

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

FEAST, FAMINE, AND INDIFFERENCE.¹

Reference:

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Many social movements aim to influence policy agendas by defining new social problems through media coverage of their protest activities. Instead of lobbying or negotiating, social movements tend to display protest activities. By resorting to demonstrations or civil disobedience, movement activists challenge the control that institutional actors (i.e. Administration, political parties and pressure groups) exert upon politics and mainstream media. Indeed, the effectiveness of social movements might be assessed by measuring: (1) how political elites set policy agendas that either reflect or ignore social movements demands; and (2) how media agendas are either shaped or unresponsive to social movement tactics (Klandermans 1989: 387-389).

I present the interdependence of policy agenda-building, media agenda-building, and social movement mobilization as they apply to a major yet under reported European social movement: the Spanish antimilitary movement.² The analysis focuses on how social movements, institutional actors and the media all bring to bear distinctive resources, strategies, and alliances in an evolving and interrelated way. The outcomes of media-movements relations can be located in terms of models of power that help to organize other case studies.

Bulding agendas for new politics

The agenda-building approach addresses the core questions of the two major schools for studying social movements.³ "New Social Movements" theorists (Touraine 1981; Offe 1985; Melucci 1989, 1996) consider that protest mobilization denounces structural problems

¹ This chapter is based on an article published in *Mobilization* (Sampedro, 1997b) but it extends the research period of the case study. The author thanks Hank Johnstone for sharpening his arguments and encouraging extensive revisions of previous manuscripts.

² I refer to the social movement, broadly defined, as the antimilitary movement. Its first phase (early 70's - 1988) will be labeled the conscientious objection movement, as a reflection of efforts to win legal recognition of conscientious objection to Spain's military draft. The second phase is called the *insumisión* movement, the term used throughout Spain to refer to the campaign of total rejection of the military draft, including the conscientious objection option, based on the principle of antimilitarism. *Insumisión* might be translated as "insubordination" or "refusal to submit".

³ See the discussion of both approaches in Meyer, 1991: 139-142; and Neidhardt and Rucht, 1991.

challenging dominant ideologies. Changing social consensus, moves the activists to search for a "space of public representation" in the media (Melucci 1996:218-228). The news may shape public opinion and how social issues are discussed (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Then, social movements use the media to project certain events and features in a particular "public image" of their ideology and goals (Van Zoonen 1996: 213-214).

From a different perspective, the school of Resource Mobilization examine social movements as policy entrepreneurs that demand access to official agendas (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1987). In order to attract support, protesters must consider the external conditions that hinder or facilitate their success. A favorable "political opportunity structure" consists of stable political alignments, formal channels of access, and intra-elite conflict (Tarrow 1988). In the same vein, the factors that affect the media agenda might be labeled the "media opportunity structure" (Sampedro 1997b) that helps social movements to challenge public policies, to demand access to institutional agendas, and to attract potential supporters (Snow and Benford 1988).

Recent research connects the ideological and the political dimensions of social movements. The use of rhetorical arguments is assumed to increase the opportunities to act in a given political context (Tarrow 1998, Diani 1996). And "master frames" - dominant arguments or images - explain cycles of protest (Snow and Benford 1992). The basic idea is that social movements energize their peculiar tension between claims for broad ideological change and for concrete policy demands when questioning official agendas and frames, both in politics and in the media. This perspective always characterized the policy agenda literature.

Seminal authors, Cobb and Elder (1971; Elder and Cobb 1984; Kingdon, 1984), pointed to three processes for accessing new issues into governmental plans. First comes the ideological process of framing: attributing causes for collective privation, personifying responsibility and offering solutions. Movements' grievances can not be attributable "to fate, or nature" in order to call for governmental action (Stone 1989:299). For example, feminism and pacifism present "the woman's question" and "peace" as issues of real politics linked to discrimination and militarism, respectively. Finally, social movements must advance policy solutions and find political authorities to be encharged of the new policies.

As seen above, political science and social movements theory adopt a constructionist perspective when addressing the dynamics of social movements. Media scholars join the constructivist perspective when they study agenda-building instead of agenda-setting. Agenda-setting research (McCombs and Shaw 1972; Protess and McCombs 1991) demonstrates that news organizations tell the audience the issues *to think about* and the frames for *how to think about* politics (Iyengar 1991, McCombs 1993:62). Media coverage could help the activists to persuade the public (and even the political elites) of their demands and arguments. But most movement-media studies deny that hypothesis (Kielwobicz and Scherer 1988). More generally, striking differences exist among the frames presented by the media and those held by the audience (Graber 1988; Neuman, Just and Crigler 1992).

Especially important are the news frames that might influence the audience perception of its own capacity to affect institutional politics (Gamson 1992). Media frames (Altheide 1976; Entman 1993) function as social movement studies suggest: "as forms of political rhetoric rather than as belief systems" (Diani 1996: 1057-1058).⁴ First, news sources may try to impose their

⁴ Robert Entman (1993: 52) points that media frames "promote a particular problem definition, causal

agendas and frames to (de)mobilize the public and competing groups (Gitlin 1980; Entman and Rojecki 1993). Later on they might try to convince them.

The agenda-building approach (Gandy 1982) focuses on the privileges that the media grant to certain groups for monopolizing public discourse. Media coverage may offer social movements a discursive platform for interacting with other policy actors. The mass media have become "the arena for the contended definition of what is political, of what belongs to the polis [...] transforming [...] the society inner dilemmas [...] into politics (literally into something concerning the polis)" (Melucci 1996:221). In fact, mass media are critical levers to foster and reallocate institutional attention upon new issues and calling for new policies to be adopted. For example, social movements usually go from police repression of protest activities, to court litigations and then - or simultaneously - to political debates over their demands. This chain would hardly occur without media coverage of protest activities.

We need to know to which extent social movements can access and frame its demands in mainstream media. This implies studying the "agenda game" (Protest et al. 1991) as it is played out among different policy actors and the media itself through a symbolic struggle that filters new political issues, and how to think about them. More than stressing a coincidental history of different disciplines, the preceding discussion sustains a parallel analysis of political and discursive power. Silence and agenda exclusion conform the hidden "faces of power" (Lukes 1974).

Models of political and communicative power

Depending on the political context, newsworthy issues and events may be fixed by the controlling elite, through open debates, or through institutional patterns for news- and policy-making. Following Michael Mann (1993: 44-91), we can think of movements-media relations in terms of three models of power: pure elitism, pluralism and institutional elitism. These models are ideal-typical in that they locate real world relations in terms of pure models based on nature and degree of elite control (see table 1). They provide an analytically convenient way of organizing and systematizing complex relationships which are far from static. Regarding the Spanish antimilitary movement, these models represent distillations of complex state-media relationships that existed over time.

Table 1. *Policy and Media Outcomes of Social Protest by Models of Media-State Relations.*

MODEL OF POWER	POLICY AGENDA	MEDIA AGENDA
Pure Elitism	(a) Inactivity (b) Repression	(a) Silence (b) Marginalization
Pluralism	Political innovation	Coverage of protest and/or of official controversy.

interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation". These are exactly the same phases signaled for collective action frames (Snow and Bendford 1992).

In pluralist competition, movement organizations mobilize the media like a resource at their disposal. It has been suggested that a rational exchange of information for publicity - one that mirrors rational market transactions - occurs between journalists and news sources (Blumler and Gurevitch 1981). "The movement wants persuasion and the media search for sensation" in an "exchange" or "transaction" (Wolsfeld 1984; 1991) model. Protest activities provide the media with personalized, emotionally laden and conflictive dramas. These are highly valued media commodities which deserve high visibility coverage, sometimes enabling a handful of activists to achieve broad public attention. However, a fair exchange between movements' sources and conventional journalists seems far from real. As Gamson and Wolsfeld (1993: 117) argue "those who are most needy have least access to the media services they desire and pay a higher price for them - an example of the principle of cumulative inequality". The pluralist exchange model considers the media as neutral resources for reaching the audience. Although, institutional and political constraints distort the exchange of news information.

In order to effectively manage news coverage, a social movement needs (1) stable networks for media relations, (2) internal division of labor between those members devoted to activism and those entrusted with press relations, (3) control over supporters to schedule and sustain protests easy to be covered by the journalists; and (4) clear-cut collective identity and demands to project to the media. Instead, social movements produce "cultural modes not governed by cost-benefit calculations but by symbolic waste" (Melucci 1996: 359). Often social movements pose ambiguous proposals through different, sometimes contradictory ways (Van Zoonen 1996).

Gamson (1995: 104) observes that: "[media discourse]... often obstructs and only rarely and unevenly contributes to the development of collective action frames". Negative media effects upon social movements are rooted in journalistic work routines and professional news values. The sociology of news-making shares with elitism a critical tone (Entman 1989; Bennett 1988, 1990, 1996), but the explanation rests now on the media institutional "logics".

Institutional elitism is the model most characteristic of Western democracies. It recognizes that news production is an institutionally embedded process, conditioned by political context, which has its own routines and norms. The media privilege certain interests and, at the same time, may create room for the expression of social demands. In a sense, the institutional model combines elitist and pluralist types because it emphasizes asymmetries of power and the unintended consequences of institutional patterns (Hall and Taylor 1996).

Power is distributed unevenly across social groups, and it tends to be monopolized by networks of best positioned actors. States, parties, courts, etc. and the media structure power relations, since they maintain distinctive forms of interaction with pressure groups. Official agenda-building lurches from one extended phase of stability to another, as short periods of change are followed by new equilibria that reestablish the position of dominant groups. Agenda-building reflects "constantly reshaped systems of limited participation" (Baumgartner and Jones 1992). Officials and journalists establish new routines or alter the existing ones to support their interests. And the role of social movements is to demand new policies that have yet to become routinized, institutionalized. In limited cases, major mobilizations can break policy monopolies.

The institutional model also recognizes how state structures shape social movements. David Meyer (1991) observes that social movements can be *co-opted* by being incorporated into existing institutions, e.g. putting leaders on advisory boards. One might also speak of *institutional marginalization* in which conflict is managed by commissions of experts, detoured

to the courts, or confined to bureaucratic proceedings (at a bureaucratic pace). Enmeshing movements in the legal system is a common practice. The net effect of these official strategies is to shuttle movement demands out of the public eyes.

The power of institutional structures also biases media agendas. Media coverage of protest is shaped by "epistemological and organizational features of news organizations" (Van Zoonen 1996). Institutional conventions ingrained in daily journalistic practices structure the contest for representing policies in favor of those groups that already possess institutional resources. Mainstream media is "path dependent" on "legitimate politics" (Hallin 1986) because official sources provide a constant and reliable flux of information for making "different" news stories on a regular basis. Institutional actors usually set the parameters of political conflict through the media because of their accessibility and predictability. More subtly, journalistic routines find legitimation in institutional sources because their social authority implies objectivity (Tuchman 1978, Gans 1980, Fishman 1988). Instead, social protest must always carry the weight of proving its legitimacy. All this means that media agendas are more accessible for elites than for social activists. Political control usually entails news management (Wolsfeld 1997) or, to put it another way, "the political opportunity structures shape media opportunity structures" (Sampedro 1997a; 1997b).

However, journalistic routines may also facilitate movement coverage. Social movements may influence news agendas by moderating their demands and adopting a more consensual frame or working closely with official agencies that are regularly followed by journalists. In this case, the cooptation of a social movement occurs in the form of institutionalized movement sources, as listed in the bottom right box in table 1. When a movement refuses to moderate, another variety of cooptation derives from media structures. I have in mind activists' strategies to generate shocking and novel events that fit the news values of dramatism and surprise, and capitalize on journalists' attention. In these cases, it is a real possibility that journalists frame protestors as sensationalists, not because of state directives or elitist ties but because of the commercial imperative to win market share. Shocking news stories are easier and faster to "manufacture" than background reports, and they sell better. The result is that the movement is sensationalized, trivialized, and coopted. If movement leaders become "media stars" obsessed with gaining attention, they can further contribute to sensationalization (Gitlin 1980: 146-178). In sum, through media institutionalization social movements may be coopted by becoming conventional or eccentric news sources.

Finally, institutionalized media agendas may react to social movements with indifference. This corresponds to the shift of contention to bureaucratic processes, discussed above. Contention that is shifted to judicial or administrative arenas where conflict simmers without resolution, claims are asserted without drama, and debates rage without clear villains or victims, is not newsworthy. Lengthy and intricate institutional proceedings obscure the broader storyline and make a news plot that is hard for audiences to follow (Cook 1996). If any story line is forthcoming at all, it will coincide with the "trail of power" (Bennett 1996) drawing upon institutional and bureaucratized politics. If activists are unable to generate elite disagreement or innovative reframings of their demands, protest will fade from the media.

In the pages that follow I apply these three models in a longitudinal study of incremental - although not continuous - institutionalization of Spanish media. Some of the processes observed will be generalizable to other issues and other political contexts. Prior to 1976, the movement was effectively marginalized by Francoist dictatorship and media control. At the

other end of the study's temporal frame (1996), we encounter news agenda-building integrated into institutionalized relations with political elites but opening public discourse to antidraft protests.

Antimilitarism and politics

Military service for adult males is still compulsory in Spain. Serious consideration of conscientious objection (hereafter CO) as an alternative service was denied for fifty years: during the Francoist dictatorship (1939-1975), during Spain's democratic transition (1976-1982), and during the democratic consolidation (1982-1996).⁵ Policies ranged from repression and imprisonment under Franco, to bureaucratic stonewalling, symbolic pronouncements and temporary deferments after Franco's death (1975). The first cases of CO were mostly religiously inspired. After 1975, politically oriented CO appeared, with their numbers growing each year.

The military was the major antagonist against the democratic transition and considered CO as a direct attack. Even though the 1978 Constitution provided a right to CO, and a CO law had been passed in 1984 it took until 1989 to put into effect a civilian service in the place of military conscription. The main social movement, the Movimiento de Objeción de Conciencia (MOC) and other antimilitary organizations responded by launching a campaign of civil disobedience (*insumisión*) against all compulsory military and civilian service, thereby risking severe imprisonment. They argued that accepting the alternative service continued to legitimate not only the draft but the military itself. As a result, the Spanish antidraft movement grew at an unprecedented rate.

Table 2. *Recognitions of Conscientious Objection by the Spanish State, 1986-1997*

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
6407	8897	11049	13140	27389	28051	42454	68209	77121	72832	93272	127304

Source: *El País*, February 17, 1998, p. 18.

Spanish CO rates are the largest of the world. By 1993, those choosing total rejection of the conscripted system (called *insumisos*) reached 9,000 and enjoyed broad popular support (Ibarra 1992, Sampedro 1997a, Ibarra et al. 1998). In other European countries total objectors remain about a dozen cases. Forced by this pressure, in 1996 the government announced the end of military conscription by the year 2,000. Spain may be considered the first case where a social movement forced the transition to a fully professional Armed Forces in peace time.⁶

⁵ In 1996 the period of socialist rule ended with the election of a Conservative government. This was the second wave of elite replacement since the end of Francoism. The first was the replacement of center-right UCD elites by the socialists (PSOE) in 1982.

⁶ The end of compulsory draft have usually responded to geo-estrategic and technological reasons. Compared to the anti-draft movement during the Vietnam-War, the Spanish antimilitary movement displayed a greater level of mobilization without the impulse of an unpopular war (Sampedro, 1997a).

Agendas of protest and information

Graphic 1 shows the media coverage of the CO issue and the changing ability of the different actors to promote their position as measured by main "news promoters" (Molotch and Lester 1974) in terms of what activities and declarations had prompted journalists to write the news stories. We coded all CO coverage of the three main national newspapers from 1976 to 1996.⁷ *El Pais* (aligned with the socialists), *ABC* (conservative) and *El Mundo* (a more popular and adversarial daily that began printing in 1989) were assumed to set the agendas for other media through a "cascade effect" (Noelle-Neumann and Mathes 1987).

Graphic 1 also presents the relationship between news coverage and CO numbers increasing rapidly after 1989 when the *insumisión* campaign began. Also, it is represented a further influence on news coverage: the level of elite disagreement, measured by the parliamentary initiatives from opposition parties. The data are grouped according to five periods (indicated by vertical broken lines) that distinguish different media agenda-policy agenda models. I discuss now the main players' strategies to influence both CO politics and public debate according to these five periods.

[Graphic 1 AT THE END OF THE TEXT]

Period I: Transition from Francoism (1976-1977)

Francoist repression was replaced by benign governmental inactivity. In 1976 an executive decree recognized CO on religious grounds only and condemned the secularly motivated conscientious objectors to prosecution. Coverage of protest demanding new legislation peaked in 1977, suggesting a pluralist model. Because of movement refusal and media attention to innovative non-violent protests, the 1976 decree was never implemented. In November 1977, the Defense Ministry privately provided for the "unofficial exemption" of all the objectors who dared to apply while maintaining a hard line position against protesters. This measure was never printed in official bulletins and its publication was punishable as an offense against the Armed Forces, effectibly silencing the media for the next six years and ending pluralistic coverage (with two exceptions that I discuss below).

Period II: Conflict Management by "Hidden Agenda" (1978-1984)

Most senior officers were holdovers from Francoism, and gave rise to continuous rumors of coups d'etat. On February 23, 1981, the Spanish parliament was seized by a Colonel in the Civil Guard. Thus, the government avoided a permanent political solution of CO while simultaneously implementing a "hidden agenda". Between 1977 and 1984, many objectors were

⁷ I thank José López Rey for his help in coding the news stories and the political initiatives for period 1993-1996. For extended methodological instructions see Sampedro 1997a: 335-339; 1997b: 192.

amnestied. Subsequent objectors were exempted from military duty until 1989 - a policy of "concealment by postponement". This way, politicians placated the military by avoiding the pressure of a social movement that had already defined itself as "antimilitaristic".

The policy of "unofficial exemption" noted above was kept secret by pressure, self-censorship and threat of military tribunal. As figure 1 demonstrates, media reaction was to avoid coverage except for two peaks in 1980 and 1983. The first represented coverage by *El Pais* of twenty CO activists who had been imprisoned for making public the "unofficial draft exemption". The second peak occurred in 1983 during heated parliamentary debates over the first secular CO law presented by the socialists. Figure 1 shows that politicians predominated over other news promoters.

Period III: Enlargement of Conflict and Debate (1985-1988)

Media coverage suggests pluralist competition during this period. Movement's presence in the news resulted from mobilizations against yearly draft calls that preceded the *insumisión* campaign. The Spanish socialist party was swept into office in 1982, but contrary to the hopes of many activists, its policy was intransigence and stonewalling rather than accommodation of movement's demands. The Ministry of Defense imposed severe limitations on the right to claim CO in 1985. Facing the movement's mobilization, the socialists shifted movement challenges to bureaucratic agencies. Moreover, changes to the CO laws had to be sanctioned by the highest courts, further delaying resolution and removing the issue from public scrutiny until 1988 when CO legislation was concluded. In the end, this legislation was challenged by the *insumisión* campaign (1989). Mobilization of increasing numbers of CO and total objectors made it impossible to keep the conscription issue on the back burner of the official agenda any longer.

Period IV: Outburst of Conflict and Debate (1989-1992)

News coverage increased significantly each year during the *insumisión* campaign and peaked in 1991. Graphic 1 shows that movement organizations were the primary news promoter. The news share of the politicians and the judiciary reflected heated parliamentary debates over the model for the Armed Forces, and ongoing judicial proceedings against the *insumisos*. A second peak of information occurred in March 1992 when a not-guilty sentence was passed, generating an impressive news share for judiciary.

Period V: Institutionalization (July 1992 - March 1996)

Media coverage declined, ignoring the increase of activists, judicial proceedings and court sentences - some favorable to *insumisos* and others upholding their prosecution. Several

news-making patterns account for the news decline. Journalistic routines and professional norms led to indifference towards the movement because of the shift of conflict to the judicial arena. Influential political elites agreed in late 1991 that the movement's goal of draft abolition was simply unattainable. The journalists seemed to accept the official definition of the movement as no longer relevant. Reports about new CO policies in 1994 and electoral promises in 1996 generated the high news shares of politicians and of media (see graphic 1). The overall decline of coverage suggests a characteristic pattern of "either feast or famine" (Baumgartner and Jones 1992) in which the media remains attentive to intense conflict but soon become saturated. How this process played out warrants closer attention.

Feast, famine and indifference

No newspaper could avoid reporting the impact of the *insumisión* campaign when it matched Spain's participation in the Gulf War during 1991. News shares of the movement peaked. Coverage in 1992 changed dramatically, with judicial and political elites becoming the primary news promoters. Social protest was replaced by institutional conflicts within the political class and between the government and the judiciary. In March 1992 a judge absolved a young Catholic *insumiso* - the first to be set free - but Socialist President Felipe González asked the Attorney General to imprison all *insumisos*. A year after, a second activist was found not guilty. A breakdown of news coverage for these two trials demonstrates the media saturation by 1993.

The sentence of March 1992 attracted fifty-eight news stories in the three newspapers, compared to just five stories for next acquitted sentence. *El País* and *ABC* offered just one story each (four and three paragraphs long, respectively). However, this last case deserved much more media attention because of its social implications. The 1993 sentence applied to 200,000 draftees because the *insumiso* had refused to perform the military service. Instead, the 1992 sentence was more limited, affecting only 40,000 men, because this *insumiso* was tried for refusing to perform the alternative civilian sentence.

A plausible explanation must take all the actors into account as shown in Table 2. First, the government decreased the media appeal of the *insumisión* by shifting the debate to judiciary processes. Contradictory court sentences (which carried neither imprisonment nor freedom for all *insumisos*) blurred the differences between civil disobedience, conscientious objection, and draft-dodging. Officials took advantage by simply ignoring the sentences that threatened their own position, thereby marginalizing the successes of the movement. Second, in 1991 a parliamentary consensus was reached on a semi-professional army by the year 2000. This was an apparent success for the movement, but it was accompanied by increase of penalties for *insumisión* and new legislation to decrease the number of CO recognitions. After these laws were passed, the number of parliamentary initiatives of the opposition decreased dramatically (see figure 1), leading to media silence.

Third, "judicial marginalization" was reflected in news gathering routines. Journalists increasingly turned to institutional sources as shown in table 2. Figure 1 also shows how political news promoters enjoyed the highest shares from 1993 onwards, followed by the judiciary elites. In 1995 and 1996 the movement achieved the last and least news share, while the trials of

insumisos and recognitions of CO outnumbered those of previous years. Compared to the drama of the Gulf War mobilizations and the first trials, subsequent judiciary episodes seemed irrelevant.

Table 3. Promoters of News Stories for the First Two *Insumiso* Acquittals.

Insumiso Trial	CO Movement	Politicians	Judiciary	Media
March 1992	9	19	22	10
February 1993	0	1	4	0

In sum, the institutional patterns that had previously impelled the movement's media presence lost strength. The CO movement was thwarted by a mix of political strategy, media saturation, and journalistic routine. The all-volunteer Armed Forces announced in 1996 demanded enormous military budget and full integration into NATO, both contrary to public opinion. The fortunes of the antimilitary movement to question this policy agenda were shaped by a constricting media agenda which clearly gave advantage to the political class as the main news promoter during the last 5 years of study (see figure 1).

It is important to emphasize, however, that the media is not just a simple tool of politicians. Had it not been for the CO stories of *El Pais* between 1978-1988 the movement would probably have been headed for extinction. The climax of the *insumisión* campaign (1989-1991) set in motion a wave of media interest opened to different proposals for draft abolition, court trials, and journalistic efforts to report, comment and measure the turmoil. Thus, the media was both the vehicle by which the movement was brought into the public arena and the means that officials used to stake out their own positions.

An intensive content analysis of the 1988 coverage in *El Pais* and *ABC* traced how the media may have helped the movement in framing the *insumisión* campaign (Sampedro 1997a: 263-294). We found that the media played a positive role for activists. Half of the paragraphs both in *El Pais* and *ABC* framed *insumisión* as legitimate social protest. Most policy proposals printed demanded alternative CO policies. Moreover, only 2% of policy proposals presented by *El Pais* and 6% in *ABC* defended legal punishment. The compulsory military conscription was labelled as too conservative and, even, militaristic. Clearly, this coverage opened the policy debate when it seemed closed.

While the main press performed as a "space of opposition", during 1988 it privileged institutional sources. Routine news such as conferences, leaks and press releases amounted to almost half of the information provided by both dailies. They also preferred sources closest to their editorial lines. The Ministry of Defense relied on conservative *ABC* to criticize the initiatives of the Ministry of Justice, which were all advanced by *El Pais*. Therefore, the media rarely gave full coverage of the movement's ideology and strategy.

Journalistic routines and editorial bias imposed additional constraints. The newspapers

printed news stories about peaceful demonstrations on pages dominated by stories of terrorism or on the crime pages. Apparently, the media considered only the activities of professional politicians as worthy of the political pages. Stories grouped with military issues happened only 20% of the time in *El Pais* and a scant 2% in *ABC*. Thus the movement was "framed by juxtaposition", suggesting a conscious editorial decision by *ABC*. Established options on draft policy were obviously favored in both newspapers that never portrayed the insumisión master frame as globally antimilitaristic (i.e "Not to the Armed Forces" but only as "Not to the draft"). The general conclusion is that while news coverage of a movement might play a key role, it must nevertheless pass several filters: standards of journalism, constraints of layout and composition, and congruence with elites aligned with the media.

Until 1991, the media *opened* the policy agenda by introducing new issues, participants, and solutions that officials were forced to take into consideration. Media coverage also *reset* the official agenda by discussing flaws and fissures in official policy, thereby rekindling debate that was artificially closed. And finally, media critical coverage *blocked* the official plans of CO laws implementation and repression of resisters. Media coverage clearly influenced the political agenda. But powerful structural constraints such as elite alliances, economic considerations, news-making routines or political inertia cushioned media effects.

What we might call "a media politics of social protest" (Sampedro, 1997b) consists of spreading and accelerating policy controversies in front of the public; that is, to strategically place certain demands to encourage political debates and competition among policy actors. This strategy may eventually result in policy innovation, but as the case of the CO movement demonstrates, change is incrementally slow and may not necessarily coincide with the movement's core demands.

Conclusion

In contemporary societies, the best that a social movement might expect is that protest mobilization demonstrates (and in some cases deepens) contradictions or insufficiencies in existing policy alternatives. Through media coverage of protest, the activists might open the institutionalized controversy, reset the contents, or block unpopular initiatives. Rarely are the activists able to determine the policy agenda. For short pluralistic periods, movements may react to and counteract the elitist control of the agenda, but in the long run they are faced with institutional pressures to close the policy agendas they challenge. These institutional pressures are reinforced by parallel processes in the media. Political elites have resources that enable them to co-opt movements by bureaucratizing protest and diffusing original demands. Under these circumstances, media attention reaches saturation quite soon. Another possibility is to trivialize and sensationalize a movement, although we did not see this in the present case.

By the same token, news organizations can be active contributors to the policy agenda. While institutional constraints are almost always at work, the media may offer a "space of representation" of new ideologies or a "space of opposition" by injecting alternative issues into decision-making circles. Because journalistic attention focuses mainly on official activities, media opportunities for a movement are typically dependent on existing political opportunities, especially the level of institutional controversy. When the state exercises greater influence over the media, as in the elitist model, "symbolic politics" based on artificial consensus and mere rhetoric (Edelman 1987) or "placebo politics" which mask social privations (Stringer and Richardson 1980) can easily close the media agenda.

The general conclusion is that political control and news management usually go hand-in-hand, guaranteeing the stability of official agendas. A "soft" version of elite hegemony seems appropriate. In advanced democracies, elites do not baldly "manufacture consent" through the media nor are the major media simply propaganda organs of the state or parties. But mass communication mostly inhibits the expansion of alternative ideologies and collective action through its own rules. The media institutional rules tend to validate the political class and, in the long run, dilute social protest.

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Graphic 1. News promoters in El País and ABC (May 10 1976-June 1993) and El Mundo (Oc. 1989 - June 1996)

