THE IMPACT OF THE MEDIA ON SOCIAL
MOVEMENT STRATEGIES AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

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THESIS

THE IMPACT OF THE MEDIA ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT

STRATEGIES AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

By

Carpenter
Diane Kay^Emling

AN ABSTRACT TO A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

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An examination of how media coverage influences
social movements. First, questions are addressed as to
the reasons for apparent media bias in news coverage.
Then the relationship between media coverage and social
movement strategy is analyzed. Finally, the impact of
publicity on the role of leadership within social move-
ments is discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

> The Movement did not choose us to be its symbols;
> the press and the government did.[1]
>
> --Tom Hayden, of the "Chicago Eight"

> Television and I have been going steady for more
> than nine years.[2]
>
> --Vice President Gerald R. Ford

". . . television is the single most potent force in American public live."[3] If this is true, what could be said of the combined impact of television, radio, and the many forms of printed communication that come our way each day? Certainly their impact is awesome; many key people in our society (especially politicians) have tried to identify what that impact is. However, for all the conjecture, very little has come in the way of achieving a clearer understanding of how the media derive and use their power, and what the consequences are for social movements and other change-oriented groups wishing to be involved in the news-making process. It is such an understanding--of how the media have influenced the strategy and leadership of social movement--that I wish to work toward here.

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It is my contention that through the ability to create forceful visual images, the media influence both our perceptions as individuals and our national consciousness. In addition, the dynamics involved in reporting an event to the public may in a real sense change the character of that event. (Examples of this phenomenon will follow.) This being so, it seems fundamental to a sociological understanding of contemporary society to examine mass communication carefully and expand our awareness of its workings. In particular, I am interested in how the media (especially television news, but also the newspapers) have affected the social movements of the 1960's, and how publicity has influenced the nature of leadership within the movement. In short, I believe full understanding of contemporary society requires examining how the media have influenced our view of society, and how, by their very presence, the media have affected the course of events.

Finally, as I worked on this project, I became increasingly convinced of the importance of this subject. For a topic with such crucial impact on society, it is surprising that virtually no systematic research has been done. While this lack of data or theorizing on the subject has been a major source of frustration for me in doing this research, it has impressed me with the importance of beginning to pull together the diverse, yet related, fields where this literature can be found. In terms of academic

sources, I have examined both the disciplines of sociology and journalism. However, I found some of my most valuable sources to be out of these areas completely; in selected articles in the underground press, and writings of those involved in the social movements being examined. Social movements, especially those much in the public eye, have had to cope with the presence of the media; for that reason the insights of movement activists have been a helpful source of ideas.

I hope to bring from these diverse sources some information which will help draw a clearer picture of the relationship between the media and social movements and their leaders. However, this is still a very new field, and there are many questions yet to be examined. I see it as one of my major tasks to outline some of these as well.

Establishing the Media's Influence

Before continuing, I think it important to clarify exactly what I conceive this "power of the media" to be. For the most part, the ability to influence our perceptions does not seem to have been consciously sought and manipulated by the networks. Rather, the influence seems to lie in the nature of the media themselves. First, the media of necessity deal with images. While radio and newspapers rely on verbal images, the influence is particularly acute with television, which depends upon visual images.

All that we may know about an event of global importance
may be the picture we see flashed on the television screen
and the 60-second script describing it. This involves a
tremendous power over how an event will be thought of.
By concentrating on image rather than factual detail,
the media shape how the public views history as it is made.
The image will remain long after the 'facts' are duly
recorded. Irving Lang has elaborated on the aspect of
image creation ("leaving an impression"):

> What television news delivers best is impression.
> A minute of film showing bombers destroying a bridge
> and a flyer emerging from an air-sea rescue heli-
> copter, when combined with a few facts about yester-
> days raids and losses, will leave the viewer with
> more than he would retain if the newscaster read a
> long Associated Press dispatch.[4]

Closely linked to the ability to create simple
images of events, no matter how complex, is the power to
define what the public issues will be. Was the Vietnam
War a struggle to preserve the self-determination of a
valiant people who were being savagely overrun? Was it a
civil war, both political and religious, to be solved
internally? Was it a war of imperialism? The media had
access to sources advocating all these and many more defini-
tions of the conflict. The power of the press lies in
determining which of these definitions will receive coverage
and what the tone of that coverage will be. The media grant
legitimacy or deny it; they may expose a divergent defini-
tion, or ignore it. How the media define an issue (including
through images created) holds considerable sway over the

definitions of the public. Tom Hayden has pointed out the differing definitions of the issues in the 1968 Chicago demonstrations:

> The main point is that the Chicago conflict could not be simplified, as it was in the press, to one of free speech versus respect for the law. By defining the question as one of free speech, many of our supporters were making a major liberal mistake. They opened themselves up to a common-sense conservative criticism: free speech is all right, but not obscene epithets shouted at police. Liberal sympathizers were being forced, in effect, to defend our right to shout "Fire!" in a crowded theater. In reality, the government, not the radical left, has become a 'clear and present danger' to our common security. In this situation radical action has to be defended, not on the basis of civil liberties, but on the basis of the principles embodied in the Delcaration of Independence.[5]

Finally, the media have the power to judge the value of a story. Since there are often at least two views of the significance of an event, and a limited time for broadcast news, editorial decisions (what to cover, what not to cover, what segment of an event is most "newsworthy") represent a tremendous source of influence. Indeed, by defining what is newsworthy, the media are simultaneously guaranteeing what the public definition of an event will be. While this judgment is somewhat tempered by the need to remain competitive with others in the market, there is no doubt that the decision to cut or keep a story, to send a reporter or not, has important implications for all of us. Robert Kintner, president of NBC, has commented about the problems involved in determining what is newsworthy:

> An organization without any real membership could picket a political convention and stand a chance of putting itself, at least briefly, before a huge

public. Network news division must rely on the
editorial judgement of experienced people . . .
(who decide) whether the real news value lies in
the interesting characters demonstrating outside
the doors or in the speech somebody is making
inside.[6]

Thus, the power of the media as I see it comes from

three major sources: creating images for individual viewers,

creating public definitions of issues and events, and deter-

mining what is newsworthy. I contend that the presence

of this force in society has changed our culture within the

past few decades, and has within the last few years changed

the approach of those involved in social movements. Murray

Kempton maintains:

There is no way in the world, I'm afraid, left in
this country to make any impact except by getting
on the television camera. This has led Stokely
Carmichael to rather mechanical formulations fit
for two minutes of television. It leads us all
that way, and to a certain extent all our politics
now is in terms of playing at dramas of one kind
or another . . . But I'm beginning to wonder
really whether or not a watched revolution will
ever boil.[7]

The intent of this research is to examine the rela-

tionship of the media to social movements and movement

leaders. I hope to shed light on 1) the internal workings

of the profession of journalism which may have effect on

shaping news coverage; 2) the peculiar needs of social

movements and the media and how these play into each other;

also, alternatives which movements have developed for deal-

ing with the media; and 3) the position of movement leaders

vis à vis the media, the dynamics of that relationship,

and how leaders have dealt with it. Along the way, I will

point out important questions needing further research, and raise questions about the work already done.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I began researching the connection between the media and social movements by examining the traditional literature in sociology on collective behavior (e.g. Cameron, 1966; Ash, 1972; Smelser, 1962; Heberle, 1951; King, 1956). Most of this literature seemed to be asking very different questions from my own, some based on assumptions I would challenge. Each author seemed intent on putting together the most succinct theory: to identify the major predictor of a movement, or establish the components and developmental patterns involved. Because this literature did not seriously consider the complex interaction of variables or the impact of external events (e.g. political climate), I came to view it as somewhat simplistic. Although I did find some insights of moderate value, they had only indirect connection to the issue of the media and movements.

Within the field of sociology, however, there was also some lesser known literature which was very helpful (e.g. Freeman, 1972; Lipsky, 1968; Molotch and Foster, 1973; Boorstin, 1972; Klapp, 1964). This literature reflects some new approaches to research which seem to account for a much wider range of questions. Particularly in examining

the impact of the media, this more recent literature has made some encouraging advances.

Next, I examined the literature of the field of journalism. It, too, seems to reflect some changes in thinking from 1950 to 1970. The older literature, like that of sociology, reflects a narrow range of questions, and does not recognize the difficult ethical problems that may be encountered by the press in society. The major concern seems to be maintaining the standard of "objective reporting." Linked to this are a few professional debates about the influence of newspaper chains, the proper editor/ publisher roles, etc. Very few of these sources attempt to articulate the influence of coverage on the course of events; the way in which the media define reality, and how this impact ought to be used and controlled; the peculiar relationship of newsmen and public figures, or other crucial and challenging questions.

However, within this literature I have found a few studies (Bowers, 1967; Breed, 1955) which seek to establish whether or not there is intentional slanting of news by various professionals within the field. This data is all the more interesting because it is primarily internal-- newsmen reflecting on their own experiences in the profes- sion, and not the conclusion of an outside observer.

Other than this, perhaps the best material for my purposes has come from very recent sources. In journalism within the past few years, the influence of Spiro Agnew's

attacks on the media are clear: a wealth of publications have specifically analyzed network news, and material has also appeared on the relationship between media and Washington politicians (e.g. Aronson, 1971; Cirino, 1974; Wolfe, 1973; The O. M. Collective, 1971; Schwartz, ed., 1973; and Schwarts, 1973). In many cases, the focus of these writings can be applied to the relationship of social movements to the media. However, there is not yet any comprehensive writing being done which recognizes the impact that the media had on the many forms of social movements of the 1960's.

Probably the most well-written and thoughtful analyses I have found have come from very recent articles in underground newspapers, magazines, etc. (e.g. Hopkins, 1968; Ferro, et al., 1970; Hickey, 1973; Sale, 1973; Enzensberger, 1970). Perhaps those best equipped to write about the relationship of the media to movements have been too busy to set forth a thoughtful analysis. Those who have attempted to write on the subject have done so more to promote the movement than to shed light on the complex relationships being enacted. Perhaps within the next few years more participants will reflect on their involvement in writing and thus increase our knowledge of the subject.

In short, the sources that I will be citing throughout the rest of this work are a few from the traditional literature of sociology and journalism, many journals and

essay collections, and some "counter culture" resources:
books by and about notable figures, underground publica-
tions, lesser known journals, etc. I have gleened a little
from a lot of diverse sources, and here hope to unite it
under a common framework.

ARE THE MEDIA INTENTIONAL IN

SLANTING COVERAGE?

I have already indicated the power of the media to impose definitions and to recreate events. From that, it is a short step to the next crucial issue: How the media use their power. In this section I hope to examine the evidence and determine whether or not the media are self-conscious enough to be manipulating this power systematically and controlled its effects. Do reporters deliberately slant the events they cover to fit a "company policy?" Does editorial policy influence front page news coverage? What are the political pressures operating on the media which might constrain news coverage? Can a theory be suggested which would help explain the tempering of events which sometimes seems to occur? Social movement activists have long imputed many motives to the media for the distortions they perceived. Before continuing, I wish to establish to what extent those distortions are the deliberate policy of media executives.

Before beginning to discuss the issue of media bias, it is important to clarify some perceptions about the nature of the profession of journalism itself, to help determine where bias may enter into reporting. First,

professional relationships within most news establishments
(newspapers as well as television) are highly stratified
and segmented. Clear distinctions are made between pub-
lisher, editors, department editors, and reporters within
various departments. Professional roles distinguish
between various levels of responsibility and authority,
and guide relationships between subordinates and superiors.
Inspite of this, there are important variations in the
decision-making process from one publisher to another.
The extent of involvement and control that subordinates
will have in decisions is a matter of choice on the part
of the executive.[8]

The result of this professional structure has
been that most studies in the field tend to focus on one
level of the hierarchy, and there are little data repre-
senting a wholistic approach. One researcher may study
the role of reporters' views in determining positive or
negative coverage; another may examine whether the adver-
tisers have the power to dictate policy. Still another may
examine the role of editor preference in determining how
many sides of a story the public will know. However, very
little has been done to attempt to trace the interaction
of these various professional segments, or to illuminate
the connections, communication, and power links between
the various levels in the journalistic division of labor.

As a result, my analysis will fall into the follow-
ing major areas: the role of reporters in slanting the

news, the extent to which editorial policy is reflected in "straight news" articles (especially candidate endorsement), and the effect of various political pressures on the shape of the news when it reaches the public. Finally, I will undertake an analysis and put forward my own theory as to why and how the media appear to be systematically distorting news events.

Reporters

The reporter, as the first link between the event and the public, has an obviously crucial role in the objectivity of the presentation of the event. Besides the fact that each person may observe a situation somewhat differently with no intention of changing the meaning of the event, are there systematic actions reporters take to feel their impact over the facts we have about the world?

In 1955, Warren Breed did a study entitled "Social Control in the Newsroom" in which he undertook intensive interviews with 120 newsmen from middle circulation (10 to 100 thousand daily) publications. Although he makes no pretense to a random sample, Breed reports that without exception editor/publisher policy is unspoken. That is, reporters maintain they are not _told_ how to slant their stories. Nevertheless, each reporter admits knowing, having somehow learned, what editor preference was. Breed examines this phenomenon, and concludes that a great deal of socialization occurs within the newsroom, insuring that overt

policy enforcement will be unnecessary . This socialization occurs in some of the following ways: Most reporters do, and some are required to, read their paper each day. This serves two important socialization functions: newcomers will be inclined to pattern their articles after what they see as being successful; and also, new staff tend to look at news columns and editorials as a guide to local community norms (attitudes to minority groups, political parties, labor, etc.). In addition, reporters may learn policy by more overt methods: consistent blue-penciling of certain items, reprimands with subtly implied sanctions, overhearing comments of executives, internal gossip.[9] Breed also examines the question of why reporters comply with perceived news policy, and concludes that the esteem and obligation reporters feel for their superiors, mobility aspirations, and institutional authority are the major forces operating on newsmen. Thus, once employed within a particular news firm, a reporter learns without being told what is expected of him, and usually complies.

Should a reporter not respond to the cues of his environment as to what items to temper or ignore, what will be the consequences? Certainly Breed has hinted that the power of employer over employee is a major factor in the acquiescence of reporters to policy. The experience of Charley Thompson at station WJXT-TV is exemplary.[10]

Hired in 1969 at station WJXT-TV in Jacksonville, Florida, Thompson brought with him a record of critical

investigative reporting, and was guaranteed "We have no sacred cows here."[11] Shortly after he began his new assignment, Thompson turned out a series of documentaries on local pollution problems. These films were explicit, linking important civic and political leaders with polluting corporations. Both the water quality control board and the air quality control board boasted members allied with major industrial polluters. Many of the major offenders were advertisers with WJXT, as well. Although listener response was overwhelmingly approving, political and economic pressures from the community on the station intensified until Thompson was fired for being too effective at his assigned task.

Both the Breed study and the Thompson example point to the unspoken pressure put on reporters to understand and maintain the interests of those they work for—especially where advertisers and economic interests are involved. Following up on the role of economic pressures upon the media is a study by David Bowers (1967) which analyses when publishers will become involved in newsroom decisions.

In this study, Bowers sent an extensive questionnaire to the managing editors of the evening daily, general circulation newspapers listed in Editor & Publisher Yearbook in 1966. This totaled more than 600 U.S. dailies, which he divided according to circulation groups and geographic areas. In this study, managing editors were asked to rate the activity of their publishers in news

decisions on different types of news items, issues of content, display, use/nonuse decisions, etc.

Bowers' conclusions indicate that under certain circumstances, publishers tend to be more active in newsroom decisions. Publishers of small circulation papers were reported more active than larger ones. They were also more active as issues became more geographically close. Finally, publishers were reported more active in decisions on issues which might affect the revenue on the paper than, for example, a stand on a national political issue. He also emphasizes that even in local revenue-related issues, the activity of publishers is more often promotional rather than suppressing of potentially damaging stories. Geographically, Bowers finds that the only variation is to somewhat less overall publisher activity in New England.

Thus, based on the Breed and Bowers studies and the WJXT/Charley Thompson affair, we see evidence that reporters are under some pressure from those above in the professional hierarchy to at times modify for better or worse their reports on issues which are economically sensitive. Where this pressure is exerted by the publisher on the editor, it also seems likely that this will be passed along to the reporter. However, I have found no evidence to support the claims of some that there are specific, controlled decision-making channels where somewhat conspiratorial policies are made to deliberately influence what the public thinks and knows. The various

media seem to have little common motivation for such inten-
tional deception. Much more common are the subtle omissions
or tone changes intended to handle delicate public rela-
tions problems for the publisher.

Editorial Policy and News Reporting

If it is true that 1) reporters learn without being
told what editor/publisher biases are, 2) reporters have
been known to lose their jobs for putting their employers
in too severe economic and political jeapardy, and that
indeed such political considerations probably enter into
the application and hiring process, and 3) publishers are
more active in news decisions that relate to local and
economic affairs in small and medium circulation papers;
then one must look further to discover why the media appear
to have a consistent bias in particular matters. If indeed
there is no real conspiracy to manage most types of daily
news, is there any real link between editorial policy and
news as reported?

In 1957, Arthur Rowse published a study he conducted
during the 1952 Presidential campaign. Attempting to answer
the question, "Does editorial policy affect news coverage?",
he examined a cross section of evening dailies which
included 26 of the 32 largest circulation newspapers in
the nation. (The other six were excluded to avoid dupli-
cation through the use of several chains.) Each was
examined for several days when stories were breaking on the

Nixon--and later the Stevenson--campaign funds. His study revealed that of all the major papers examined, only three editorially supported the Democratic Party candidate. The rest, perhaps because of their business background, endorsed the Eisenhower/Nixon ticket. When the Nixon secret fund (which involved $18,235 donated by 76 supporters) was revealed, those papers which were editorially Republican were quite slow (approximately 3-5 days) in giving the item front page and headlines. Even then, the articles and headlines were highly conciliatory in tone. The three Democratic papers editorially headlined the Nixon story as it broke, and featured more stories of an investigative nature on side angles to the original story.

Likewise, a few days later, the Stevenson story (which involved $18,150 from 1,000 contributors) was also handled in a partisan way which reflected on the editorial policy of the paper. While the Stevenson story was relatively more low-key, coming in the middle of the Nixon furor and not spotlighted by elaborate speeches in his defense, the Republican endorsors used the Stevenson story on the front page with headlines to overshadow the Nixon story they never fully broke. By the same token, the Democratic endorsers kept the Nixon story in the forefront, making Stevenson only a sidelight.

Rowse concluded that whether consciously or not, editorial policy clearly did influence the placement, tone, and coverage of the news. He did not speculate as to how

such policy was passed along, who had final responsibility, or if indeed the link was intentional. Rowse did not examine the system of communication across editorial lines (managing editor to department editors, department editors to reporters, etc.). While we cannot tell how this policy came to be (or if indeed it was a matter of policy), Rowse did clearly show that editorial policy and front page coverage are not independent.

At the 1973 Convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Ben Bagdikian reported an informal follow up to the Rowse study. First he established the editorial position of many key newspapers in 1972, and found them still to be overwhelmingly Republican. He reported:

> The history of journalism for this era will have to have more than a footnote on the fact that of all dailies who endorsed a major candidate in 1972, 93 percent endorsed the first President ever to impose prior censorship on the press, who made more Supreme Court appointments hostile to the press than anyone in our time and who has threatened and jailed more newsmen than any President in our memory.[12]

Bagdikian compared the coverage of the Stevenson fund with the coverage given to Watergate prior to the election. He reports that the same papers which carried the Stevenson story on page one for as long as possible (and according to Rowse buried the explosive Nixon fund story of 1952), also practically ignored Watergate during the 1972 campaign.

Thus even over a period of 20 years, editorially policy (which remained remarkably consistent) clearly had

an impact on front-page news reporting. Coupled with
what was learned earlier about the informal sanctions
controlling reporters and the role of publishers in pro-
tecting economic interests, the interworkings of the
profession become more visible.

Political Pressures

There is another popular theory about how news
decisions are made: that the media are a business which is
by nature associated with politics by the definition of its
product (i.e. selling news). According to this theory,
dependence upon political sources makes the media respon-
sive to political pressures in determining coverage.

First, as the press has assumed a more conglomerate
organizational form, it has become subject to intense
political pressures which did not exist a few years ago.
As the economic interests of the media become intertwined
with extensive holdings of diverse businesses (many of
them multinational) it becomes more and more difficult to
separate the network from the news. Bagdikian (1967) has
given many examples of how great corporate linkings could
influence news coverage. For example, since ABC and ITT
are part of the same congolmerate, this could have a
tremendous impact on the news. Consider, for example, how
ABC might cover a South American movement to nationalize
U.S.-owned industries, when the news network's own corpora-
tion stands to lose. It would not be inconceivable for the

ruler of such a country to approach the news network and in effect control the image presented of his country, using the business interests located in his country as leverage. Finally, how will ABC approach the question of defense cost overruns, when 40 percent of ITT's resources come from defense contracts?

Although Bagdikian's article was prompted specifically by the proposal of the ABC/ITT merger, he is quick to point out that this is not solely an ABC concern. Both NBC and CBS have similar business relationships justified by the theory that more diverse financial sources remove much of the financial insecurity of the press, therefore allowing them to better concentrate on the serious work of journalism. Whatever the rationale, the important question seems to be: does the existence of these relationships influence how a network covers the news? Does the larger corporation pressure the press for slanted coverage of particular events? In the ABC/ITT case, the exercise of influence seemed apparent.

First, ITT tried to influence the AP and UPI coverage of the merger hearings, since they did not reflect a sufficiently positive point of view. Since ABC is a major subscriber to the wire services, it was also in a position to exercise financial clout.[13] In addition:

> ABC drove the point home by having its affiliates ask members of Congress in their districts to support the merger. It's a dull politician who doesn't wonder if his access to constituents through broadcasting isn't at stake.[14]

Other strong political interests operate on the press. To a large extent, information on policies and politics comes to the media through people involved in the decision-making process. To what extent will the press jeopardize an important source of favors or information by giving coverage which is detrimental to that source? Given the symbiosis of the politician/press relationship (both needing the support of the other, yet cast in an adversary role) it can be speculated that a good source could expect a degree of immunity from the press. Indeed this is so, according to Robert Yoakum (1967) who examined the case of Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut. Through the course of the misconduct hearings against Dodd, considerable evidence was uncovered linking him to exchanges of official favors for financial gifts in several instances: favors to industries under investigation, gifts from businessmen, diverting campaign funds to personal accounts, exchanging financial gifts for government jobs, payroll padding in his Senate committee, etc.

Why was it that there was very little media coverage of an investigation which would usually be considered important news? Other than a very few columnists, most media as well as the major wire service reports did little to promote the Dodd story, or even to cover the events of the hearing. This was especially true for Connecticut papers, many of which replaced syndicated columnists when they wrote about the Dodd story.

Yoakum explains that a newsman is likely to protect a good source of information, and that this affects the coverage of such news events:

> One reason for the inaction in Washington is old and familiar--the symbiotic relations that develop between newsmen and their sources. Dodd, like every Senator, had found many occasions when he could give news to a reporter from his state to their mutual benefit. Reporters are not eager to eliminate their best source of supply for the only commodity in which they deal.[15]

The final kind of political pressure that might influence the objectivity of news coverage relates back to both the issue of conglomerates and of dependence on sources to meet survival needs. Specifically, one of the functions of the Attorney General of the United States is to review media mergers and conglomerates. Ben Bagdikian claims:

> Newspapers are more and more becoming parts of chains and conglomerates . . . Two-thirds of all the papers in this country, all dailies, are in such groups. Each time one of these groups acquires another communications property, it needs the approval of the Attorney General of the United States. So two-thirds of our papers have corporate reasons to fear a President who is ready to use his Department of Justice for political reasons . . .[16]

Bagdikian also asserts that the Executive Branch (through attacks and challenges) can greatly affect the stock and profits of those dailies which trade on the market (e.g. Washington Post). The government can, through its attacks, create a situation of uncertainty for such a paper, and market traders will not invest. This area of political influence, as yet nowhere intensely examined, is worthy of close attention in the future.

In summary, several causes have been cited for the slanting of news by various forms of media. First, reporters are socialized to accept the editorial policy of the institution for which they work--and a great deal of self-selection goes into that initial staffing decision. Second, publishers themselves are more active in newsroom decisions as the issues move closer to home geographically and touch the economic base of the paper. Third, in support of the socialization theory, it has been demonstrated that editorial policy does become expressed through the appearance and content of the front page. Finally, several political pressures may be sources constraining an open press: corporate interests within, dependence on external news sources, and the power of the Executive Branch over the financial security of the business.

Where does this leave us in terms of our understanding of the relationship between media and social movements? It does give us insights into the internal workings of a profession which has a tremendous impact on our understanding of our society. It also helps clarify differences which occur among different media in their coverage of protest (e.g., one advertiser is involved in the protested defense contracts; another publisher has spoken his law and order bias in the presence of reporters eager to please). Some consistency between competitors is also accounted for here, based on the generally accepted notion that a high percentage of media industries and executives are Republican/business oriented.

However, I still do not find this type of analysis adequate, for it leaves much unaddressed. Are the media intentional in slanting news items? If so, none of the studies cited have given an adequate explanation of why, or how such decisions are made and enforced. If not, the studies do not explain why many movement activists have perceived the press as intentionally distorting reports of protest. Because these studies remain on the surface of many issues (e.g. never analyzing relationships between advertiser, publisher, editor, reporter; not asking "why" at critical points), I have moved to some other sources for a more plausible explanation of why the media may seem to some to be a monolithic giant when it may not really be so.

An Alternative Theory

Another dynamic seems to be operating here, which I would characterize as the American flair for consumption. I would postulate that the media, as part of this society, are themselves susceptible to the same economic ideology which has affected other businesses as well as all of us as citizens. Linked to the philosophy of progress as growth (economic expansion) is the production of new goods for consumption, and increasing consumption as any new "gadget" is produced. In competition for such a consumption-oriented audience, the media themselves come to view any particular news item as throw-away; depth

reporting is used only if there is not enough "new" to fill the alloted time or pages each day. Because we as viewers have become consumers of technology, we expect that technology to provide us with change, newness, stimulation, international intrigue. To be economically competitive, the media must construct news in bigger and better ways.

> Many historical forces help to explain how we have come to our present immoderate hopes. But there can be no doubt about what we now expect, not that it is immoderate. Every American knows the anticipation with which he . . . opens his evening paper before dinner, or listens to the newscasts every hour . . . as he drives across the country, or watches his favorite commentator on television interpret the events of the day. Many enterprising Americans are now at work to help us satisfy these expectations. Many might be put out of work if we should suddenly moderate our expectations. But it is we who keep them in business and demand that they fill our consciousness with novelties . . .[17]

Not only have the media as an industry come to view news events as items for consumption (as we all have), they have also come (with other corporations in a capitalistic economic system) to an understanding about economic survival and how to "beat the competition." What this leads to is a situation in which the media develop interests common to most American enterprises: shareholder returns, and sympathetic people of influence in the right places.

Molotch and Foster (1973) have theorized that if the same types of events and people are routinely covered by the press, it is because their interests are compatible, rather than that in some "objective" sense they are more

newsworthy.[18]   It is simply that in order to satisfy

consumers and survive in a competitive economic market,

certain types of news must be generated (i.e., the unusual,

sensational, personality/human interest angle, etc.); in

order to survive among competition, each newsman must

persist with more vigor than the last. This production/

consumption dynamic applied to the field of journalism,

seems to shed a great deal of insight as to why many,

especially movement people, tend to view the media as

having common interests which override their differences.

Jeanette Hopkins has summarized the theory of the

media as a part of a culture which itself demands rapid

change, exploitation of sources, and sensational stimula-

tion:

> Joseph Breckner . . . said that 'despite
> extremist claims, there is no vast conspiracy
> among the news media and certainly none among
> broadcasters. In fact, there is fierce and
> expensive competition among the various networks
> and individual stations.'
> Competition, however, will not ease the sense
> of alienation (of blacks) . . . from the news
> media, for the obligation 'to perform in the
> public interest,' which Breckner mentions, sug-
> gests a common understanding of what that
> interest is. The natural alliance of broadcasters
> is more one of common attitude and identification
> with the majority culture than it is one of con-
> spiracy but the consequences . . . are often the
> same as if it were a predetermined policy.[19]

What, then, are the consequences for social move-

ments and their leaders of this majority culture identifi-

cation of the press which gives them needs of their own

which must be satisfied in news reporting?

THE MEDIA AND MOVEMENT STRATEGY

The discussion of the structure of the media and news reporting was intended to set the stage for a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between the media and social movements. Especially, I hope to shed more light on the complex relationship between media coverage and the decisions movements make about strategy and tactics. First, I will discuss some general patterns which seem to apply to those social movements which are oriented to the media. Next, I will present a case study of the civil rights movement of the 1960's, attempting to show the impact of publicity on the course of the movement. Finally, I will indicate ways in which other social movements (partly learning from the history of the civil rights movement) have developed more sophisitcated approaches to the media. Both social movements and the press have become increasingly self-aware, and I will detail these insights and their practical application.

General Patterns

Different forms of media tend to respond to social movements in different ways. For example, television has more need for a visually stimulating item than radio or

newspapers. Therefore, television most often relates items which are dramatic; the theatrical aspect of all our politics has risen sharply with the expansion of electronic media. A newspaper, on the other hand, cannot rely on dramatic visual appeal, and may give more in the way of factual detail, background, or the unraveling of complex issues. James Mcevoy and Abraham Miller (Becker, 1970) have discussed the difficulty of the media, especially television, in presenting complex issues. This reluctance to become involved in highly complex issues leads the media to accept an official point of view or a superficial analysis if there are enough news events in a day to fill the time allotment. However, if it is a "slow news day," reporters may a bit more actively dig for stories beneath the headline. Even so, the story that reaches the viewer is likely to be a very superficial treatment of what may have been weeks or even years in brewing.

The needs of radio news reports in many ways parallel those of television: news items must fit into a small time slot, and be verbally, if not visually, exciting. Indeed, the radio has more need for rapid turnover of events, for its news broadcasts are usually consumed hourly throughout the day. A story which is revealed slowly (so that there is a little more to report each hour) is well fitted to the format of radio newsbriefs on the hour. In planning strategies, movements have sometimes shown an understanding of basic differences between media forms, and selected press targets accordingly.

The second major pattern which seems to affect most social movements which have decided to be media-oriented is that television news reporting is slanted by a heavily Eastern bias.[20] Since the major investment of television is in entertainment rather than news, networks have found it economically unfeasible to invest in great numbers of camera crews permanently stationed throughout the country. Rather, a network seems to maintain the minimum number of crews necessary to fill the allotted time. In essence, crews are maintained where news is expected to break (Washington and New York). This circumstance clearly affects movements which might seek publicity but be far from the media sources. It also implies that by the time a network discovers a movement, it may already by firmly established in other parts of the country.

For example, the women's movement was very active in Chicago and Seattle long before it came to the attention of the media.[21] Yet when women began to organize in New York and Boston, they were "discovered" by the television networks. Not surprisingly, most of the women set up by the press as spokespeople are also Eastern in location, though they may have no more credibility as leaders within the movement than someone from San Francisco or Dallas.

Third, the less powerful one is in society, the more one must resort to the unusual to get attention. The President of the United States need not picket the White

House to voice concern over a critical issue. He need only

request prime time coverage, and it is his; any issue he

chooses to speak on becomes an issue involving us all.

> Less powerful groups . . . too try to cause issues
> to surface . . . But by virtue of their lack of
> power, they must typically assemble themselves in
> an inappropriate place at an inappropriate time
> in order to be deemed 'newsworthy.'[22]

While this relationship to some extent defines the

media/social movement interaction from the outset, it can

have many consequences. For example, having chosen to

assemble "inappropriately" so as to disrupt "business as

usual," a movement may find itself being discredited in the

media on the basis of its tactics, rather than on its issue

position.

The final general pattern that I will discuss is

that of the role requirements of reporters who are assigned

social movement coverage. Understanding the cross-currents

the reporter faces may help us understand the relationship

of the media to movement leaders, for both newsmen and

leaders are caught between several competing role demands.

First, newsmen have been trained to support the concept

of "objective reporting," and to believe that by living up

to that concept they are working for civic betterment.

Yet, in addition, they require of themselves the discovery

of a just-breaking story or the investigation of a new

angle on the latest wire service report. They also expect

reliable and accurate information. Lipsky (1968) has out-

lined some of the potential conflicts among these goals:

> Reporters demand newsworthiness of their subjects
> in the short run, but also require reliability and
> verifiability in the longer run. Factual accuracy
> may dampen newsworthiness. Sensationalism . . .
> may be inconsistent with reliable, verifiable
> narration of events.[23]

The leader, also, is caught between the demands of diverse elements. As much unity as possible must be maintained among members of the movement. Yet controversial steps may need to be taken to seek new members. While the leader must not be "above" others in the movement in an alienating sense, s/he must also be able to stand independently, and be a representative for the group. Demands must be juggled from external groups with whom the leader may be neogtiating, internal movement demands, press demands. Indeed it seems that neither the reporter or the leader can completely trust any allies--including each other.

Case Study--The Civil Rights Movement

As a basic case study around which to formulate a model of media/movement interaction, I have chosen the civil rights movement of the 1960's. There are several reasons for this choice. First, upon surveying other movements of our recent history, I would conclude that this was the first large American social movement where strategies were clearly planned for electronic media publicity, and where the movement leader (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) did at some points in his writings indicate the meaning of publicity for the movement. In addition, the effects of

the media coverage on the course of the movement were highly formative and are clear to see. I would theorize that many of the stages of the civil rights movement were directly related to the impact of the media on the phase which came before.

I have also chosen this movement for the reason that I find it to be in many ways the formative movement for this field of study. That is to say, many of the movements which followed looked carefully at the experiences of blacks in their movement for liberation, and learned lessons, made changes, and made new mistakes. Thus, after the case study, I intend to trace the way in which other groups have learned from the experience of the civil rights movement, and have developed a more sophisticated approach to the media. Finally, because of the impact of the civil rights movement on our society at large, there is much more systematic data on it than on many other movements, and this has helped in detailing more precisely how the media and movement decisions were related.

Case Study

As the movement for justice for black Americans moved from the arena of legal action into nonviolent direct action, there were new developments in ideology and strategy. Those within the movement began to speak of finding ways to force white community leaders to bring their racism into the open; to move out of the slow and

dispassionate legal realm. One of the major goals was to bring white racism into the open and expose its depth and cruelty so that no one could mistake it. Without actually stating it, blacks were beginning to evalute the role of publicity (i.e., press coverage) for their movement, and planning strategy which would use that publicity most effectively.

Martin Luther King, Jr. has outlined the major steps in a nonviolent campaign: negotiatin, self-purification, and direct action. While this long process is closely related to the philosophy of nonviolence itself, it has several spin-off results for the media. First, it gives plenty of advance notice (through the stages of negotiation and self-purification) so that crews may be on the scene when the direct action does occur. In addition, the added exposure of the negotiation and self-purification stages with the arrival of the media can be a positive influence for the movement. Second, it makes a longer story, since results are unknown for several days, or even weeks. This is the type of story the media most prefer, since it can run for a relatively long time yet always have a new angle (the latest negotiation report, a personality or human interest story, plenty of time for interviews with movement and community leaders, the man on the street, etc.). Finally, the major issues will be outlined, positions and personalities hardened, and community sentiment aroused in the early stages of the process, which

gives good imagery for the media to market. The "creative tension" that King sought to build practically guaranteed any ambitious reporter on the scene a good and unique story.

If the process of working toward a nonviolent campaign had positive results for the media, it was nothing compared with the actual direct action part of the campaign. For the confrontation tactics the social movement chose rested squarely on media support for their effectiveness. While there was very little specific reference to "the media," the role of publicity is clearly understood. White racists could easily hide behind the legal system and its formalities; the intent was to show the world their true nature by forcing them to a confrontation in public. The rest of the world was to be shown a side of Southern white America that formerly only blacks had known.

> The brutality with which officials would have quelled
> the black individual became impotent when it could
> not be pursued with stealth and remain unobserved.
> It was caught--as a fugitive from a penitentiary is
> often caught--in gigantic circling spotlights. It
> was a luminous glare revealing the naked truth to
> the whole world.[24]

While nonviolent spokesmen may not have defined exactly how they expected this message to be carried to the rest of the world, it was clear that their strategies were partly directed at the media. A direct action campaign has in it all the most compelling qualities for the press: color, glamour, danger, strong emotional involvements, personalities, and a cause based on the American values of democracy.

Current analysts assessing the actions of the early 1960's are much more explicit than those directly involved in the movement in pointing to the role of the media in publicizing the injustice, carrying the desired images and definitions to the public, and indeed bringing world pressure to bear upon Americans to live up to their own creed in granting equality and freedom to blacks. Jeanette Hopkins (1968) explains the personal impact of viewing the coverage of this movement:

> Where direct experience is absent, the press may provide indirect, vicarious encounter. The viewer was, in a sense, projected onto the bridge at Selma or onto the streets of Birmingham . . . His response was often immediate and sometimes galvanizing, fusing intellect and emotion in understanding of the multiple dimensions of the experience of racism.[25]

Daniel Bell (1973), emphasizing how modern communications force us to deal immediately with social issues, also mentions the events at Selma:

> There is little question that the presence of the television cameras in Selma, Alabama . . . aroused an immediate national response which was reflected in the presence of thousands of persons who poured into Selma the following week . . . Without television, it is likely that the shock effect, even if transmitted through news photos and newsreels, would have been dissipated (and that before the rise of the mass media this incident would have never had a national impact).[26]

Within a relatively short time, however, the civil rights movement grew more complex. Up to this point, both the media and the movement had their needs met almost symbiotically. As the movement diversified, however, this dynamic became increasingly unclear: for telling the world

about the forces of good and evil in confrontation in
Southern USA no longer told the whole story.

First, the public began to grow impatient with
images of confrontation and mass demonstrations on their
television screens every night. Soon the concept of white
backlash emerged to describe the situation. The movement
became caught in a dilemma which would also affect those
movements to follow: When a particular type of demonstra-
tion is new and exciting, the press will be on hand.
However, since we have come to demand newness and excite-
ment in our newscasts, no one tactic will long command
media attention. When the movement becomes everyday, the
press must look elsewhere for its news.

About the same time that the media became restless
with direct action, the movement began to reflect on its
strategies. Many who were involved in King's campaigns
began to ask themselves whether there might not be merit
in the concept of self-defense, and whether organizing
within the black community might not be a better approach
than waiting until sufficient pressure convinced whites to
have a change of heart.

Thus, at the same time that the movement faced a
lessening of public attention on its direct actions, it
was facing internal divisions which the press was quick to
discover. However, the media seemed incapable of dealing
with complicated issues in depth. It could air only
flashes of the debate to the public: an image of a speaker

urging more militant action opposed to a speaker urging
dedication to nonviolence. Since the media were not
equipped to fully explore these issues for the public,
there was much ignorance about the actual position of the
movement at any time.

Second, in the midst of this time of directional
indecision for the movement, the media was not without its
influence. By the very fact that cameramen were looking
for new events to film, and giving less attention to styles
of the recent past, the movement was in effect encouraged
to move to a more dramatic position. To retain the non-
violent stand would be to risk losing both a large part
of its internal support and its media support. Emergence
of a more militant group would both satisfy internal
elements clammoring for faster social change, and also
retain media fascination. Throughout the decision-making
process, the media (due to its own need for news) dispro-
portionately covered these younger, more radical elements,
which in effect forced a decision before it was made.

The relationship between a movement and the media
is never stationary, and its fluid nature can cause many
complications for the movement. In this case, the civil
rights movement turned increasingly militant, following
the lead of certain of its own members, as well as playing
into the needs of the press. Soon, however, the role of
the press (which had formerly been seen as at least
somewhat helpful) was to change: as the media captured

the flavor of the "radicals" and presented their image to
society, the movement was less pleased with the results:

> The earlier gratification with television's func-
> tion as revealer of violent Southern Bigotry in the
> early 1960's gave way to dismay among "moderates"
> as television cameras and microphones picked up
> self-incriminating statements from Negro "radicals"
> during summer unrest. The scene is no longer one
> of simple black good versus simple white evil.
> Negro violence and hatred . . . have introduced
> moral complexity into the scene, and television
> coverage is now perceived by Negroes as a potential
> danger and even, to some degree as an evil . . .[27]

Having thus outlined in some detail the relationship
of the media to the nonviolent movement, and in somewhat
less detail the increasing complexity of the relationship
as the movement grew progressively more militant, I would
like to conclude this case study with an examination of
the role of the media in the urban riots of 1966 and 1967.

First, the news reports of the riots were heavily
biased with a law enforcement point of view. This was so
for several reasons. Police and other official sources
had the most reliable information at the time, and were
within easy reach. Also, should a reporter venture into
the riot area to observe for himself, he most often did
so on the heels of the police, upon whom he relied for a
degree of protection. This police/reporter relationship
on the scene limited what the media reported, for reporters
often were seeing through police eyes. Another factor
which may have entered into the point of view expressed
in news reports of the riots is that of access to sources.
Given that once the nonviolent stage was past most

demonstrators were black, and reporters white, one might question whether reporters had knowledge of or access to those community people who most accurately could describe the events. All these factors united to practically guarantee that the viewing public would never really understand what the riots meant for the black people involved.

Second, during the first riots, the press were thrust into a role without ever having reflected upon their professional responsibilities in such a situation. Perhaps reporters relied on police because the story needed immediate coverage, yet no example had ever been set as to how to get it. Within a very short time, however, individual journalists and professional conventions throughout the country were debating the responsibility of the reporter in urban disorders. Were cameramen guilty of increasing the violence by their presence? Did this mean that they should not cover the news? Ought there to be a professional position on the issue of news blackouts which might be extended over the days of a riot? These and other questions which had been in the minds of observers for some time finally began to be asked within the ranks of journalists. From this point on, the press increased in sophistication, in understanding their influence on events, how they have been used by various groups for publicity, and also how their own needs have played into this dynamic. However, whether the media are yet aware of how they have

manipulated social movements to meet their needs is still uncertain.

In summary, I would postulate that the relationship of the media and the black movement has undergone considerable change over time, and that this relationship has been reflected upon by other social movements which followed. Perspectives have shifted from reliance on the press to communicate a clear and simple message to the public, and from a relationship where mutual needs were being met. As militancy was on the rise (in part encouraged by the media) the press found new ways to meet its need for newness and excitement, and movements have been working to redefine their relationships with the media. Culminating in the riots, the relationship of the media and the movement had moved full circle: the media had become the allies of the law enforcers.

Applications

As other social movements rose during the 1960's, some seemed to make a conscious effort to build on the experience of the black movement in planning their actions. How, then, did successive social movements refine this awareness of the role of the media? What new mistakes were made; what new dynamics discovered?

The first strategy which was learned very well by the anti-war activists in the late 1960's was the success of direct action demonstrations in visualizing grievances.

The tactics (rallies, marches, building sit-ins, etc.) were reminiscent of the early civil rights movement, and indeed met with some success. The good/evil dichotomy was also involved as the nation's morally pure youth took a moral stand for the value of human life. The strategy of being in inappropriate places at inappropriate times did insure a great deal of media attention, and did bring the question of the morality of the Vietnam War to the nation through its television screens. Protesters learned, as Lipsky theorizes, that the success of protest activity may well be directly proportional to the amount of wider-based publicity it receives.[28]

However, this skill at capturing publicity involved another factor which anti-war activists often overlooked: that the media will tire of tactics they have seen before, and will give more publicity to something new. Saul Alinsky explains: "Once a specific tactic is used, it ceases to be outside the experience of the enemy. Before long he devises countermeasures that void the previous effective tactic."[29] Thus white youth found themselves struggling to think up new ways to visualize their protest in order to maintain media attention. In the course of the movement, everything from planting pine trees at defense plants to spilling blood on draft records was undertaken--all efforts to compress a moral lesson into a televised visual message.

In trying to accomodate media demands for new events, movements ran certain risks. By patterning one's

movement after the needs of the press rather than the
imperatives of one's own ideology, one risks losing control
of the movement to the media. This valuable lesson was
never really articulated by blacks; however, student pro-
testers found that at times a more radical wing of the
movement could control a tactical decision because it would
also attract more attention, especially from the media. As
a result, the movement lost some of its support among the
young, as well as losing some of that image of moral
purity which had helped to keep the larger society tolerant
of the demonstrations. Viewing this tendency for a move-
ment to lose control over its own events, Alinsky has
cautioned:

> Radicals must be resilient, adaptable to shifting
> political circumstances, and sensitive enough to
> the process of action and reaction to avoid being
> trapped by their own tactics and forced to travel
> a road not of their choosing.[30]

The second major difference between the youth move-
ment (particularly the Yippies) and the black movement
was a broadening of the arena for dramatic events. No
longer did one announce a rally and wait for the press to
arrive; much more was done to go where the media were, using
public forums to make one's case. People came to Washing-
ton, D.C. or Chicago partly because of the political impor-
tance of what was happening there, but also because that
was where the media were. In Chicago in 1968, Hayden
explains that there was a plan to avoid police confrontations
on the city streets where the media were not present.

Rather, the move for confrontation was made in front of the Hilton Hotel, where the cameras were already filming for a national audience.[31]

In addition, Abbie Hoffman's concept of "media freaking" was carried to many new forums, most notably the courts. Here, for the first time, defendants did not comply with the usual courtroom decorum, but instead used every possible moment to dramatize the dichotomy between "straight" and "freak" ways of life and thought. Here the put-on was perfected. This tactic of letting "the establishment" set the scene, and using one's tactics in any forum to create the desired images was clearly a new development in the use of the media.[32]

The third new element the new left learned to cope with was the effect of lessened coverage on the movement. Once large, dramatic actions seemed to be losing their effectiveness (less press coverage, little visible result in policy changes, internal conflicts between activists), many had to reevaluate the meaning of their actions. Many left the movement to do less conspicuous things with their lives.

> Such press selectivity has an effect beyond simply depriving the public of information about what's going on in the radical world of campus politics. It serves to blunt the political effect of protest and gradually thereby to diminish the instances of it--if nobody's listening, what's the point?--and it persuades individual groups that they are isolated and working in a void, hastening the processes of atomization and disintegration... . Whether this is a conscious effort on the part of the media, as was their playing down of ghetto rebellions in the late

Sixties, or whether it is simply the acting out
of their unconscious role as social meliorators,
the effect has been pervasive.[33]

Sale goes on to describe the effect as that of
turning radicals inward. Rather than continuing massive
public actions, various radicals of the 1960's have con-
tinued to live out their philosophies through changes in
lifestyle. By defining new careers for themselves consis-
tent with the counterculture, by working on local projects
and building from within, these individuals have indeed
learned to live radicalism in ways which might produce more
real change with substantially less dependence on the
media.

The women's movement, growing in part out of the
experience of women in the new left, had the opportunity
to even further refine its relationship with the media.
To a large extent, the movement has been very cautious of
the media, both becuase of its heavily male orientation and
because of the media's power to redefine a movement out of
the hands of the members. This is one reason why the
women's movement has not emphasized large, public actions,
but has worked on an interpersonal level. Not as much
concerned with bringing an immediate halt to one specific
policy (as was the anti-war movement), the women's movement
has emphasized small, local consciousness-raising groups.
Attempting first to help women make some significant changes
in their own lives, the movement has addressed specific
political issues secondarily. Even while active in the

political realm, women have adopted a much more low-key style (as with the Equal Rights Amendment), which keeps them from manipulation by the media. In the meantime, the women's movement has also worked to articulate a media theory and to try to control that relationship carefully. It may be telling that the women's movement is simultaneously probably the most advanced in its understanding of media dynamics, yet the most cautious in its use.

This effort has had its drawbacks as well as its strengths. While it has allowed the movement to stay low-key, and probably last longer than if it had become a media flash, the press has found new, often unanticipated ways to relate the movement. First, the media has selected coverage to reinforce the traditional female stereotypes--feather-brained, childish, not to be taken seriously. This has been done primarily through the selection of spokespeople, and so will be dealt with later in a discussion of leadership. However, it also applies to those larger-scale events women have staged: the press response to bra-burning, for example, was highly stereotyped.

In addition, the media have worked harder with this movement than others to create spokespeople. This has been necessary because the movement has devoted so much effort to remaining leaderless, and therefore to consciously denying celebrities for media consumption. Also, because of the small-group style of the movement, fewer figures emerge as colorful, vibrant sympathizers whom the media

push into public position. The interchange between the media and the women's movement on the issue of leaderlessness is far from over. What new patterns are discovered both by the movement and by the media will be vitally important for those movements to follow.

In summary, then, the relationship between the media and social movements grew increasingly complex throughout the 1960's. While movements grew more cautious and began planning much more carefully how to relate to the media, the media also grew in its understanding of how to meet its needs for excitement and novelty under the newly defined conditions. The new left emphasized direct action as a method to reach the masses quickly and effect political change from a relatively powerless base. However, they were not as effective at controlling the limits to their media strategy, and at times it overtook them. They also learned to go to the media, rather than waiting for the television crews to frequent the scene of a demonstration. By taking the movement into new places, and by staging events solely for the purpose of attracting media coverage, the movement opened a debate about the nature and validity of the "pseudo-event."

The concept of the pseudo-event (an event which did not happen for its own sake, but was created to be reported) was introduced by Daniel Boorstin (1964). As examples of what he considers pseudo-events, Boorstin cites the press release written in past tense describing an event

which has not yet occurred, or a script circulated before
a press conference (or party convention). Should the
event not correspond to the prior definition in detail,
the media is in a quandry over which description merits
attention. Which, indeed, was the real event? Indeed,
are either real events, since they both exist solely to
be reported?

This concept has led the media to become more
thoughtful about their role in publicizing demonstrations.
They are becoming sensitive to the fact that they might be
being manipulated by staged events for the purposes of a
particular movement. Within six months' time, TV Guide
has carried at least two articles describing the realiza-
tion of the press that they have been used in particular
situations. Both the AIM takeover at Wounded Knee (TV
Guide, December 1, 1973) and the Hearst kidnapping (TV Guide,
April 20, 1974) represent recent events in which the media
have become increasingly aware of how they have played into
public dramas in ways they might not have chosen. Whether
the press adopt some new defenses to make themselves less
susceptible to this kind of journalism will indeed be
interesting to see.

While the concept of the pseudo-event may be help-
ful in distinguishing between events which would happen
regardless of the press and those with an element of
theatrics (such distinctions, by the way, are surprisingly
hard to make), the conventional wisdom now seems to be to

use the concept to discredit movement events which rely on media attention. Such happenings have come to be considered unreal in some sense, or of less newsworthiness than events not staged with an eye to the media. Others, however, have been quick to point out that the establishment has its pseudo events as well--inaugurations, state funerals, political trials.[34] Certainly the fact that these are initiated for public consumption with obvious political meanings has not deterred the media from being on hand. Ben Bagdikian has defended the legitimacy of the pseudo-event:

> This is a useful notion, but the 'pseudo-event' is not entirely an unreasonable manipulation of mass information machinery. It is an artifact of urban life, where it is impossible to pass information to all who need to know by face-to-face contact. Formal systems of communication are the only means we have; these systems are not entered with the manners or modes of the New England town meeting but by something very like the 'pseudo-event.'[35]

The press seem still to be debating what the appropriate response should be to the pseudo-event in the news. Whether they should decide to grant such events legitimacy or not, there is another important and far-reaching question involved. While the pseudo-event may not be "an unreasonable manipulation," it may be another critical step in the direction of consumption politics. If dramas are staged for us, we are exempted from involvement. When television news brings us the moral issues of the day wrapped and packaged, the citizen-as-spectator role is enlarged. Therefore, the outcome of the media debate

on the proper handling of pseudo-events may have a large formative impact on developments both of social movements and of issues of public participation in society.

What, then, can be concluded about the relationship of the media and social movements? What can a movement do to control its course of events, yet still meet its needs for constituency building? Primarily, this must be done by carefully examining both the movement's needs and the needs of the media, and by articulating beforehand how that relationship will be defined.

First, the movement members must think in depth about how tactics are to fit with theory. The philosophy of the group must first be made clear, and each tactical choice should be held up to that ideal and checked for fit. Especially, the role and need for publicity must be explored. Can the movement survive without it? How much publicity may be necessary? How much is the movement ready to compromise to achieve it? Is it practical to assume that a movement can be successful in terms of achieving change without attracting media attention? The movement must define how much it will allow its strategy to become radicalized by the press. This can only be done with a careful analysis of the media requirements in a situation, and knowing from the press' point of view what the relation-ship is. This is never static, for even as movements learn and grow in their understanding of this relationship, so does the press. As mentioned before, especially since the

Wounded Knee episode the media have been more cautious about
their possible manipulation by movements in the future.   The
media may change approaches entirely.

Second, the movement must thoroughly define the
type of image it wants to project.   While a movement may
control its image somewhat, it seems unlikely that a move-
ment could avoid media images completely.   Given that the
media may consciously or otherwise create an image, it is
imperative to have thought through what image the movement
favors, and how to maintain it.   How will an unfavorable
image be combatted? How might the members portray the image
desired?   How do the chosen philosophy and tactics fit with
the intended image?   How will this image be communicated?
Also, it must be considered beforehand that while being
on the offensive in presenting one's chosen image may lessen
the ability of the press to create one, the media may
manipulate the image chosen.   How might the media manipu-
late this image, and what alternatives might work in deal-
ing with that manipulation?

THE MEDIA AND MOVEMENT LEADERSHIP

As with the media/movement dynamic, there are some general patterns which characterize the relationship of individual movement leaders and the press. First, the media seem to prefer certain leadership styles. Understanding these preferred styles can help a movement avoid media manipulation through the ability to second-guess. If a movement has chosen to be leaderless, for example, it could attempt to identify which of its members are likely media targets for "stardom." By working closely with those individuals a movement may be able to blunt the effect of the press. In addition, knowledge of media-preferred political styles and understanding the leadership role internally (see Lipsky, 1968) can allow the movement to decide upon and advance its own leader if it so desires.

Jeanette Hopkins (1968) has outlined more specifically what the approved style for black leadership consisted of: "the press . . . tends to approve . . . those leaders whose demeanor, style, language, and expressed mood are typical of its own leadership preferences-- sophistication, urbanity, intelligence . . ."[36] She is quick to point out that this preference has a strong

upper-middle class bias to it, and that leaders who fall into this style can get by with fairly radical content. This may help also to explain the apparent contradictions in Hopkins' statement. Abbie Hoffman, for example, is not strictly speaking in the sophisticated, urbane style. However, he is intelligent, articulate, and can outwit the press at any given moment. This gives him fascination for the media, and so he is approved. It is a "lower-class" style which rates disapproval from the press.

A second general point is that the relationship between the media and leaders depends on both parties: "For the reporter, news, not social change, is the goal. For the . . . leader, news is only a means to the end of change. Each needs the other but neither meets the other's need."[37]

While many leaders do not trust the press, they still must be in contact purely as a function of their position. In addition, they may at times have tips to pass along to their favorite reporter, and grant interview requests on a discretionary basis. At the same time, the press needs the leaks and personality angles only a leader can provide. However, the emphasis is not to serve the needs of the leader (although to some extent this may happen), but rather to get the story faster than the competition. This need may over time necessitate jeopardizing whatever personal trust may have been established between reporter and leader.

This leads to the third general aspect of the media/leader dynamic: the media hold the power, once a leader is recognized, to discredit that leader to the public, and by implication, to discredit the movement as well. Should the press need a story which is not forthcoming, it will find one. Perhaps a divergent spokesperson can be found to emphasize divisions within the group. Perhaps the press through its attention can give rise to a new "leader," or dig up an aspect of the leader's personal life to cast doubt on the responsibility of the position. An interesting example of this attempt to discredit by personal detail can be seen in the women's movement. When Kate Millett acknowledged her bisexuality publically, the media attempted to use that to create an image for the entire movement. In this instance, the movement's response was to defuse the entire situation by supporting Millett: "We are all bisexual," and wearing lavendar armbands as a symbol. By accepting the image pushed by the press, the movement took the ground that the media was standing on, leaving them where they started. The point is, when news is slow, there are many ways the media can use a personality to create a fresh story. The leader is practically powerless to prevent this from happening. As such, any movement projecting a leader must think of creative ways to deal with it, and accept it as a cost to be borne based on the initial choice of leadership style.

The fourth general trend is that the "star system" (either self-selecting or through media selection, having a leader projected as the super-person) creates elites and hostile feelings within a movement. Once a leader becomes a star, two elements begin operating. First, control over the leader is lessened since the leader's main dependency is on the press and other stars. The leader becomes an elite among his/her own movement people. Second, internal problems develop based on jealousy and attempts by workers to establish who is "in" with the leader and who is not. For any movement seeking to maintain a democratic decision-making style (or for one attempting to be leaderless, but with media-selected stars), the implications of having a leader turn "star" can be very serious.

The final general theme I would like to enumerate before offering some examples, is that the media, if it is left to choose a leader for itself, will often choose someone who fits with social stereotypes about particular movements and their members. For blacks, for example, a media-selected leader would most often be a strong-looking male. In reporting the women's movement, the media often chose as a spokesperson someone quite attractive, but not too threatening. A gay liberation spokesperson would either be a large and forceful female, or an effeminate male. For a movement which is seeking to break down these

stereotypes, the media use of images can pose difficult tactical problems.

Case Study

Once again, to establish some basis for discussion, I will present a brief case study of how, at a few points in time, the media have interacted with various black leaders. From there, I will trace the understanding gained and changes made by other movement leaders in their peculiar situations.

Martin Luther King may well have had the press in part to thank for his rapid rise from small local beginnings to a position of national leadership. Virtually unknown before the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott, King became a respected national celebrity virtually overnight. His style was much as Hopkins has suggested: articulate, able to couch fairly radical demands for change (at least for that time) in reassuring terms. He was a powerful personality who could inspire crowds and provide excellent news and color for newsmen as well.

For quite some time, King seemed to remain free of many of the pitfalls of leadership outlined above. In the early days of the movement, there were no other spokespeople to divide the constituents. There was little or nothing in King's personal life to be discredited, although people did debate whether he was really as nonviolent as he professed, and some questioned King's (and the movement's)

long-term responsibility for those arrested. However, with the passage of time, some of this began to change.

The changes that began to occur for King and the civil rights movement can be attributed to two sources which are very difficult to separate: the internal workings of the movement, and the media. As has been discussed before, the media has limited need for any one particular style, and begins to look for novelty. The media definitely tired of the King style of confrontation over time, and began to look for other spokespeople to give exposure to. Simultaneously, segments within the movement began to question the effectiveness of King's nonviolence. Suddenly, there were many more black spokesmen given coverage, and pushed to national prominence.

As Martin Luther King began to be upstaged by younger black men ready to make more radical statements to the press, and as blacks began to concentrate on organizing around local issues, the movement experienced yet another side of the press: leadership creation. Most local issues did not involve a national figure or broadbased issues, and the media were in a quandary about how to cover movement events. For national networks, the problem was even larger, for it was difficult to come into a community and quickly get a feeling for the important issues and individuals. This resulted in a situation in which almost anyone who was willing to speak or make a proposal had a chance of being labeled as a movement leader. To a

large extent, this was based on the failure of newsmen to know enough about the local movement. However, the end result--anyone willing to make a more radical statement than was aired the day before, made the news--has been widely criticized. First, it created a false impression of the problem--usually exaggerated, and much broader than the original issue. Second, it made conflict resolution even more difficult, for publicized opinions are skewed to the radical, and the confusion of who is a movement leader made negotiation even more difficult. Ted Poston asserts:

> . . . the editors and publishers really don't know or wish to know that part of their larger community . . . There is an increasing and dangerous tendency for Northern papers to create their own versions of Negro leaders in the Harlems of this country. How do they do this? Simply by giving front-page coverage to and designating as a 'leader' any nonwhite citizen who makes preposterous statements about race relations.[38]

The second result of the rise of many black spokespeople was the phenomenon whereby any well-known black person (be s/he entertainer, athlete, politician, etc.) was expected to be a "leader" in the sense of articulating goals and philosophy for the movement itself. Talk shows compete for interviews with the intention of presenting a "Negro leader."[39]

Not surprisingly, it is the local black press which has avoided these pitfalls, and been able to distinguish true community movement leaders from the fabricated ones. This has been an important lesson for other protesting groups: by establishing its own press, a group has at

least an internal organ which is reliable and can perhaps clue in the "straight press" as to the real community dynamics it may be out of touch with. Probably the most notable example of this is Liberation News Service, a wire service started to coordinate reports from diverse underground sources. Both the new left and the traditional press are subscribers to this source of counterculture news.

Applications

Based on this brief outline of the relationship of press to personality as observed in the black movement, where have other movements gone with the leadership problem. How have those designated as leaders come to understand their position?

Tom Hayden has summarized well the tendency of leaders to fall into the "star system"; Hayden takes seriously the implications of the cult of personality which can easily engulf movement celebrities. He points out that "Ideally leadership is supposed to be shared, or even to be 'nonleadership,' but here it is embarrassingly self-centered, deliberately and consciously marketed."[40] This "marketing of personality" has been used by movements (especially the Yippies) for their own benefit, however, the tendency is for the theater of personality to work against the movement:

The first step in this power syndrome is to become a 'personality.' You begin to monopolize

> contacts and contracts. You begin making $1000
> per speech. With few real friends and no real
> organization, you become dependent on the mass
> media and travel in orbit only with similar
> 'stars.'[41]

Once this occurs, the movement has no sanctions to

maintain that leader as their representative (if indeed

s/he ever was), and no control over the public image

created by that person in the name of the movement as a

whole.

Although many movements have felt the impact of

this marketing of personality, or star system, perhaps the

draft resistence movement and the women's movement have,

at least retrospectively, come to grips with its implica-

tions more than others. Fred Rosen (1971) has written:

> There was a tendency to stress the exemplary lives
> we were leading which led necessarily to the
> cultivation of the most exemplary personalities
> . . . we set up an informal hierarchy in our own
> organization which we called leadership, but
> which was really much more of a star system. The
> people who led the most exemplary lives, or who
> looked like they led the most exemplary lives,
> were our stars. I guess we figured we could
> recruit more resisters and be more impressive to
> the public with our stars up front. To be sure,
> there were people who were more forceful . . .
> more creative . . . and some who were better
> looking too. For the most part these qualities
> merely enabled different people . . . to make
> different contributions, but after a while we
> began to believe our press instead of ourselves.[42]

Several women have written of the devastating effects

of a star system within the feminist movement. Jo Freeman

(1973) has outlined thoroughly the dynamic of the star

system: how it is created either through the choice of

the movement or by default through the press. She has also

observed the implications for the internal movement: the
creation of an elite in a supposedly democratic movement;
the way in which the movement loses control over such
leaders as they become indebted to the press; and the prob-
lems involved in the personal relationships of "star" and
"regular members."

The ultimate effect of this eagerness on the part
of some early movements and indeed of certain personalities
(Abbie Hoffman, for example) to market leader personalities,
has been to prompt a major debate within the movement. How
can people arguing seriously for an anti-capitalistic
alternative engage so openly in profit-oriented activity?
Is the movement co-opted by nurturing dependence on a
capitalist institution? Especially considering the tendency
for leaders to fall into the individualistic "star" syn-
drome, does the capitalist nature of the media shape the
problems of leadership faced by movements? In many cases,
these ideological questions have prompted movements to
reaffirm the slow-but-sure grass roots approach and to
carefully guard themselves from excess media attention.
This, in turn, leads back to the questions being asked by
movement activists about whether there is a loss of effec-
tiveness in the loss of publicity. Thus, the tactical
problems in dealing with the media are becoming clearer;
the major philosophical contradictions are yet to be
resolved.

What, then, might a newly organizing social movement do to circumvent the problems of leadership encountered by previous movements?

First, a movement might consider both leadership systems and leadership styles, again related to philosophy, image, tactics. Will the group explore leaderless organization? How will informal leaders be kept from dominating and in effect assuming leadership positions? How will needs be met which otherwise a leader would fill? What about leadership groups which rotate responsibilities? Leaders, should there be formal ones, may be elected, or be chosen on a consensus model. To a large extent, the leadership system depends on the goals and commitments of the members.

Likewise, questions of leadership style are closely related to choices of leadership systems. Is the leader (should there be one) to serve mainly internal functions for the movement? Or is s/he to also serve as the public spokesperson? What controls will the movement retain over the leader? How will leadership problems be dealt with? Is the movement biased in favor of upper class social skills in determining leadership styles? Is this a deliberate choice? The final question regarding leadership which I would urge needs to be addressed early in the movement's life is: to what extent is the position of leadership to be viewed as a learning position for the person involved? To answer that question may well provide

a framework for how other leadership decisions will be made.

Finally, it is within the realm of the movement's decision to lay some ground rules for how to deal with the press. Although this is a new realization, many techniques have been tried, and some imagination must be used. Will interviews be granted only to press members who identify with the group (e.g., many women's groups will not allow a male reporter to their meetings)? Will meetings be open to press, or closed entirely? Will leadership and image manipulation best be controlled by allowing interviews only with two or more members present? Black nationalists have begun to argue for equal time or independent program-ming rights from the networks as a way to guarantee a fair share of time, and fair coverage as well.[42]

CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In conclusion, the best key I have found to understanding the complex dynamics of the relationship of the media to movements and their leaders is simply to examine the interplay of the needs of the various groups involved. If the relationships change over time, it is likely that the needs of at least one party involved have changed as well.

Overall, the needs of the media are for novelty, visual or verbal stimulation, reliability of sources and imagable items. Which of these needs takes precedence in a particular situation may change; however, in the long run most of them must be fulfilled. The needs of the social movements are basically for membership and a degree of progress toward a goal (usually of some type of social change). Therefore, movements can have a diversity of approaches to leadership as well as to the media. The needs of a leader vary greatly depending on his/her chosen style and the goals of the movement involved. Basically, the leader needs to maintain a constituency while leading them toward their goal. This usually involves a degree of publicity. The dilemma for the leader is to achieve a

balance between the needs of the movement and the media without becoming entirely engulfed in one or the other.

Therefore, probably the most important (and also the most variable) element in this framework is how the movement chooses to work toward its goals, and from that, how the leadership role is defined. Once these are determined (either by explicit planning or by evolution through action), the movement becomes more public. The media then begin to relate to the social movement on the basis of their own needs, and the interaction is underway.

Second, I would emphasize that this relationship is never static, and indeed that any attempt to capture it at a particular point in time may not be accurate in another situation. A change in any one of the three major elements (media, social movement, movement leader) practically always affects the others in some way. Also, each of the elements seems to be at a point of reevaluating at the present. The media, especially, are beginning to question how they have been involved in social movements, feeling that they have been manipulated by clever "media guerrillas." Movements are exploring alternative models of leadership, and alternative methods of relating to the press. Leaders are re-examining their role within social movements, particularly their susceptability to the aspects of personality marketing. From all of these examinations will come some changes in approach. How the decisions of each element affect the others will indeed be interesting research for the future.

Near the beginning of this paper, I mentioned that research within the field of journalism had tended to focus on one segment of the profession at a time (advertisers, publishers, editors, reporters). It seems imperative that research be undertaken which will achieve a more wholistic view of the field of journalism. How do the various professionals relate to each other? How are decisions communicated? What are the alternative models for decision-making followed by various publishers, and what involvement is encouraged by staff? Are there any general patterns which emerge? Specifically, what is the power of the advertiser over the whole process? If we could better understand the ways in which media decision-making and internal communication occurred, much of the image of the "monolithic giant" could be replaced by a more realistic and useful approach.

Second, a great deal of participant-observation, as well as a variety of other research techniques, need to be undertaken to more carefully examine the workings of contemporary social movements. There is a lack of any systematic data in this area, not for the lack of articulate people involved, but for the lack of putting experiences into print. We currently have no sources on how decisions were made within the various movements considered, or how leaders and media were viewed from within. Were alternatives carefully considered? Were people aware of the dangers of the "star system" and of media manipulation?

When did this come about? Some of this material exists in scattered sources in very piecemeal form. The gathering and systematizing of these views would be a great service to the field.

Finally, the literature needs to be developed in the area of leadership to include more than business and civic-related concepts. Leadership in terms of social movements receives only brief treatment by social movement theoriticians, and little of any treatment by leadership specialists. The leaders if the movements themselves have not yet written systematically about their experiences. Both biographies and other studies and analyses are in order here.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that consumption (capitalism) is at the root of the media/movement/leader dynamic. The differing goals and definitions of the media and social movements vis à vis their relationship to consumption are at the heart of these conflicts. If social movements are indeed ever successful at moving citizens from their passive, consumer role, the media will necessarily undergo tremendous changes. For this reason, as well as those stated early in this paper, I am convinced of the importance of this area of study both to the profession and to society. While my research has been a challenging and rewarding process, it represents only a start on what I hope will be a growing area of study.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Tom Hayden, _Trial_ (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), p. 109.

[2] Gerald Ford, "Television and Me," _TV Guide_ March 23, 1974, p. 5.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 6.

[4] Irving E. Lang, _Television News_ (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1968), pp. 70-71.

[5] Hayden, p. 48.

[6] Robert E. Kintner, _Broadcasting & the News_ (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 13.

[7] Alexander Klein, ed., _Dissent, Power, and Confrontation_ (Chicago: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971), p. 146.

[8] Fieldnotes: Interview with Charles Walden, editorial writer for the _Detroit Free Press_, February 28, 1974.

[9] Warren Breed, "Social Control in the Newsroom--A Functional Analysis," _Social Forces_, 33 (May 1955), 329.

[10] "The Devil in Duval County," _Time_, Vol. 96, August 17, 1970, p. 42+.

[11] _Ibid._

[12] American Society of Newspaper Editors, _Problems of Journalism_ (Washington, D.C., 1973).

[13] Ben Bagdikian, "News as Byproduct," _Columbia Journalism Review_, 6 (Spring, 1967), 7.

[14] _Ibid._, p. 7.

[15] Robert Yoakum, "The Dodd Case: Those Who Blinked," _Columbia Journalism Review_, 6 (Spring 1967), 20.

[16]American Society of Newspaper Editors, p. 130.

[17]Daniel Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Harper & Row, Colophone Books, 1964), p. 9.

[18]Harvey Molotch, Marilyn Foster, "Accidents, Scandals, and Routines: Resources for Insurgent Methodology," Insurgent Sociologist, III (Summer 1973), 4.

[19]Jeanette Hopkins, Racial Justice and the Press (New York: Metropolitan Applied Research Center, 1968), p. 47.

[20]John O'Connor, "Narrow Focus of TV News," New York Times, April 5, 1973.

[21]Jo Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," Berkeley Journal of Sociology, XVII (1972-73).

[22]Molotch, Foster, p. 4.

[23]Michael Lipsky, "Protest as a Political Resource," American Political Science Review, 69 (July 1963), 1152.

[24]Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait (New York: Signet Books, 1964), p. 39.

[25]Hopkins, pp. 5-6.

[26]Daniel Bell, The Coming of Post-Industrial Society (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 315.

[27]Hopkins, pp. 42-43.

[28]Lipsky, p. 1151.

[29]Saul Alinsky, Rules for Radicals (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 163.

[30]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[31]Hayden, p. 48.

[32]Ibid., pp. 69-70.

[33]Kirkpatrick Sale, "The New Left: What Left," Win, June 28, 1973, p. 9.

[34]Murray Edelman, Politics as Symbolic Action (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1971), p. 37.

[35]Warren K. Agee, ed., Mass Media in a Free Society (University Press of Kansas, 1969), p. 20.

[36]Hopkins, pp. 40-41.

[37]Ibid., p. 13.

[38]Paul Fisher, Ralph Lowenstein, ed., Race and the News Media (New York: Frederich A. Praeger Publishers, 1967), p. 71.

[39]Ibid., pp. 131-32.

[40]Hayden, p. 110.

[41]Ibid., p. 109.

[42]Fred Rosen, reviewer, "The Wise Minority--An Argument for Draft Resistance and Civil Disobedience," Win, August 1971, p. 27.

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