selections fill gaps in the scheme, and since coders provide details of these other forms, they assist us in revising the scheme for future research.

For the vocalizing subcategory, for instance, we initially listed 12 examples that we frequently observed in gatherings: cheering, booing, oohing, ohhing, ahhing, hissing, crying, laughing, whistling, shrieking, wailing, and playing (wind) instruments. Five of the categories were then collapsed into two: oohing/ohhing/ahhing and shrieking/wailing, resulting in nine categories. Of these nine, three are listed on the code sheet—cheering, booing, and oohing/ohhing/ ahhing. The

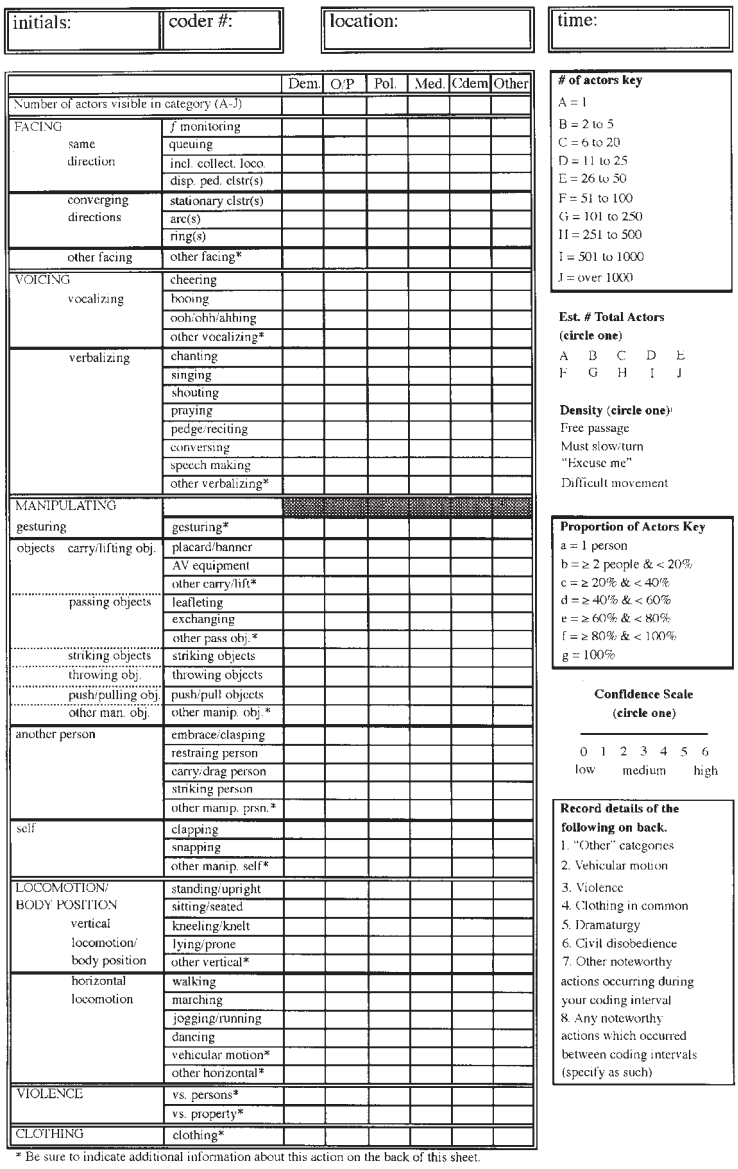
remaining six and any other instances of vocalizing are coded as "other."

One significant decision was to collapse all of the vertical position and vertical motion subcategories so that the listed forms are standing/upright, sitting/seated, kneeling/knelt, and lying/prone. Whenever elementary forms are collapsed, information is lost. Here we lose the distinction between people who are all in an upright position and people who move together from a seated position to an upright position. For some investigations (e.g., of religious services), this distinction might be important. Other forms in this category include bowing/bowed, kowtowing/kowtowed, jumping, and falling.

The four-level organizational scheme found in Figure 3 was collapsed into two columns on the code sheets (see Figure 4). Instructions for identifying each form are found in the *Collective Action Observation Primer* (McPhail, Schweingruber, and Berns 1997), the handbook issued to observers.[7] For instance,

> *Chanting* is verbalizing the same words in unison, usually repeatedly, and often in rhythm.
>
> *Striking things* is hitting something forcefully, either with the hands or with something held with the hands, such as a stick or bat. Striking may break something (such as striking a car window) or make a noise (such as striking a drum). If the striking damages or destroys property, it is also coded as violence against property.
>
> *Kneeling/knelt* describes actors who are moving from another body position (typically sitting or standing) to a knelt position or those in the knelt position (i.e., with the weight of the body rested on the knees and the front of the lower leg and foot).

Again, we emphasize that our list of elementary forms may not be exhaustive. However, we have observed repeatedly these forms of two or more people acting together in hundreds of substantively different gatherings. There are undoubtedly additional forms of collective action that the reader can imagine and that we have ourselves observed in prosaic, religious, and sport gatherings. This list was tailored to identify the most frequently observed and likely observable forms of collective action in political demonstration gatherings such as those under investigation.



initials: | coder #: | location: | time:

		Dem.	O/P	Pol.	Med.	Cdem	Other
Number of actors visible in category (A-J)							
FACING	*f* monitoring						
same direction	queuing						
	incl. collect. loco.						
	disp. ped. clstr(s)						
converging directions	stationary clstr(s)						
	arc(s)						
	ring(s)						
other facing	other facing*						
VOICING	cheering						
vocalizing	booing						
	ooh/ohh/ahhing						
	other vocalizing*						
verbalizing	chanting						
	singing						
	shouting						
	praying						
	pledge/reciting						
	conversing						
	speech making						
	other verbalizing*						
MANIPULATING							
gesturing	gesturing*						
objects carrying/lifting obj.	placard/banner						
	AV equipment						
	other carry/lift*						
passing objects	leafleting						
	exchanging						
	other pass obj.*						
striking objects	striking objects						
throwing obj.	throwing objects						
push/pulling obj.	push/pull objects						
other man. obj.	other manip. obj.*						
another person	embrace/clasping						
	restraing person						
	carry/drag person						
	striking person						
	other manip. prsn.*						
self	clapping						
	snapping						
	other manip. self*						
LOCOMOTION/ BODY POSITION	standing/upright						
vertical locomotion/ body position	sitting/seated						
	kneeling/knelt						
	lying/prone						
	other vertical*						
horizontal locomotion	walking						
	marching						
	jogging/running						
	dancing						
	vehicular motion*						
	other horizontal*						
VIOLENCE	vs. persons*						
	vs. property*						
CLOTHING	clothing*						

* Be sure to indicate additional information about this action on the back of this sheet.

# of actors key
A = 1
B = 2 to 5
C = 6 to 20
D = 11 to 25
E = 26 to 50
F = 51 to 100
G = 101 to 250
H = 251 to 500
I = 501 to 1000
J = over 1000

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

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

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

Confidence Scale (circle one)
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
low medium high

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

Figure 4: The Code Sheet

FLEXIBILITY OF THE SCHEME

The taxonomy of elementary forms is designed to be flexible. Any of the dimensions, categories, and forms can be expanded, combined with others, consigned to "other" status, or eliminated. There are three reasons for this flexibility. First, the list of forms presented here is meant to be provisional. One of the rationales for this project is to discover which forms of collective action are prevalent and which are not.

Second, the list will require slight modification depending on the type of gathering and may require greater modification depending on the culture in which the gathering occurs. But there must be a starting place, and the list we present here was designed for political gatherings in the United States. An investigation of religious, sports, or prosaic gatherings might require a slightly different list.

Third, the list of forms can be modified depending on the research question. The list we present here is designed to investigate the presence and distribution of common forms. But an investigation of a particular form would require a different list of forms. For instance, if gestures are being investigated, the gesture form can be expanded to list specific gestures (e.g., raised fist, raised index finger, raised middle finger, raised index and little finger). If locomotion is being investigated, Morris (1985) lists 36 types of "gait"—horizontal motion by foot—that could be added to the taxonomy (e.g., strolling, swaggering, and promenading). If vehicular motion were a concern, separate categories could be created for bicycles, skateboards, roller skates, roller blades, cars, trucks, and so on.

The same system used to code elementary forms can also be used to code other types of collective action of interest to the investigator. We include three of these on our code sheets: violence against property, violence against persons, and clothing-in-common. Although violence is infrequent in temporary gatherings (Eisinger 1973; Tilly et al. 1975; Edgerton 1979; Smith 1983), it is important to record instances when it occurs since we are interested in comparing our results to media reports of political demonstrations. Violence is not an elementary form since it comprises a large range of behaviors (e.g., striking, kicking, throwing objects). However, it can be coded in the same manner as are the elementary forms. Clothing-in-common is coded when

people wear head coverings or upper-body clothing that match. This is common in political demonstrations, but the prevalence of clothing-in-common may vary by type of gathering. We have included it here to acknowledge this issue.

THE CODE SHEET

The central element of the code sheet is a 6×54 matrix of cells that allows the observer to record the frequency of participation in elementary forms. The sheet also includes sections for recording the observer's identity, the time and location of the sample, the density of the observer's area and how many people are in it, and a confidence scale. We will take up each element on the code sheet in the order that the observers complete them.

OBSERVER'S IDENTITY; TIME AND ALLOCATION OF THE SAMPLE

Four cells at the top of the sheet (see Figure 5) allow the coder to indicate (1) his or her identity with initials and ID number; (2) the coder's location in the gathering, using a coordinate system; and (3) the time of the sample. The location and time cells allow the data to be positioned in space and time.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE GATHERING

A key and two scales on the right-hand side of the sheet (see Figure 6) are used to code the estimated total number of people in a coder's area of responsibility and the density of the people in the area. The number of actors key provides a series of categories for estimating the number of actors, each preceded by an alphabetic designation. The observer makes no entry in this key; rather, the letters there are used to make entries in several other locations on the code sheet. Using the ranges in the key, coders circle 1 of 10 capital letters (*A* through *J*) to indicate the estimated number of people in their area of responsibility (hereafter, area). The letter *A* refers to one person, while the letter *J* refers to more than 1,000 people in the area.

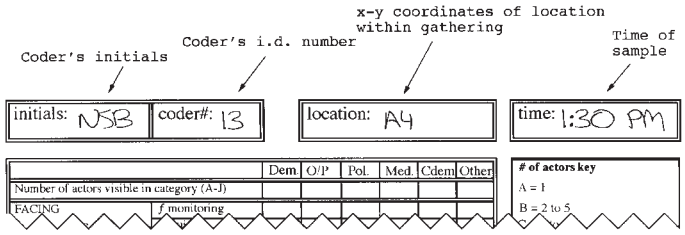


Figure 5: Code Sheet Cells for Coder Identity and Location and Time of Sample

The four density categories designate variations of densities from the perspective of someone attempting to walk from one side of the area to the other. Coders circle one of four descriptions, which are explained in the primer:

Free passage means you could freely walk through the area without having to significantly alter the direction or velocity of your movement.
Must slow/turn means you could walk through the area by slowing down or turning your path of movement to circumvent the people in the area.
"Excuse me" means you could walk through the area only by asking one or more actors in your path, "Excuse me, could I get through here?"
Difficult movement means it would be very difficult to move through the area.

CATEGORIES OF ACTORS

The main matrix on the code sheet has six columns, which correspond to five categories of people who are often present at demonstrations (MacCannell 1973) and an "other" column. Like the elementary forms, the particular actor categories were selected because of the type of gathering being coded. For other types of gatherings in other

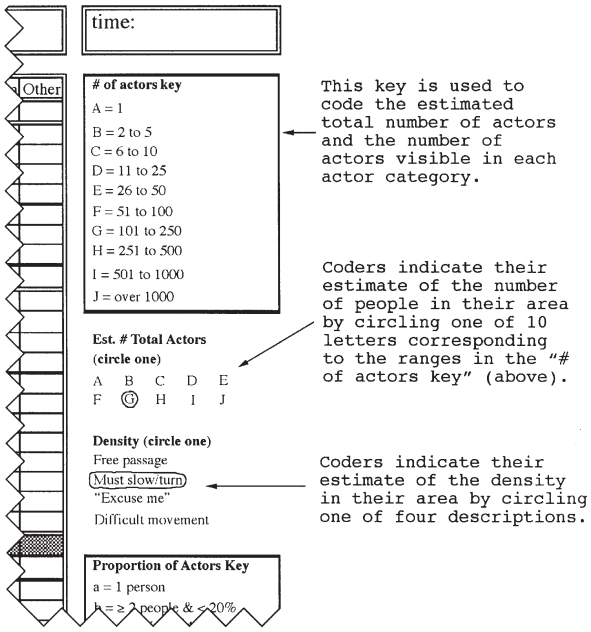


Figure 6: Code Sheet Cells for Number and Density of People in Gathering

places, different categories would be appropriate. The *Collective Action Observation Primer* (McPhail et al. 1997) contains instructions for deciding the actor category to which people belong. Coders are instructed to consider such factors as actions, words, clothing, relationships, locations, and artifacts. The six actor categories are the following:

Demonstrators are at the gathering to support the purpose of the demonstration.

Onlookers/passersby are at the gathering site for purposes unrelated to the demonstration.

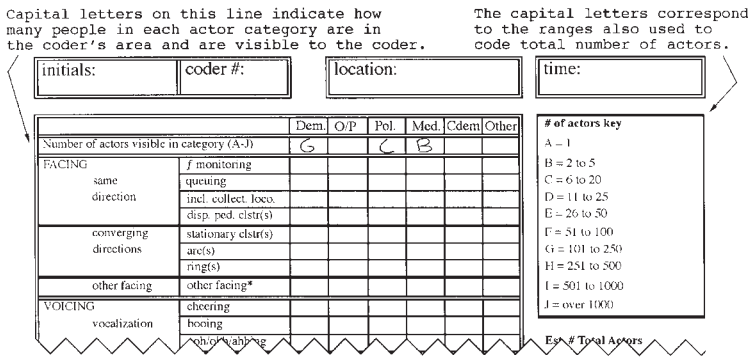


Figure 7: Code Sheet Cells for Number of Actors Visible in Six Categories

Police are any law enforcement officials at the gathering.
Media are reporters, photographers, and video camera operators from newspapers or broadcast news agencies.
Counterdemonstrators are at the gathering to demonstrate opposition to the purpose of the demonstration.
Others include vendors, pickpockets, sociologists, and people demonstrating for purposes unrelated to the demonstration.

Beneath each of the actor category column headings is a cell in which the observer is asked to estimate the number of actors in each category who are present in the observer's area of responsibility and who are visible to the observer (see Figure 7). Once again, the capital letters (*A* through *J*) from the number of actors key are used for this purpose. If no one from a category is in the area, the appropriate cell is left blank.

Many people in the area may not be visible to the observer because they are behind other people. The observer has no way of judging to which actor category they belong or in what elementary forms they are participating. The judgments about participation in elementary forms are based only on those actors who are visible to the observer. We do not consider this a major problem because any one observer's record

of collective action represents only a sample of the collective action in an area of the gathering, not all the collective action that occurs.

CODING ELEMENTARY FORMS

The remaining 53 rows on the central matrix are used to code proportions of actors in each category who are participating in one or more of the elementary forms of collective action (or the violence or clothing categories) (see Figure 8). Each cell corresponds to a category of actors and an elementary form. For each cell, the coder estimates the proportion of the visible actors in a category participating in that particular elementary form. The lowercase letters (*a* through *g*), from the proportion of actors key, are used to indicate seven ranges of proportions. An *a* entered in the box indicates that although the action is observed, only one person is acting, so no collective action is present. The letters *b* through *g* indicate increasingly higher levels of collective action, with *g* indicating 100 percent participation.

Although making these calculations for 318 cells in a few seconds appears both complicated and demanding, most of the cells are left empty (due to the absence of most of the actions at any particular sampling interval). The coder need only read down the list of actions and record those that are present. The ranges of proportions are also designed to make estimations easy by having intuitive estimates in the center of the ranges. For instance, *c* (≥ 20 percent and < 40 percent) would be marked if the coder thought "around a quarter" or "around a third" of the people were acting, while *d* (≥ 40 percent and < 60 percent) would be marked if the coder thought that "about half" or "just over" or "just under" half the people were engaged in a collective action.

CONFIDENCE RATING

After completing the code sheet for each sampling interval, each coder indicates how confident he or she is of the information entered on that particular sheet by circling a number on the confidence scale (see Figure 9).

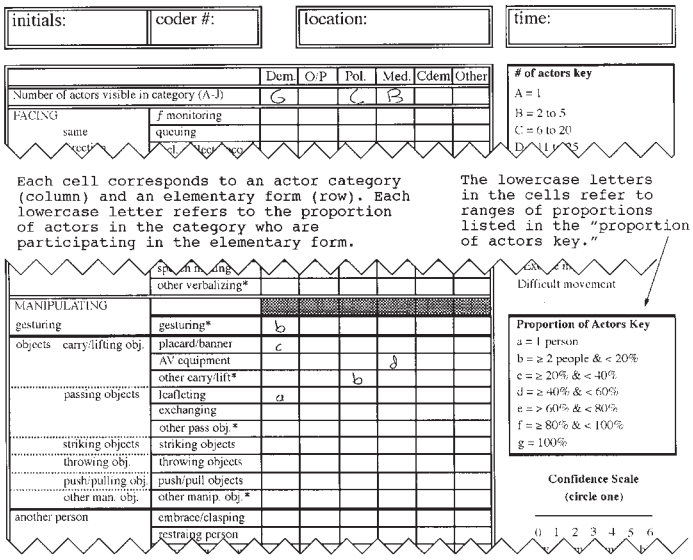


Figure 8: Code Sheet Cells for Coding Elementary Forms

OTHER INFORMATION TO BE RECORDED

Our coders were also directed to record some information on the margins or backs of the code sheets. This is a way to get clarification about some of the items coded and to collect information that does not fit into the current scheme. Prior to the initial observation and coding interval, we require observers to draw a map of their area on the back of the first sheet, including compass directions, prominent features, and their position in the area. They also record weather conditions and note on later sheets any weather changes. A box on the code sheet lists other types of information coders are to record on the margins or backs of the sheets. These include the following:

- Descriptions of all actions that have been coded in any "other" category, in the vehicular motion category (i.e., what type of vehicle), in a

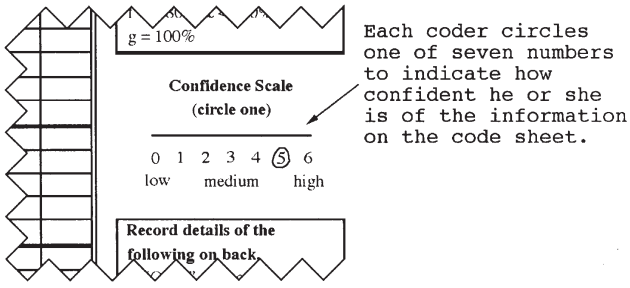


Figure 9: Code Sheet Confidence Scale

violence category (i.e., what type of violence), or in the clothing-in-common category (i.e., what type of clothing).

- Descriptions of any observed instances of dramaturgy or civil disobedience. These are two phenomena of theoretical and substantive interest to us, but since they are composed of many types of individual and collective action, they were not included on the code sheet as elementary forms.
- Descriptions of other noteworthy activities that the observer observed.

IMPLEMENTING THE METHOD

Our method was employed as part of the larger Collective Action Project, the aforementioned project on selection and description bias in mass media representations of demonstrations in Washington, D.C. (McCarthy et al. 1996). In the first phase of this project, the investigators examined selection bias, as explained above. The method described in this article was part of the second phase, an investigation of description bias. Implementing the method required recruiting observers, training them to correctly use the code sheets, positioning them throughout the gathering, debriefing them, and then entering their records into a database. This section briefly summarizes how we accomplished this. Unless otherwise noted, this description is of the

process used at the 1995 March for Life,[8] which was held on the Ellipse. A similar process was used prior to the 1995 National Organization for Women rally and the 1997 Promise Keepers assembly, both of which were held on the National Mall.

TRAINING THE OBSERVERS

Most of our observers were undergraduates from Washington-area universities who were recommended to us by colleagues. (The other coders included one of the authors, a professor, and several graduate students involved with the project.) The undergraduate observers were paid for their time involved in group training, observing, and debriefing. They were also paid for studying the *Collective Action Observation Primer* (McPhail et al. 1997) and whatever practice they did on their own. The observers were furnished with the primer to study several days before their first training session. They were instructed to study the primer, become familiar with it before their group training began, and prepare questions to ask during the training. The group training took place during a daylong session two days before the demonstration. The sessions consisted of (1) a brief lecture on temporary gatherings, the history of observing them, and the purpose of the project; (2) a brief history of the March for Life; (3) an illustrated overview of the elementary forms and coding procedures; (4) practice using the coding forms; and (5) practice estimating the number of actors and density of gatherings. The history of the March for Life, the overview of forms and coding procedures, and the practice coding forms all made extensive use of 35 mm color slides. All of the forms were illustrated with slides while they were being explained. The observers practiced using the criteria and procedures in the primer by coding slides of demonstrations. After each slide was coded, the authors and trainees discussed the results. The training for estimating the number of actors and the density included the use of slides but also included taking the trainees outside and arranging some of them in various formations for the other trainees to observe. The trainees were encouraged to study their codebook and practice coding the day between the group training and the demonstration.

PREPARING FOR SPACE SAMPLING

Essential to the method is the distribution of observers throughout the demonstration venue such that each observer is responsible for a clearly delineated area. Prior to each training session, we visited the demonstration venue and divided it into a matrix. For the boundaries of the matrix cells, we used sidewalks, trees, lampposts, stages, audio speakers, buildings, and sightlines connecting these various markers. The entire demonstration venue was then mapped, including markers and sightlines, so that each observer had a map of the complete venue, with his or her specific observation area indicated. Depending on the size of the demonstration venue, the number of observers, and the number of cells or areas in the matrix, observers might be placed in every area or a subset of them.

Figure 10 is the map of the 1995 March for Life rally site at the Ellipse. The boxes indicate the speakers' platform, the media stand, and audio speakers. The boundaries of the area are sightlines drawn between the main stage, the media platform, and six large loudspeakers. Boundaries for the demonstrations held on the National Mall were easier to set since we relied on the matrix of sidewalks and lampposts that border the entire National Mall. But the March for Life required mapping the rally site, sections along the parade route, and the procession destination area near the Supreme Court, where a counterdemonstration was held.

COORDINATING THE OBSERVERS AT THE DEMONSTRATION

Upon arriving at the demonstration venue, the observers synchronized their watches to ensure that all would observe and record during the same time periods. They were each given a spiral-bound 8.5×11-inch pad of code sheets and a map indicating their area of responsibility. Because we anticipated people questioning the observers about their identity, the code sheet books had the project name on their bright green plastic covers, each observer wore a project name tag, and each observer carried business cards of the project's principal investigators. Observers were told they could answer questions about their coding as long as it did not interfere with their duties. However, they were

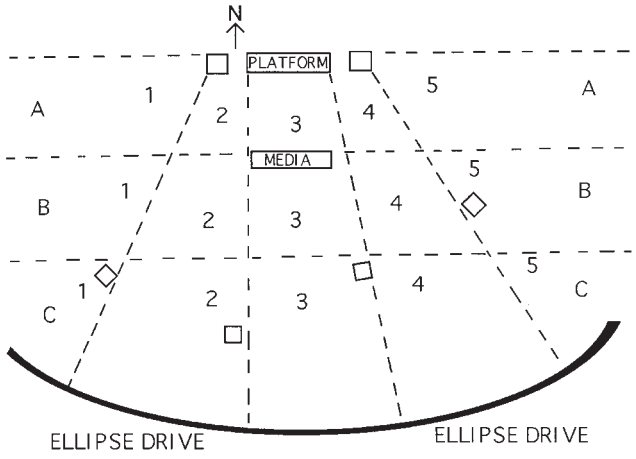


Figure 10: A Map of the March for Life Rally Site on the Ellipse

encouraged not to be drawn into discussions with demonstrators about demonstration-related issues.

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

OBSERVING THE DEMONSTRATION

Beginning at 11 a.m. (a half hour before the official start of the March for Life rally), each observer was instructed to fill out a code sheet to indicate what was taking place in his or her area during a 1-minute sample. The observers were told to scan their area for

approximately 30 seconds of the 1-minute sampling period and to then begin filling out their code sheets. They could look up from the sheets to observe the area again, but they were not to code any new collective actions that took place after the 1-minute sampling period was over. At the March for Life rally, observers repeated the coding every 15 minutes. The interval between samples was decreased to 10 minutes for the Rally for Women's Lives. The March for Life observers moved, at specified times, from the rally to their second position, either along the parade route or at the Supreme Court.

After the demonstration ended, the authors met with the observers for a debriefing. The observers filled out surveys and engaged in a group discussion about the observation criteria and procedures, particular problems they encountered, and suggestions they had for improving the training, criteria, and procedures for subsequent demonstrations. The information they provided was used to improve the method for the next round of observation training and data collection.

PREVALENCE AND VARIATION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

Above we listed five problems faced by scholars of collective action. In the remainder of this article, we will consider how the method can address these problems. In this section, we will address two of the problems with data from the March for Life. These are Problem 1 (of all the actions in which two persons in temporary gatherings could engage, in which ones do they engage, with what frequency, and to what extent?) and Problem 2 (how do collective actions vary by space and time within demonstrations?). We will also explain how the method will be used to address Problem 3 (to what extent do the large protest events reported in the mass media differ from the smaller protest events, which occur more often but are less likely to be reported?).

The code sheet we used for the March for Life was slightly different from the current version (see Figure 4). We note two important differences. First, the code sheet had five fewer elementary forms. Second, at the March for Life, observers recorded the proportion of actors engaging in collective action on a 6-point scale, where *a* = one to six actors (with the exact number specified), *b* = at least seven actors but

less than 25 percent of the total visible, *c* = 25 to 49 percent, *d* = 50 to 74 percent, *e* = 75 to 99 percent, and *f* = 100 percent. We subsequently rescored all *a* responses with two or more actors into one of the proportional categories. In the tables and discussion that follow, these proportions have been translated into a 5-point scale (cf. Tables 2-5), where 0 = no one or only one person acting (thus, no collective action), 1 = two or more persons acting but less than 25 percent, 2 = 25 to 49 percent, 3 = 50 to 74 percent, 4 = 75 to 99 percent, and 5 = 100 percent participation.

Although we had multiple observers in some observation areas, the data and analysis discussed here are based on just one coder per observation area.[9] The rally site contained 15 observation areas that covered the entire rally site. The march had 6 observation areas along the route, 3 each on the north and south sides of the street. March observers were responsible for the one half the street through which the demonstrators processed as well as the adjoining sidewalk. The area in front of the Supreme Court was divided into 9 areas. Across these 30 areas, the number of sampled observer records per area ranged from 6 to 12, with a mean of 7.7. The total number of sampled observer records was 232. Of these 232 observations, demonstrators were visible in 219 (94.4 percent) of them. Our discussion here focuses on these demonstrators.[10]

FREQUENCY OF ELEMENTARY FORMS (PROBLEM 1)

In this section, we discuss the frequency of the elementary forms of collective action performed by demonstrators during the 1995 March for Life. Our data provide two units of analysis for investigating this. First, we can examine the percentage of observation records in which an observer reported the presence of an elementary form of collective action performed by demonstrators. Second, we can look at the average proportion of demonstrators who were performing each of the actions.

Table 1 shows the percentage of observer records in which an elementary form is reported. The first three columns show this percentage for each of the three demonstration gatherings—the rally at the Ellipse, the march along Constitution Avenue, and the march destination site at the Supreme Court. The fourth column is the mean of the first three columns. These numbers represent the odds of observing a

TABLE 1: Observed Frequency of Collective Actions: Percentage of Observer Records on Which Each Elementary Form Appears

Collective Actions	*Rally*	*March*	*Destination*	*Mean*
Facing				
Same—*f* monitoring	86.4	34.6	49.1	56.7
Queuing	5.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
Same—*f* inclusive locomotion	7.9	80.8	34.0	40.9
Disparate pedestrian clusters	40.0	30.8	58.5	43.1
Stationary clusters	61.4	23.1	73.6	52.7
Arcs	9.3	0.0	17.0	8.8
Rings	7.9	0.0	18.9	8.9
Other facing	1.4	3.9	0.0	1.8
Voicing				
Cheering	30.7	3.9	11.3	15.3
Booing	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.2
Ooh/ohh/ahhing	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.7
Other vocalizing	4.3	3.9	1.9	3.3
Chanting	2.1	34.6	34.0	23.6
Singing	5.7	15.4	9.4	10.2
Shouting	0.7	0.0	13.2	4.6
Praying	0.0	3.9	24.5	9.5
Pledging/reciting	0.0	0.0	11.3	3.8
Conversing	61.4	65.4	56.6	61.1
Speech making	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Manipulating				
Gesturing	2.1	0.0	1.9	1.3
Placarding/bannering	97.9	84.6	75.5	86.0
Other carrying/lifting objects	12.1	7.7	5.7	8.5
Leafleting	12.1	11.5	5.7	9.8
Exchanging	2.9	0.0	0.0	1.0
Other passing objects	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Striking objects	0.0	3.9	5.7	3.2
Throwing objects	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other manipulating objects	2.9	7.7	1.9	4.1
Embracing/clasping person	7.1	15.4	13.2	11.9
Restraining person	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Carrying/dragging person	12.1	7.7	1.9	7.2
Striking person	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other manipulating person	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Clapping	22.9	0.0	1.9	8.3
Snapping	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other manipulating self	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Locomotion/body position				
Standing/upright	94.3	61.5	86.8	80.9
Sitting/seated	27.1	30.8	26.4	28.1
Kneeling/knelt	1.4	0.0	5.7	2.4
Lying/prone	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.5

TABLE 1 Continued

Collective Actions	*Rally*	*March*	*Destination*	*Mean*
Locomotion/body position				
Other vertical	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.2
Walking	66.4	96.2	83.0	81.9
Marching	0.0	0.0	11.3	3.8
Jogging/running	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other horizontal	1.4	3.9	0.0	1.8
Clothing in common	11.4	7.7	11.3	10.1
Number of observer records	140	26	53	

particular type of collective action during a random minute in the gathering. We call this measure the observed frequency of a collective action.

Table 2 is the average proportion of demonstrators visible to the observer participating in each form of collective action during the observation periods. These numbers are on a scale from 0 (*no collective action*) to 5 (*unanimous collective action*). The denominator used to calculate each of these proportions is the number of observer records reporting the presence of the particular type of collective action. Therefore, the actual range of these proportions is from 1 to 5. Since the coders estimated ranges of proportions instead of exact proportions, there is no way of translating the numbers into exact percentages. We call this measure the participation proportion of a collective action.

Table 1 demonstrates that there was wide variation in the observed frequency of elementary forms of collective action during the 1995 March for Life. This discussion will focus on the most prevalent forms, but we begin by noting that none of our observers reported any collective incidence of 6 of the possible 36 elementary forms of collective action or of 3 of the 9 "other" categories.[11] Another 6 forms and 3 "other" categories were reported in fewer than 2 percent of observers' records. Of the remaining 27 forms, only 13 were reported on more than 10 percent of the observers' records. These 13 are discussed in detail below.

TABLE 2: Average Proportion of Demonstrators Participating in Collective Actions

Collective Actions	*Rally*	*March*	*Destination*	*Mean*
Facing				
Same—*f* monitoring	3.62	1.56	2.23	2.47
Queuing	1.00	—	—	1.00
Same—*f* inclusive locomotion	3.73	4.19	3.61	3.84
Disparate pedestrian clusters	1.43	1.50	1.71	1.55
Stationary clusters	1.62	1.33	1.95	1.63
Arcs	1.38	—	1.11	1.25
Rings	1.00	—	1.10	1.05
Other facing	2.00	1.00	—	1.50
Voicing				
Cheering	2.30	1.00	1.33	1.54
Booing	1.00	—	—	1.00
Ooh/ohh/ahhing	1.00	—	—	1.00
Other vocalizing	1.17	1.00	1.00	1.06
Chanting	2.00	1.78	2.06	1.95
Singing	2.25	1.75	1.20	1.73
Shouting	1.00	—	1.71	2.36
Praying	—	3.00	1.33	2.17
Pledging/reciting	—	—	1.50	1.50
Conversing	2.22	1.82	2.17	2.07
Speech making	—	—	—	—
Manipulating				
Gesturing	1.00	—	1.00	1.00
Placarding/bannering	2.57	2.91	2.08	2.52
Other carrying/lifting objects	1.12	1.00	1.00	1.04
Leafleting	1.06	1.00	1.00	1.02
Exchanging	1.00	—	—	1.00
Other passing objects	—	—	—	—
Striking objects	—	1.00	1.00	1.00
Throwing objects	—	—	—	—
Other manipulating objects	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Embracing/clasping person	1.00	1.50	1.14	1.21
Restraining person	—	—	—	—
Carrying/dragging person	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Striking person	—	—	—	—
Other manipulating person	—	—	—	—
Clapping	2.19	—	1.00	1.06
Snapping	—	—	—	—
Other manipulating self	—	—	—	—
Body position/locomotion				
Standing/upright	3.98	2.56	3.15	3.23
Sitting/seated	1.13	1.00	1.29	1.14
Kneel/knelt	1.00	—	1.67	1.34
Lying/prone	1.50	—	—	1.50

TABLE 2 Continued

Collective Actions	*Rally*	*March*	*Destination*	*Mean*
Body position/locomotion				
Other vertical locomotion	1.00	—	—	1.00
Walking	1.67	4.24	2.73	2.88
Marching	—	—	2.33	2.33
Jogging/running	—	—	—	—
Other horizontal locomotion	1.00	1.00	—	1.00
Clothing in common	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

NOTE: 1 = ≥ two actors but < 25 percent; 2 = 25 to 49 percent; 3 = 50 to 74 percent; 4 = 75 to 99 percent; 5 = 100 percent.

The second measure, participation proportion, clearly supports Turner's (1964) claim that unanimity is an illusion. Only nine of the forms have an average participation proportion over 2.00, which indicates that at least 25 percent of people in the observer's area were engaging in the activity. These were inclusive collective locomotion (3.84), standing (3.23), walking (2.88), placarding/bannering (2.52), monitoring (2.47), shouting (2.36), marching (2.33), praying (2.17), and conversation (2.07).

The most frequent collective action reported overall was placarding/bannering. While this peaked during the rally (reported in 97.9 percent of records), it diminished only slightly during the march and at the destination of that march. When placarding did occur, it had the fourth highest participation proportion (2.52) of any collective action. Participation in this form was promoted by the organized distribution of commercially printed placards.[12] It is a testament to this organizing tactic that this form was observed on more records than standing or walking.

The second and third most frequent forms of collective action were walking (81.9 percent) and standing (80.9 percent). Standing (3.23) and walking (2.88) also have the second and third highest participation proportions. Not surprisingly, standing was more common at the rally and walking at the march, while the forms had similar frequency levels at the destination. Standing had the highest participation proportion (3.98) at the rally, and walking was the highest (4.24) at the

march. These findings are among the most obvious but are important nonetheless since they represent any demonstration organizer's two largest achievements. An organizer's task is to bring people together to perform sequences of collective action, and among the most dramatic of these sequences are the assembling of people's standing bodies at rallies and the organization of people walking together during processions or marches. The display of large numbers in collective action is one of the most dramatic ways of providing evidence to outsiders and decision makers alike of the strength and solidarity of the organizers' and participants' common cause.

Related to these two impressive sequences of collective action are the fifth and eighth most frequently observed forms: facing in the same direction as a function of monitoring (56.7 percent) and facing in the same direction as a function of inclusive collective locomotion (40.9 percent). Monitoring reached its peak (86.4 percent) at the rally when demonstrators were standing and facing in the direction of the platform from which they were addressed by a series of rally speakers.[13] This dropped dramatically during the march, where some demonstrators stood along the route faced in the direction of the procession in the street. Monitoring then increased slightly at the destination site. Overall, monitoring had the fifth highest participation proportion (2.47). Inclusive collective locomotion was not frequently observed during the rally; however, it increased dramatically at the march, during which a majority of demonstrators were participating.[14] In fact, the only two forms to reach a participation proportion over 4.0 at one site were inclusive locomotion (4.19) and walking (4.24) at the march. Inclusive collective locomotion also had the highest overall participation proportion (3.84).[15] Inclusive locomotion remained comparatively frequent at the destination (34.0 percent) because many of the demonstrators continued their march into and through the destination area before dispersing.

The fourth most frequent form of collective action reported by our observers was collective or interactive voicing in the form of conversations (61.1 percent), which remained at roughly the same level during each of the demonstration gatherings. We know from other research (McPhail 1994) that pedestrian and standing clusters typically involve from two to five or six persons. Thus, note here that the

sixth and seventh most frequent forms of collective action overall reported by our observers involved stationary clusters (52.7 percent) and pedestrian clusters (43.1 percent). Other research on sport (McPhail and Miller 1973; Aveni 1977) and religious (Clelland et al. 1974) gatherings suggests that these are companion clusters of two to five members who assemble together, remain together throughout the duration of the gathering, and then disperse together. They alternate between participating in more inclusive forms of collective action (e.g., monitoring, chanting, cheering, singing, praying, clapping), acting alone, and interacting with their companions (e.g., engaging in conversation). These companion clusters are the most common and, in our judgment, the smallest but most fundamental units of social organization in all temporary gatherings. While our observers report that clusters were very much in evidence during the rally as well as at the destination site, they diminished in visibility during the march itself when a large proportion of the demonstrators were proceeding shoulder to shoulder; clusters, if observed and reported during this phase of the protest event, were likely to have been among the demonstrators standing along the march route.

Under the heading of voicing, note that chanting, the 10th most frequently observed category (23.6 percent), is virtually absent during the rally but is reported on more than a third of the records at the march and destination. Conversely, under the heading of manipulation, clapping (8.3 percent overall) is common during the rally (22.9 percent) but dropped at the march and destination. Four other categories had a mean frequency of more than 10 percent. Sitting (28.1 percent), the 9th most frequent collective action, remains near the same level throughout the demonstration. Cheering (15.3 percent overall) was highest at the rally (30.7 percent), where demonstrators cheered speakers' comments. Embracing/clasping (11.9 percent), which includes hugging and holding hands, was reported at all three gatherings, while singing (10.2 percent) was most frequent during the march.

Several other manipulation categories also warrant comment. Carrying/dragging a person (7.2 percent) is reported with comparable frequencies at the rally and march sites and typically indicated adults lifting and carrying infants and children. Carrying/lifting other objects (8.5 percent) refers to any inanimate object other than a placard or

banner. The most frequently carried object reported by our observers was some piece of audiovisual equipment (e.g., camera, video camera, microphone). Leafleting (9.8 percent) was frequently reported at the rally site and along the route of the march.

VARIATION IN GATHERINGS (PROBLEM 2)

Although Turner's (1964) discussion of "the illusion of unanimity" is more than three decades old, there has been no attempt to systematically assess the extent of variation within gatherings. The data collected at the March for Life provided a opportunity to do this. We offer here a preliminary discussion of one type of variation. Tables 3, 4, and 5 each illustrate variation of one type of collective action across space and time at the rally. Each table shows a modified version of participation proportion. The denominator in these proportions is the total number of observer records that indicate the presence of demonstrators. Therefore, the range is from 0 (*no collective action*) to 5 (*unanimous participation*) instead of from 1 to 5. These proportions represent collective action performed by demonstrators during the first two hours of the March for Life rally. Each table demonstrates a pattern of variation of one elementary form over space and time. The collective action is shown by depth in the gathering (i.e., front, middle, and back of the gathering as a function of distance from the stage), centrality (i.e., center, margins, and fringes of the gathering as a function of lateral position in the gathering),[16] and lapsed time across the duration of the gathering. The time variable is broken into four half-hour segments, each consisting of two samples 15 minutes apart. The 36 numbers in each table are averages of coders' judgments of the proportion of actors participating in the elementary form.

Table 3 examines facing in the same direction as a function of monitoring. It describes people whose lines of sight are approximately parallel.[17] Throughout the gathering, the incidence of this form increased from the first half hour (mean = 1.27) to the second half hour (3.37), when the rally program began, with a slight increase to the third and fourth half hours (3.87). The proportion of people with same facing was much higher in the front and middle of the gathering (mean = 3.38) than at the back (2.53). Centrality in the gathering had no significant effect on this elementary form.

TABLE 3: Facing Same Direction as a Function of Monitoring by Location and Time

	Centrality			
Depth[a]	*Center*	*Margins*	*Fringes*	*Time*[a]
Front	1.50	2.75	0.00	First half hour
	4.00	4.50	3.75	Second half hour
	4.00	4.00	4.00	Third half hour
	4.00	4.00	4.00	Fourth half hour
Middle	1.00	2.00	2.00	First half hour
	2.00	4.25	2.75	Second half hour
	4.00	4.50	4.00	Third half hour
	4.00	4.75	4.00	Fourth half hour
Back	0.50	0.75	0.50	First half hour
	2.50	2.75	3.00	Second half hour
	3.50	2.75	4.00	Third half hour
	3.00	2.75	4.00	Fourth half hour

Overall mean = 3.09
Depth means: front = 3.38; middle = 3.38; back = 2.53
Centrality means: center = 2.83; margins = 3.31; fringes = 3.00
Time means: first half hour = 1.27; second half hour = 3.37; third half hour = 3.87; fourth half hour = 3.87

NOTE: 0 = none or one actor; 1 = ≥ two actors but < 25 percent; 2 = 25 to 49 percent; 3 = 50 to 74 percent; 4 = 75 to 99 percent; 5 = 100 percent.
a. Independent variable is significant at the .001 level.

Participation in conversations (see Table 4) presents a much different pattern, although again depth and time yield significant statistical effects, while centrality does not. Conversations were most prevalent in the first half hour (2.47), which corresponds to the final moments of the assembling phase prior to the start of the rally. Conversations dropped sharply during the second half hour (1.53) and continued declining through the third (0.97) and fourth (0.83) half-hour periods. However, conversations were more prevalent in the back (2.17) and middle (1.60) of the gathering than in the front (0.57). And while the gathering as a whole saw a drop in conversations each half hour, the center back saw a rise during the second hour.

Placarding/bannering (see Table 5) has a different pattern of collective action. This elementary form was quite common throughout the gathering, with little variation by time or depth. However, the center of the gathering had a higher participation proportion (3.46) than the margins (2.21) or fringes (2.31).

TABLE 4: Conversation by Location and Time

	Centrality			
Depth[a]	*Center*	*Margins*	*Fringes*	*Time*[a]
Front	4.00	0.50	3.00	First half hour
	0.50	0.00	0.00	Second half hour
	0.00	0.00	0.00	Third half hour
	0.00	0.00	0.00	Fourth half hour
Middle	3.00	2.50	2.75	First half hour
	4.00	1.25	2.50	Second half hour
	1.00	0.50	1.25	Third half hour
	1.50	0.00	0.50	Fourth half hour
Back	2.50	2.75	2.25	First half hour
	0.50	3.50	1.75	Second half hour
	1.00	2.75	1.75	Third half hour
	2.50	2.00	1.75	Fourth half hour

Overall mean = 1.45
Depth means: front = 0.57; middle = 1.60; back = 2.17
Centrality means: center = 1.71; margins = 1.31; fringes = 1.46
Time means: first half hour = 2.47; second half hour = 1.53; third half hour = 0.97; fourth half hour = 0.83

NOTE: 0 = none or one actor; 1 = ≥ two actors but < 25 percent; 2 = 25 to 49 percent; 3 = 50 to 74 percent; 4 = 75 to 99 percent; 5 = 100 percent.
a. Independent variable is significant at the .001 level.

These tables demonstrate one type of variation—the variation of collective action across space and time. However, our data also allow investigation of the variation of collective action by actor category, variation of collective action by density, variation of types of actors across space and time, and variation of some forms (e.g., types of voicing) across other forms (e.g., types of facing). These analyses will be presented in subsequent reports.

LARGE VERSUS SMALL GATHERINGS (PROBLEM 3)

A remaining problem with media bias is that demonstrations most often reported in the media are atypically large. Our method will allow us to investigate systematically the differences between large and small demonstrations. It will be much simpler to investigate smaller demonstrations than large ones since fewer coders will be needed. However, the data will be in the same format and can easily be compared to that from large demonstrations.

TABLE 5: Placarding/Bannering by Location and Time

Depth	*Centrality*[a]			*Time*
	Center	*Not-So-Center*	*Fringes*	
Front	2.50	2.00	2.50	First half hour
	3.50	1.75	2.50	Second half hour
	3.50	1.75	2.50	Third half hour
	2.50	2.00	2.00	Fourth half hour
Middle	3.50	2.25	3.25	First half hour
	3.50	2.25	3.00	Second half hour
	3.50	1.75	2.75	Third half hour
	4.00	2.00	1.25	Fourth half hour
Back	3.00	1.75	2.25	First half hour
	4.00	3.00	2.50	Second half hour
	4.00	3.00	1.25	Third half hour
	4.00	3.00	2.00	Fourth half hour

Overall mean = 2.50
Depth means: front = 2.30; middle = 2.58; back = 2.62
Centrality means: center = 3.46; margins = 2.21; fringes = 2.31
Time means: first half hour = 2.47; second half hour = 2.73; third half hour = 2.47; fourth half hour = 2.33

NOTE: 0 = none or one actor; 1 = ≥ two actors but < 25 percent; 2 = 25 to 49 percent; 3 = 50 to 74 percent; 4 = 75 to 99 percent; 5 = 100 percent.
a. Independent variable is significant at the .001 level.

MEDIA RECORDS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

So far, this article has reported on the use of our method to code demonstrations on-site. However, it is also readily adaptable for coding video records of demonstrations. In this section, we present some preliminary data from coded video records that address Problem 4, regarding description bias in media reports of demonstrations. Then we discuss how this method can be used to address Problem 5 (how can television news reports of demonstrations be made a fruitful avenue for research on demonstrations?).

DESCRIPTION BIAS IN MEDIA REPORTS (PROBLEM 4)

After gathering data on-site at the 1995 March for Life, we used our method to code all network news stories about abortion-related demonstrations during the weekend of the demonstration. All three networks ran March for Life stories on January 23, 1995, the day the

march was held. In addition, CBS and NBC ran stories on January 22, the actual anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Rather than time sample, we coded all collective action visible during the reports. We used one code sheet per shot. Then we compared what was shown on the television news to what our observers saw on-site. We also examined the audio tracks of these stories.

Here we report three key findings. First, a small proportion of the coverage was devoted to showing or describing collective action in the March for Life protest event. These stories combined consisted of 57 shots and totaled just over 5 minutes. However, only 34 seconds (9 shots) concerned the March for Life.[18] Second, those elementary forms that were visible or described on the television news were also recorded by our observers on-site. Third, those forms that we found most prevalent at the demonstration were reported by the media.[19] From the 4 shots in CBS's story, three elementary forms are visible, but they are the three forms—inclusive locomotion, walking, and placard/bannering—that were engaged in by the highest proportions of demonstrators during the march. The NBC shots show the same three forms, but others—gesturing and carrying other things (crucifix and bouquet)—are also visible. ABC's shot shows the same three major forms as well as chanting. All of these forms were coded by our observers on-site.

In addition to our investigation of network news, we examined coverage of the March for Life by C-SPAN, which devoted far more time to the event than any of the networks. While the networks' visuals were entirely of the march portion of the demonstration, C-SPAN, a public affairs channel, focused on the speeches in its 1-hour, 22-minute-long coverage of the rally. For a majority of the coverage, the only individuals visible were on the stage. But the audience was visible for approximately 11.5 minutes, much more time than on all of the networks combined. As with network news coverage, those elementary forms that were visible were coded by our observers, and those forms that we found most prevalent at the demonstration—in this case, the rally—were shown on C-SPAN. In addition to the obvious collective facing actions (same facing as a function of monitoring, clusters) and collective body position actions (standing, walking), demonstrators can be seen carrying placards, banners, and crosses and can be heard cheering, chanting, and clapping.

Further comparisons between television news reports and on-site records are needed before we can make any general statements about description bias, but our method provides a way of making these comparisons in a straightforward way.

DEMONSTRATION DATA FROM TELEVISION NEWS REPORTS (PROBLEM 5)

The final problem we address in this article is how to make television news reports of demonstrations a fruitful avenue for research on demonstrations, as newspaper reports have been. Our preliminary investigation of the 1995 March for Life suggests that data collected from television news reports can provide some useful information, even if it is nowhere near as comprehensive as that collected on-site. We are currently using our method to code Washington, D.C., demonstrations from 1973, 1982, and 1991 using records of nightly network news telecasts from the Vanderbilt Television News Archives. This use of our method is clearly not a substitute for on-site observation since television news accounts of demonstrations, like the newspaper accounts used so widely by scholars, are colored by both selection and description bias. However, if we can establish the nature of this bias—as we are attempting to—these accounts can become as valuable in the future as newspaper accounts have proven to be in the past. Coding video records is cheaper and quicker than coding on-site. Moreover, a wide range of demonstrations are available for analysis from several archives for examination and analysis by students of collective action. These data can be used to make comparisons across time and different types of demonstrations.

We note in passing another possible use we can make of video records with our method. Instead of human observers making records on-site, an array of video cameras could be stationed throughout a demonstration gathering. Each camera would provide a continuous record of one location in the gathering. Each record could then be coded to create a set of data that would be far more detailed than the set that we have analyzed here and the sets we could produce from television news records. These data would also be free of the description bias inherent in network news reports.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Over the past three decades, students of collective action have moved from ivory tower speculation on "the crowd" to extensive research on collective action in political demonstrations and other temporary gatherings. We have identified two major approaches to this research. The microapproach has consisted of extensive fieldwork to identify the types of collective action that people perform in gatherings. The macroapproach, most frequently known as protest event analysis, has consisted of archival research of newspaper reports and other chronicles of collective action by observers who are presumed to have witnessed the phenomena they reported. Both these approaches have resulted in important contributions to our understanding of collective action. However, we have argued in this article that a new method is required to address five problems raised by these two approaches, and we have given a detailed description of this method. We have presented data gathered with this method at the 1995 March for Life that address three of the problems we raised and have explained how our method can be used to address the other two.

First, we provided data to show which types of collective action were most frequent in a large gathering. Our method allowed a systematic recording of the forms of collective action found in the gathering and enabled a thorough description of the variation in the observed frequency of these forms and the proportion of the individuals in the gathering participating in these forms.

Second, we presented data that provide substantial empirical evidence for what Turner (1964) referred to as "the illusion of unanimity" in collective action across space and time. Because the data were gathered by multiple observers at uniform times, they can be used to show how the proportion of people participating in each form of collective action varies in the gathering by space and time. We demonstrated this with three common forms of collective action.

Third, we explained our plans to use this method to investigate small gatherings and make comparisons between these small gatherings and the large ones we have already investigated. Since the taxonomy from which our method was devised was developed from observing and recording hundreds of smaller political demonstration gatherings, we believe that using the method to study these gatherings

and making comparisons with larger gatherings will be straightforward. These comparisons are important because while small gatherings are more frequent, large ones are more likely to be reported in the media accounts that are used in protest event analysis.

Fourth, we have made a comparison between what our observers recorded at a large gathering and what television news accounts reported. We found that the television news accounts are superficial in their portrayal of collective action in comparison to data collected by our observers on-site. However, those elementary forms that were visible or described on the television news were also recorded by our observers on-site, and those forms that we found most prevalent at the demonstration were reported in the television news accounts. Further comparisons of the type we have presented here will make possible a systematic analysis of description bias in media accounts.

Fifth, we briefly explained the next step of this project, using our method to code television news accounts of demonstrations from 1973, 1982, and 1991. This will allow the study of many more demonstrations than can be observed on-site. This use of our method cannot provide data as rich as that presented here, but it does provide a way to make television news reports a valuable source of information about demonstrations.

There are additional issues in the study of collective action and social movements for which our method may have significant implications. Sociologists and political scientists often have been guilty of adopting or developing explanations for collective action and collective action events based on commonsense knowledge of the phenomena to be explained instead of first developing firsthand familiarity with those phenomena. This is not to suggest that all students of collective action or protest events should be working at a microlevel of analysis and limiting their research to the method of direct observation and recording that we have described here. It is to suggest that their explanations of protest waves, campaigns, and events must be built on empirical findings of gatherings and the individual and collective behavior sequences of which they consist. We see our empirical contribution at the microlevel of analysis as a potential contribution to those working at more macrolevels. Finally, we hope this method can provide the observations necessary for the development of a well-thought-out multilevel analytical scheme such as Blumer

(1957) claimed was required for even more incisive observations. Perhaps the method we have offered here is one step toward the resolution of Blumer's paradox.

NOTES

1. The exception to this generalization was Lang and Lang's (1953) pathbreaking comparison of on-site observers' records of crowd reactions to General Douglas MacArthur's parade through the streets of Chicago with simultaneous records by observers viewing live television coverage of crowd reactions to that parade.

2. Unlike this study's concerns with variations in collective actions within gatherings, Tilly's project of some three decades has been concerned with "a series of collective actions; a set of social structures within which the actions take place; [and] a political process linking the one to the other" (Tilly et al. 1975:313). Tilly and his colleagues have examined strikes in France (Shorter and Tilly 1974); collective action in France, Italy, and Germany (Tilly et al. 1975); and contentious gatherings in Great Britain (Tilly 1978, 1995) and in colonial America (Tilly 1979). In each segment of the project, quantitative records have been generated by systematic coding of government archival records of social, economic, and demographic structures and of newspaper archives and other chronicles for descriptions of types of gatherings, issues, acting units, and categories of actions by those units. Tilly's efforts to become familiar with the phenomena to be explained are without precedent or parallel among past or present students of campaigns, waves, and cycles of collective action.

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

4. Tilly (1994:7) defines a social movement as "a sustained challenge to powerholders in the name of a population living under jurisdiction of those powerholders by means of repeated public displays of that population's numbers, commitment, unity, and worthiness."

5. The *carrying audiovisual equipment* form was added to the code sheet after the March for Life because it was the most common "other" object being carried.

6. The action verbs identified by Tilly (1995) in his study of contentious gatherings in Great Britain between 1758 and 1834 include actions we would code as voicing (cheer, communicate, decry, deliberate, negotiate, request, resolve, support), manipulating (attack, fight, petition, resist), locomotion/body position (move), and facing (chair). Tilly's concerns are changes in the frequency with which various action verbs appear in chronicles of "early roughstreet politics" prevalent in the middle of the eighteenth century and those that characterized the orderly public meetings and electoral assemblies that prevailed near the end of the first third of the nineteenth century. He reports that the verb *chair* is associated with meetings and electoral assemblies from which we infer that some person is in charge (is chairing the gathering) and/or is positioned in a location (occupies the chair) to which the majority of the gathering is facing or to whom they are giving attention. Consistent with other trends in the changing form of contentious gatherings between 1758 and 1834, a chair was absent and meetings were infrequent between 1758 and 1811. Deliberately called meetings were prevalent between 1828 and 1834, as was a chair.

7. In the third edition of the *Collective Action Observation Primer* (McPhail et al. 1997), used for the Promise Keepers assembly, the text describing all of the elementary forms (voicing forms excepted) was accompanied by photographs of an exemplary illustration of the form.

8. The annual March for Life began in 1974, one year following the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion. This rally and march has occurred each year since its inception and thus constitutes the longest running periodic demonstration event in Washington, D.C., history.

9. We do not have available true intercoder reliability correlations because the coders observing the same area did not stand in the same place. We asked them to position themselves in opposite sides of their area. The data presented in this section are from the primary coder (the one with the lowest coder ID number). There were 13 pairs of coders who were in the same area at one of the three sites. The correlations between these matched-up coders varied by elementary form. For the most prevalent forms, correlations include inclusive collective locomotion (0.74), onlooking (0.57), stationary clusters (0.50), and conversing (0.33). The relatively low correlations for some forms suggest that there were large variations within sampling areas. During the Promise Keepers assembly, we had pairs of coders observe and code standing next to one another to generate true intercoder reliability ratings.

10. Other actors visible were police (visible during 55 observations, or 23.7 percent of all observations), media (46, or 19.8 percent), onlookers/passersby (27, or 11.6 percent), and counterdemonstrators (8, or 3.4 percent).

11. The observers reported no instance of collective speech making, throwing objects, striking persons, restraining persons, snapping (fingers), or jogging/running, nor did they report other manipulating persons, other passing objects, or other manipulating self. They also reported no instances of individual or collective violence against persons or property.

12. These placards expressed statements of opposition to abortion or images of aborted fetuses. Others were handmade and expressed a variety of anti-abortion and pro-life sentiments. Banners identified their bearers as members of delegations from pro-life chapters, parochial schools, and churches in various eastern U.S. cities.

13. These included event organizers, some clergy, and many newly elected Republican congressional representatives who vowed to vote pro-life throughout their tenure in Congress.

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

15. This is due largely to the definition of *inclusive collective locomotion*, which required more than half of the demonstrators in the area to be moving the same direction. Less inclusive locomotion was coded as disparate pedestrian clusters.

16. The front corresponds to the area labeled *A* in Figure 10, the middle corresponds to *B*, and the back corresponds to *C*. The center corresponds to 3, the margins correspond to 2 and 4, and the fringes correspond to 1 and 5.

17. Actually, when the gathering is viewed from aerial photographs, the participants' lines of orientation are not parallel but slightly convergent, thus forming an arc. But the observers used the onlooking code because, from their perspective, the lines of sight appeared parallel.

18. Seven smaller abortion-related demonstrations merited more combined coverage (1:30, 24 shots) than the March for Life. These included a pro-life vigil that hoped to confront President Clinton in front of a church he often attended and two demonstrations by the American Coalition of Life Activists, a group linked by ABC to the idea that "killing of abortion doctors [was] justifiable homicide."

19. Each of these three findings also held for our examination of newspaper coverage of the March for Life.

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David Schweingruber is a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. His research on Washington, D.C., First Amendment gatherings includes systematic observations of contemporary demonstrations, archival research on historical demonstrations, and analysis of demonstration media coverage. His chapter on the development of the U.S. public order management system (coauthored with Clark McPhail and John McCarthy) recently appeared in Policing Protest *(1998, edited by Donatella della Porta and Herbert Reiter). He is currently completing a dissertation on the training and organization of door-to-door salespersons.*

Clark McPhail is a professor of sociology at the University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign and is the author of The Myth of the Madding Crowd *(1991, Aldine) and numerous articles on collective action. His current projects include completing* Acting Together, *a sequel to* Myth*; extending the observation and recording method for coding videotape records of police-protester collective action and interaction in London, where he will be a Fulbright senior research fellow for 1998-1999; and, with John McCarthy, developing a survey of U.S. police agencies' protest policing frequency, training, and organization.*