

THE EBBS AND FLOWS OF GULF WAR PROTESTS

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Operation Desert Storm was not a "patriotic triumph" for many U.S. citizens. Numerous Americans silently disapproved of the war, while others defiantly created a movement of Gulf War dissenters. This reenactment of the antiwar movement will be the focus of this paper. More specifically, the paper will trace the inception, growth and decline of this oppositional movement. Methodologically, this paper studies the movement's ebbs and flows through a content analysis of newspapers and an ethnographic case study. In the end, this study reveals that the slow and steady growth of the movement during the last months of 1990 was surpassed by a rash of movement activity around the January onset of the war. Yet, this flurry of activity around the middle of January became a two-week milestone as the protest size began to shrink in February and early March.

In 1991 the United States waged a ferocious war on Iraq. Despite George Bush's insistence that "there is no antiwar movement out there," millions of Americans were voicing their objections to pollsters. However, this disapproval of the war was not limited to survey responses as thousands of Americans expressed their discontent by protesting in the streets.

By the mid 1990's the existence of these protests had faded from the public's consciousness. Combining with this "normal citizen" amnesia is the fact that even some insightful peace scholars have minimized the size of the protests. For example, peace historian Charles Chatfield (1992) wrote, "So brief and militarily successful was the [Gulf] war . . . that no significant opposition evolved" (p. xi) and Sociologists Sam Marullo et. al. (1996) said that the Gulf War inspired only a brief "'minisurge' in peace activism" (p. 10). This paper challenges these characterizations by providing a systematic count of Gulf War protesters.

PEACE MOVEMENTS AND PROTEST CYCLES

A social movement can be seen as the collective process that occurs when a less powerful constituency challenges elite targets through non-electoral techniques. Such challenges are transient in nature, since mobilizations seem to appear and disappear during specific periods. When movements are "active," their intensity seems to fluctuate. Moreover, movements seem to follow episodes or stages of initial expansion and subsequent declines.

These modifications of movement size and activities have been called "mobilization spirals" (Tarrow, 1989; Lofland, 1992). Tarrow (1989) suggests that movement spirals are connected to changes in: (1) the production and mediation of symbols that justify the mobilization; (2) the formation of movement coalitions; (3) the diffusion of activity from small clusters of activists to large sectors of the general populace; (4) the invention and modifications of tactics and repertoires of contention; and (5) an increase in the intensity of conflicts with authority figures. Lofland (1992) adds that antiwar surges follow similar multidimensional patterns (i.e., the number of participants, the number of activists, the number of endorsing organizations, the types of funding sources, the extent of public support for the movement, the degree of elite approval, and changes in media packaging of the movement).

PROTESTS AGAINST THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

Earlier studies have addressed some facets of this antiwar mobilization. They have looked at the goals of the movement (Hunt and Benford, 1994; Coy and Woehrle, 1996), the extent of bystander sympathy for protesters (Pan et. al., 1993; Beamish, et. al., 1995), the structure of movement organizations (Elbaum, 1992; Epstein, 1992), the impact of protests on congressional war votes (MacDougall et. al., 1995), and the importance of identity and value commitments in antiwar activism (Swank, 1993/94; Duncan and Stewart, 1995). While these works have contributed to a rudimentary knowledge of the mobilization, they have limited themselves to cursory and impressionistic renditions of this movement's protest cycle.

METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS: INDICATORS, SOURCES AND COUNTING PROCEDURES

In contrast to any impressionistic accounts, this study undertakes a systematic measurement of U.S. protesters. Although the "perfect study" would have researchers at every American protest, a lack of resources usually blocks such an occurrence (one researcher cannot simultaneously be at several cities and not even a team of researchers can observe the thousands of concurrent protests which stretch from Seattle to Miami). Hence, logistical impositions routinely necessitate a reliance on secondary sources.

Various types of secondary sources have been used in movement research. Though a few studies have used official archival records (i.e., Tilley et. al., 1975) or activist-generated histories (i.e., Rupp and Taylor, 1987), the vast majority of studies have used of newspapers for data (i.e., McAdam,

1982; Taylor and Jodice, 1983; Koopmans, 1993). In fact, around 90% of protest cycle articles found in *Sociological Abstracts* have used reporter informants.

DATA SOURCES FOR THIS PROJECT

This study contains personal assessments of a local protest (Swank 1993/1994). The crowd counts of San Diego's mobilization were derived through the "grid/density" approach (see Jacobs, 1967; Seidler et. al., 1976). This "grid/density" approach breaks the crowd into separate quadrants, counts the number of people in a single quadrant, and then multiplies this single quadrant count by the total number of quadrants. Although this approach has some limitations -- researchers may not create the proper number of quadrants or the density between quadrants may vary -- the overall system is relatively sound. That is, the "grid/density" approach is more reliable than intuitional guesstimates since it standardizes measurement protocols while other methods do not.

After completing this study of a regional protest, I saw three reasons to construct a national sample. First, there could be generalizability problems if there is no convergence between the San Diego and national protest cycles. Second, a national sample frame seemed appropriate since the protests challenged a federal target. Finally, I assumed the inclusion of several information sources would enhance the validity of this project. That is, questions of measurement reliability can be explored by examining the extent of agreement or disagreement between press reports and the grid/density approach.

PONDERING THE RELIABILITY OF SECONDARY SOURCES

The reliability of size estimation hinges on the issues of "selectiveness," "standardization," and "bias" (Olzak, 1989; Ruch and Ohlemacher, 1992). When addressing selectiveness, we should ask about the frequency in which a source covered the number of protests for a given locale (i.e., the percentage of Southern Californian demonstrations covered by the *San Diego Union-Tribune*). Clearly those sources which miss most protests are extremely unreliable. For standardization, one can ask whether the estimator used some uniformed methods of computing crowd sizes. When addressing bias, we must question whether the observer's political loyalties caused them to inflate or deflate the size of the actual crowd.

Communication studies suggest that news reports routinely founder on all three accounts (Gamson and Wolfson, 1993). Kielbowicz and Schrer's

(1986) review essay noted that: (1) reporters commonly neglect the substance of political critiques, instead focusing on the dramatic and unique vestiges of the movement; (2) reporters tend to disproportionately rely on the statements of conventional authorities to define the movement; (3) editors customarily send novice "general assignment" reporters to protests; (4) the beat schedules of reporters affects the probability of events being covered; (5) the proximity between a media outlet and the protest site affects the nature of media coverage; and (6) reporters' identities, political commitments, and conceptions of professional norms influence the type of coverage that movements attain.

Two "empirical" studies substantiate these claims of selective coverage. Snyder and Kelly (1977) discovered that the *New York Times* ran a grand total of 22 protest stories in 1968. Conversely, the local papers of 43 U.S. cities covered 120 protests during the same contentious year (this means that *Times* missed around 81% of the protests covered by other papers). A later study by McCarthy, McPhail and Smith (1996) showed that other papers mirrored the *Times*' selectivity problems, finding that only 7% of the 1,856 protests logged in Washington police files were ever covered by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *ABC*, *NBC*, and *CBS*. Moreover, all sources but the *Washington Post* covered less than 2% of the total protests (the *Post* was best at 6 percent).

This media/movement discrepancy also bled into antiwar coverage. Historian W.J. Rorabaugh (1989) suggests that the national and Bay Area newspapers frequently ignored the Free Speech and antiwar demonstrations that occurred at the University of California in the 1960's. Todd Gitlin (1982) and Melvin Small (1994) argued that newspapers repeatedly missed small and medium-size protests because editors quickly grew tired of covering "ordinary" or "conventional" demonstrations against the Vietnam war. Subsequently, the protests that occurred late in the protest cycle had to exhibit "sensational" flair in order to be considered "news-worthy" events (e.g., the spectacle of enormous size, or the exhibition of illicit behaviors by protesters).

Recent studies indicate that the "corporate" media tried to suppress images of Gulf War opposition. A study of CBS, NBC, and ABC's nightly news casts found that of the 2,855 minutes of pre-January 3, 1991 reports on "Desert Shield" that only 29 minutes were dedicated to stories of opposition to military intervention (Lee and Devitt, 1991), while national newspapers devoted an average of 2.7% percent of their war stories to features on the peace movements (Dennis, 1992). Similarly, a study of *Washington Post* front pages articles found that 2% of "Gulf War" articles focused on antiwar activists (Kaid et. al., 1993) and a content analysis of three Kentucky

newspapers found that 4% of all Persian Gulf War reports contained information on demonstrations (Haney, 1993).

Adding to this issue of media selectivity is the problem of biased reporting. During the stormy sixties, Daniel Hallin (1986) found that almost every CBS news story portrayed antiwar protesters as "traitors," "hard-core deviants," and "young misfits who threatened law and order." Similarly, the reports on Gulf War protests were generally presented in a stigmatized frame. Resse and Buckalew (1995) found that Texan reporters implied that Gulf War protesters were violent, and Hackett and Zhao (1994) noted that 28% of printed stories portrayed activists as "oddballs" who were ill-informed and immature, while 46% of the stories stated that the protesters were "enemies" of the nation.

Several studies suggest that this dislike of activists transfers into skewed size estimates. Anecdotally, Todd Gitlin (1982) noticed that a *New York Times* reporter admitted that he intentionally relied on police estimates although he knew they were severe undercounts and Small's book, *Covering Dissent*, shows how mainstream newspapers deflated movement counts by using police estimates to guide their front page headlines. In a similar light, Leon Mann's (1974) study of 22 U.S. newspapers found a statistical relationship between a paper's editorial position of the Vietnamese conflict and its ability to count people at antiwar protesters. That is, after classifying papers into the categories of "dove" or "hawk," Mann found that the four "dove" papers put 33,000 participants at a 1965 demonstration, while the seven "hawk" papers provided the average estimate of 20,600 for the same event. Finally, a paper by Murray Edelman (1986) highlights the extent of paper undercounts. After collecting estimates through the grid/density approach, Edelman turned to the pages of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *New York Times* for their official accounts. Predictably, Edelman found that paper estimates for leftist demonstrations were always smaller than his grid/density counts of the same event (i.e., a demonstration against the Moral Majority produced a police estimate of 100 while the grid found 1000, an anti-KKK rally found a police count of 100-200 as the grid showed 350, and a Jesse Jackson speech drew 375 according to the police and 2000 according to the grid).

IMPROVING THE RELIABILITY OF NEWSPAPERS BY EXPANDING THE SAMPLE SIZE

Listening to methodologists (i.e., Franzosi, 1987; Meyer, 1991), I created a stratified sample of several newspapers. The first stratum was composed of national news-sources: three news services (United Press International, Gannett, Newsbank) and four national papers (*The New York*

Times, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*). The second stratum consisted of local papers which were situated in all regions of the country.

With the help of the Census Bureau's *County and City Data Book* (1994) the country was divided up into ten separate regions (New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West North Central, West South Central, Mountain, Pacific and Southwest). With these categories in place, I searched the largest newspapers in each subsection (largest number of daily subscribers). After using the directory *Newspapers Online*, I added the *Boston Globe*, *Philadelphia Enquirer*, *Atlanta Constitution*, *Houston Post*, *Louisville-Courier Journal*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Denver Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Seattle Times* to the sample.

Supplementing these mainstream sources was a third stratum of "alternative" periodicals. Since the U.S. lacks a daily left paper, I had a choice between a list of weekly papers and monthly periodicals. After scanning the "alternative presses" of *Z Magazine*, *The Progressive*, *Utne Reader*, and *In these Times*, I added the New York weekly, the *National Guardian*, to the sample since every issue of the *Guardian* from December to March had a special section on the protests.

Finally, I turned to a peace movement paper. Although the national organizations had fragmentary movement histories, a small group called the Nuclear Resisters collected an extensive list of protests. This Phoenix based collective became the "unofficial" clearinghouse of activist manuscripts because hundreds of antiwar coalitions faxed their reports to their Arizona office. This tiny group was so efficient in its efforts that its newsletter was routinely inundated with several pages of antiwar information.

DATA COLLECTION AND CODING PROCEDURES

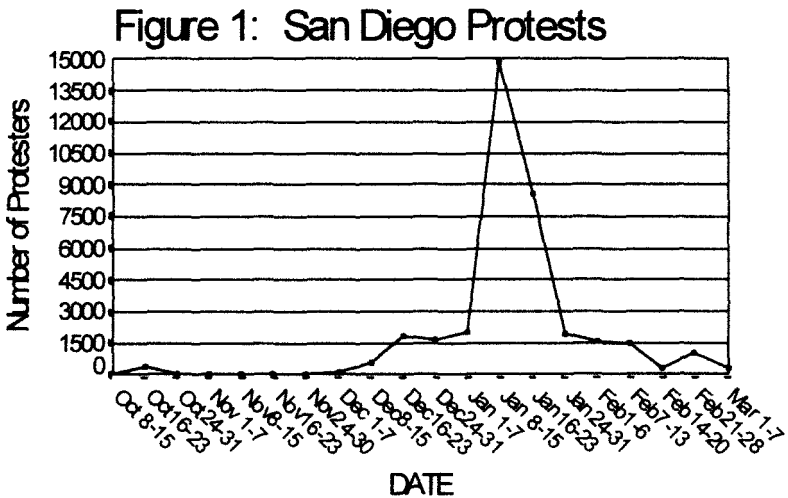
I limited myself to articles that fell within a ten month time frame (August 1990 and May 1991). Furthermore, this selection of articles approximates a census of all printed reports since I used bounded and computerized indexes to locate the relevant articles. In the end, the papers yielded a total of 842 stories that appeared under the categories of "antiwar," "demonstrations," "Persian Gulf War."¹

¹The breakdown of articles for each source is as follows: *Newsbank* n=141; *Los Angeles Times* n=117; *Washington Post* n=82; UPI n=81; *San Francisco Chronicle* n=64; *USA Today* n=50; *Boston Globe* n=46; *Seattle Times* n=42; *New York Times* n=37; *Atlanta Constitution* n=27; *Denver Post* n=27; Gannett n=25; *National Guardian* n=22; *St. Louis Post Dispatch*

FINDINGS

SAN DIEGO

Figure 1 reveals the general augmentation, expansion, and eventual decline in protest activity in San Diego, California. This graph indicates that the movement had a very small base of active protesters in the pre-December days. Then the new year brought hordes of activists into the streets of San Diego. In fact, San Diego experienced some of its largest protests ever in the week that followed the bombardment of Iraq (January 16, 1991). Yet, this rush of new activists began to taper off shortly thereafter since the number of active protesters significantly shrunk by the month of February.



n=19; Chicago Tribune n=17; Louisville-Courier Journal n=17; Philadelphia Enquirer n=15
Houston Post, n=13).

While Figure 1 reveals the general contours of the San Diego protest cycle, some further details are in order. In early August 1990, a few days after Bush's placement of troops in Saudi Arabia, a cluster of eight full time activists from Greenpeace, the Peace Resource Center, Alliance for Survival, Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft, Middle East Cultural and Information Center, National Lawyers Guild, and the Friends of Nicaraguan Culture formed the San Diego Coalition for Peace in the Middle East (SDCPME). This newly created coalition agreed to hold its first protest on October 20, 1990.

On October 20, the Coalition for Peace in the Middle East held its first "No blood for oil" protest (n=400). The date of this protest was significant because it became the first day of coordinated protests among over 20 different U.S. cities. It should be noted that participants were predominantly people affiliated with one of the endorsing groups.

After this demonstration, the SDCPME began an extensive recruiting drive. It held its first "public" organizational meeting in which the group spent five hours of debating the nuances of protest planning. After some heated exchanges, the group began to formalize its structure by creating special committees that would be responsible for certain tasks (i.e., working with the media, outreach to new communities, information gathering, and legal matters). When meeting ended, the group decided to sponsor weekly Sunday vigils and hold a "major demonstration" on Wars deadline (January 14).

On December 9, 300 hundred people attended the first of many Sunday vigils in a local metropolitan park. Thereafter, the next month showed a slow and steady growth in the number of vigil protesters. One thousand participants attended a December 16 rally while around 800 people attended the December 23 and December 30 vigils. Then in January the crowds doubled their size, with the January 6 and January 13 vigils growing to 2,000 and 2,500 people respectively. Finally, the students at the University of California in San Diego (UCSD) threw a teach-in which drew 1000 participants.

This gradual growth in protest size preceded a dramatic surge of activism. The January 14 "eve of the bombing" vigil drew 10,000 people to a Monday night protest. This candlelight vigil attracted many "first time" protestors and had a very civil tone. Then on January 16, a UCSD "die-in" drew 1000 participants and SDCPME impromptu January 17 protest attracted 4,500 protestors.

The San Diego organizers quickly learned that this influx of activists would be short-lived and that the January 14 event would represent the peak number of demonstrators and activities. By January 20, an extremely sedate Sunday vigil drew 2,500 protesters. A more rambunctious crowd of 1,800

showed up for a January 27 protest, while the February 23 demonstration which foreshadowed the looming land invasion drew only 1000 participants. By March 3, only 300 "longtime activists" attended the final Gulf War march.

NATIONAL PROTESTS

The sources found 1,225,567 activists at a total of 1,365 protests. A large percentage of this grand total was found in the two days of national protest. Table 1 shows that national protests in San Francisco and Washington on January 19 each drew more than 40,000 participants while the same streets were filled with over 90,000 activists the preceding weekend.

Table 1: The Largest Protests in U.S. Cities

City	Size	City	Size
Washington (1/26)	154,565	Seattle (1/19)	5,200
San Francisco (1/26)	95,000	Portland (1/11)	5,000
San Francisco (1/19)	49,000	Chicago (1/14)	5,000
Washington (1/19)	40,290	New York (1/14)	5,000
Seattle (1/14)	30,000	Washington (1/14)	5,000
Portland (1/12)	14,000	Chicopee, MA (1/15)	5,000
New York (10/20)	13,000	New York (1/15)	5,000
Boston (12/1)	12,000	Austin, TX (1/16)	5,000
Minneapolis (1/13)	10,000	Minneapolis (1/16)	5,000
San Francisco (1/15)	10,000	New York (1/16)	5,000
San Francisco (1/16)	10,000	Portland (1/16)	5,000
Portland (1/18)	10,000	San Diego (1/16)	5,000
San Francisco (10/20)	8,000	San Francisco (1/16)	5,000
San Diego (1/14)	8,000	San Antonio (1/29)	5,000
New York (1/17)	7,500	Chicago (12/8)	4,500
San Francisco (2/21)	7,000	Austin (1/11)	4,500
Chicago (1/12)	6,000	Chicago (1/17)	4,300
San Francisco (1/21)	6,000	Washington (1/15)	4,200
Los Angeles (1/12)	6,000	Seattle (12/1)	4,000
Portland (2/16)	6,000	Denver (1/12)	4,000
San Francisco (1/17)	5,700	Los Angeles (1/13)	4,000
Los Angeles (2/1)	5,500	Milwaukee (1/14)	4,000
New York (2/17)	5,500	Atlanta (1/15)	4,000
		Boston (1/15)	4,000
		Cincinnati (1/15)	4,000
		Minneapolis (1/17)	4,000
		Los Angeles (1/26)	4,000
		Oakland (2/24)	4,000
		San Deign (1/19)	4,000

Although the largest protests were of the national sort, local antiwar groups mustered up some fairly large protests. Table 1 reveals that eight regional protests drew at least 10,000 participants and 41 drew between 9,999 and 4,000 adherents. Moreover, Table 1 ignores the fact that 24 vigils drew around 3,000 to 4,000 demonstrators,² and thirty-six antiwar events amassed between 2,000 and 3,000 dissenters.³

When adding the time line to these protest counts one sees some similar patterns of movement growth in both the national and San Diego settings (for Figures 1 and 2 the correlation coefficient equals .80). Both figures show that the movement swelled in size during the last two weeks of January 1991. Moreover, both figures show a marked decrease in protests in early February with a small increase in the late days of February.

A more detailed comparison of these data reveals some slight divergences between the nation's and San Diego's protest waves. Protests were staged earlier in the national scene. Right after the first troop deployment (late August to early September 1990), several cities saw small and sporadic protests. In fact, cities such as Boston, Cleveland, Minneapolis and Tucson witnessed small protests in early August, and New York City experienced a protest of around 2,200 activists on September 13.

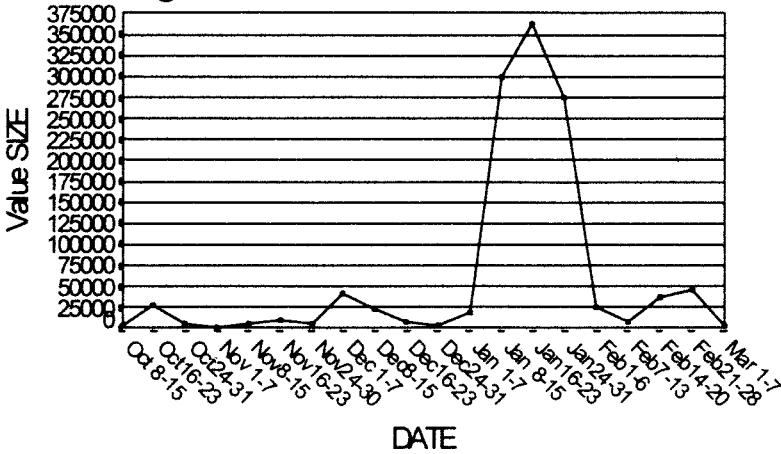
During this September and early October stint, a band of seasoned activists were assembling the vestiges of the first national coalition. On October 20, the newly formed Coalition Against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East convinced a confederation of fledgling groups to hold concurrent protests in their respective cities.⁴ While some of these twenty simultaneous protests carried a large number of activists (New York 11,900 or San Francisco 7,000), most protests gathered around 400 to 500 protestors (i.e., Los Angeles, Minneapolis, or Missoula, Montana).

² The twenty-four protests that collected between 3,000 and 4,000 demonstrators resided in New York City (2), San Jose (2), UC Berkeley (2), UC Santa Cruz (2), UC Santa Barbara (2), Atlanta, Bellingham, WA, Boulder, CO, Boston, Cincinnati, Denver, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Nevada Test Site, Philadelphia, San Diego, St. Louis, UCLA, and Washington.

³ The thirty-six demonstrations that attracted between 2,000 and 3,000 protestors occurred in Los Angeles (5), Seattle (3), Boston (2), Des Moines (2), Montpelier, VT (2), New York City (2), University of Wisconsin (2), Denver, Eugene, Houston, Ohio State University, Missoula, Oakland, Olympia, WA, Philadelphia, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, University of Indiana, University of Michigan, University of Washington, UC Berkeley, Washington and Western Washington University.

⁴ On this date protests occurred in Atlanta, Baton Rouge, Birmingham, Boston, Chicopee, WA, Cleveland, Dallas, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Missoula, MN, New York, Olympia, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington.

Figure 2: Number of U.S. Protesters



This coordinated event became an anomaly and lasted only one day (the next national protests follow three months later). In November, the leadership of local antiwar coalitions delayed further attempts to build a national movement. Instead regional groups focused on outreach and recruitment efforts. This meant that the cadre of peace activists put most of their efforts into creating pools of adherents who would be willing to protest in future events. Subsequently, this strategy resulted in the enactment of small and irregularly placed protests throughout the month of November.

While the community activists were trying to recruit new sympathizers, a handful of college protest were starting to evolve.⁵ Under the banner of growing student opposition, a handful of private universities generated protests (i.e., Stanford, Columbia, Dartmouth, Brandies, and Notre Dame). On the west coast, six of the seven University of California campuses saw protests on their grassy compounds (i.e., 1,200 demonstrators at both UC Santa Cruz and UC Santa Barbara), and Montana State and the

⁵ In fact the sources for this study found 27 college protests during this November period.

University of Utah saw their lecture halls turn into teach-ins. Even the large Midwestern universities saw antiwar activities in November (i.e., November protests drew 1,500 at the University of Michigan, 600 at the University of Wisconsin, 200 at Iowa State and 100 at the University of Kansas).

In December, the movement experienced a new synergy. The community and college protests added new members, and these separate mobilizations began uniting forces more regularly. In the pre-Christmas weeks of December, the political hubs of this country were able to generate protests that numbered in the thousands (i.e., Boston 11,000, Chicago 4,500 or New York City 5,000). At the same time, mid-size communities such as Atlanta, Detroit, Lincoln, Milwaukee, and Phoenix were arranging protests that netted hundreds of activists while smaller towns like Akron, Evanston, Stratford, and Annapolis were generating smaller gatherings.

This gradual and incremental growth stopped in the month of January. The nation saw a flurry of protests by the middle part of the month (85 protests on January 14, 144 on January 15, 95 on January 16, and 133 on January 17). Adding to the increase of events was a drastic increase in the size of these events (each day from January 14 to January 17 had over 80,000 U.S. protestors). In fact, the outpouring was so immense that 31 protests surpassed the 5,000 mark from January 12 to January 26.

There were several aspects to this galvanized state of the movement. By early January, many of the previously mobilized centers became meccas of activism (i.e., San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis, or New York City). For cities of this sort, protests routinely numbered in the thousands during this January peak. Moreover, the traditional weekly protests were supplanted by successive protests that occurred every day of the week.

Yet, one would be wrong to conclude that this proliferation and escalation of protests were confined to the "progressive" sites of the United States. Cities in America's heartland also saw an enormous rush of activism in January. From January 12 to 26 cities such as Baltimore, Cincinnati, Des Moines, Detroit, Fort Collins, Little Rock, Milwaukee, Missoula, New Orleans, Salt Lake City, St. Louis, and Tallahassee had protests that exceeded 1000 participants. Also in that same time span, some medium sized towns such as Albuquerque, Fort Wayne, Duluth, Hartford, Iowa City, Knoxville, Rockford, Sacramento, and Tampa had protests that almost reached the 1000 person plateau. Even small towns such as Boise, Bozeman, Flagstaff, Lansing, Omaha, Rapid City, and Wilmington created protests that surpassed 500 participants.

Meanwhile, the spark of activism was igniting on college campuses. The campuses which experienced earlier protests were hopping with student demonstrations. Both research institutes (like Indiana University, the Universities of Michigan, Washington, and Wisconsin) and some private

settings (such as Stanford, Columbia, Harvard, and USC) held protests that went beyond crowds of one thousand.⁶ Previously dormant campuses also become alive with protests. For example, protests at western schools drew over 300 at Brigham Young, Colorado College, Western Washington University and San Diego City College, while Midwestern protests drew crowds of 700 at Kent State, 700 at Michigan State, 500 at Northwestern, and 1000 at Purdue.

By the end of January this plethora of local protests began to amass into enormous national demonstrations. On January 19, over 35,000 protesters from the entire country visited the cities of San Francisco and Washington. But, these first national protests were simply a foreshadowing of the enormous ones held the following week. On January 26, the oval in our national capital had around 120,000 protesters and the Golden Gate Bridge held over 75,000 protesters.

While these national protests were large, one could say that this pinnacle of activism was a fleeting phenomenon. By the first weeks of February, our newspapers reported the public demonstrations receded to December like numbers. This supposed contraction took three routes. First, the smaller urban centers that had sudden protests around January 15 halted their spontaneous protests by February. Thus, secluded cities such as Shreveport, Boise or El Paso discontinued their brief flurry of protests after the Pentagon promised an "easy" rout of Iraq. Second, the political hotbeds were unable to sustain their peak of January activism (i.e., a citywide protest in Chicago on January 12 drew 6,000 while the same call for protests gathered 600 on February 16, or the Minneapolis demonstrations fell from a height of 10,000 January 13 protesters to 600 on February 10). Third, sources suggest that protests on college campuses almost evaporated between February 1 and February 14 (the papers claim that only seven protests happened on U.S. campuses in this two-week period).

Fearing a pending March invasion of Kuwait, movement leadership tried to counteract the movement's February slump. However, the attempts to revitalize this shrinking movement were met with moderate results. A few local coalitions could resurrect somewhat big crowds in late February (i.e., 3,000 in Boulder and Seattle), but these larger February protests were rare events and never reached their previous peaks. In fact, the last two weeks of February only netted three protests that crested around 5,000 activists, and the four next largest protests in this period barely passed the 3,000 mark. Similarly, attempts to rekindle a withering campus movement

⁶ The University of California campuses at Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz had numerous protests that exceeded that 1500 mark.

produced minimal results. For example, on February 21, the day of "national college dissent" attracted a small list of 22 participating campuses. Further, the largest size of these protests numbered 600 at the University of Oregon, while the other protests fell in the 500 to 100 range. This modest upswing in activism was the last hurrah for the movement. By the first days of March, the February practices of dwindling protests was juxtaposed by a glaring absence of protests.

DISCUSSION

One can reach several conclusions from this study. First, the relatively strong correlation between the size of San Diegan and national mobilizations suggests that this paper captures the general contours of this phenomena. Second, the absence of operational definitions for "maxi," "midi," or "mini" surges would not preclude us from asserting that this was a "significant opposition" in many ways. That is, one would probably agree that minisurges do not have over one million participants or that a minisurge would not have one of the largest protests in Washington history (Bryant, 1993, suggests that the *Washington Post* has only seen thirteen protests which were larger than the January 27 Gulf War protests). Furthermore, one would not call the Gulf War protests a "small mobilization" since the size of every 1982 mobilization did not surpass the size of this antiwar movement (McCarthy et. al., 1996). Finally, this study found 74 Gulf War protests with over 3,000 participants, while a thirty-year study of *Washington Post* articles found only 43 protests that reached that plateau (Everett, 1992).

Nevertheless, Gulf demonstrations should not be considered the biggest antiwar movement in U.S. history. These protests did not reach the heights of the 600,000 demonstrators at the 1969 Vietnam War Moratorium or the 500,000 at the 1971 Vietnam "Out Now" rally (numbers by Bryant 1993). Similarly, it is clear that the 1990's college protest scene did not match the estimated 4,350,000 student protestors of the 1960's and 1970s (Heinemen, 1993, p. 249).

However a strictly numerical comparison can be misleading. Each mobilization was set in different socio-historical contexts. The Presidential rationales for the wars were different. One war was supposedly stopping the "spreading cancer of Communism," while the other war was said to be the freeing of a virtuous country from a rogue Arab state. The fate of the wars also differed. One war required a draft, had higher casualties, and lasted three decades, while the Gulf War was seen as quick drubbing of Iraq which cost few American lives. Moreover, the media's played different roles in each war. The media removed sights of mutilation from Gulf War footage while the images of death from Southeast Asia were consistently brought

into American family rooms. Finally, it may have been easier to organize an antiwar mobilization in the sixties since college students had more free time and there were blocks of seasoned activists who could siphon off the civil rights movement.

Since contemporary activists face such an uncondusive situation, one may be surprised by the existence of any Gulf War protests. Others may be shocked by the anomaly of a proactive antiwar movement. That is, researchers should take note of that this mobilization preceded the bombing while most U.S. antiwar movements were reactions to ongoing wars (keep in mind that first national protest against Vietnam came after years of American involvement in that "police action"). Hence, a two-folded conclusion emerges. This antiwar movement showed an initial capacity to mobilize early protests, however these capacities were quickly tapped as the movement shrunk into abeyance within a few months.

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