

The Role of Social Movements in the Macro Political System

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The voiceless have few opportunities for recognition in the political arena. However, some groups have apparently come to exercise political power through grass roots organizing. Given this, it comes as a surprise that scholars generally find that social movements have little impact in this regard. Perhaps these null results are produced when scholars study the effect of a single movement upon a single related policy. I take a unique theoretical approach rooted in *The Macro Polity*, considering that ideologically-congruent groups rise and fall together across time. In contrast with past findings, I find that liberal social movements affect national public opinion and the ideological direction of voting in the U.S. Congress. As predicted by the political mediation model, these relationships are stronger when there are more Democrats in the electorate, and in the Congress, respectively. And in a stark contrast to past studies, I find liberal protests have an effect on the ideological direction of the final laws passed by the Congress and signed by the President. This effect is indirect, operating through public opinion and U.S. Senate legislative activity. In summary, liberal protests impact the entire political system, and not merely the outputs that would be relevant to the targets of the protests. The very most well attended political protests do substantively affect the entire political system.

The system of representation in a democracy stands on two cornerstones. The first is that elected representatives respond to public opinion by creating policy that reflects the public's preferences. This first cornerstone reflects majoritarian theories of representation. However, democratic theory scholars have long recognized that the mass public is uninformed about, and uninterested in, many issues. Thus, the second cornerstone of democratic representation is rooted in the pluralist school—policy is the result of conflictual participation between active and interested groups, with policy makers hearing competing arguments and making policy based on the more compelling claims (e.g. Dahl 2005).¹

Pluralism typically invokes interest groups and lobbying, but the “outside government” game is vitally important as well, as scholars have long claimed (Lee 2002; Lipsky 1968; Lohmann 1993; Mansbridge 1994; McAdam and Su 2002). American history is fraught with examples of seemingly voiceless groups organizing mass protests as the only avenue to deliver them the say-so they desired. Indeed, this option is sometimes held up as the great equalizer—if the voiceless and powerless can organize themselves, they can force the nation to take notice. This raises the question of whether or not an important part of this second cornerstone of democratic theory holds true. That is, to what degree do social movements influence public opinion and policy?

Remarkably, while studies move forward on the latter part of the question, very little study has been done on the former. Only a handful of published studies consider how protest affects public opinion. Most of these studies concern the impact of the pro-immigration marches in 2006 on Latino public opinion (Branton, Martinez-Ebers, Carey and Matsubayashi 2014; Carey, Branton and Martinez-Ebers 2014; Mohamed 2013; Wallace, Zepeda-Millan and Jones-Correa 2014). Two other studies consider the impacts of other movements on public opinion

(Guigni 2004; Banaszak and Ondercin 2016). All of these studies find that social movement activities affect public opinion, with the exception of Guigni (2004).

Turning to how social movements might affect policy, scholars uncover the messy reality that the effects of social movements on policy are contingent on elements of the political opportunity structure (Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan 1992; Amenta, Dunleavy, and Bernstein 1994; Amenta and Young 1999; Browning, Marshall and Tabb 1984; Burstein 1998; Cress and Snow 2000; Burstein and Linton 2002; Santoro 2002; Soule and Olzak 2004). As well, scholars now know that the effects of movements depend on the stage of the policymaking process (King, Cornwall and Dahlin 2005; King, Bentele, and Soule 2007; Soule and King 2008), and the level of counter-movement activity (Soule 2004; Soule and Olzak 2004).

While scholars have certainly learned a lot about the linkages between social protest, and policymaking, almost all of the research on both the emergence of protest and its effects on policy focuses on a single movement at a time, in a single period of time (four exceptions are: Baumgartner and Mahoney 2005; Gillion 2012; King, Bentele, and Soule 2007, and Madestam, Shoag, Veuger and Yanagizawa-Drott 2013). Researchers should study many movements, with variation across time, to increase the generalizability of their findings. This is a common critique of the social movement literature (see for example Amenta, Caren, Chiarello and Su 2010). Inspired by the concept of the *protest cycle* or *protest wave* (Tarrow 1994), in this paper I examine the entirety of social protest, in the United States, over a 23-year period (from 1972 to 1995). My goal is to understand whether the waxing and waning of social protest, writ large, is connected in any way to public opinion and policymaking. I assume that ideologically like-minded social movement groups are linked by common causes and roots, rising and falling

together across time, and I test how well this assumption allows me to explain systematic variance in public opinion, and public policy.

In this study I hypothesize that liberal and conservative protest movements cause related changes in the ideological direction of public opinion, as measured by changes in public policy mood, and also in policy, as measured by Congressional voting. Following from political mediation theory, I also consider how these relationships might be both conditioned (moderated) and mediated (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello and Su 2010; Amenta, Carruthers and Zylan 1992; Amenta, Caren and Olasky 2005; Amenta, Halfmann and Young 1999). I hypothesize that a core moderating factor is the number of Democrats. I expect that when there are more Democrats in Congress, liberal social movements will have greater success with legislative activity; and when there are more Democrats in the electorate, liberal social movements will have greater effects on public opinion. I also hypothesize that protest movements may have indirect effects as well. If they impact public opinion, and legislative activity in the U.S. Congress, they may also indirectly impact the ideological direction of the laws that are passed by the Congress and signed into law.

Macropolitics

I begin with the most basic question: How might protests rise and fall together across time? For an answer, the macro politics model of American politics is a useful place to start. This literature deals with national politics at the system level. In this literature public opinion is conceptualized and measured at a highly aggregated level (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, Stimson, MacKuen and Erikson 1995, Stimson 1999) and focuses on how macro opinion influences and responds to other aspects of the American political system—partisanship, election outcomes, policy production, economic conditions, and so on (Durr 1993, Erikson, Mackuen and

Stimson 2002, De Boef and Kellstedt 2004, Kellstedt 2000, Kelly 2009, Kelly and Enns 2010, Page and Shapiro 1992, Stimson, MacKuen and Erikson 1995, Wlezien 1995). This literature shows that public opinion both influences and is responsive to shifts in other aspects of the political system. Liberal shifts in public opinion generate Democratic electoral victories, liberal policy outputs, and less income inequality. But public opinion also responds over time to the dynamics of the political system. The public becomes more conservative as policies become more liberal than they prefer, acting as the thermostat in the system of macro politics (Wlezien 1995).

This study integrates social movements into the study of American macro politics. I begin with the assumption that ideological social movements are a part of this macro system. I assume that just as aggregate public opinion is both moved, and moves, in liberal or conservative directions in response to other system inputs, social movements do the same. In other words, factors cause liberal social movements to become more or less active together, and the same holds true for conservative ones. It may appear to some observers that movements such as civil rights, anti-war, gay rights, or anti-tax, all occur independently of one another, but I assume there is an ideologically-leaning causal foundation underlying them.

There are bases in the social movement literature to believe this would be true. Some scholars find that social movements become more active when the government is less supportive of their agendas (in the case of the anti-nuclear weapons movement, see Meyer 1993; the environment, Schlozman and Tierney 1986; anti-abortion activism, Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, and Staggenborg 1991). The federal government is sometimes controlled by one political party (such as in 2008-10 when Democrats controlled the White House and both houses of Congress; or, in 2002, when Republicans did the same). When this is the case, government will

move against movements that are, generally speaking, uniformly liberal (when Republicans control government), or conservative (when Democrats control government). These government actions would then target or resist an array of groups with agendas that would be classified as, broadly speaking, liberal or conservative, causing these wide array of similarly-minded movements to become more active, with each responding individually on its issue (see Tarrow 1989 for another argument for how like-minded groups would become more or less active together). In addition, like-minded groups commonly share members and even cooperate with one another as part of broader coalitions (Rochon and Meyer 1997). As Meyer (2004, 140) writes, “Recognizing the coalitional nature of a challenging movement thus affords scholars that analytical purchase to see connections between processes in very different contexts on claims of widely varying scope.” The purpose of this analysis is to ascertain the degree to which making this assumption allows one to use social movements to explain changes in public opinion and government outputs.

The Protest Cycle and Public Opinion

The highly-aggregated measure of public opinion is called public policy mood (Stimson 1999). It is defined theoretically as Americans’ preferences over the scope of government activity, in terms of the degree to which it should do things such as tax, regulate and spend. When mood is more liberal, Americans prefer for government to be more active in these ways, and when it is moving in a less liberal (more conservative) direction, then Americans prefer for it to be less active. I note that this is public opinion largely separate from social issues, such as abortion. Mood is measured largely using questions measuring support for government spending (such as on health care, the military, roads, etc). But there are also questions concerning other issues, such as taxation. The measure of public policy mood, then, begins with the individual-

level measures of a wide array of concepts, but they are then aggregated together to create one measure at one point in time (in the case of this data, we aggregate the data quarterly). And this measure has higher or lower levels of liberalism at different points in time. The high and low points of the series correspond with the political eras we would expect: It is especially high in the early 1960s (during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations) and at its lowest point in the very late 1970s (just before the Reagan Revolution).

John Zaller's (1992) Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) theory of public opinion suggests a mechanism through which protests might generate changes in public opinion. Zaller argues that when people answer survey questions (and such responses *do* form the measure of policy mood), they sample from relevant considerations. These considerations were communicated to them, in some manner, by their environment. When they perceived the message, they "received" it, according to the model. I expect rising liberal or conservative social movements to increase the number of liberal or conservative messages people are exposed to. When liberal and conservative groups are protesting at equal levels, the information flow would be more two-sided in this regard. However, when one ideological side is more active than the other, this will more closely approximate a one-way information flow. As ideological social movements rise, people should receive more ideological (i.e. liberal or conservative) messages from all of the possible sources for such messages: the media, but also interest groups, campaigns, or other sources as well. Importantly, the most widespread and active movements may create their own message sources (for civil rights leaders see Lee 2002; for the role of black churches, see Calhoun-Brown 1996 and Tate 1991; for evangelical churches on abortion see Jelen and Wilcox 2003) .

Turning to the accept stage of the RAS model, more ideological messages will move public opinion through both priming and framing. Protest movements will communicate more

ideological considerations as they become more active. This will prime these considerations, which should make them more accessible to people in the third stage of the survey response – sampling. In addition, the frames of the protest movements should become more dominant, which may persuade some to hold opinions that are more liberal or conservative (e.g. Nelson and Oxley 1999). The increase in liberal or conservative considerations will lead people to sample from these increased considerations, increasing the probability of delivering an ideological response to an interviewer. The crux of the argument is that people will have increasingly liberal or conservative opinions, reflecting their information environments.

H1: Liberal protests will increase liberal public policy mood, and conservative protests will decrease it.

Will Protest Movements Lead to Changes in Policy?

In the earliest phase of the scientific study of social movements, scholars saw plenty of reasons to believe protest movements would affect policy directly (e.g. Tilly 1984). One of the earliest studies of social movements argued that they had influence because they could disrupt normal societal functions and force compromise (Lipsky 1968). However, subsequent studies reveal that such effects are rare (prominent null results include Burstein and Sausner 2005; and, Giugni 2004, 2007. See Amenta, Caren, Chiarello and Su 2010 for a review). Because of the conflicting, and generally null, results, I present arguments for both views here—that for why one should expect to find direct effects of social movements on policy, and also for why one may not.

I begin by defining public policy as the ideological direction of laws passed by the U.S. Congress. The definition of policy as legislative output is a common one in the social movements literature, although scholars find more success for social movements when earlier

stages of the legislative process are studied (e.g. King, Cornwall and Dahlin 2005; King, Bentele, and Soule 2007; Soule and King 2008). Given this definition, the argument for the effect of social protest rests on two points. The first is that protest movements can directly impact legislation by affecting the information environment of legislators (Burstein and Linton 2002, 386). Legislators routinely seek re-election to their elected offices, making the re-election imperative one of their highest motivators (Mayhew 1975). Legislators are rational actors, and as such they respond to *changes* in their political environments because they have already accounted for their current environments in their actions.

Perhaps the most important cue legislators respond to is a policy preference signal from their constituents. This cue can be about the *direction* of a policy preference (i.e. support or opposition to a policy), but also about the *salience* of a policy, as well as the *intensity* of the preference. Protest movements provide information about all three. Increases in liberal or conservative protests, then, may update legislators about these preferences, and affect how they vote by signaling the legislators about constituent preferences. *Larger* protests would provide stronger signals about the direction of the preference, the salience, and intensity (Lohmann, 1993; McAdam and Su 2002; Walgrave and Vliegenthart 2012). According to the *political mediation model*, movements best achieve political influence when large numbers of people participate, and make political demands that are both achievable and reasonable (see Amenta, Caren, Chiarello and Su 2010, 298, for review).

The second component of the argument has to do with the aggregate nature of the conception of political protest. While each individual political protest movement may have a limited direct effect on its relevant policy, perhaps considered in total, ideologically-like minded movements have greater effects. Ideologically like-minded movements tend to share certain

values, world views or perspectives that could impact other public policies as well. For example, the anti-Vietnam War movement, the Civil Rights movement, and the Women's movement, all shared an egalitarian ideology. The evidence thus far is that each movement's impact on its own relevant policy domain is limited.² But perhaps these movements, and other liberal or conservative movements of the time, have some bleed-over effect on other public policy domains. In other words, considered separately, perhaps each movement's signal to the political system is rather weak, but in total, the signal is stronger.³

Finally, I find it important to account for the stage of the legislative process. There are three major stages a bill must negotiate to become a law. In the first, committees hold hearings, "mark-up" the bill, and report it out of committee. In the second, the floor of the chamber debates and votes on the bill. In the final stage, both houses of Congress pass the bill in identical form and it is signed into law by the President. I expect social movements to have greater direct effects on legislation earlier in the legislative process.

This expectation is consistent with the findings of social movement scholars who generally conclude that most social movements *do not* communicate electoral signals to elected officials. This leads them to search for conditions under which they do matter. For example, Tarrow (1993, 1994) and Piven and Cloward (1977) argue that movement-induced reform results only from threatening movements that cause substantial turmoil. Effects on policy are contingent on elements of the political opportunity structure (Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan 1992; Amenta, Dunleavy, and Bernstein 1994; Amenta and Young 1999; Cress and Snow 2000; Burstein and Linton 2002; Soule and Olzak 2004), and the level of counter-movement activity (Soule 2004; Soule and Olzak 2004). These are the kinds of conditions that strengthen the signal sent to elected officials.

H2: Greater liberal protest pushes the legislative process in a more liberal direction (and more conservative protest in a conservative direction), especially earlier in that process.

Beyond Direct Effects: The Political Mediation Model

Thus far, we have only argued for direct effects on the outcomes of interest—public opinion and legislative activity. However, as we alluded to earlier, the contingent and mediated nature of the effects of social movements are well-studied. I hypothesize here how the relationships may also be conditional or mediated. I do so for two reasons. First, these kinds of relationships are one of the major themes in the social movements literature; so much so, that one of the most prominent social movement theories focuses on these kinds of relationships—the political mediation model (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello and Su 2010; Amenta, Carruthers and Zylan 1992; Amenta, Caren and Olasky 2005; Amenta, Halfmann and Young 1999). However, the second reason is that by doing so we uncover the mechanisms or avenues through which the movements achieve influence, as well as the necessary conditions, to realize their political effects. Social movements operate in complicated environments in which merely holding a public protest event is not enough to realize political influence.

The political mediation model lays out the theoretical foundation for our argument in this regard. To impact policy, social movements must affect the calculations and actions of elected officials or other decision makers. They must come to see the social movement participants as facilitating or blocking their own goals (Amenta, Halfman and Young 1999). A politician's most central goal is to win re-election (Mayhew 1975). It is easier for elected officials to win re-election when they broaden their electoral coalitions. When social movements become active and attract attention, elected officials who are sympathetic to their agendas will have an incentive to support the goals of the movement so that their own electoral constituencies are broadened by

bringing in new members, or deepened when existing members provide increased enthusiastic support to the elected official (Amenta, Caren and Olasky 2005). Elected officials will show support for these potential coalition members by increasing institutional attention to the issues, or even voting in favor of them.

To achieve influence over decision makers, successful movements combine three factors— “favorable political contexts, mobilization and assertive actions” (Amenta, Caren and Olasky 2005, 517). Political mediation model theorists consider a wide array of movement actions as more or less assertive, but certainly protest marches tend to be assertive. Also, the degree of mobilization is a central component of my conceptualization of protest, as I think the levels of attendance at protests are very important for finding effects. In terms of the political environment (“favorable political contexts”), one of the most important factors that researchers consider is the partisan composition of government. This is a study of liberal or conservative social movements, and in the U.S., the Democratic Party is the liberal party and the Republicans, the conservative one. When there are more Democrats holding office, liberal social movements have greater numbers of persuadable targets, and so could have greater effects (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). For our purposes, given that we also study the impact of protest events on public opinion, the parallel factor among the electorate would be the presence of more Democrats. Macropartisanship scholars study party identification as an aggregated time series, operationalized as the percent of the electorate at any given time (such as in a given quarter or year) that identifies with the Democratic party (e.g. Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002). Just as when there are more Democrats in Congress that would be susceptible to liberal protest event messages, the same should hold true for the electorate, with more Democrats in the population allowing for liberal protest events to have greater effects.⁴ In the language of social movement

scholars, the political system would be more “open” to the movements (Amenta, Carruthers and Zylan 1992). As Edwin Amenta and his colleagues explain, in both cases this weakens the necessary force of the message that it takes to achieve political outcomes because there would be less resistance to the agendas (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello and Su 2010; Amenta, Carruthers and Zylan 1992; Amenta, Caren and Olasky 2005; Amenta, Halfmann and Young 1999). In general then, when liberal social movements are better attended (or conservative ones), they should have more success when there are more Democrats (or Republicans) holding elected office. These conditioning factors are regularly regarded as among the most important, with Amenta, Caren, Chiarello and Su (2010, 299) reviewing the studies in the social movement literature which find that both *movement size* and *partisan context* amplifies the effects of social movements.

H3: In the U.S. Congress, liberal social movements should have more success when there are more Democrats holding office.

H4: In the electorate, liberal social movements should cause more liberal public policy mood when there are more Democrats in the electorate.

Hypotheses three and four specify moderating, or conditioning, relationships. However, mediating relationships should hold true as well. It is well-established that one of the most important determinants of policy liberalism (that is, the ideological direction of the laws passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by the President) is public policy mood (e.g. Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002). I expect that it is unlikely that liberal protest events will have a direct effect at this final stage. However, we hypothesize that liberal or conservative social movements will affect public policy mood, and if this holds, then liberal protests might have an indirect effect on policy liberalism by operating through this very important factor.

Other potential sources of indirect effects exist as well. For example, we will consider as

a dependent variable the overall ideological direction of voting of the U.S. House and Senate, each respectively. It could be the case that these factors impact policy liberalism. If they do, and if liberal protest events affect them, then these could be additional avenues for indirect effects.

H5: Liberal protest events will impact public policy mood, and possibly other factors as well, indirectly affecting policy liberalism.

Data and Measurement

Data Source: The Dynamics of Collective Action, 1960-1995

The analysis of protest events has at its foundation a dataset of *protest events*, defined as any type of activity that involves more than one person and is carried out with the explicit purpose of articulating a grievance against (or expressing support for) a target. Data on these events were drawn from daily editions of the *New York Times* (NYT) between 1960 and 1995 and come from the *Dynamics of Collective Action Project*, run by Sarah Soule, Susan Olzak, John McCarthy, and Doug McAdam.⁵

Using this dataset as the source of our measure of social movement activity requires a theory of what leads the media to cover social movement protest events. Fortunately, much has been written on this topic, especially regarding the *New York Times*. Generally speaking, newspapers cover major national social movements on a regular basis. For example, Amenta, Olasky, Caren and Stobaugh (2009) group social movements into movement “families” and find that in the 20th Century many movement families received daily coverage in the *Times* for at least one continuous year: anti-alcohol, anti-war, environmental, feminist, old age, nativist, and veterans movements. The labor movement received daily coverage from 1919 to 1999, and the black civil rights movement from 1960 to 1981. The main take-away from their research and other studies of the determinants of the *Times*’ and other papers’ coverage of social movements

is that groups that hold more protests, and better attended ones, receive more coverage in newspapers (Amenta et al. 2017; Boyle, McLeod and Armstrong 2012; Walgrave and Vliegenthart 2012). This media coverage then largely mediates the effects of social movements on political outcomes (although some direct effect remains; Walgrave and Vliegenthart 2012). Given the fact that newspaper coverage is not a perfect mirror of all social movement activity, one can conclude that the *Times* covers protest events that are larger and more socially and politically salient. A salient movement is one that is widely recognized as having a coherent and active political agenda, and a condition of such salience would be a group that is regularly active. Our measure of social movement activity then is a reflection of both media coverage, but also movement strength itself, reflected in the attendance at the protest events.

For a particular protest event to be included in the dataset, it must have met three basic criteria. First, there must have been more than one participant at the event, since the interest is in collective action. Acts of protest carried out by individuals, such as uncoordinated hunger strikes or acts of self-immolation, are therefore not included. Second, participants at an event must have articulated some *claim*, whether this be a grievance against some target or an expression of support for some target. The events in the dataset are associated with *any* claim or issue area articulated by participants (in other words, these are not specific to a particular movement or set of movements).⁶ While claims can often be grouped into distinct “social movements” or “issue areas,” the coding team did not attempt to do this a priori. Because the coding rules required that protesters articulated some claim, collective events such as block parties, annual parades, and fund-raising campaigns were not coded.⁷ Also, the event must have happened in the *public sphere* or have been open to the public for the coding team to include it in their dataset. Thus, private or closed meetings by social movement actors are not included, but events within

organizations (e.g., schools, churches, private organizations) are included *if* they were open to the public.⁸ Finally, coded events occurred all over the U.S.; that is, the researchers did not code events only in cities or only in certain areas.

These data were collected in two distinct stages. First, researchers read each and every page of all daily issues of the *NYT* searching for any mention of protest events. By avoiding the use of an index to the *NYT*, they were able to find events that were embedded in articles on other (often related) topics. For example, protest events by poor people were found embedded in more general articles on the cost of living. It is likely that such events would *not* be indexed under headings such as, “protest” or “demonstration.” As a result, the project’s strategy nets a greater number of events than other strategies. The second stage of data collection involved the content coding of each event, noting that a single article can discuss multiple events, each of which was coded separately. Project personnel coded information on a variety of different topics, including the claim or issue area articulated at the event, event size and location, the participating group(s), targets of the event, organizational presence, tactical forms employed, and police presence and action taken by these actors at the event. Intercoder reliability estimates for most items on the codesheet were consistently at or above 90% agreement. In all, there are over 23,000 distinct protest events reported to have occurred in the U.S. between 1960 and 1995.⁹

The analysis in this paper required some recoding of events. First, since I am interested in *the ideological direction of protest events*, it was necessary to determine if each event was associated with a liberal, conservative, or non-ideological cause. To do this, I had seven different coders assess each of the claims associated with these events and determine if the claim is associated with a liberal, conservative, or non-ideological cause. For example, I asked coders which of those labels they would assign to a pro-peace event. Or, I asked them to determine if an

anti-abortion event was, in general, associated with a liberal or a conservative cause. Once each coder completed this task, I reconciled their decisions. If there was over 85 percent agreement (that is, if there was perfect agreement or if only one coder disagreed with the other six), then I went with the code. In cases where there was less than 85 percent agreement, I discussed the claim with colleagues and either made a decision or, in some cases, decided that I could not determine if a claim was, on balance, liberal or conservative.¹⁰ For example, there were a number of events that were in favor of retrieving prisoners of war or searching for military personnel missing in action. Or, there were victims' rights events, for example. In such ambiguous cases, I simply assigned an ambiguous code and have excluded them from the analysis.

Constructing the Liberal Protest Variable

Given the theoretical argument, I clearly expected to find that both conservative and liberal social movements would be systematically related to the other variables in the models. I initially imagined one of the dependent variables of interest would be the difference between liberal and conservative social movements, such that higher levels on the dependent variable would represent liberal movements as having more activity net of conservative movements, and lower levels, conservative movements having greater net activity compared to liberal protests.

I modeled this difference variable as a function of the independent and dependent variables I report in Table 1, and much to my surprise, produced an R-squared statistic near zero. To understand how this could be the case, I analyzed each protest time series separately. I report the results in Table A2. I find that the only independent variable that explains the rise and fall of conservative social movement events is the rise and fall of liberal social protests. As such creating a net liberal protest variable only introduced error, because the conservative protest model only responded to the liberal protests.

As a result, the core explanatory variable in the models is the liberal protest activity, which is rooted in the protest event data. Given my interest in the over-time movement of liberal protest and how it influences public opinion and policymaking, one must shift the focus from analyzing individual protest events to analyzing protest cross-temporally. To do this, I aggregate the protest event data by quarter in order to create a quarterly measure of protest events. In this paper I focus on liberal protest events, so the quarterly count includes only protest events that were coded liberal, using the coding rules described above.¹¹

I also take two additional steps. First, I weight the protests by participation.¹² For each protest event, information regarding the number of people participating was recorded. The weighting scheme simply multiplies each event by the number (in thousands) participating in the event before aggregating the events into a quarterly measure of liberal protest participation. In each year, then, the *liberal protest participation* variable provides the number of people, in thousands, participating in liberal protest events.¹³ This variable is particularly useful for my purposes because it tracks not only the existence of protest, but also the degree of participation in these protests. A protest involving ten participants should send a much weaker signal to elected officials and the mass public than a protest involving tens of thousands. I expect a weighted measure to have more impact than a simple event count measure, and I test this expectation, which I report on shortly.

Second, one should think carefully about how to account for protests in a way that captures the potential mechanisms linking protest to the macro political outcomes of interest in the analysis. The first outcome is public policy mood. Public policy mood is the aggregate total of people's support for a more active *federal* government. The other dependent variables concern legislative outputs from the U.S. Congress. The focus of both of these is the

government in Washington, D.C. Protests outside of Washington send a weaker signal concerning national politics because many of them are protests that are about state or local issues, and not *national* issues. As such, I confine the protest measure to social movement events held only in Washington, D.C.¹⁴

In addition, a weakness of the *Dynamics of Collective Action* dataset is that one cannot consistently and clearly differentiate between protests about national, as oppose to state or local, issues. For example, a protest coded as pro-education in the data could be about greater support for federal education programs, but is more likely to concern state funding of education. Similarly, gay rights or even civil rights protests could have the state government as their targets. Gillion (2012) aggregates protests at the Congressional-district level, finding that such protests affect Members of Congress, but the current measure presents challenges for me to do the same because the ability to differentiate national from state issues is not as perfect as one would like. Granted, the data does contain a variable that lists the “target” of the protest, but my experience was that I could not always differentiate when protestors might be targeting national versus local governments. However, all protests occurring in Washington, DC, are targeting the federal government.¹⁵

Finally, I exclude protest events related to abortion as I found that the trajectory of those protest events is quite distinct from protests surrounding other policy issues. The resulting quarterly measure of liberal protest participation is available from 1960-1995. I display the resulting time series in Figure 1.

Figure 1 reveals much variance in terms of social movement event participation in Washington, D.C. In most quarters of most years, there is no liberal social movement participation, or almost no social movement events. However, other times there is a lot of

activity. A consideration of the series reveals the protest events one expects to see. For example, Martin Luther King Jr.'s "March on Washington" appears in 1963, with about 200,000 participants. The anti-Vietnam War marches of the late-1960s and early-1970s are apparent as well. The small spikes in the late 1970s reflect feminist marches in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. The year 1993 really stands out, with about 1.6 million people marching on Washington. In late April of that year gays and lesbians marched on Washington in support of equal LGBT rights—a march which the *Times* reported as attended by 750,000 people. In addition, on two additional days, another 300,000 people marched in different city locations each day, resulting in a total of about 1.6 million people. The spike at the very end also stands out. This was the Million Man March, in which 400,000 African American men marched on the mall in Washington in support of the role of African American men in families. The march occurred over two days, and about 400,000 people attended both days, resulting in the measure indicating about 800,000 marched on Washington DC during the final quarter in 1995.

Dependent Variables

I discussed above my hypotheses related to the potential effects of liberal protest participation on public opinion and policymaking. I test each of these hypotheses using time series data from 1972-1995, focusing on three dependent variables that capture these aspects of the American macro polity. The first variable is public mood liberalism, first created in Stimson (1991), which aggregates thousands of surveys and survey responses to tap the general ideological preferences of the mass public. Stimson discovered that the opinions of the mass public in a variety of policy domains generally move together over time. When sentiment in one domain moves in a conservative direction, sentiment in other domains move in a conservative direction as well. Public mood summarizes the ideological preferences of the American public in

a single measure. And, while Stimson explores the possibility of multiple dimensions of public opinion, he finds that the primary dimension corresponds to the right-left ideological continuum. The quarterly version of the 1st dimension mood measure I utilize here is *only available from 1972-2009* (the most recent update of the measure is available at <http://www.unc.edu/~jstimson>), with higher values corresponding to more liberal public opinion. This particular version of mood examines the attitudes only of voters rather than the full mass public. The consequence of using this measure of mood is that one can then only analyze protest events beginning in 1972.

The other two dependent variables analyzed below are indexes combining multiple measures of policymaking activity in the House and Senate. Both the House and Senate measures were originally introduced in Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson (2002, 294-97). I desire to capture the *broadest possible measure* of policymaking activity in the Congress, and so the index is composed of four different sources (i.e. the index for each chamber is an additive combination of four indicators).¹⁶ The first indicator is based on interest group ratings from the ADA (Americans for Democratic Action) and ACA (Americans for Constitutional Action). The ADA provides scores of “liberalism” while the ACA provides “conservatism” scores. Averaging the ADA and ACA scores within chambers provides a measure of the overall ideology of roll-call votes in the chamber. The second indicator included in the index is the percentage of liberal wins on polarized votes, in each respective chamber. This measure is created by first categorizing each roll-call vote in the House or Senate as polarized or not. Specifically, a roll-call is categorized as polarized if the vote shows a greater correlation with members’ ADA scores than a pure party-line vote would. In other words, a polarized vote is defined as a vote in which ideologically consistent voting was higher than average. Once a roll-call vote is categorized as polarized, the liberal and conservative positions on the vote are identified. The

policy activity liberalism measure gauges the annual percentage of polarized roll-call votes that are won by the liberal side.¹⁷ The third measure examines “key” votes as identified by *Congressional Quarterly* and calculates the average ideology of the winning coalition on those votes based on ADA/ACA scores. The final measure is the median size of the liberal coalition on polarized votes as defined above.

Importantly, each of these indicators is truly a measure of policy *activity* rather than actual policy *enactment*. Roll call votes in the House and Senate are a part of the policymaking process, but they do not of themselves produce policy. However, the focus on *activity* is consistent with the argument above and other existing literature suggesting that the greatest likelihood of protest impact is earlier in the policymaking process. Here, I am looking at a middle stage of the process, after policy proposals have been crafted but prior to adoption.

Other Explanatory Variables

In addition to liberal protest participation, I examine several other variables that could plausibly shape public opinion and policymaking. First, I include a series of measures for the partisan composition of the House, Senate, and presidency. The presidential partisanship variable is simply a dummy variable coded 1 for Democratic presidents and 0 for Republicans. The congressional measures report the number of Democrats in the House and Senate, respectively. I also include separate measures of the majority party in the House and Senate, coded 1 for Democratic majorities and 0 for Republicans. Second, I include a measure of policy liberalism in models of public opinion since it is well-established that public opinion responds to current policy outputs (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, Wlezien 1995). Policy liberalism is a measure of the ideological content of policy output which is based on coding each of Mayhew’s (2005) important laws for ideological direction (liberal +1, conservative -1, neutral 0),

summarizing the ideological content by year, and then cumulating the annual measure over time to generate an indicator of cumulative policy liberalism (see Kelly (2009) for a more detailed discussion of the policy liberalism measure).

Analysis and Results

I remind the reader that because the public policy mood variable only begins in 1972, I cannot analyze the full liberal social protest time series. As a first step in the analysis, which covers the years 1972-1995, I test each variable for unit roots. This step is taken in order to make sure that I avoid any problems with spurious regression that can be generated when analyzing time series variables containing a unit root (Granger and Newbold 1974). The results of these unit root tests are reported in Appendix A. In sum, I found that all of the variables except for protest participation contain a unit root. Therefore, in all the models that follow, variables containing a unit root are differenced in order to remove the unit root process. After differencing, all of the variables in the models are stationary, thereby avoiding the spurious regression problem.

Direct Effects

In Table 1, I present four models that capture the effect of protest participation on public opinion and policy activity. Because the hypotheses are directional, I utilize one-tailed tests of statistical significance. In the first model, the outcome is the liberalism of public opinion as captured in the public mood of voters. In this model, the coefficient for liberal protests is positive and significant. This indicates that liberal protests produce liberal shifts in public opinion. The coefficient indicates that an increase in liberal protests of 1,000 people shifts public policy mood in a liberal direction by one quarter of a standard deviation, or .004 points ($B = .25$; $b = .004$, $p < .025$, one-tailed test). This indicates that while the size of the effect is small, the very largest

public protests in Washington have substantive effects on policy mood. For example, while a liberal protest of 100,000 will shift public policy mood in a liberal direction by only .4 points (where the measure ranges from 0 to 100), a liberal protest of 1,000,000 will shift policy mood 4 points. According to the measure, the largest liberal protest in Washington involved 1.6 million people marching for gay rights in April of 1993, which would have moved policy mood in a liberal direction by 6.4 points.

The temporal nature of the data helps to rule out the idea that it is actually mood that produces protest activity. In this model current changes in public opinion are regressed on past levels of liberal protest activity. The other results from the table indicate that as Democrats hold more seats in the U.S. Senate, voter mood becomes more conservative, but when they take control of the chamber, voter mood becomes more liberal.¹⁸ In this model I include a lagged dependent variable because I find the model's residuals are auto correlated, and I add the lag as a control for it.

I noted earlier that I was interested in how operationalizing protest events as simple event counts, versus weighting the events by the number of participants, would affect the analysis. I had theoretical reason to privilege the weighted approach, but I estimated models using both approaches because the event count approach is so dominant in the literature. As a result, in a different analysis I replaced the weighted liberal protest measure with a simple liberal events count measure, finding that the latter count measure is not statistically significant (results not reported but available on request).

The second column presents evidence that liberal protest activity increases liberal policymaking activity in the U.S. House. As with the previous result for public policy mood, the coefficient is rather small in size ($B=.30$; $b=.002$, $p<.025$, one-tailed test). However, the largest

protests in Washington generate substantively more liberal policy-making in the U.S. House. A protest in Washington of 1,000,000 people would increase liberal policy making activity by 2 percent in the U.S. House. The other model results indicate that both Democratic control of the chamber, as well as Democrats holding more seats, produce the same effects.

In the third column one sees that the lag of liberal DC protests increases Senate Liberal policy activity, as well. The coefficient is the same as that for House Liberal policy activity ($B=.20$; $b=.002$, $p<.10$, one-tailed test), which indicates that a protest in Washington of 1,000,000 people would increase the liberal policy making activity of the U.S. Senate by 2 percentage points. Just as with the model for the House, this result indicates that the Democrats taking control of the Senate has the same effect of increasing the liberal direction of voting (although the Beta coefficient is more than twice as large in the Senate model than House). As with the model from column one, in the latter two models I replaced the weighted liberal protest measure with simple liberal events count measures, and once again, the simple events count measures were not statistically significant (results not reported but available on request).

The final column includes the overall ideological direction of legislation passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by the President. This is the most stringent test for the effects of social movements. If social movements have effects at this stage, then they have affected the ideological direction of the final laws passed in identical form by the U.S. House and Senate, and signed into law by the President. Given our theoretical expectations about when we expect to find social movement effects, we are the most skeptical of finding effects at this stage because this is the final stage of law making. As expected, both of the social movement variables, the liberal and conservative series, have small Beta coefficients and are not statistically significant. Increasing Senate policy liberalism has the largest effect ($B=.51$, $b=.10$, $p<.01$ one tailed test),

followed by increases in public policy mood ($B = .39$, $b = .08$, $p < .01$ on tailed test), and tied for third are moving from a Republican to Democratic President ($B = .30$, $b = .92$, $p < .01$, one tailed test) and increasing Democratic seats in the U.S. Senate ($B = -.32$, $b = -.09$, $p < .01$, one tailed test; surprisingly, once these myriad of other factors are controlled for, increasing numbers of Democrats in the U.S. Senate leads to a liberal policy backlash). The final statistically significant factor is moving from the Republicans controlling the U.S. House to the Democrats ($B = .17$, $b = .92$, $p < .10$, one tailed test).

I find that liberal social movements lead to more liberal public policy mood and also affect the overall ideological direction of voting in the U.S. House and Senate (the results for the conservative protest events are not statistically significant). However, these findings reveal little about the mechanisms through which liberal social movements might operate. One of the most prominent theories of social movements emphasizes how protest events seldom have direct effects (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello and Su 2010; Amenta, Carruthers and Zylan 1992; Amenta, Caren and Olasky 2005; Amenta, Halfmann and Young 1999). I now explore both moderated and mediated relationships.

Conditional (Moderated) Effects

Social movements have more success at some times, rather than others. By modeling these conditional relationships, we gain a better understanding of how social movement protest events affect political outcomes. In Table 2 we report the results of one such test on voter public policy mood, and one each on House policy and Senate policy liberalism.

In column 1 we find that the interaction between the lag in liberal protest events and the difference in macropartisanship increases the liberal score of voter public policy mood. In other words, when the electorate has increasing Democratic identification, liberal protests have more

of an effect on public policy mood ($B = .22$, $b = .0005$, $p < .05$, one tailed test). When macropartisanship is unchanging, liberal protest events increase voter public policy mood ($B = .17$, $b = .004$, $p < .10$, one tailed test). To clarify, when macropartisanship is unchanging, a one thousand person increase in liberal protests increases public policy mood by a bit less than a fifth of a standard deviation, and when macropartisanship increases in the Democratic direction by one tenth of a percent, the liberal protest events have an additional impact on public policy mood of a bit more than a fifth of a standard deviation. When liberal protest events are unchanging, macropartisanship has no relationship with voter public policy mood ($B = -.03$, $b = .01$, n.s.)

In column 2 we find that interacting the liberal protest lag with increases in Democratic seats in the U.S. House increases the difference in House liberal policy activity ($B = .14$, $b = .0006$, $p < .10$ one tailed test). Put more simply, liberal protest events have stronger effects on liberal House voting when Democrats hold more seats. This should not be surprising, given that when there are more Democrats in the House, there are more representatives who are sympathetic to liberal protest messages. In column 3 the same relationship hold in the U.S. Senate ($B = .12$, $b = .0005$, $p < .10$, one tailed test). In the U.S. House, a joint one thousand person increase in liberal social movement attendance, corresponding with an increase in the Democrats holding one additional seat in the U.S. House, increases U.S. House liberal policy activity by .14 standard deviations over the .26 standard deviation increase that liberal social movements have when the Democrats are neither gaining nor losing seats in the U.S. House. In the Senate, the interaction increase is almost exactly the same size ($B = .12$), and the liberal protest event parameter is exactly the same size.

Indirect (Mediated) Effects

In Table 1 we found that liberal protest events impacted differences in public policy

mood, as well as differences in Senate and House policy activity. These results open the possibility that liberal protest events might impact the ideological direction of major U.S. laws by operating indirectly through these factors. We address this possibility by estimating a Structural Equation Model (SEM) in which public policy mood, Senate policy activity and policy liberalism are all endogenous, and liberal protest events are allowed to impact policy liberalism indirectly by operating through mood and Senate policy activity. We report the results in Table 3.

In the first model, we include changes in policy liberalism as the endogenous variable, and we find that differences in public policy mood ($B = .38$, $b = .08$, $p < .01$, one tailed test) and differences in Senate policy activity ($B = .51$, $b = .10$, $p < .01$, one tailed test) both lead to the laws passed by Congress and signed by the President to be more liberal. Other factors matter as well—differences in the Democrats holding Senate seats make the laws less liberal, while the Democrats gaining control of the House and the Presidency make them more liberal.

In the second model, we include differences in voter public policy mood as the dependent variable. Of course, in the policy liberalism model, this variable strongly correlates with policy liberalism. Increases in the lag of liberal protest events lead voter policy mood in a more liberal direction ($B = .25$, $b = .006$, $p < .01$, one tailed test). Increases in the lag of conservative protest events lead to the same result, although the coefficient is smaller and less statistically significant ($b = .15$, $b = .002$, $p < .10$, two tailed test). This is the only result in the paper in which conservative protest events are found to correlate with any of the outcome variables.¹⁹ Other factors matter as well—differences in the Democrats controlling the Senate, the Democrats gaining more seats in the Senate, and the Democrats gaining seats in the House.

In the final model, we model differences in Senate policy activity as the endogenous

variable. Increases in the lag of liberal protest events lead Senate policy activity in a more liberal direction ($B = .19$, $b = .004$, $p < .01$, one tailed test). The other factor to associate statistically is when the Democrats gain control of the chamber.

At the bottom of the table we report the indirect effect coefficients and their statistical significance. We find that the indirect effect coefficient through public policy mood on policy liberalism is statistically significant ($B = .096$, $b = .0005$, $p < .01$, one tailed test), as is the corresponding coefficient through Senate policy activity ($B = .097$, $b = .0004$, $p < .01$, one tailed test). The combined coefficient indicates that a one thousand person increase in attendance at liberal protest events makes the laws of the United States more liberal by two fifths of a standard deviation, or .0009 units. One million people attending a liberal protest event in Washington D.C. would make the laws of the United States more liberal by about 1 percentage point. However, the ideological direction of U.S. laws tend to be pretty stable, and so such a change represents a change of more than one standard deviation.

Discussion and Conclusions

The macropolity literature puts policy mood front and center as a key driver of policy outputs—it affects the ideological direction of legislation, as well as Presidential policy, and even the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court. Previously, scholars found that policy mood responds to the economy, but it also responds to political outputs and attempts to maintain an ideologically moderate equilibrium. Now scholars can add another factor that affects this potent force in American politics—the activity of liberal social movements, as they hold events in Washington, D.C.

These results are in some contrast to past scholars who traditionally find that social movements have little to no effect on public opinion (Guigli 2004, 2007). The divergent findings

may be for two reasons. First, I study protest events in their aggregated form, while others study one protest movement at a time. Scholars have established that the entire macro political system (including public opinion, as well as the outputs of the House of Representatives, Senate, President, and Supreme Court) move in left-right directions across time (e.g. Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002). I produce evidence here that protest events also move the public opinion component of the political system. However, when protest movements are parsed out and considered separately, the strength of the overall ideological signal may be considerably weakened.

The second reason for the divergent findings may have to do with the operationalization of protest movements. Social movement scholars traditionally measure protest movement strength by counting the number of events a movement holds. I take a different tact, measuring protest movement strength as the number of people who participate in protest events in a given year. While I expect that both should be related to the ideological turns of the macro system, I believe that greater numbers of participants send a stronger ideological signal than greater numbers of events do because of the greater multiplier effect that protest events can have when more people attend. In the future, I will further examine the empirical implications of the two measurement strategies.

In the original analysis I considered liberal protests nationally, but this measure was not focused enough on the federal government to produce results at the national-level. In other words, many of the terms associated with “liberal” protests did measure liberal protests, but many of them were seemingly targeted at the state or local governments. The disadvantage of the *Dynamics of Collective Action* data is that it is difficult to tease out these different targets. I solve this problem by analyzing protests in Washington D.C.—they are aimed at a national

audience, and they are on topics directly relevant to the federal government. The groups in American politics that can mobilize hundreds of thousands or millions of people in Washington are limited, but when they do so, the course of American politics is affected.

These results seem especially relevant given current developments in American politics. The election of Donald Trump as the U.S. President has caused a nation-wide protest backlash against his Presidency and his conservative agenda. The high point in terms of protest attendance, at least thus far, was the nation-wide Women's March. The march was held the day after President Trump's inauguration, and millions of people marched nationwide, with crowd scientists estimating that about 470,000 people marched in Washington, D.C. (Wallace and Parlapiano 2017). The results here predict that the Women's March in Washington D.C. should have impacted public policy mood, moving it in a liberal direction about 2 points. Of course, what is most unusual about that march in particular is that it was matched in countless cities and other jurisdictions across the country, to the count of millions of people. This raises the possibility that the Women's March may have had an even greater impact on public policy mood, and maybe even policy itself. One study finds that protest that occurs in Congressional Districts impacts the voting behavior of those Districts' Members of Congress (Gillion 2012). In the first six months of the Trump Presidency, Republicans in Congress have not been able to effectively pass legislation. Perhaps the dramatic rise in liberal social protest is part of the reason why.

In conclusion, in a literature filled with null results, I find liberal social movement activity in Washington D.C. affects public opinion (as it relates to preferred levels of federal government activity), and also liberal wins in the U.S. House and Senate. Political mediation theory leads me to look for influence beyond direct effects. I find that an important conditioning

factor is the number of Democrats. When there are more Democrats in the electorate, liberal protest movements have greater effects on voter public opinion. When there are more Democrats in the U.S. Congress, liberal protest movements seemingly increase liberal voting in those chambers. Finally, liberal protests have indirect effects on the laws of the United States. Liberal protest events increase public policy mood and liberal Senate activity, and those factors in turn affect policy liberalism. The coefficients in all the analyses tend to be small, but liberal groups that can mobilize half a million people in Washington D.C., or more, can impact the general ideological direction of both public opinion, and the Congress' policy making activity, by a couple of percent, or more.

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Tables and Figures

Figure 1. Quarterly Liberal Social Movement Event Participation in Washington D.C., 1960-1995

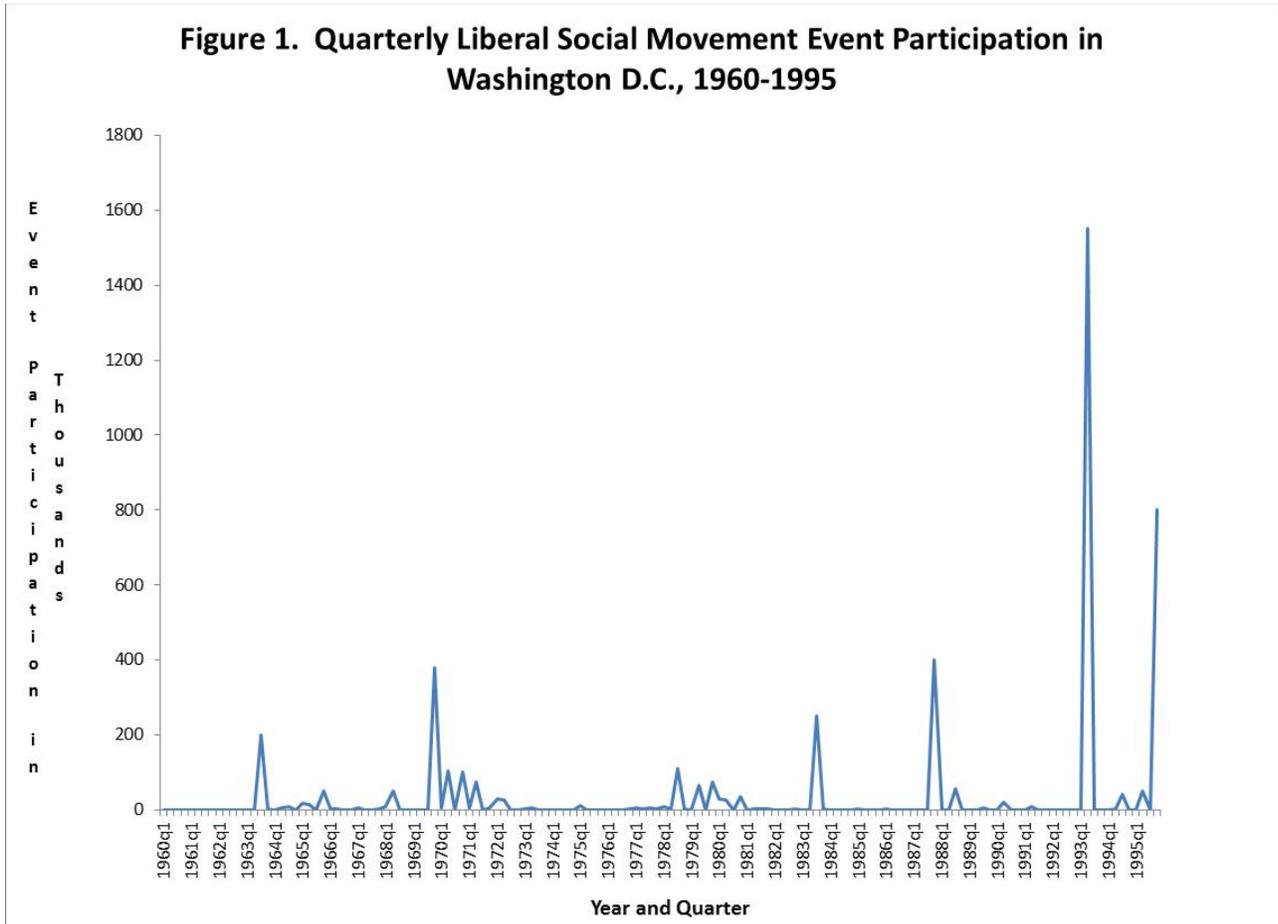


Table 1. Effects of Protest Activity on Four Macro-Political Outcomes

Independent Variable	Δ Voter Mood		Δ House Liberal Policy Activity		Δ Senate Liberal Policy Activity		Policy Liberalism	
	Unstandardized	B	Unstandardized	B	Unstandardized	B	Unstandardized	B
Liberal DC Protests _{t-1}	0.004** (0.0003)	.25**	0.002** (0.001)	.30**	0.002** (0.002)	.20**	0.0003 (0.0004)	.07
Conservative DC Protests _{t-1}	.000 (.000)	.15	-0.001 (.001)	-.13	-0.001 (.001)	-.01	-0.0002 (0.0002)	-.09
Δ House Dem Seats _t	0.01 (0.01)	.25	0.06*** (0.03)	.30***			-.002 (.009)	-.03
Δ House Dem Control _t	-.11 (.50)	-.03	4.63** (2.25)	.25***			.92* (.67)	.17*
Δ Senate Dem Seats _t	-.20** (.08)	-1.17**			-.05 (.41)	-.03	-.09** (.05)	-.32**
Δ Senate Dem Control _t	1.74** (.74)	.92**			10.29** (4.32)	.65**		
Δ Senate Liberal Policy Activity _t							.10*** (.02)	.51***
Δ Democratic President _t	.06 (.26)	.03	0.35 (0.96)	.03	-0.07 (1.52)	-0.00	.92*** (.33)	.30***
Δ Policy Liberalism _t	-.06 (.07)	-.10						
Δ Voter Mood _t			0.72 (0.53)	.13	-1.19 (.77)	-.14	.08*** (.02)	.39***
Δ Unemployment _t	-.12 (.11)	-.13						
Lagged dependent variable	.004 (.01)							
Constant	-.06 (.04)		-0.34* (0.19)		-.44 (.26)		-4.65*** (1.05)	
Breusch-Godfrey Significance	2.16 .14		NA		NA		NA	
N	84		87		87		84	
adj-R ²	0.14		0.31		.40		.37	

*p<.10, one-tailed; **p<.05, one-tailed; ***p<.01, one-tailed

First model estimated with OLS regression, coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses. Other models estimated with Prais-Winsten regression to account for autocorrelation. Insignificant Breusch-Godfrey indicates no autocorrelation.

Table 2. Conditional Effects of Protest Activity on Three Macro-Political Outcomes

Independent Variable	Δ Voter Mood		Δ House Liberal Policy Activity		Δ Senate Liberal Policy Activity	
	Unstandardized	B	Unstandardized	B	Unstandardized	B
Liberal DC Protests _{t-1} X Δ Macropartisanship	.0005** (.0003)	.22**				
Liberal DC Protests _{t-1} X Δ Dem Seats in House			.00006* (.00005)	.14*		
Liberal DC Protests _{t-1} X Δ Dem Seats in Senate					.00005* (.00003)	.12*
Liberal DC Protests _{t-1}	0.004* (0.003)	.17*	0.003** (0.001)	.26**	0.003** (0.02)	.17**
Δ Macropartisanship _t	-.01 (.02)	-.03				
Δ House Dem Seats _t	0.01 (0.01)	.26	.06*** (.03)	.30** *		
Δ Senate Dem Seats _t	-.20** (.08)	-1.18**			-0.08 (0.41)	-.06
Conservative DC Protests _{t-1}	.0004** (.0002)	.23**	-.001 (.001)	-.13	-0.0001 (0.001)	-.00
Δ House Dem Control _t	-.08 (.49)	-.02	4.54*** (2.23)	.25** *		
Δ Senate Dem Control _t	1.75** (.74)	.93**			10.64*** (4.30)	.67***
Δ Democratic President _t	0.07 (0.26)	.04	.34 (.96)	.03	-.03 (1.51)	-.002
Δ Policy Liberalism _t	-.06 (.07)	-.09				
Δ Voter Mood _t			.62 (.53)	.11	-1.33** (0.76)	-.16**
Constant	-0.06* (0.04)		-.41*** (.19)		-.52** (0.27)	
Breusch-Godfrey Significance	2.98		NA		NA	
	.15					
N	84		87		87	
adj-R ²	0.15		0.32		0.41	

*p<.10, one-tailed; **p<.05, one-tailed; ***p<.01, one-tailed

First model estimated with OLS regression, coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses. Remaining models estimated with Prais-Winsten regression to account for autocorrelation.

Insignificant Breusch-Godfrey indicates no autocorrelation.

Table 3: Indirect Paths of Liberal D.C. Protests on Policy Liberalism, Structural Equation Model

Endogenous Variables	Exogenous Variables	Coefficients (Standard errors)	Standardized Beta Coefficient
<i>Δ Policy Liberalism_t</i>			
	Δ Public Policy Mood _t	.08*** (.02)	.38***
	Δ Senate Liberal Policy Activity _t	.10*** (.02)	.51***
	Δ Senate Dem Seats _t	-.09** (.05)	-.32**
	Δ House Dem Seats _t	-.002 (.009)	-.03
	Δ House Dem Control _t	.93* (.64)	.17*
	Δ Democratic President _t	.92*** (.31)	.30***
	Constant	-4.51*** (.98)	
		R ²	.43
<i>Δ Voter Public Policy Mood_t</i>			
	Liberal DC Protests _{t-1}	.006*** (.002)	.25***
	Conservative DC Protests _{t-1}	.002* (.001)	.15*
	Δ Policy Liberalism	-.06 (.06)	-.10
	Δ Senate Dem Control _t	1.74** (.69)	.92***
	Δ Senate Dem Seats _t	-.20** (.08)	-1.17**
	Δ House Dem Control _t	-.11 (.47)	-.03
	Δ House Dem Seats _t	.01* (.01)	.25*
	Δ Democratic President _t	.06 (.24)	.03
	Δ Unemployment _t	-.12 (.10)	-.13
	Constant	-.06* (.04)	
		R ²	.23

Δ Senate Liberal Policy Activity_t

	Liberal DC Protests _{t-1}	.004*** (.002)	.19***
	Conservative DC Protests _{t-1}	-.00 (.00)	-.03
	Δ Senate Dem Control _t	8.58*** (4.10)	.54***
	Δ Senate Dem Seats _t	.11 (.39)	.08
	Δ Democratic President _t	.04 (1.49)	.00
	Δ Voter Public Policy Mood _t	.05 (.09)	.05
	Constant	-3.43 (5.02)	
	R ²	.43	
	N	84	
Overall Model R ²		.67	
<i>Indirect Path to Policy Liberalism thru Public Policy Mood</i>	Liberal DC Protests	.0005*** (.0003)	.096***
<i>Indirect Path to Policy Liberalism thru Senate Liberal Policy Activity</i>		.0004*** (.0002)	.097***
<i>Total Indirect Effect on Policy Liberalism</i>		.0009*** .193***	

*p<.10, one-tailed; **p<.05, one-tailed; ***p<.01, one-tailed
chi² = 7.90 (p=.54) df=9

Appendix A: Unit Root Tests

Table A1. Unit Root Tests

Variable	Augmented Dickey Fuller Statistic	Significance Level
Inside DC Protests	-8.19	0.00
Voter Public Mood	-1.45	0.85
Democrats control House	-0.58	0.98
Democrats control Senate	-2.11	0.54
Number of Democratic House seats	-2.44	0.36
Number of Democratic Senate seats	-2.14	0.52
Democratic President	-2.73	0.22
House Liberal Wins	0.25	1.00
Senate Liberal Wins	-1.44	0.85
Policy Mood	-2.99	0.04
Unemployment	-1.46	0.55
Gross Domestic Product	2.06	1.00

Note: Significant test statistics means absence of unit root.

Table A2. Predictors of Inside Washington D.C. Liberal and Conservative Protest Events

Independent Variable	Liberal DC Protests	Conservative DC Protests
Opposing ideology protests _{t-1}	-.02 (0.05)	.37** (0.15)
Policy Mood _{t-1}	-7.81*** (2.10)	-3.61 (3.34)
Δ Macropartisanship _t	10.21* (5.28)	7.44 (8.39)
Policy Liberalism _{t-1}	-1.09 (1.02)	-1.73 (1.61)
Δ Unemployment _t	77.83** (38.99)	20.13 (61.97)
Δ Gross Domestic Product _t	-0.12 (0.27)	.14 (.44)
Lagged DV	.17* (0.10)	.27*** (.09)
Constant	519.13*** (132.45)	262.80 (210.53)
Breusch-Godfrey Significance	0.16	.50
N	141	141
adj-R ²	0.18	0.14

*p<.10, one-tailed; **p<.025, one-tailed; ***p<.005, one-tailed

¹ For example, Robert Dahl (1956) confronts the problem of how the intensity of preferences should be represented in government. He finds no formal, “constitutional” solution, instead turning to “extra-constitutional” solutions that involve those with intense preferences performing political activities – which would seemingly include political protests.

² For the anti-war movement, see McAdam and Su (2002); for civil rights, Jenkins, Jacobs and Agnone (2003); and for women, Soule et al. (1999).

³ A typical quantitative study of social movements will correlate national policy outputs on some public policy with national measures of public opinion and social movement activity on that topic. These studies rarely find that social movements affect policy. In contrast, Gillion (2012)

finds that when social movements are aggregated instead at the Congressional District-level, racial minority protests affect relevant legislation. As another alternative approach to the conventional measurement strategy, I consider what happens when ideologically-related movements are all aggregated together. For the research question of whether or not social movements affect policy, different levels of aggregation may produce different results.

⁴ Although the reasons why for the effects are different. When there are more Democrats in Congress, there are more people who are both supportive of liberal protest agendas, and can also benefit politically from broader liberal coalitions. Among the electorate, however, when there are more Democrats, there are more people in the population with what John Zaller (1992) might call liberal “considerations,” making those people more open to the priming and framing effects I outlined earlier.

⁵ <http://www.dynamicsofcollectiveaction.com>. For more in-depth discussions of the data used here, see McAdam and Su (2002), Earl, Soule and McCarthy (2003), Van Dyke, Soule and Taylor (2004), Soule and Earl (2005), Earl and Soule (2006), King and Soule (2007), King, Bentele and Soule (2007), Soule and King (2008), Soule (2009), Larson and Soule (2009), Olzak and Soule (2009), and Soule and Davenport (2009).

⁶ The project coded events associated with both sides of each claim or issue area. For example, the researchers coded both pro-war and anti-war/peace events. In all, they coded over 160 different claims articulated over this period.

⁷ Note that if a block party turned into a demonstration in which participants articulated some claim, this would have been coded.

⁸ The data cannot speak to changes in protest that takes place outside of the public sphere, such as changes in movements that develop within corporations. As well, the dataset does not include

organized labor events (e.g., work stoppages and strikes) because the dynamics of labor events are likely different from the rest of the protest sector. Note that if an organized labor event morphed into a public protest event, it would be coded as a distinct event, however.

⁹ Note that in some of the statistical analysis presented in herein, there are somewhat fewer cases due to missing data on one or more variable. Also note that the full database from which these events were drawn covers well over 22,000 events but this is because it includes events using tactical forms that I exclude herein (see earlier footnote).

¹⁰ Nathan J. Kelly and Sarah Soule were involved in this project's earlier stage.

¹¹ The social movement activity variable is a sum of the following activities: Rallies, marches, vigils, picketing, civil disobedience, ceremonies, dramatic demonstrations (like concerts or dances), motorcades, information distribution (like tabling or distributing fliers), symbolic displays (like menorahs), attacks, riots, strikes, boycotts, press conference, and lawsuits.

¹² Because each activity is weighted by the number of participants, activities with large numbers of participants, like rallies and marches, dominate the measure in comparison to the other activities.

¹³ Scholars have studied political protest for years. Two conceptualizations of mass protest arise. The first focuses on the number of people who actually participate. The second focuses on the number of events held. Given my interest in the impact of protest on public mood, I favor the former conceptualization of mass protest because I expect the numbers of people involved will have a greater impact on public mood. While the number of protest events should also share a relationship with public mood, mood and policy both result from the behavior of the mass polity, and my conceptualization of protest should also reflect the actions of the masses. I see an event-

related definition of protest to be more related to elite considerations, and less to the passions and interests of the mass public.

¹⁴ We note that this point only applies to analysis with this dataset. Scholars are beginning to find that members of Congress respond to protests held in their Congressional districts (Gillion 2012 and Madestam, Shoag, Veuger and Yanagizawa-Drott 2013). Our dataset does not allow for similar analyses because the protest events are coded according to broad topics – such as education, or the environment. Protests held on such topics can be targeted at the state, local, or federal level. Indeed, we found that when we construct the measure in such a way, the results are inconclusive (results not presented). However, protests held in Washington are definitely targeted at the federal level. While scholars are starting to find that district-level protests affect Members of Congress, we assert that our findings in this paper represent another way in which protest groups have voice.

¹⁵ One beneficial side effect of this measure is that it may also tap similar protests going on outside of Washington, D.C. that also target the federal government. In other words, if liberal protests targeting the national government are more active in the capital, they may well be more active outside the capital, as well.

¹⁶ Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson (2002, 294) write in defense of this approach, “...if none of them by itself is probably *the* defensible measure, our intuitions are probably correct in netting out the sum of many of them, all moving in the same direction.... But when they run in tandem with one another, the set will give more confidence than its members individually.” (Emphasis in original)

¹⁷ This variable does not vary by quarter, so in a given year, each of the quarters are assigned the same value in the quarterly analysis below.

¹⁸ On its face, it would seem that when Democrats gain control of the Senate, mood should become more conservative as a part of the thermostat model to move the ideological balance of the system back toward the middle. After all, Table 1 reports the result that when Democrats gain seats in the Senate, policy mood becomes more conservative. My response to the seemingly inconsistent finding is to note that in this model, these variables are all modeled contemporaneous to one another, at time t . Liberal mood should cause the Democrats to take the Senate, which is correlated with Democrats holding more seats in the Senate. However, there is apparently a feedback effect back to mood, where Democrats holding more seats in the U.S. Senate reduces the liberalness of policy mood. Once a variety of factors related to this process are controlled for (most importantly, the positive impact of both more Democratic Senate seats and Democratic control of the Senate on policy liberalness), it is seemingly the feedback from holding more seats that produces the thermostatic ideological balancing result, while the positive relationship between mood and Democratic Senate control remains. I include these and other variables to isolate the causal impact of liberal D.C. protests on policy mood, and so the other coefficients in the model are not necessarily causal effects. Teasing out the causal ordering of the positive Democratic Senate coefficient takes us far afield from my purpose in this paper.

¹⁹ Of course, the direction of the relationship is the opposite of that predicted. One way to explain this result is to consider two things. First, in general, liberal protest movements are much more common in history than conservative ones are. Second, the stand-out exception to this would be the pro-life movement, which is excluded from this analysis. As a result, it is possible that given an electorate which is notorious for not paying close attention to politics, this may indicate a result where conservative protest movements actually lead voters to hold more

liberal opinions, in that all “change” has become associated with “liberal change” to voters who don’t pay enough attention to discern the difference.