

TO THE INTERNET, FROM THE INTERNET: COMPARATIVE MEDIA COVERAGE OF TRANSNATIONAL PROTESTS*

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We compare activist-based internet data with four other media sources—Lexis Nexis Academic Universe, The Seattle Times, Global Newsbank, and The New York Times—on their coverage of the local, national, and international protests that accompanied the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Third Ministerial Conference in Seattle, Washington in late 1999. Using the Media Sensitivity-Protest Intensity Model of event reporting, we find that activist-based web sites report a greater number of transnational protest events at the local, national, and international level. We also find that activist-based websites are less positively influenced by the intensity properties of protest events. In the age of globalization, research on transnational movements should therefore combine conventional media sources and activist-based web sources.

A new kind of contentious politics now coordinates simultaneous protest campaigns in dozens of countries. Protesters link a rainbow coalition of groups and organizations across several nations for each crusade (Smith 2001; Smith and Johnston 2002; Tarrow 2002; Lichbach 2003). This ascendant mode of international political mobilization, where protest episodes are no longer limited to a single region or nation, marks an important new arena for social movement activity in the twenty-first century. Whereas protest was once triggered by and focused on national economies and governments, contemporary transnational movements¹ increasingly frame, interpret, and attribute their grievances to neoliberal globalization, international governing institutions, and global standards of justice (Schulz 1998; Ancelovici 2002; Wood and Moore 2002). Do conventional media sources yield valid event data on this new kind of protest?

This article focuses on media coverage of the seminal transnational protests in November-December 1999 against the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Millennium Round meetings, which have come to be known as the "The Battle of Seattle." Three thousand official delegates to the WTO meetings, and 2,000 journalists were outnumbered by 50,000 demonstrators organized in over 500 protest groups. Participants were responsible for a four-day closure of the retail district in downtown Seattle, \$3 million in property damage,

* This research project benefited from grants awarded by the Institute of Global Conflict and Cooperation (University of California) and the World Society Foundation. We thank David Armstrong, Hank Johnston, Sidney Tarrow and the *Mobilization* reviewers for valuable comments on the manuscript.

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and the eventual failure of the WTO meeting. Equally important as the local events in Seattle, however, were the dozens of anti-WTO protests that took place in cities around the United States and the world (see figures 1 and 2).²

The maps in figures 1 and 2 help clarify how the political contention surrounding the WTO symbolizes the new type of social conflict in our globalizing world. Transnational protesters have developed a novel collective action frame, opposition to neoliberal globalization (Ayres 2001; Graeber 2002), and a novel organizational form to complement it, a rainbow protest coalition that networks different types of group claims into a common transnational struggle. In addition, this coalition has innovated a new type of protest campaign: public demonstrations outside the meetings of Multilateral Economic Institutions (MEIs) timed to coincide with dozens of simultaneous solidarity actions around the globe. Since the mid-1990s there have been several transnational protest campaigns during MEI conferences: G-8 meetings in Europe in 1998, 1999, 2001, and 2003; IMF/World Bank Meetings in Washington D.C. and Prague in 2000 and 2002; various World Economic Forum and World Trade Organization conventions; and a host of regional trading block conferences such as the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the European Union (EU), and the Free Trade Area of the Americas meeting (FTAA) in Quebec City in 2001 (Bircham and Charlton 2001; Seoane and Taddei 2001; Gohn 2002).

This article explores one promising method for gathering protest event data on such transnational social movement activity. We compare activist-based internet data to four conventional media sources in their coverage of the paradigmatic transnational protest campaign, the anti-WTO mobilizations in late 1999 (Smith 2001). Coverage of five media sources is compared using the media sensitivity-intensity model developed specifically by Snyder and Kelly (1977) and Mueller (1997a) for protest event analysis.

PROTEST EVENT ANALYSIS

One central research design in the study of social movements involves content analysis of texts (Olzak 1989). Over time, the technique has been refined into "protest event analysis" (Rucht, Koopmans, and Neidhardt 1999; Koopmans and Rucht 1999). Textual newspaper sources—hardcopy, microfilm, and increasingly electronic newspaper sources such as FBIS, Lexis Nexis, Agence France Presse, and Reuters (Maney and Oliver 2001), are content analyzed for protest events using a pre-designed coding protocol (Tarrow 1989; Olzak 1992).

Protest event analysis codes the dependent variable—protest—along multiple dimensions. Protest events are partitioned into types (e.g., demonstrations, strikes, petitions, sit-ins, and vandalism). Analysts record the date, geographical location, duration, number of protest participants, groups involved, and the target of protest. Social movement researchers have also used newspapers and other media sources to record key covariates such as government repression (e.g., arrests, homicides, etc. See Francisco 1995; Beissinger 2001), presence and type of social movement organizations (Soule et al. 1999; Oliver and Myers 1999), and government accommodation (e.g., release of political prisoners, etc. See Rasler 1996; Moore 1998). The unit of analysis is commonly the individual protest event, though multiple newspaper articles are often used to cover a single protest (Tarrow 1989; Olzak 1992).

Protest event analysis has resulted in some of the preeminent works in contentious politics (for overviews, see Lichbach 1992; 1995; 1997; 1998). For example, Tilly's (1995) work on European contention, Jenkins' research on California farm workers (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Jenkins 1985), McAdam's (1982) seminal study of the U.S. civil rights movement, Tarrow's (1989) study of protest cycles in Italy, Olzak's (1992) study of US ethnic conflict, Kriesi et al.'s (1995) study of new social movements in Western Europe, and Beissinger's (2001) analysis of ethnic tides of protest in the former Soviet republics all

Figure 1. States Reporting at Least One Anti-WTO Protest event between November 15 and December 14, 1999 (shaded areas indicate protest)



Figure 2. Countries Experiencing at Least One Anti-WTO Protest Event between November 15 and December 14, 1999 (shaded areas indicate protest)



employed protest event analysis as a central method. Many of these research projects involved sizable budgets, large research teams, and required many years to complete (Imig 2001: 253). Another defining characteristic of these paradigmatic studies is that they analyzed protest events *within* national boundaries. The present study builds on the protest event analysis tradition (Rucht, Koopmans, and Neidhart 1999) by comparing data sources on *transnational* protest campaigns that span multiple countries. More specifically, we compare activist web-based coverage of transnational protest to four conventional news sources.

THE STRUCTURE OF TRANSNATIONAL PROTEST

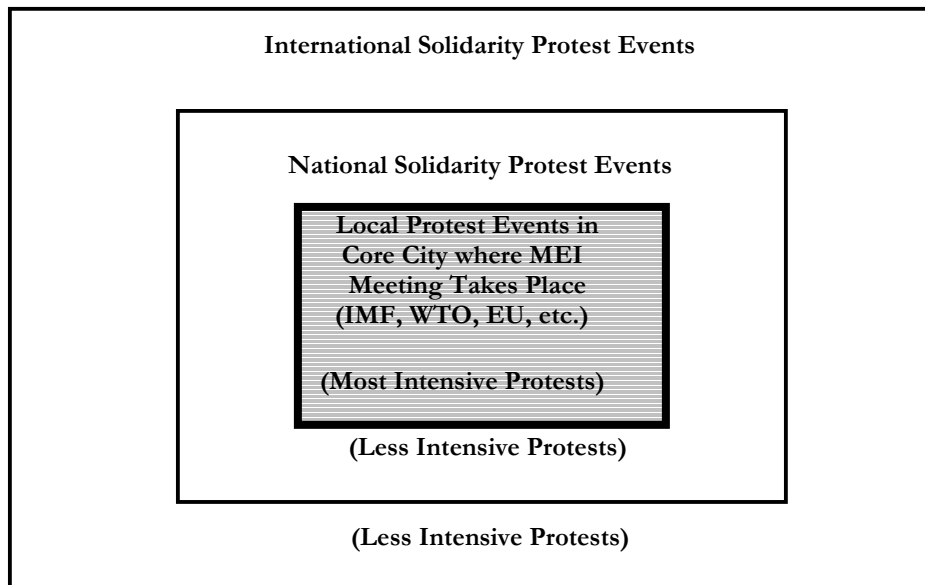
In this new transnational form of protest, protesters mobilize at a core event, where a multilateral economic institution (MEI) meeting takes place, while concurrently coordinating solidarity protests in dozens of other national and international locations. This template of protest was employed during the 1999 WTO meetings (see figures 1 and 2), the September 2000 Prague IMF/World Bank Meetings, the April 2001 Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Conference, the June 2001 European Union Meetings in Gothenburg, the July 2001 G-8 Meetings in Genoa, and the November 2001 WTO conference in Qatar. The Prague IMF/World Bank meetings and demonstrations, for example, were accompanied by at least 82 distinct protests in cities outside the Czech Republic (in 17 countries). The anti-FTAA transnational protests during the April 2001 Quebec City meetings, for another example, included solidarity protests in at least 50 cities outside of Canada.

Figure 3 illustrates the nested structure of transnational protest. During transnationally organized protests, the most intensive protest events in terms of size, disruption/violence, and duration occur on the opening day in the core city where the MEI meeting take place. While the simultaneous solidarity protests that occur nationally and internationally tend to be less intensive—they are smaller events with less disruption and violence³—they demonstrate the national and international depth of the movement and reflect important diffusion processes. Since they cross multiple nations simultaneously (Keck and Sikkink 1998), transnational protests raise interesting questions about gathering protest event data. If analysts focus solely on the core city of the protests, they obviously miss much of the “transnationalness” that distinguishes this ascendant form of collective action.

VALIDITY ISSUES AND TRANSNATIONAL PROTEST EVENTS

All media coverage is distorted in some way (Lichbach 1984; McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith 1996; Mueller 1997a; Woolley 2000; Maney and Oliver 2001; Davenport and Litras forthcoming). One promising approach developed in recent years to determine the probabilities of protest event reporting by different media sources is the Media Sensitivity-Protest Intensity Model (Snyder and Kelly 1977; Mueller 1997a). In this model, the frequency of reporting protest events is a function of the *sensitivity* of media sources and the *intensity* of the protest events (Snyder and Kelly 1977; Muller 1997a). We shall discuss media sensitivity and protest event intensity as they relate to *transnational* protest, and show how they affect protest coverage among different media sources, including activist-based websites.

Media Sensitivity. Media sensitivity characteristics include the geographical proximity of the protest event to the media outlet and ideological composition of the media source (Mueller 1997a). The more geographically proximate the media source to the protest, the more likely a protest event will be reported. For transnational protest that occurs locally, nationally, and internationally, we predict the following in terms of sensitivity for conven-

Figure 3. The Structure of Transnational Protest Campaigns

tional media outlets: Local media sources (e.g., the *Seattle Times*) will report more local protest events; national news sources (e.g., in the U.S. the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*) will report a higher frequency of national protest events outside the core city; and international news sources (e.g., *Reuters*, *Agence France Presse*, *Lexis Nexis*) will more likely report international solidarity protest events outside the core city.

Activist websites receive information via email, listservs, and electronic local news coverage attachments from eyewitnesses, fellow activists, and novice reporters located where transnational protest events are occurring (i.e., locally, nationally and internationally).⁴ Since their contributing informants are more proximate to the events, activist websites will likely report higher protest frequencies at all levels—local, national, and international—than conventional media sources.⁵ Nonetheless, protest event reporting by activist websites is partly determined by the degree of integration into transnational activist networks (Carty 2002). Countries, regions, and groups that have little access to the internet or transnational activist organizations will less likely hold anti-MEI protest events and less likely report their occurrence when they take place (Wood 2003). Figure 2 provides some evidence of this claim; anti-WTO protest clusters in North America, Western Europe and the more industrialized regions of the developing world (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Mexico, South Korea and South Africa).

Protest Event Intensity and Media Sensitivity. Comparative press coverage studies of protest consistently find that conventional news media sources have higher probabilities of reporting protest events with *intensive characteristics*—events that are spectacular, violent, large, and long-lasting. Conversely, they more likely underreport protest events that lack these properties (Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975; Gitlin 1980; Keilbowicz and Scherer 1986; White 1993; McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith 1996; Mueller 1997a; Almeida and Stearns 1998; Hug and Wisler 1998; Koopmans 1999; Beissinger 1999; Oliver and Myers 1999; Oliver and Maney 2000).

Based on its ideological composition, activist web-based protest coverage maintains a distinct reporting logic in comparison to conventional media sources. Ideologically left-leaning media sources (such as from global justice activists) have a lower threshold for reporting anti-corporate protest events (Mueller 1997a; Rucht and Neidhardt 1999). Activist reporting is also closely associated with the process of collective action frame formation and mobilization. As core social movement activities, activists diagnose social problems (e.g., the negative international and domestic consequences of WTO rulings and “corporate globalization”), offer strategies of action, induce sympathy, and recruit future protest participants from a broader population (Snow and Benford 1988). Almost any anti-corporate globalization protest event therefore would be of interest to document on activist websites. Conventional media outlets, on the other hand, have literally thousands of competing news events to potentially report, which raises their threshold of reporting transnational protest events. Compared to more ideologically centrist or corporate-controlled conventional media sources, activist websites thus have much lower requisites for reporting what would be considered a newsworthy protest. In sum, activist websites have higher probabilities of reporting less intensive events and solidarity actions outside the local core city of the MEI meetings; and activist websites will likely be *less* positively influenced by the intensity of transnational protest events in their reporting than conventional media sources.

The media sensitivity-protest intensity model therefore yields five hypotheses about media coverage of transnational protest events:

- H₁: Local media sources will report more transnational protest events and social movement organizations (SMOs) occurring locally than national or international media sources.
- H₂: National media sources will report more transnational protest events and SMOs occurring at the national level than international or local media sources.
- H₃: International media sources will report more transnational protest events and SMOs occurring internationally than local or national media sources.
- H₄: Activist web sites will report more transnational protest events and participating SMOs at the local, national, and international level than conventional media sources.
- H₅: Activist web sites will be less positively influenced by protest event intensity (occurring in core city, occurring on core day, large size, violence, and disruption) than ideologically centrist conventional media sources.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To evaluate our predictions about variation in the coverage of political events among different news sources, we compared transnational activist web-based data with four conventional sources of protest event data that represented local, national, and international press coverage. Information on local, national, and international protests against the WTO, between November 15 and December 14, 1999, was coded along the following dimensions: date and location of protest events, number of protest participants, presence of violence or disruption, and number of participating SMOs and protest groups inside and outside of Seattle. Following Mueller’s (1997a) research design for comparing international protest event coverage, we combined all non-redundant reported anti-WTO events from all five media sources (including the activist-based internet data) into a master set of anti-WTO protest.⁶ The master set of non-redundant anti-WTO protest, created for lack of an exhaustive and

independent source of protest events to compare our five media sources, is used to analyze the proportion of events covered by each media source and the relationship between protest event intensity characteristics and reporting frequencies (see Mueller 1997a; Davenport and Ball 2002 for similar designs).

Local Media Sources. Local newspaper coverage (i.e., where the protest is occurring) has been found to report higher protest event frequencies than national and international sources (Snyder and Kelly 1977; McCarthy et al. 1996; Mueller 1997b; Hug and Wisler 1998; Beissinger 1999). *The Seattle Times* is one of two leading daily newspapers in the greater Seattle region. We chose it to represent a local source of media reportage of the Seattle anti-WTO events. *The Seattle Times* was examined between November 14 and December 16, 1999 for protest actions; 232 WTO-related articles were identified and coded.

National Media Sources. *The New York Times* (index and articles) has been used as a central source in national protest event data sets (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; McAdam 1982; Taylor and Jodice 1983; Olzak 1992; McAdam and Su 2002). Both an internet search on *The New York Times* website using the search string “World Trade Organization” and a manual scan through microfilm copies uncovered 49 articles between November 14 and December 15, 1999 relating to the WTO and protest. The articles coded included news stories and analyses, paid advertisements, and opinion and editorial pieces.

International Media Sources. We selected two international media sources for international protest event coverage—the *Global Newsbank* and *Lexis Nexis*. Both of these databases have grown in accessibility in recent years and provide a supply of protest event information at the national and international levels. One of the main differences that distinguishes *Global Newsbank* and *Lexis Nexis* from individual newspapers is that they are storehouses of numerous conventional media sources (e.g., newspapers, wire services, television news, and magazines).

1. *Global Newsbank*, operating as a CD-ROM subscription service since 1996, includes more than 90,000 articles annually from over one thousand national and international newspapers, radio and television broadcasts, wire service reports, and magazines. In addition, “its extensive database contains translated broadcasts, news agency transmissions...and government documents from around the world” (www.newsbank.com/public/global.html). The search term “World Trade Organization” netted 927 articles for 1999. Of 157 articles published between November 15 and December 15, 29 articles discussed protests related to the WTO and were subsequently coded.

2. *Lexis Nexis Academic Universe* was also used as an international media source. With the development of machine-coding software, *Lexis Nexis* has become increasingly popular in conflict studies (Francisco 1995; Sommer and Scarritt 1999; Kettner 2001; Maney and Oliver 2001). We used the World News section of *Lexis-Nexis*, which contains hundreds of domestic and international newspapers, journal and trade magazine articles, including contributions from the *Cable News Network* (CNN), the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC) and the *Agence France Presse*. The article search was limited to WTO protest between November 15 and December 14, 1999. The Boolean search string, “World Trade Organization and demonstrat! or march! or petition or protest! or anarchi! or strike! or boycott or blockade or riot! or violen! or arson or vandall!” resulted in a total of 629 articles that were examined and coded.

Activist-Based Internet Sources. Electronic sources of social movement and protest event information, especially electronic news and press services, are now thought to provide a low-cost and time-expedient means of data collection for collective action scholars (Gerner et al. 1994; Bond et al. 1997; Sommer and Scarritt 1999; Woolley 2000; Imig 2001; Maney and Oliver 2001). We included data from activist websites as an additional electronic resource now available to social movement analysts. Activist-based websites exemplify one defining characteristic of globalization—what Harvey (1990) refers to as “time-space compression”—

in that the sites instantly report protest events over an expansive geographic territory (Castells 2001; Carty 2002).

Activists and social movements operating on the internet use their loosely coupled cyber-networks to report on events as they are occurring around the globe. The transnational expanse of activist communication networks via webpages, listservs, and electronic newspaper links (Castells 2001; Myers 2002) can be observed in three key activist on-line websites: Independent Media Center (IMC), A-Infos, and People's Global Action (PGA).

IMC, founded during the fall 1999 anti-WTO protests, reportedly received one and half million hits on its website during the height of protest in Seattle (Sellers 2001). Part of the founding mission of IMC was to counter the distortions of commercial media coverage by providing an alternative media perspective on social movements (Atton 2003).⁷ As of November 2002, IMC (www.indymedia.org) maintained 57 international activist websites in thirty-three countries (on six continents), and forty websites in different U.S. cities reporting on anti-globalization events (see Atton 2003). A-Infos (<http://www.ainfos.ca/>) is an influential anarchist and anti-globalization news service translated in 11 languages. PGA is one of the core international social movements organizing globally against the WTO since 1996. Its webpage (<http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/en/>) translates into seven languages.

As part of a larger research project on globalization and social movements, we selected a purposive sample of anti-WTO activist-based websites and listservs to gather data on the protests occurring locally, nationally, and internationally against the WTO between November 15 and December 14, 1999. Based on our reading of the activist literature, we chose websites that were most central to organizing against WTO policies. Appendix A provides a list of the internet activist data sources used in this paper. Our search involved examining the following web-based sources: activist-based internet websites, activist-based electronic listservs, and online newspapers and periodicals linked to activist-based websites.

Activist Internet Websites. To mine the transnational protest data in activist internet websites, one must first identify the principal actors and groups involved in a particular conflict—in our case groups with grievances against the WTO and/or those with related causes. Websites constructed by movement participants and sympathizers in the anti-WTO campaigns include the *Ruckus Society* (www.ruckus.org), *Independent Media Center* (www.indymedia.org), and the anarchist *MidAtlantic-infoshop* (www.infoshop.org). These websites indeed contained information about past, present, and future social movement actions—including partial chronologies of dozens of protest events. Activist and sympathetic media organizations served as virtual storehouses of web links on globalization and global justice organizing activities and protests. For example, on *Znet's* website one may find “field reports, mainstream news items, analytical essays, interactive facilities, anti-WTO websites, and photographs” (http://zena.secureforum.com/wto-watch/link_view.cfm). Seventy-two percent of the protest events constructed in our activist-based data set derived in part from activist websites.

Activist Internet Listservs. The emerging international social movement sector has created a number of electronic mail listservs (Ayres 1999; Smith 2001). The listservs specifically function to share information on the logistical issues of upcoming events. One may find maps of protest sites, housing opportunities, supplies (e.g., teach-in materials), tentative schedules of events, and contact or host-protest organizations (Carty 2002). Most importantly for protest event analysis, listserv participants frequently report related protest events from around the globe. One may glean eyewitness accounts and peruse electronic attachments that often include insertions of local newspaper coverage. Though obviously important in mobilizing people for collective action, we used activist listservs as a source of protest event data. While only four percent of protest events in our activist internet data set came directly from email listservs, many chronologies and reports listed on activist websites likely originated from such listservs.

On-line Newspapers and Periodicals. Our final data source is electronic newspaper and periodical sources linked to activist-websites and listservs. Several anti-WTO activist websites (www.ruckus.org or www.infoshop.org) provided a list of links to electronic local, national, and international newspaper and magazine coverage of the protest events in Seattle, the US, and around the globe. For our activist database, we only used online newspaper and magazine articles linked to activist websites and listservs. Fifty-five percent of protest events in the activist web database stem from newspaper stories linked to activist websites.⁸

These rich sources allowed us to collect many types of information about the transnational protest: types of protest (e.g., sit-ins, marches, vandalism, etc.); geographical location of events; and actors participating in the conflict and the groups/ organizations to which they belong. We arranged relevant texts from the three activist-based web sources into a single chronology of anti-WTO protest events occurring in Seattle and in other national and international locations. The chronology was organized by day and the average entry was about a one-third-page paragraph. The texts were directly copied (i.e., “cut and pasted”) or paraphrased from the online source (activist website, electronic listserv, internet newspaper/magazine) into the chronology. The end product was a 54-page event chronology detailing the local, national, and international protest events and organizations/groups mobilized against the WTO in 1999. The activist internet chronology was coded using the same protocol as the other four conventional media sources described above. The excerpts below describing anti-WTO protest events in the United States, Switzerland, and India are examples of the texts in our activist-based web chronology.

- USA: November 30, 1999. In Nashville, Tennessee, 45 people protest against WTO outside of Gore campaign headquarters. They hold large Ronald McDonald puppet. (www.infoshop.org/octo/wto_nash.html).
- USA: November 30, 1999. In downtown Atlanta groups from Rain Forest Action Network, Earth First!, IWW, AIM, Food not Bombs, Dogwood Alliance and student groups hold anti-WTO demonstration in Woodruff Park. (www.infoshop.org/octo/wto_atlanta.html)
- USA: November 30, 1999. In Santa Rosa, CA, a noontime rally in Courthouse Square in downtown Santa Rosa brought a small, diverse, and upbeat lunch-time crowd to protest the WTO. Speakers included representatives from Sonoma County Peace and Social Justice Commission, Green Party of California, and New College. Only two Santa Rosa police officers arrived on bicycles and left after a little while. (<http://www.adbusters.org/campaigns/question/toolbox/global.html>)
- Geneva: November 27th, 1999. Two columns of demonstrators, almost 2000 farmers and 3000 city dwellers from all over Switzerland met in the center of Geneva this afternoon to march on the WTO headquarters. The farmers, who gathered in front of the United Nations building, came at the call of all of the Swiss farmers associations (small farmers of the Union des Producteurs Suisses, but also the larger Union des Paysans Suisses and the Chambers of Agriculture). Having fought hard, but all alone against the founding of WTO, many had become discouraged, but falling prices, bankruptcies, and the new menaces in Seattle brought them into town again today.... Meanwhile, city people, called by a Coordination against the Millennium Round, were gathering in the heart of the international banking district. This starting point had been chosen to point out that the international banking system is at the heart of globalisation. Demonstrators had come from Berne, Basel, Lausanne and other cities. Supporters of People's Global Action of course, but also of the ATTAC network and

of some twenty other organisations and associations [were present]. The civil servants union in particular made a particular effort to mobilize, knowing that the future of public education and health services could well be endangered in Seattle. For Geneva (only 300 000 inhabitants), this was a major demonstration, proving that the riots that had marked the last WTO summit meeting had not scared or confused the people. Young, old, children, peasants, punks, professors and just plain people marched and mixed cheerfully, while the riot police—dressed to kill as usual—waited in vain.” (London N30 homepage www.bak.spc.org/N30london/world.html; now located at www.ainfos.ca/99/nov/ainfos00365.html)

- Bangalore (India), 30 November 1999—Several thousand farmers from all the districts of Karnataka gathered today in Bangalore to protest against the Third Ministerial conference of WTO which is now starting in Seattle. They were joined by activists from several leftist organisations and unions.... The demonstration started at the central train station at 10:30 and headed towards the Mahatma Gandhi's statue to hold a public meeting. The police tried to stop the demonstrators from entering the park where Gandhi's statue is situated, but the KRRS farmers went into the park telling the police that they don't need anyone's permission to visit this statue and shouting slogans against the WTO, “free” trade, Monsanto etc... Representatives of all the districts of KRRS, of trade unions and other leftist organisations addressed the public meeting. Mr. Kodihally Chandrashekhar, General Secretary of KRRS, stated: “We have already experienced the impact of 'free' trade on our lives, this is why we demand the Indian Government to reject the WTO regime and withdraw from it” (www.infoshop.org/octo/wto_india.html).

COMPARING MEDIA SENSITIVITY OF TRANSNATIONAL CONTENTION

We compare the sensitivity of media sources to transnational protest along three dimensions: frequency distribution of reported local, national, and international protest events, presence of social movement organizations, and cities reporting protest outside of Seattle.

Distribution of Transnational Protest Events. Table 1 provides the frequency distributions by media source of anti-WTO protest events occurring between November 15 and December 14, 1999 in Seattle, the US, and around the globe. When all non-redundant events are combined, we have a master set of 306 reported events. Between 48 and 60 percent of all events for each source are reported on November 30—the official opening day of the World Trade Organization Meetings in Seattle and most intensive day of protest activity (see figures 4 and 5). The activist internet websites reported 83 percent of all events. *Lexis Nexis* reported 33 percent of the protests, the *Seattle Times* 28 percent, followed by the *Global Newbank* with 17 percent and *The New York Times* covering 10.5 percent.

Table 2 compares the mean proportions of reported transnational protest at the local, national, and international levels among the five media sources. The comparison includes subsamples of nonredundant anti-WTO events occurring in Seattle, the United States, internationally, and the full set of events. The activist web data consistently report significantly more protest events than the other four conventional media sources across all four samples and levels of protest activity, supporting our media-sensitivity hypothesis. Activists are the most proximate source to protest at all levels and are more ideologically sensitive in reporting their occurrence.

Figure 4. Master Set of Nonredundant anti-WTO Protest Events, November 15 to December 15, 1999, in Seattle, USA, and Global (N= 306)

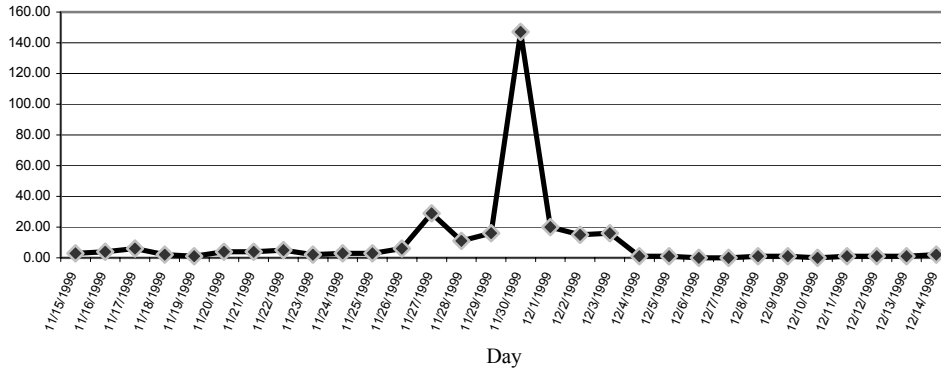
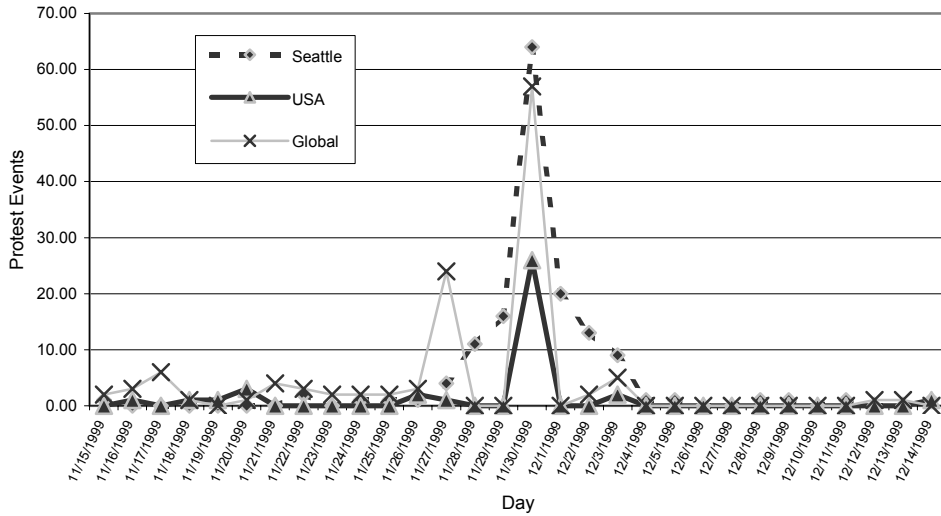


Figure 5. Master Set of Nonredundant Anti-WTO Protest November 15 to December 14, 1999 by Location (Seattle, National and Global)



In comparing only the four conventional media sources at the local level (i.e., protests in Seattle), the *Seattle Times* reported more events than the other three sources, as predicted, but surprisingly was not significantly different than *Lexis Nexis* for local coverage. In comparing reporting frequencies for anti-WTO protest events in the US outside of Seattle, *The New York Times* documented more events than the local *Seattle Times* and the *Global Newsbank* as predicted, but only the comparison to the *Global Newsbank* was statistically significant. The *New York Times* also failed to report more national events than *Lexis Nexis*. For international protest events outside the United States, *Lexis Nexis* reported significantly more events than the other three news sources, as expected. The *Global Newsbank* reported more international events than the *Seattle Times* and the *New York Times*, but the differences

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Master Set of Anti-WTO Protest Events (in Seattle, USA, and Global) Reported in Five Media Sources, by Day: November 15 to December 14, 1999.

Date	Internet		Lexis Nexis		Seattle Times		Global Newsbank		New York Times		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
11/15	2	0.8	0	0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	3	1.0
11/16	3	1.2	1	1.0	1	1.1	0	0	2	6.3	4	1.3
11/17	4	1.6	2	2.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2.0
11/18	2	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.7
11/19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.1	1	0.3
11/20	4	1.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1.3
11/21	4	1.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1.3
11/22	5	2.0	1	1.0	1	1.1	1	1.9	0	0	5	1.6
11/23	2	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.7
11/24	3	1.2	1	1.0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	3	1.0
11/25	2	0.8	2	2.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1.0
11/26	5	2.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.1	6	2.0
11/27	26	10.2	7	6.9	3	3.4	0	0	0	0	29	9.5
11/28	5	2.0	5	5.0	4	4.6	2	3.8	2	6.3	11	3.6
11/29	15	5.9	7	6.9	11	12.6	7	13.2	4	12.5	16	5.2
11/30	126	49.6	44	43.6	43	49.4	32	60.4	16	50.0	147	48.0
12/1	18	7.1	6	5.9	6	6.9	5	9.4	1	3.1	20	6.5
12/2	10	3.9	10	9.9	7	8.0	5	9.4	1	3.1	15	4.9
12/3	11	4.3	11	10.9	5	5.7	1	1.9	3	9.4	16	5.2
12/4	1	0.4	1	1.0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
12/5	1	0.4	0	0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
12/6	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12/7	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12/8	1	0.4	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
12/9	1	0.4	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
12/10	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12/11	1	0.4	0	0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
12/12	1	0.4	1	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	3.1	1	0.3
12/13	0	0	1	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
12/14	1	0.4	1	1.0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	2	0.7
Total	254	100.0	101	100	87	100.0	53	100	32	100	306	100
Percent Total		83.0		33.0		28.4		17.3		10.5		

were not statistically significant. For all events, *Lexis Nexis* and the *Seattle Times* reported significantly more protests than the *Global News Bank* and the *New York Times*. In sum, when comparing only the four conventional media sources, *Lexis Nexis* reported the greatest frequency of international events and the *Seattle Times* reported the most local events, though not significantly more than *Lexis Nexis*.

Presence of Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) and Protest Groups. One of the most distinctive features of anti-WTO contention was that the Seattle protest alliance constituted a rainbow coalition of “teamsters and turtles” (i.e., organized labor and environmental advocacy groups). In addition, students of transnational movements will increasingly want to explore the relative presence of transnational organizations relative to national and local groups in protest events (Smith 2001). In order to systematically collect data on social movement organizations mobilizing around transnational institutions we must first evaluate the differential reporting of SMO and protest group presence by media source.

Outside of Seattle, activist online sources reported many more of the organizations and specific groups involved in the transnational protests (see figure 6). Web-based activist data identified 77 SMOs protesting outside of Seattle in the USA or international cities, over 5 times more than the 14 protest organizations identified by *Lexis Nexis*. Outside of Seattle, *The New York Times* reported five SMOs, *Global Newsbank* two, while the *Seattle Times* did not mention any. *Lexis Nexis*, surprisingly, identified the greatest number of SMOs

Table 2. T- Statistics for Significance of the Difference between the Proportions of Anti-WTO Protest Events Reported in Internet Activist Websites, *Lexis Nexis*, *The Seattle Times*, *Global Newsbank*, and *The New York Times*, by Subsample, November 15 to December 14, 1999.

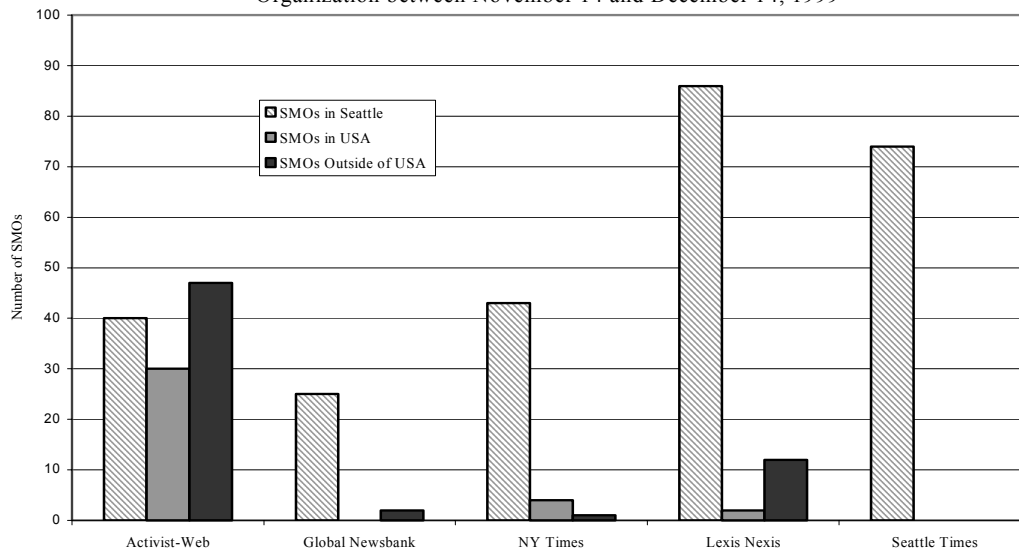
Subsample	Activist Web vs. Lexis Nexis	Activist Web vs. Seattle Times	Activist Web vs. Global Newsbank	Activist Web vs. New York Times	Number of Events
Seattle	6.40***	4.01***	8.76***	13.53***	149
USA	6.47***	9.61***	14.05***	7.56***	38
Global	12.24***	29.75***	28.60***	29.75***	119
All Events	13.92***	15.39***	21.52***	25.76***	306

Subsample	Lexis Nexis vs. Seattle Times	Lexis Nexis vs. Global Newsbank	Lexis Nexis vs. New York Times	Number of Events
Seattle	-1.48	2.90**	6.85***	149
USA	1.67	2.89**	0.90	38
Global	4.76***	4.38***	5.03***	119
All Events	1.34	5.41***	8.06***	306

*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$ (two-tailed tests)

Subsample	Seattle Times vs. Global Newsbank	Seattle Times vs. New York Times	New York Times vs. Global Newsbank	Number of Events
Seattle	4.41***	7.67***	-3.33**	149
USA	1.78	-0.37	2.09*	38
Global	-0.45	0.00	-0.38	119
All Events	4.27***	6.34***	-2.56*	306

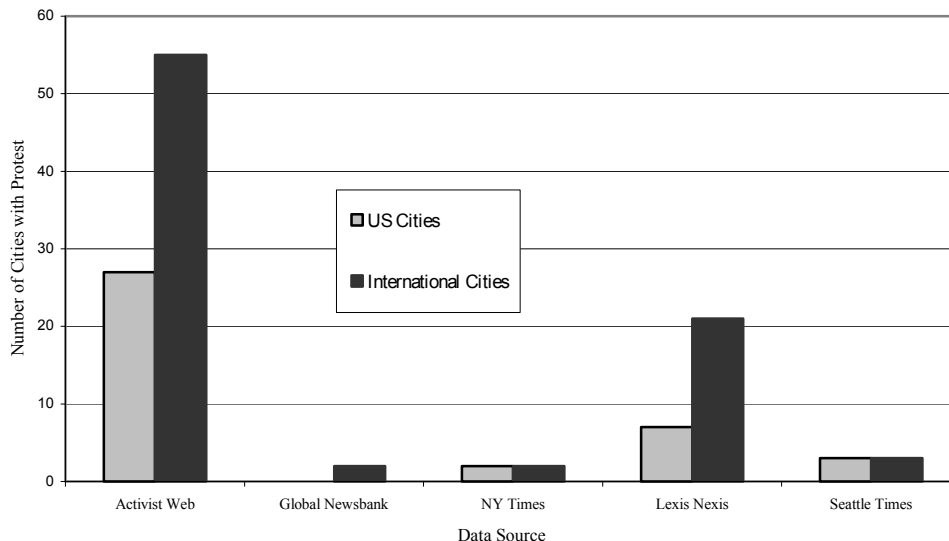
Figure 6. Reporting of Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) and Groups Protesting the World Trade Organization between November 14 and December 14, 1999



participating in Seattle followed by the *Seattle Times*. The *Seattle Times* reported 74 anti-WTO SMOs in Seattle, while the *New York Times* reported 43, activist sources identified 40, and the *Global Newsbank* 25.⁹ In sum, web-based activist sources contained higher reporting frequencies for SMOs protesting nationally and internationally, while both *Lexis Nexis* and the *Seattle Times* reported the greatest number of SMOs protesting locally in Seattle.

Global/National Contention Outside of Core City. As figure 7 demonstrates, the activist web data also identified many more cities protesting nationally and internationally against the WTO between mid November and December 14, 1999. For example, demonstrations were held the weekend before the opening day of the Seattle WTO meetings throughout France and in Geneva (European mass demonstrations are more common on weekends; Kriesi et al. 1995). A series of anti-WTO peasant protests took place in India as well. Finally, a number of cities around the United States, Britain, and Canada also held solidarity demonstrations with the Seattle protesters. Figure 7 (and figures 1, 2 and 5) thus illustrates the extent of national and transnational protest against the WTO outside of Seattle. According to the activist-based internet data, twenty-seven U.S. cities and fifty-five cities (in 19 countries) outside of the U.S. held at least one anti-WTO protest event between November 15 and December 14, 1999. *Lexis Nexis* identified seven protesting U.S. cities (Washington D.C., Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Long Beach, New York, and Portland). The *Seattle Times* registered three U.S. cities (Tacoma, Portland, and San Francisco), the *New York Times* reported two (Washington D.C. and New York), while the *Global Newsbank* reported none. *Lexis Nexis* reported twenty-one international cities protesting the WTO, the *Seattle Times* identified three (Geneva, London, and Manila), the *New York Times* two (Geneva and Mexico City), and the *Global Newsbank* two (London and Manila).

Figure 7. Reported Cities Outside of Seattle Experiencing Protest against the World Trade Organization November 15 to December 14, 1999



SUMMARY OF MEDIA SENSITIVITY FINDINGS

The activist web-based data hypotheses are supported: internet sources report the most transnational protest events at local, national, and international levels. As expected, the activist web-based data also reported more SMOs participating in contention nationally and internationally than conventional media sources. However, for SMOs protesting locally in

Seattle, *Lexis Nexis* reported the greatest number followed by the *Seattle Times*.

Comparing only the four conventional media sources, *The Seattle Times* reported more local events than *Lexis Nexis*, but the difference was not significant. The English-language based *Lexis Nexis* may be a useful substitute when a local newspaper is unavailable or language barriers obstruct transnational research at the local level. For national protest events outside of Seattle, *The New York Times* likely underreported events because of their relatively low intensity. In the next section we directly analyze the relationship between transnational protest intensity and protest-event reporting across all five media sources.

TRANSNATIONAL PROTEST INTENSITY AND MEDIA SENSITIVITY

Table 3 presents the results of multivariate logistic regressions predicting protest event reporting by the five media sources. The independent variables include measures of protest event intensity.

Independent Variables. Intensity variables include events in Seattle versus global and national anti-WTO protest, the core day of protest, size of protest, violent protest, and nonviolent disruptive protest. *Core City* coverage was measured as a dichotomous variable coded 1 for anti-WTO events that occurred inside of Seattle; events occurring outside of Seattle (in the U.S. or internationally) were coded 0. The focal day variable, entitled *Core Day* (for the opening day of the WTO conference), was coded 1 for protests occurring on that day

Table 3. Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Number of Anti-WTO Protest Events Reported by Five Media Sources on Event Intensity Variables (Standard Errors in Parentheses)^a

Independent Variables	Activist Web	Lexis Nexis	Seattle Times	Global Newsbank	New York Times
Core City	-1.14*** (.378)	1.029*** (.295)	3.755*** (.514)	2.579*** (.571)	.824 [†] (.500)
Core Day	.302 (.353)	-.263 (.288)	.920* (.404)	.919* (.415)	-.865 [†] (.504)
Size	.480* (.197)	.641*** (.160)	.911*** (.221)	.920*** (.251)	.536* (.248)
Violent	.699 (.595)	1.536*** (.471)	.387 (.615)	1.93*** (.665)	3.373*** (.678)
Disruptive	.460 (.444)	.284 (.385)	.572 (.461)	1.005* (.514)	1.122 [†] (.595)
Intercept	.875 [†] (.516)	-1.875*** (.522)	-2.422*** (.685)	-4.017*** (.859)	-3.745*** (.860)
-2 log likelihood	16.07	48.54	137.44	81.27	43.04
Chi-square	-131.434***	-169.801***	-114.871***	-100.408***	-83.124***
Pseudo R ²	.06	.13	.37	.29	.21

Notes: [†] $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$, N = 306.

^aThe data are from the master set of 306 nonredundant anti-WTO protest events occurring in Seattle, the USA, or internationally between November 15 and December 14, 1999.

(November 30, 1999) and 0 for events occurring before or after. Size was measured as a five-category interval variable. Following McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith's (1996) coding of event size, protests ranging from two to twenty-five participants were coded 1; protests with twenty-five to 100 participants were coded as 2; protests with between 101 and 1000 participants were coded as 3; protests over 1000 were coded as 4; and protests with more than 10,000 participants were coded as 5.

Violent and disruptive protests were treated as a set of two dummy variables with nonviolent conventional protest serving as the reference category (see Hardy 1993). The variable *Violent Protests* included all events that caused property damage or injuries (Tilly 2003). Violent events were coded as 1, while all other events were coded as zero. *Disruptive Events* were defined as nonconventional, nonviolent, but disruptive protests and were coded as 1, while all other events were coded as zero. Nonconventional protests included such dramatic acts as banner hangings and skydiving while nonviolent disruptive protests included sit-ins and meeting disruptions. Appendix B reports the descriptive statistics for the variables in the logistic regression equations in table 3. 13 percent of all anti-WTO protest events were violent, while an additional 20 percent involved disruption. Thus up to one-third of all protest events either involved violence or disruption, while the remaining two thirds of events included conventional nonviolent tactics such as press conferences, petitions, marches, and rallies.

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable is *coverage of the protest event* in the five media sources. Reported protest events were coded 1 and non-reported protests were coded 0. Time series plots appeared in figures 4 and 5; aggregated proportions appeared in table 1.

Results in table 3 show that activist-web sources were the least positively influenced by intensity characteristics of transnational protest events. Activist-based internet coverage was more likely to report the less intensive feature of anti-WTO protest events occurring nationally and internationally outside of Seattle.¹⁰ In contrast, all four conventional media sources were more likely to report protests in Seattle, the core local city, than national and international protest events. Even *Lexis Nexis* and the *Global Newsbank*, whose strengths include international coverage of political events, were more likely to report protest activities in Seattle than national and international anti-WTO protests.

In comparison to the activist internet data, the conventional media sources therefore emphasize the intensive characteristic of the focal protest city (e.g., Seattle) where the multilateral economic institution (e.g., WTO) conference takes place. Given that half of the reported anti-WTO events occurred outside of Seattle (51 percent), this particular tendency of activist websites will be useful to analysts that are collecting data on the national and international diffusion of transnational protest.

Both *The Seattle Times* and the *Global Newsbank* were more likely to report events that occurred on the opening day of the WTO meetings (November 30, 1999) than the days before or after. This finding has important implications for research that focuses on the emergence and decline of protest activity. Only activist and *Lexis Nexis* coverage were not positively associated with the height of protest activity on the core day. *Lexis Nexis*, *Global Newsbank* and *The New York Times* were all more likely to report violent events. The *Global Newsbank* and *The New York Times* were also positively influenced in reporting nonviolent disruptive protest.

The one intensity variable that positively influenced activist reporting was protest size. Protest size is the intensive property most likely to positively influence protest reporting (Mueller 1997b) and it positively influenced all five media sources. For the activist data, this finding may be due to activists' interest in framing themselves as a large movement with mass support (Swank 2000). Table 4 summarizes our findings about the influence of protest event intensity on media source reporting. Only one intensity variable (protest size) positively

influenced the likelihood of activist web data reporting. These results support the notion that activists' websites have a much lower threshold for reporting transnational contention. Evidently, activists have lower thresholds of violence, disruption, core day and core city occurrence, for documenting protests, than conventional media.

Table 4. Summary of Transnational Protest Event Intensity on Influence of Media Source Coverage

Media Source	Number of Protest Intensity Variables that Positively Influenced the Likelihood of Reporting Transnational Protest Events
Activist Web Data	1
The New York Times	2 (4)*
Lexis Nexis	3
The Seattle Times	3
The Global Newsbank	5

*Note: At the $p \leq .10$ level of significance, *The New York Times* was positively influenced by 4 protest-intensity characteristics.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

When a single activist website provides a detailed chronology of dozens of transnational protest events occurring in multiple countries, while conventional news sources report relatively few of these protests, analysts must develop systematic techniques for collecting and evaluating activist-based data.¹¹ Our study thus compared the reporting of transnational protest in activist-based web sources to the coverage in conventional media sources. Activist-based internet sources reported a higher proportion of protest events at the local, national, and international level. Though our small purposive sample of activist websites reported fewer SMOs protesting locally in Seattle than three of the four other news sources, the activist data identified substantially more SMOs protesting nationally and internationally outside of Seattle. The activist web-based data source was also less positively influenced by the intensity characteristics of protest events than the other four media sources. In sum, activist websites have a much lower threshold for reporting transnational protest events at the local, national, and international level.

Not all activist websites are equally valuable for collecting protest event data. We found the most useful activist websites to be those that focus on news information and reporting. Activist websites that list chronologies of protests events, archive their listserv messages and eyewitness reports from fellow activists and sympathetic journalists in the field, and maintain electronic hyper-links to newspaper articles with protest coverage contain invaluable information about transnational social movement activities. For particular transnational social movement campaigns, these websites will likely document activities of the leading activist coalitions organizing the events, such as the Mobilization for Global Justice (anti-IMF/World Bank campaigns), People's Global Action (anti-WTO campaigns), and Jobs with Justice (Free Trade in the Americas campaigns). They also offer a window

(pun intended) to the activist-based news services that cover a wide range of anti-globalization-type events, such as the Independent Media Center, Mid-Atlantic Infoshop, and A-Infos.

However, when using activist-based web sources to construct protest event databases, caution is recommended. Most importantly, analysts need to develop procedures to validate event occurrence. One possible approach is to use local conventional press reports. Local media coverage may provide a means to crosscheck activist-based reports (Franzosi 1987; Mueller 1997a; Sommer and Scarritt 1999; Oliver and Myers 1999). For at least large cities (and many smaller ones) in North America and Europe, activist-based internet accounts of the occurrence and description of a protest event may be empirically verified by examining such independent sources as local on-line press reports where the event(s) took place. Given the relative infancy of activist-based websites and listservs, though, more research is needed to determine the feasibility of using the local press and *Lexis Nexis* to examine validity of online activist sources.

In addition to discretion regarding validity issues of activist internet data, there are also limits to the kinds of research designs and types of studies that rely exclusively on activist based data. Since most activist websites began to emerge in the late 1990s, the information they contain is largely about recent transnational protest campaigns. Cross-sectional research designs using countries, states, or cities as units of analysis will thus be easier to construct than longitudinal studies that cover several years. Research using activist web data to examine cross-national variation in anti-globalization protest would be most successful for time frames between 1998 and the present.

Finally, activist websites best provide information on the kinds of movements they represent and into which they are integrated. Newspapers and *Lexis Nexis* may provide superior data for the kinds of contention that are not endorsed by activist websites. This will be especially evident for countries, regions, and groups that lack access to digital technology and/or allies with the resources and expertise to design high power websites (Castells 2001; DiMaggio et al. 2001).

This study, nonetheless, provides preliminary evidence that activist on-line data offer social movement analysts new opportunities for data collection. As recently as ten years ago the financial costs and time involved in accessing newspapers (in hardcopy and microfilm form) from a variety of locations greatly restricted the scope and richness of the data collected. In addition, collecting hardcopy bulletins, press releases, and activist literature from more than one or a few protest groups used to be quite cumbersome. Today, multiple groups distribute a wide range of protest event information online for instantaneous accessibility. On-line activist web sources break down previous temporal, geographical, and financial barriers in social movements research.

Internet activist data offer extensive and multidimensional information on local, national, and international political contention, and hence, provide evidence of the transnational nature of the movement beyond the streets of the core protest city. Given the common organizing strategy in recent transnational protest campaigns in Canada, the United States, and Europe, a central demonstration at the site of a multilateral economic institution meeting combined with dozens of simultaneous solidarity actions around the globe—the activist web-based data collection approach may be indispensable to constructing data bases that cover such a vast range of protest and dissent. Indeed, many of the same activist websites disseminating information about the anti-WTO protests also contain information about transnational protests elsewhere, such as in Prague, Vancouver, Washington D.C., Montreal, Bangkok, Cancun, Genoa, Doha, Gothenburg, Nice, Porto Alegre, Quito, Evian, Barcelona, Thessaloniki, and Miami.

In sum, whereas activist internet sources offer a rich source of data about a new kind of protest, the information gleaned from conventional mass media offers a less comprehensive understanding of the most distinctive transnational properties of these protests. Just as

transnational movements find the World Wide Web to be a useful avenue to organize protest and broadcast information (Castells 2001), scholars interested in explaining the rise and future trajectory of such movements will find the Web to be a key source of data about such movements. To the internet, from the internet: As protesters move online, conflict researchers will increasingly find that extracting information from activist online sources offers new opportunities beyond conventional data collection techniques.¹²

APPENDICES

Appendix A. List of Activist Websites, Listservs, and Newspaper Links

Activist Websites and Listservs	News and Wire Service Links to Activist Websites
www.change-links.org	Associated press (http://wire.ap.org/)
http://forward.to/walkout/listserv	Boston Phoenix (www.bostonphoenix.com/)
http://n30listbot.com	Cleveland Free Times (www.freetimes.com)
www.zmag.org	Financial Times (http://news.ft.com/home/rw)
www.bak.spc/N30london/world.html	ICON (www.iconquest.com)
www.Indymedia.org	La Jornada (www.jornada.unam.mx/)
www.infoshop.org/	LA Weekly (www.laweekly.com/)
www.adbusters.org/	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com/)
www.seattlewto.org	MSNBC (www.msnbc.com/news/default.asp)
www.freespeech.org	New York Times (www.nytimes.com/)
www.oilcompanies.org	Reuters (www.reuters.com/news.jhtml)
www.earthfirstjournal.org/efj/	Revolutionary Worker (http://rwor.org/)
www.elksoft.com	San Francisco Bay Guardian (www.sfbg.com/36/31/index.html)
www.globalexchange.org	Seattle Post-Intelligencer (http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/)
www.globalizethis.org	Seattle Times (http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/home/)
www.nowto.fsnet.co.uk/news.html	Seattle Weekly (www.seattleweekly.com/)
www.jubilee2000uk.org	Village Voice (www.villagevoice.com/)
www.labor.net	Wall Street Journal (http://online.wsj.com/public/us)
www.ruckus.org/	Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com/)
www.wtocaravan.org	

Appendix B. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
November 30	306	0	1	.48	.50
Global/National	306	0	1	.51	.50
Size	306	1	5	2.22	1.00
Violent	306	0	1	.13	.34
Disrupt	306	0	1	.20	.40
Valid N	306				

ENDNOTES

¹ We follow Tarrow's (2001: 11) definition of transnational social movements as "socially mobilized groups with constituents in at least two states, engaged in sustained contentious interaction with powerholders in at least one state other than their own, or against an international institution, or a multinational economic actor."

² Figures 1 and 2 present reported national and international anti-WTO protests events drawn from the master database used in this article. In addition, we also mapped anti-WTO events in Brazil and Argentina that were reported only in the Peoples Global Action Bulletin No. 5 (Peoples Global Action 2000 at www.nadir.org). This source is not incorporated in the quantitative analyses in the present study.

³ The obvious exception is when the central financial meeting/conference takes place in a remote region or authoritarian country (Smith 2001). In these cases, some national and international solidarity protest events may be more intensive than the events at the site of the meetings.

⁴ For example, as of November 2002 the transnational activist website of the Independent Media Center (IMC) (www.indymedia.org) claims on the first page of its homepage that it is "a collective of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage."

⁵ Smith (2001) found that a single activist website (www.n30.org) reported anti-WTO protests in over twenty countries in November and December of 1999.

⁶ Repeated events (reported in more than one source) were not included in the master data set. Where there was a conflict in reportage of a property, such as protest size, of a particular protest event between more than one media source we took the mean.

⁷ On its website, the Independent Media Center (IMC) provides a brief autobiographical sketch: "The Independent Media Center (www.indymedia.org), was established by various independent and alternative media organizations and activists in 1999 for the purpose of providing grassroots coverage of the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle. The center acted as a clearinghouse of information for journalists, and provided up-to-the-minute reports, photos, audio and video footage through its website... Through a decentralized and autonomous network, hundreds of media activists setup independent media centers in London, Canada, Mexico City, Prague, Belgium, France, and Italy over the next year. IMCs have since been established on every continent, with more to come."

⁸ Many individual protest events in the internet database were constructed from multiple sources (e.g., activist websites and electronic newspaper articles). This procedure is similar to social movement analysts' use of multiple newspaper articles to construct a single protest event (Tarrow 1989; Olzak 1992).

⁹ Though our small purposive sample of activist websites and listservs uncovered only 40 protest organizations in Seattle, our larger project employed a larger sample of activist websites that allowed us to identify 248 protest organizations.

¹⁰ At the same time, the activist internet data reported a significantly greater proportion of protest events occurring in Seattle than the other four conventional media sources (see Table 2).

¹¹ This trend seems to hold for other types of transnational protest such as the global anti-war movement in 2003. A single activist website (www.unitedforpeace.org) listed 603 cities around the world that held an anti-war demonstration the weekend of February 15, 2003. Another U.S. based activist website (<http://nyspc.net>) provides a catalog of 230 high schools and colleges (including sponsoring organization, city, and state) participating in a student strike/walkout on March 5, 2003 against war in the Middle East.

¹² With apologies to Mao's mass-line philosophy, "From the masses, to the masses."

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