

## Framing Dissent: Mass-Media Coverage of the Global Justice Movement

Jules Boykoff  
*Pacific University*

**Abstract** *This study explores the framing practices employed by mainstream mass-media outlets in the United States in their coverage of the Global Justice Movement during two major episodes of contention: the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in 1999 and the World Bank/IMF protests in Washington, DC in 2000. A content analysis of prominent and influential newspapers—the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and the Boston Globe—and television networks—ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and FOX—rendered five predominant frames: the Violence Frame, the Disruption Frame, the Freak Frame, the Ignorance Frame, and the Amalgam of Grievances Frame. These frames emerge from the interactive relationship between social movements and the mass media, which is bracketed by journalistic norms and values, and results in a dialectic of escalation whereby dissidents feel pressed to radicalize their tactics and rhetoric if they want to gain mass-media attention.*

### Introduction

Covering the protests of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle in 1999, a front-page article in *USA Today*—“‘This Weird Jamboree’: Teamsters and Turtle Protectors on the Same Side”—kicked off with the following lead:

President Clinton wants to put a “human face” on trade, but others want to give it a black eye. A bewildering spectrum of voices has converged on Seattle to disrupt the largest trade meeting ever held in the USA. Their protests and arrests have exposed the huge chasm between those who want to harness globalization and those who intend to stop it.

The authors go on to note “the astonishing array of causes, costumes, and voices in the Seattle streets” before quoting Chris Matthews of MSNBC’s *Hardball*, who dubbed protesters in Seattle “this weird jamboree of the big-neck boys of labor and the tree huggers.”<sup>1</sup> Such a portrayal depicts protesters as fierce opponents of trade who, when it comes to globalization, simply “intend to stop it.” As the black eye metaphor subtly implies, these people might be willing to engage in violence to achieve their ostensible goals. In an attempt to get a handle on the “bewildering spectrum of voices” in Seattle, the author turns to a news celebrity for a quotable

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<sup>1</sup> James Cox and Del Jones, “‘This Weird Jamboree’ Teamsters and Turtle Protectors on Same Side,” *USA Today*, December 2, 1999, p. A1.

moment replete with name-calling and normative judgments about the dissident demonstrators.

How can we best make sense of this portrayal of dissident citizens on the streets of Seattle? Is such a characterization of the anti-corporate globalization movement common? Dissident citizens have long objected to the coverage they have received in the popular media. Are their concerns about deprecatory media coverage warranted? Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri assert, "there have certainly existed previously numerous mechanisms for shaping public opinion and public perception of society, but contemporary media provide enormously more powerful instruments for this task."<sup>2</sup> Can we pinpoint common framing devices—or "powerful instruments"—that the US mass media use to represent the Global Justice Movement?<sup>3</sup>

This article addresses a number of questions. How did major US media outlets portray the Global Justice Movement in two major episodes of contention: WTO protests in Seattle in 1999 and World Bank/IMF protests in Washington, DC in 2000? What are the dominant frames the mass media used to depict this social movement? Along the way, I provide a framework for more tractable analysis of media treatment of the Global Justice Movement, a framework that also has applicability for other dissident movements operating in our contemporary moment.

### Mass Media, Social Movements, and the Dialectic of Escalation

The mass media constitute a crucial site for the construction of reality, an ever-unfolding discursive locale that influences public opinion on social issues and delimits societal assumptions and public moods. While David Miller notes, "Ruling ideas' rule by a variety of mechanisms" and not simply through ideology-driven mass-media portrayals, the mass media fashion a vital space where "normalcy" is defined and propagated.<sup>4</sup> According to Murray Edelman, "The concepts and categorizations that language constructs are therefore *not instruments of expression but potent creators of what we accept as reality.*"<sup>5</sup> This is certainly the case with mass-media coverage of social movements. In fact, the mass media often portray dissidents who engage in contentious politics as ridiculous, bizarre, dangerous, or otherwise out-of-step with Middle USAmerica,

<sup>2</sup>Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 322.

<sup>3</sup>I use the terms "anti-corporate globalization movement" and "Global Justice Movement" interchangeably. The latter term is becoming more widely used, e.g. Benjamin Shepard, "Movement of Movements: Toward a More Democratic Globalization," *New Political Science* 26 (2004), pp. 593–605. I concertedly avoid the common term "anti-globalization movement," since, aside from a slender minority, most of these dissidents are not opposed to globalization *per se*; rather, they are opposed to the uneven development that corporate-driven economic globalization, based on neoliberal principles, engenders. The Global Justice Movement supports many modes of economic and cultural globalization, not the least of which is the globalization of dissent.

<sup>4</sup>David Miller, "Media Power and Class Power: Overplaying Ideology," in Leo Panitch and Colin Leys (eds.), *Socialist Register 2002: A World of Contradictions* (London: Monthly Review Press, 2001), p. 260.

<sup>5</sup>Murray Edelman, *The Politics of Misinformation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 113, emphasis added.

and these characterizations reverberate throughout the public sphere to the detriment of dissent.

The mass media have played an important historical role in suppressing dissent in the United States, as they tend to look more favorably on dissident citizens who operate within the system and to disparage dissidents whose oppositional activities challenge sanctioned modes of action. While dissidents are sometimes able to frame issues and grievances in a manner satisfactory to them, they are more often frustrated by what they deem inadequate—and sometimes even derisive—mass-media coverage. Coverage frequently fails to focus on the issues and ideas of social movements and actually deprecates the participants, thereby undermining social movement efforts.

Mass-media coverage—or a lack thereof—influences the nature, form, and development of social movements, as well as the ability of these movements to reach their goals.<sup>6</sup> Understanding the role of the mass media is crucial to comprehending how social movements coalesce, build, and maintain themselves, as well as how they decide to frame their dissident messages.<sup>7</sup> Despite the substantial resources that social movements expend to obtain media attention and to sculpt this attention into a positive coverage, Dominique Wisler and Marco Giugni assert that, for the most part, the effects mass media have on the practice of dissent has been “largely overlooked” in theories and research on social movements.<sup>8</sup>

The interplay between social movements and the mass media results in a dialectic of escalation in which dissidents feel pressed to amp up their tactics. Escalation is both a reaction to the ability of social movement opponents to adapt to previous tactics as well as the result of the mass media’s unquenchable penchant for novelty. Dissident challengers, who are almost by definition at a disadvantage in terms of social status and resources, often try to make up for these limitations by engaging in exceptional, creative actions that are designed to gain mass-media attention. Carrying out contained, sanctioned actions is not likely to get mass-media attention, but disruptive, novel events improve the chances of mass-media interest. This creates a dilemma where dissidents feel compelled to foment protest activities that are novel enough to be newsworthy, yet not easily dismissible as gimmicky, violent, or weird, or that distract from or trivialize their social movement goals. This can be a fine line to walk. Even if social movements are successful in garnering mainstream press, they nevertheless have to ceaselessly adapt since what is considered exceptional, and therefore newsworthy, is an ever-shifting category. This all leads to the fomentation of “pseudo-events” characterized by inflated rhetoric and militancy beyond the group’s capabilities, which sets the table for mass-media deprecation.

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<sup>6</sup> Richard B. Kielbowicz and Clifford Scherer, “The Role of the Press in the Dynamics of Social Movements,” *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 9 (1986), pp. 71–96.

<sup>7</sup> Doug McAdam, “The Framing Function of Movement Tactics: Strategic Dramaturgy in the American Civil Rights Movement,” in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 339.

<sup>8</sup> Dominique Wisler and Marco Giugni, “Under the Spotlight: The Impact of Media Attention on Protest Policing,” *Mobilization: An International Journal* 4 (1999), pp. 171–187, at p. 172.

Concomitantly, McCarthy and McPhail assert that since the late 1960s there has been a gradual but persistent “institutionalization of protest” whereby protest has “become a normal part of the political process, its messages seen as a legitimate supplement to voting, petitioning, and lobbying efforts to influence government policy and practice.”<sup>9</sup> Simultaneously, “the recurring behavioral repertoires of both protesters and police, and their interactions with one another, have become institutionalized and therefore routinized, predictable, and, perhaps as a result, of diminishing impact.”<sup>9</sup> This “diminishing impact” occurs in part because the state has enjoyed an increase in its ability to control the timing, locale, and mode of social movement action, even as the right to protest has been legally fortified in the United States. But, importantly, this “diminishing impact” also occurs because of the way protest activity is framed by the mass media. The routinization of protest affects the interest that social movements garner from the media. What was formerly riveting and fresh can quickly become prosaic and ever-so-yesterday.

### Framing and Mass-Media Norms

Social movements and the actions they undertake are portrayed through mass-media framing, whereby news is presented through identifiable lenses. Such news lenses can shape public opinion.<sup>10</sup> Snow and Benford define a frame as “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment.”<sup>11</sup> Newspaper articles or television news stories are presented within certain frames, which organize the presentation of opinions and facts. Frames present structured cross-slices of perpetually-evolving public affairs. According to Robert Entman, framing “involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, by framing socio-political issues and controversies in specific ways, news organizations present—if tacitly—the foundational causes and potential consequences of a social problem or issue, as well as possible remedies.

Frames not only overlap and reinforce each other, but also frequently compete with each other. For instance, mass-media coverage of social movements that features a frame emphasizing violence clashes with—or at least challenges—injustice frames that the group may be trying to highlight.<sup>13</sup> On one level,

<sup>9</sup> John D. McCarthy and Clark McPhail, “The Institutionalization of Protest in the United States,” in David S. Meyer and Sidney Tarrow (eds.), *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), p. 84.

<sup>10</sup> William Gamson, *Talking Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, “Collective Identity and Activism: Networks, Choices, and the Life of the Social Movement,” in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 137.

<sup>12</sup> Robert W. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43 (1993), pp. 51–58, at p. 52.

<sup>13</sup> Gamson, *op. cit.*

coverage of dissidence can be seen as a framing contest whereby different social actors and groups present their frame(s) in an effort to gain social currency on the contested topography of public discourse. However, at the end of the day, the mass media collectively serve as the arbiter of these framing contests by implementing and synthesizing their own frames. By focusing more on the events organized by social movements and the characteristics of participants and less on the social issues that galvanized the contention and the context that informs it, the mass media depict protest activity (and dissidence more broadly) in ways that can undercut the agendas of these movements.

The mass media's deprecation of social movements is not so much a conspiracy born in a cigar-smoke-filled, secret room, as it is a collection of ever-unfolding tactical responses of journalists to the real world, as guided by professional norms, rules, and values. Mass-media accounts that make members of dissident social movements look like wide-eyed idealists, wild-eyed fringe characters, or red-eyed peaceniks who are out of touch with mainstream views do not necessarily indicate an overt ideological bias on the part of individual journalists, editors, and publishers. Generally speaking, individual journalists do not deliberately attempt to frame dissidents and their activities in derogatory light, disseminating misinformation in conscious, calculated collusion with the values and interests of their employers. Rather, such deprecatory framing can be linked to mass media workers' faithful adherence to the journalistic norms and values that undergird US news production.

Since deprecatory coverage of dissidence emerges dialectically from the interaction between social movements and the norms, values, and biases that inform the decisions of the modern mass-media workers,<sup>14</sup> consideration of these factors affords great leverage in understanding mass-media output regarding social movements. Indeed, these norms, values, and biases—which may coexist and reinforce each other—play into the dialectic of escalation social movements invariably face and are crucial in the framing battle that social movements must engage in.

Contemporary journalism favors stories that flare with novelty and drama.<sup>15</sup> As Stocking and Leonard put it: "It ain't news unless it's new," and this leads to an "issue-of-the-month syndrome" that submerges chronic social problems in favor of concentrated crises.<sup>16</sup> Because journalists perceive a need for a "news peg" upon which they can hang their stories, dramatic situations and accounts are deemed suitable while others are not. The preference for novelty and drama leads to both the trivialization of news content as well as the disregarding of news that lacks a strong whiff of freshness or drama. Personalization—or, the downplaying of structural factors in favor of ostensible personal agency—is another norm that guides news production. The tribulations, misfortunes, and victories of individuals are valued, while political and economic structures earn little consideration. Relatedly, the fragmentation norm isolates news stories from their

<sup>14</sup>W. Lance Bennett, "An Introduction to Journalism Norms and Representations of Politics," *Political Communication* 13 (1996), pp. 373–384; W. Lance Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion*, 5th edn (New York: Longman, 2002).

<sup>15</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television* (New York: New Press, 1998); Herbert Gans, *Deciding What's News* (New York: Pantheon, 1979); Bennett, 2002.

<sup>16</sup>Holly Stocking and Jennifer Pease Leonard, "The Greening of the Media," *Columbia Journalism Review*, December 1990, pp. 37–44, at p. 40.

origins and contexts, which makes it difficult to see the wider view. Finally, the authority-disorder norm is the tendency for reporters to rely in moments of crisis on authority figures as sources who can promise that order will soon be restored.<sup>17</sup> Many of these norms are interrelated, and, in some instances, a challenge to disentangle. Nevertheless, these norms and values, when put into practice, coalesce into biased coverage.<sup>18</sup>

These informational biases lead to episodic framing of news, rather than thematic framing of news, which in turn leads to shallower—and in some instances, misinformed—understandings of political and social issues.<sup>19</sup> In order to garner mass-media attention, social movements must engage in the dialectic of escalation, organizing novel, more dramatic events. In other words, as Smith *et al.* point out, “social movements often seek *thematic* media attention to some broad social concern by generating an *episode* or event that may be newsworthy in itself.”<sup>20</sup> However, the downside for social movements is that such episodic newsworthiness is often framed as violent or bizarre. Social movements therefore are forced to sacrifice deeper, thematic coverage on the altar of episodic mass-media attention. By obscuring a richer, wider understanding of social problems that pays heed to political complexity—social problems that dissident social movements are often trying to bring under public scrutiny—the combination of these informational biases leads to negativity and cynicism, and this often discourages social movement participation.

### The Global Justice Movement

The Global Justice Movement is a diverse collection of groups that focus on a wide range of social issues, from poverty, the environment, sexual politics, and corporate greed to human rights, the AIDS epidemic, labor rights, and the perils of capitalism. A striking range of groups work under the Global Justice Movement umbrella, from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Oxfam and Global Exchange to environmental organizations such as Greenpeace and the Rainforest Action Network, from issue activists like AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) to black-bloc anarchists. Additionally, coalitions have emerged to help organize and coordinate protests, such as the Direct Action Network, which was active in Seattle, and the Mobilization for Global Justice, which helped orchestrate protests in Washington, DC.

On the one hand, as Mike Moore, the former Director General of the World Trade Organization, has written, globalization “has joined imperialism, colonialism, capitalism and communism in becoming an all-purpose tag, which can be wielded like a club in almost any ideological direction.”<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, it has

<sup>17</sup> Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 45–50.

<sup>18</sup> When I use the term “bias” I am not referring to ideological bias. Rather, I am referring to informational biases—or predilections—that hinge on the journalistic norms of novelty, dramatization, personalization, fragmentation, and deference to authority figures.

<sup>19</sup> Iyengar, *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Jackie Smith, John D. McCarthy, Clark McPhail and Boguslaw Augustyn, “From Protest to Agenda Building: Description Bias in Media Coverage of Events in Washington, D.C.,” *Social Forces* 79 (2001), p. 1404, emphasis in original.

<sup>21</sup> Mike Moore, *A World Without Walls: Freedom, Development, Free Trade and Global Governance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 15.

come to be seen by its boosters as the neoliberal panacea for poverty and uneven development, the paradigmatic band-aid for a whole host of social maladies. James Mittelman describes globalization as “a historical transformation: in the economy, of livelihoods and modes of existence; in politics, a loss in the degree of control exercised locally ... such that the locus of power gradually shifts in varying proportions above and below the territorial state; and in culture, a devaluation of a collectivity’s achievements or perceptions of them.”<sup>22</sup> Globalization is the defining economic, cultural, and political phenomenon of the contemporary era, and, as such, it has produced not only ardent supporters, but also a variegated “global backlash.”<sup>23</sup>

Recently, many of the larger protests have coalesced around resistance to three major supranational institutions: the WTO, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These global financial institutions combine as a synecdoche for a rampant neoliberal capitalism that structurally favors corporate profits over the demands of non-elite citizens. Critics of the WTO, World Bank, and IMF assert that these institutions are inherently undemocratic and unjustifiably elitist. Additionally, these institutions often ignore local and national laws, thereby prioritizing unfettered trade over worker rights, consumer safety, and the environment. Through privatization, deregulation, and trade liberalization, these institutions promote the free flow of capital and goods (although not workers) and therefore encourage the shifting of production sites to countries with lower wage scales and fewer environmental standards. Through their Structural Adjustment Programs, the World Bank and IMF oversee the dismantling of public sector programs related to education and healthcare.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, the staggering debt accrued by developing countries further affects these countries’ ability to serve their populations.

Such criticisms of the WTO, IMF, and World Bank have led scholars and activists in recent years to articulate a wide range of alternatives to neoliberal capitalism. For example, Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel have advocated for “participatory economics”—or “parecon”—which promotes economic justice, economic democracy, and social solidarity through self-management, participatory planning, and democratic councils of workers and consumers.<sup>25</sup> Such challenges to globalization from above through alternative globalizations from below also resonate in the work of John McMurtry who promotes “a constitutionally governed, democratically accountable framework” grounded in “life standards” and “life economy principles” such as the repudiation of developing-world debt, the creation of binding environmental standards, and the institution of corporate accountability.<sup>26</sup> Such complex, intentional alternatives to neoliberal capitalism defy critics who assert that the Global Justice Movement is long on criticism but short on alternatives.

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<sup>22</sup> James H. Mittelman, *The Globalization Syndrome: Transformation and Resistance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Robin Broad, *Global Backlash: Citizen Initiatives for a Just World Economy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> The World Bank and IMF have largely abandoned the term “structural adjustment program” in favor of the phrase “Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper” (PRSP).

<sup>25</sup> Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *The Political Economy of Participatory Economics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Robin Hahnel, *Economic Justice and Democracy: From Competition to Cooperation* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Michael Albert, *Parecon: Life after Capitalism* (New York: Verso, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> John McMurtry, *Value Wars: The Global Market Versus the Life Economy* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp. 162–220, at p. 165.

Resistance to corporate-led globalization did not begin with the “Battle of Seattle” in late 1999. In fact, the protests in Seattle emerged out of prior local, regional, national, and transnational mobilizations against the international free-trade regime. Nevertheless, Seattle marked a new era of high-profile protests against these powerful organizations. Also, this protest helped cement the presence of transnational mobilizing structures that empowered citizens and organizations around the world. Sizable coalitions of labor, environmental, and political organizations worked side by side with consumer groups and extra-movement groups like churches, community associations, and friendship networks. Organizationally, these networks of resistance were relatively non-hierarchical, and they have continued to operate since Seattle, using the Internet as an organizing tool while attempting to be as unpredictable as possible. During heightened episodes of contention when these networks converge in various cities to protest the WTO, World Bank, and/or the IMF, they have received substantial mass-media coverage in both hard news and editorials.

Such mass-media attention has, in turn, secured the consideration of mass-media scholars. By and large, commentators have found coverage to be insufficient on a number of levels. In looking at newspaper coverage of the WTO protests in Seattle, William S. Solomon found that the media “tended to trivialize and misrepresent the demonstrators’ perspectives, thus devaluing them and rendering them more compatible with corporate values.”<sup>27</sup> Also writing on coverage in Seattle, Neil deMause zeroed in on media portrayals of violence, turning coverage on its head by asking why state-sanctioned violence—even with chemical weaponry (pepper spray) banned from international wars—is not critically interrogated as unconstitutional violence.<sup>28</sup> In an exploration of media coverage of the protests against the World Bank and IMF in Washington, DC in April 2000, media analyst Rachel Coen took a similar stance as she focused on how the media marginalized protesters through denigration.<sup>29</sup> Considering four protests that occurred after Seattle and Washington, DC, John Giuffo came to the conclusion that “poor coverage of the globalization-related events” is not only problematic due to its “focus on the small percentage of protesters who acted violently,” but also because it lacks requisite context. He also asserted that the underlying issues that led to these protests were “often glossed over or misrepresented.”<sup>30</sup>

Not all scholars are in agreement on this final point. Kevin Michael DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples make the claim that the symbolic violence and uncivil disobedience carried out by protesters in Seattle was actually “a necessary prerequisite” that wedged open media space for “expansive and extensive coverage of the issues surrounding the WTO protests.”<sup>31</sup> Andrew Rojecki makes a similar argument in

<sup>27</sup> William Solomon, “More Form than Substance: Press Coverage of the WTO Protests in Seattle,” *Monthly Review* 52:1 (2000), pp. 12–20, at p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Neil deMause, “Pepper Spray Gets in Their Eyes: Media Missed Militarization of Police Work in Seattle,” *Extra!*, March/April 2000. Available online at: <<http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1029>>.

<sup>29</sup> Rachel Coen, “For Press, Magenta Hair and Nose Rings Defined Protest,” *Extra!*, July/August 2000. Available online at: <<http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1037>>.

<sup>30</sup> John Giuffo, “Smoke Gets in Our Eyes: The Globalization Protests and the Befuddled Press,” *Columbia Journalism Review*, September/October 2001, pp. 14–17, at p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> Kevin Michael DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples, “From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and the ‘Violence’ of Seattle,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19 (2002), pp. 125–151, at pp. 141, 144.



his analysis of the Seattle protests, contending that media coverage “followed a trend of evolving understanding of and increased sympathy to movement positions. Initial focus on surface features—costumes and stunts—quickly deepened to the underlying issues they symbolized.”<sup>32</sup> My research builds from and questions this work as it both widens the range of mass-media sources and news packets under examination and extends analysis to a second protest a few months later in Washington, DC against the World Bank and IMF. After offering and discussing the five central mass-media frames from my empirical research, I will address a number of claims found in the work of DeLuca and Peebles as well as Rojecki.

### Data Sources

When tens of thousands of demonstrators came together in Seattle in 1999 to protest the policies of the WTO, the media followed. Similarly, when dissidents reassembled in Washington, DC in mid-April 2000 (aka A16) to protest the World Bank and IMF, the media obliged with substantial coverage. A systematic reading of newspaper articles, op-eds, and television transcripts from major mass-media outlets rendered the empirical data in this study. These articles and reports were collected through the *Lexis-Nexis* and *ABI/Inform* using the search terms “anti-globalization,” “protest,” and “Seattle” or “Washington, DC.” Searches were confined to 10-day periods that straddled the main events in each episode of contention. For the Seattle protests, the 10-day period ran from November 28 through December 7, 1999, while for the Washington, DC demonstrations, the time span extended from April 11 to April 20, 2000. Data sources include six major US newspapers—the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and the *Boston Globe*—and five influential television networks—ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and FOX. Because of geographical circulation, national stature, and influence on public officials, the general population, and each other, these newspapers and television entities constitute a powerful and significant segment of the US mass-media system.

The WTO protests in Seattle garnered significantly more media coverage than the World Bank/IMF demonstrations in Washington, DC. Combining newspaper articles and television reports, Seattle coverage totaled 221 news packets (111 newspaper articles and 110 television segments), while DC protests garnered 137 news packets (69 newspaper articles and 68 television segments). In response to these two prominent episodes of contention, the 11 news outlets produced 358 news packets in total.<sup>33</sup> Tables 1 through 4 summarize the data according to episode of contention, type of media, and source.

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<sup>32</sup> Andrew Rojecki, “Modernism, State Sovereignty and Dissent: Media and the New Post-Cold War Movements,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 19:2 (2002), pp. 152–171, at p. 159.

<sup>33</sup> I arrived at this total of 358 news packets through a two-step process. First, I carried out searches via *Lexis-Nexis* and *ABI/Inform* using the aforementioned search terms. This generated a preliminary collection of 732 news packets. Second, I read each article/report so I could detect and eliminate pieces that were irrelevant or that considered the protests only peripherally. This second step also involved removing individual stories that, due to quirks in the search engines, were listed twice or more. Letters to the editor, cartoons, and articles from sections of the newspaper designed for children were also eliminated. This reduction method resulted in 374 purged cases, rendering a final universe of 358 relevant newspaper articles, op-eds, and television reports.

**Table 1.** Seattle: newspaper coverage

Source	Articles	%
<i>Boston Globe</i>	9	8.1
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	21	18.9
<i>New York Times</i>	27	24.3
<i>USA Today</i>	23	20.8
<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	15	13.5
<i>Washington Post</i>	16	14.4
Total	111 articles	100

**Table 2.** Seattle: television coverage

Source	Reports	%
ABC	26	23.6
NBC	14	12.7
CBS	19	17.3
CNN	42	38.2
FOX	9	8.2
Total	110 reports	100

**Table 3.** DC: newspaper coverage

Source	Articles	%
<i>Boston Globe</i>	9	13.0
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	10	14.5
<i>New York Times</i>	16	23.2
<i>USA Today</i>	8	11.6
<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	8	11.6
<i>Washington Post</i>	18	26.1
Total	69 articles	100

**Table 4.** DC: television coverage

Source	Reports	%
ABC	10	14.8
NBC	6	8.8
CBS	12	17.6
CNN	34	50.0
FOX	6	8.8
Total	68 reports	100

### Framing and the Global Justice Movement

For this study, I read and coded all 358 of these news packets.<sup>34</sup> Through this reading of news articles, op-eds, and television transcripts, the following five predominant frames were reached inductively: the Violence Frame, the Disruption Frame, the Freak Frame, the Ignorance Frame, and the Amalgam of Grievances Frame. These frames often intersected in individual news stories, reinforcing each other. In the analysis that follows, I trace media coverage of both the “Battle of Seattle” and the subsequent A16 protests in Washington, DC, identifying the central frames that were adopted by the media to convert these episodes of contention into news stories.

#### *Violence Frame*

Violent protesters, or the potential for violent protests, constituted the predominant frame through which news stories on the protests in Seattle and Washington, DC were presented. Even when protesters did not actually perpetrate violence, the frame remained in place as journalists remarked on the lack of destruction, the absence of violence, or the potential for violence. As Table 5 demonstrates, almost 63% of news stories covering the WTO protests in Seattle featured the Violence Frame, with more than half of all newspaper accounts and almost three quarters of every television segment focusing on violent protesters. With the World Bank/IMF protests the following April, the Violence Frame was less prevalent, although it still factored into more than half of all news segments.

More specifically, in the lead-up to the WTO protests in Seattle, the *New York Times* noted, “With so many protesters crowding into Seattle, police officials here say they fear some violence.”<sup>35</sup> Similarly, NBC news reported, “police and federal agencies . . . are giving it the same priority as an Olympics or a papal visit.” The report went on to mention that the authorities’ preparations for the protest “include more than 400 federal emergency medical and operations personnel stationed in Seattle; 2,000 to 3,000 doses of medicine to handle a potential chemical or biological attack. The authorities say while they’re ready for violence, they’re not predicting any acts of terrorism.”<sup>36</sup> This is a classic example of enthymematic argument or presentation whereby the writer/speaker makes a number of assertions in succession while leaving a gap in the assertions that invites the reader/listener to fill in the missing link.<sup>37</sup> In this case, WTO protesters are mentioned in direct proximity to assertions regarding chemical and biological attacks, thereby allowing the reader to make the tacit link that these protesters are capable of committing acts of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction.

<sup>34</sup>To measure coding reliability, two individuals independently coded a random sample of 40 media accounts ranging across media type and source. This reliability test led to a 92% coder agreement, a standard that meets accepted criteria for inter-coder reliability. See Allen Rubin and Earl Babbie, *Research Methods for Social Work*, 4th edn (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000), pp. 192–194.

<sup>35</sup>Steven Greenhouse, “A Carnival of Derision to Greet the Princes of Global Trade,” *New York Times*, November 29, 1999, p. A12.

<sup>36</sup>George Lewis, “World Trade Organization to Meet Tomorrow in Seattle,” *Nightly News*, NBC, November 29, 1999.

<sup>37</sup>Paul Waldman, “Why the Media Don’t Call It as They See It,” *Washington Post*, September 28, 2003, p. B4.

**Table 5.** Violence Frame

	No. of articles/reports	% of total articles/reports
<i>Seattle</i>		
Newspaper	57	51.4
Television	82	74.5
Total	139	62.9
<i>DC</i>		
Newspaper	32	46.4
Television	41	60.3
Total	73	53.3

A vocabulary of war was also frequently applied to the protesters. For example, the *Washington Post* opened a front-page story with the lead, "A guerrilla army of anti-trade protesters took control of downtown Seattle today, forcing the delay of the opening of a global meeting of the World Trade Organization."<sup>38</sup> A few days later, in another front-page story, the newspaper keyed on Seattle Police Chief Norm Stamper's assertion that some of the dissidents were apprehended with "fire-starting Molotov cocktails and smoke grenades," and that some demonstrators "pelted officers in some locations with rocks and bottles."<sup>39</sup> The *Washington Post* also reported on page 1 that "A guerrilla army of anti-trade protesters took control of downtown Seattle"<sup>40</sup> and the *New York Times* commented that "The disruptions included a brief bomb scare, the smashing of a window in protests at a McDonald's restaurant and a takeover of a vacant three-story building by a self-described group of anarchists."<sup>41</sup> These anarchists, whom I will return to momentarily, became a magnet for the Violence Frame, with the *Boston Globe* quoting Seattle Police Chief Norm Stamper as saying, "We knew violence would be coming to our city in the form of anarchists; that wasn't a secret."<sup>42</sup>

The Violence Frame also preponderated news articles about the A16 protests in Washington, DC. The extensive police preparation was a perpetual theme in pre-protest articles, which repeatedly noted the similarities or potential similarities with the WTO protests in Seattle. As DC Police Chief Charles Ramsey put it in a widely quoted remark, "They ain't burning our city like they did Seattle. I'm not going to let it happen. I guarantee it."<sup>43</sup> The media anticipated violence, and in some cases expected it. As CBS anchor Russ Mitchell put it on the *Evening News* program, "Police in the nation's capital tonight are already in action for what has the potential to be a busy, violent few days."<sup>44</sup> Using a number of

<sup>38</sup> John Burgess and Steven Pearlstein, "Protests Delay WTO Opening; Seattle Police Use Tear Gas; Mayor Declares a Curfew," *Washington Post*, December 1, 1999, p. A1.

<sup>39</sup> John Burgess and Steven Pearlstein, "WTO Ends Conference Well Short of Goals; Ministers May Resume Talks Early Next Year," *Washington Post*, December 4, 1999, p. A1.

<sup>40</sup> Burgess and Pearlstein, December 1, 1999, p. A1.

<sup>41</sup> Sam Howe Verhovek, "Trade Talks Start in Seattle Despite a Few Disruptions," *New York Times*, November 30, 1999, p. A14.

<sup>42</sup> Lynda Gorov, "Seattle Caught Unprepared for Anarchists," *Boston Globe*, December 3, 1999, p. A11.

<sup>43</sup> Jack Kelley, "In D.C., Police, Protesters Alike Say They're Prepared: Capital Braces for Weekend Demonstrations," *USA Today*, April 13, 2000, p. A4.

<sup>44</sup> Russ Mitchell, "Police in Washington, DC Ready for Protests against World Bank-IMF Meetings," *Evening News*, CBS, April 15, 2000.

predominant frames, Dan Rather described police preparations this way on the CBS *Evening News*:

You might think it was a police convention, but it was just part of the security today aimed at preventing what happened recently in Seattle, Washington, from what's happening this weekend in Washington, DC. It's part of the run-up to the World Bank meeting in the nation's capital and protests bent on disrupting that meeting.<sup>45</sup>

As one might expect, comparisons with the violence in Seattle were rampant. More than half of all newspaper accounts (53%) of the A16 protests compared happenings in DC to the violence in Seattle, while more than a third (37%) of television segments did the same.

Once the violence actually began, the Violence Frame dwarfed all others. The media described "scattered incidents of guerrilla warfare, skirmishes all day between protesters and the police,"<sup>46</sup> and depicted battles that "pitted police, many clad in helmets and weird black gauntlets and shin guards like a baseball catcher's, against some of the more militant protesters, many also wearing black and equipped with goggles and gas masks."<sup>47</sup> Such grim scenes reinforced the framing equation that protesters plus police equals violence. When police raided dissident headquarters the day before the major protests were to begin, the potential violence of protesters was also reinforced, as a story on CNN described the confiscation of "instruments of crime." Correspondent Kate Snow explained how police arrested a number of protesters "for possessing so-called 'sleeping dragons,' devices used to lock protesters together."<sup>48</sup> Once again, enthymematic presentation is at work, as the media tacitly encouraged the viewer to make the connection between the non-violent tactic of lockboxes to the violence in Seattle. Such framing advances the impression that violence dominates the protest terrain when, in fact, it is the exception rather than the rule.

In conformity with the Violence Frame, black-clad anarchists were never far from the headlines, even when they were inactive or absent. For example, a front-page story in the *Boston Globe* began by dramatizing the presence of anarchists in its lead:

Thousands of chanting activists, some wearing combat boots and gas masks in preparation for violent clashes with police, mobbed the streets of the nation's capital and tried to disrupt meetings of world finance leaders yesterday, the first such demonstration since the riotous protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle last fall. Police squirted tear gas at one point, and an isolated group of self-described "anarchists" repeatedly tried to break through police barriers, smashing security car windows and splashing emergency vehicles with red paint.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Dan Rather, "Protest Group Ruckus and What They Hope to Accomplish this Weekend in Washington, DC," *Evening News*, CBS, April 14, 2000.

<sup>46</sup> Bob Franken, "Police and Protesters Battle for Control of Washington," *Worldview*, CNN, April 16, 2000.

<sup>47</sup> Petula Dvorak and Michael E. Ruane, "Police, Protesters Claim Victory; Scattered Scuffles and Arrests Punctuate a Largely Peaceful Day," *Washington Post*, April 17, 2000, p. A1.

<sup>48</sup> Kate Snow, "D.C. Officials Working to Ensure This Year's Meeting of Trade Ministers Not Marred by Violence," *Worldview*, CNN, April 15, 2000.

<sup>49</sup> Anne E. Kornblut, "Thousands in Protests against Finance Groups: IMF, World Bank Press on in DC," *Boston Globe*, April 17, 2000, p. A1.

Similarly, the CBS *Evening News* featured a segment that played up the Violence Frame. In dramatic fashion, reporter Lee Cowan described the aggressive behavior of black-clad protesters:

Amidst the 10,000 demonstrators hitting the streets early, an angry few, some in black masks, were looking for trouble, and in a city that was virtually shut down, they found it. Pushing and shoving, they made their way to the headquarters of the IMF and World Bank, where tense fights broke out over issues like globalization and corporate greed.<sup>50</sup>

Such coverage was common.

### *Disruption Frame*

The Disruption Frame, which often dovetailed with the Violence Frame, appeared regularly in news stories leading up to and during both episodes of contention. In fact, it was the most common frame in coverage of the DC protests. The reported penchant for dissident disruption operated at two levels: (1) the disruption of the scheduled meetings of the WTO, World Bank, and IMF, and (2) the general disruption of the lives of regular, law-abiding (and non-protesting) citizens.<sup>51</sup>

In a sound bite that was played repeatedly on television, President Bill Clinton weighed in to denounce deliberate disrupters: "To those who came here to break windows and hurt small businesses, or stop people from going to meetings or having their say, I condemn them."<sup>52</sup> Not only were the protests disruptive, but, as Judy Muller of ABC News reported, they were *designed* to disrupt. "They call themselves anarchists," she said. "Dressed in black ski masks, they carried their flag and their mayhem to the streets of Seattle this week, much to the dismay of tens of thousands of peaceful protesters." Later, Muller noted, "'Organized anarchy' might seem like an oxymoron, but no longer. Dozens of young people have been planning for months about ways to incite the crowds at this event."<sup>53</sup> Highlighting the theme that protesters were not only attempting to disrupt the meetings of these supranational groups, but were also disrupting the daily lives of innocent citizens, an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* remarked it was "especially touched" by the story of "a teary 21-year-old bank teller" who rebuked "vandals who broke the bank's windows in the name of opposition to the World Trade Organization" by shouting "This is my job! . . . This is how I eat!"<sup>54</sup> In mass-media coverage of Seattle, 17% of all news accounts zeroed in on disruptions to the lives of everyday Seattle residents.

This Disruption Frame was also common in news stories covering A16 in Washington, DC. For example, CNN anchor Andria Hall kicked off a story about protests of the IMF and World Bank by noting, "It has been a very busy evening for

<sup>50</sup> Lee Cowan, "Protesters Battle Washington, DC Police in an Effort to Disrupt Meetings of World Finance Leaders," *Evening News*, CBS, April 16, 2000.

<sup>51</sup> The former is reasonable, since disrupting meetings is often a goal, whereas the latter is less reasonable, since disrupting the lives of the populace is rarely a stated objective.

<sup>52</sup> John Cochran, "Seattle Police Crackdown on WTO Protesters," *World News Tonight*, ABC, December 1, 1999.

<sup>53</sup> Judy Muller, "WTO Meeting Continues in Seattle Despite Protests," *World News Tonight*, ABC, December 2, 1999.

<sup>54</sup> "While the WTO Burns," *Wall Street Journal*, December 2, 1999, p. A22.

**Table 6.** Disruption Frame

	No. of articles/reports	% of total articles/reports
<i>Seattle</i>		
Newspaper	40	36.0
Television	44	40.0
Total	84	38.0
<i>DC</i>		
Newspaper	32	46.4
Television	51	75.0
Total	83	60.6

Washington D.C. Police, and it could get worse this weekend. District officers have arrested hundreds of anti-trade demonstrators who are hoping to disrupt meetings of international-lending organizations."<sup>55</sup> Once it was clear that protesters would not be able to prevent the World Bank and IMF meetings from occurring, journalists focused on the disruptions that protesters caused for DC residents and tourists. For instance, in a *Wall Street Journal* article titled "Protesters Can't Stop World Bank Parley, but Do Disrupt Downtown Washington," the authors offer the following lead: "On 'A17,' or day two of their revolt, globalization protesters didn't bother trying to close down World Bank meetings. Instead, they immobilized downtown Washington." The reporters dubbed the protesters' efforts as a "spectacle" that "approached farce."<sup>56</sup> In a front-page story, the *Washington Post* highlighted the disruption to the city, offering an array of specifics:

It was as if a wildly unpredictable snowstorm were bearing down: A formal dance of 1,000 people has been postponed, a seven-days-a-week beauty salon will not open, a settlement company has spirited financial data to a safe location, a construction company felt it had to shut down a major job site. Although massed demonstrators have yet to try an assault on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, their announced intent—and vivid images of Seattle's violence—have disrupted many of the workaday routines of the region, especially downtown Washington.<sup>57</sup>

In DC protest coverage, nearly a third (31%) of all coverage offered a Disruption Frame that made DC residents into victims. On April 15 and 17, the *Washington Post* even printed "Protest Q and A" guides that offered commuters ideas for

<sup>55</sup> Andria Hall, "Washington D.C., Site of IMF and World Bank Protests, Heating Up," *Worldview*, CNN, April 15, 2000. CNN consistently adopted this frame.

<sup>56</sup> Helene Cooper, Jake Bleed and Jerry Guidera, "Protesters Can't Stop World Bank Parley, but Do Disrupt Downtown Washington," *Wall Street Journal*, April 18, 2000, p. A20.

<sup>57</sup> Steve Twomey, "Businesses Lock Up, Batten Down for Protests," *Washington Post*, April 15, 2000, p. A1. The media also discussed the costs that protest-policing would incur for the financially beleaguered city, with CBS noting, "Thirty-five hundred officers from six departments are on patrol" and that Washington, DC "spent \$ 1 million on riot gear." Lisa Hughes, "Washington Prepares for Another Day of Protests Against the IMF and World Bank Meetings," *Morning News*, CBS, April 17, 2000.

sidestepping the protests. These guides were devoid of information regarding why the protesters were in the streets.<sup>58</sup>

### *Freak Frame*

Another recurrent frame in mass-media accounts of dissidents in Seattle and Washington, DC focuses on the non-mainstream values, beliefs, and opinions of these dissidents, as well as their age and appearance. In her essay, "Of Magenta Hair, Nose Rings, and Naiveté," Robin Broad describes the overly simplistic and often misleading way Global Justice Movement participants are frequently depicted in the mainstream media, asserting:

The same images are projected over and over again in the press: rowdy students, black-masked anarchists—desperately in need of a shower—smashing a window or burning a car. Too many journalists write as if this movement were a composite of a caricature: an idealistic privileged student with magenta hair and a nose ring who will one day grow up and understand the way things really are.<sup>59</sup>

With this frame, the more radical elements of the Global Justice Movement—in terms of both outward appearance and ideology—are transformed into a synecdoche for the entire movement. As indicated by Table 7, the Freak Frame was employed frequently in coverage of the Seattle and DC protests, with more than one in three news stories zeroing in on the non-mainstream aspects of protesters (36% for Seattle and 42% for DC).

For example, a *New York Times* article titled "A Carnival of Derision to Greet the Princes of Global Trade" reported that: "There will be hundreds of protesters in sea-turtle costumes and stilt walkers dressed as monarch butterflies. Thousands of people will tie up the downtown area during a giant demonstration, and protesters will chain themselves to buildings or scale walls to unfurl banners denouncing the target of their ire: the World Trade Organization."<sup>60</sup> Other news accounts depicted the protesters as young and immature. For example, *USA Today* quoted National Association of Manufacturers president Jerry Jasinowski as saying, "What's disturbing to me about many of the opponents of expanded trade is their refusal to engage in a mature dialogue about the benefits and costs of expanding global economic activity."<sup>61</sup> Jasinowski expanded his attack on the "fringe elements" on CNN, asserting how he "was struck by how loopy some of the protesters were. I expected a more serious group that was sort of on message and had some points, but they didn't. They were sort of dancing in the streets, pushing people, acting crazy, breaking windows and throwing things. So, it looked like a group that was out of control."<sup>62</sup> On Fox News, Fred Barnes called the protesters "fringe characters who represent practically no one."<sup>63</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Twomey, *op. cit.*

<sup>59</sup> Broad, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Greenhouse, *op. cit.*, p. A12.

<sup>61</sup> Patrick McMahon, "WTO Under Fire on Many Fronts," *USA Today*, November 29, 1999, p. A6.

<sup>62</sup> Katharine Barrett, "Protesters in Seattle Disrupting WTO Conference 'Looked Like a Group that Was Out of Control,' Says Jasinowski," *CNN Today*, CNN, November 30, 1999.

<sup>63</sup> Brit Hume, "Political Headlines," *Special Report with Brit Hume*, FOX, April 17, 2000.



Table 7. Freak Frame

	No. of articles/reports	% of total articles/reports
<i>Seattle</i>		
Newspaper	43	38.7
Television	37	33.6
Total	80	36.2
<i>DC</i>		
Newspaper	35	50.7
Television	23	33.8
Total	58	42.3

The Freak Frame carried over to coverage of the protests against the World Bank and IMF in Washington, DC, with the CBS *Morning Show* dubbing the protesters “a strange cast”<sup>64</sup> and NBC *Nightly News* reporting that “10,000 angry determined youth laid siege” to downtown DC.<sup>65</sup> Such commentary was bolstered by media accounts that focused on the dress and appearance of protesters. For example, a front-page *Washington Post* story kicked off with the following description:

In the alley that served as the chow line for the revolution, hundreds of aluminum TV trays were piled with cruelty-free rice, beans, fruit, salad and bread. The same menu fit all, even if the same philosophy and fashion did not. Leather-clad, buzz-cut anarchists squatted and ate with natural-fiber dreadlocked reformers. Clean-cut Ivy League leftists chatted and chewed with skateboard “punx,” while gray-haired hippies broke bread with rainbow-haired hippies. They were like members of various religions who called the devil by many different names.<sup>66</sup>

In a subsequent *Washington Post* story, Police Chief Ramsey was credited with interacting amiably with such “rainbow-haired hippies.” According to the account, Ramsey “talked with pink-haired women and shook hands with bandanna-masked men.”<sup>67</sup> In *USA Today*, Ramsey paternalistically asserted that protesters were “just kids with a cause.”<sup>68</sup>

Columnists and opinion-editorial writers frequently adopted the Freak Frame. For example, the *Washington Post*'s Jonathan Yardley (2000), in a column titled “They Doth Protest Too Much,” asserted that dissidents were engaging in “reductio ad absurdum” since “the demonstrations [were] being staged—and ‘staged’ is certainly the word for it—by a ragtag band of ‘60s recidivists and assorted ‘activists.’” He went on to say the massive collection of state power was

<sup>64</sup> Jim Stewart, “Security in Washington Tightens in Effort to Deal with Numerous Groups of Protesters,” *The Early Show*, CBS, April 14, 2000.

<sup>65</sup> Fred Francis, “Thousands of Protesters Converge in Washington Trying to Shut Down World Bank and IMF Meetings,” *Nightly News*, NBC, April 16, 2000.

<sup>66</sup> David Montgomery, “Demonstrators are United by Zeal for ‘Global Justice,’” *Washington Post*, April 16, 2000, p. A1.

<sup>67</sup> Dvorak and Ruane, *op. cit.*, p. A1.

<sup>68</sup> Jack Kelley and Yasmin Anwar, “IMF Protests Fizzle in D.C. Drizzle,” *USA Today*, April 18, 2000, p. 3A.

“all deployed to keep a few thousand self-righteous troublemakers from dropping bombs into mailboxes or otherwise exercising their God-given right to make fools of themselves.”<sup>69</sup> Michael Kelly called protesters “magenta-haired nose-ringers” on a “great crusade to stop the world’s finance ministers from doing lunch,”<sup>70</sup> while David Frum referred to demonstrators as “idealistic college students” who on rainy days “decided to stay in bed” since “[t]hey don’t go to class when it rains—and class is held in English.”<sup>71</sup>

This comment about English is a backhanded swipe at the multinational, multi-ethnic, multilingual flavor of the Global Justice Movement. A more common frame in mass-media accounts highlights the whiteness of the movement. For example, the *New York Times* reported that “Although one goal of the movement against globalization is to turn the focus away from corporations to the poor nations of the world, there were only a handful of people from what the participants call the global South, or developing nations.”<sup>72</sup> Such criticism—that the Global Justice Movement is largely white and bourgeois—has continued to this day.

### *Ignorance Frame*

In addition to often being portrayed as out of touch with mainstream USAmerica, protesters are also frequently depicted as ignorant or uninformed. Overall, in mass-media coverage of the episodes of contention in Seattle and Washington, DC, nearly one in five news packets (19%) portrayed activists as ignorant or naïve.

For example, in coverage of the WTO protests in Seattle, the *Wall Street Journal* led off a story with the following passage: “One day into the Woodstock of antiglobalization, Debbie Carlson, a bandanna-wearing member of a lesbian activist group, can’t get beyond a few sound bites to explain why she is out in the streets with thousands of other free-trade foes who are opposed to the World Trade Organization.”<sup>73</sup> Such deprecatory attacks were routinely woven into mass-media accounts. A *USA Today* article introduced readers to Herb Green, “a self-described ‘displaced marijuana farmer,’ [who] felt strongly enough to leave the mountain home where he lives without electricity.” After quoting Green—“The turtles speak to me. I’m a voice for the critters—the four-legged ones and one-legged ones, the trees”—they go on to assert that “it was the naiveté of many demonstrators that irritated some delegates and bystanders.” Then they turned to Seattle resident Jack Mackey, who attacked protesters more generally for their ignorance, saying: “I’d like to see half of them spell World Trade Organization.”<sup>74</sup> Television news also employed the Ignorance Frame. For instance, ABC

<sup>69</sup> Jonathan Yardley, “They Doth Protest Too Much,” *Washington Post*, April 17, 2000, p. C2.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Kelly, “Imitation Activism,” *Washington Post*, April 19, 2000, p. A27.

<sup>71</sup> David Frum, “Protesting, but Why?” *New York Times*, April 19, 2000, p. A23.

<sup>72</sup> Joseph Kahn, “Seattle Protesters Are Back, with a New Target,” *New York Times*, April 9, 2000, p. A6.

<sup>73</sup> Helene Cooper, “Some Hazy, Some Erudite and All Angry—Diversity of WTO Protests Makes Them Hard to Dismiss,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 30, 1999, p. A2.

<sup>74</sup> Cox and Jones, *op. cit.*, p. A1.

Table 8. Ignorance Frame

	No. of articles/reports	% of total articles/reports
<i>Seattle</i>		
Newspaper	30	27.0
Television	12	10.9
Total	42	19.0
<i>DC</i>		
Newspaper	21	30.4
Television	5	7.4
Total	26	19.0

News reporter Kevin Reese had the following exchange with a protester on the *World News Now* program:

Reese: "What's the point, man?"  
 Unidentified Man: "Why? Because it's cool."  
 Reese: "Do you have any idea what WTO does?"  
 Unidentified Man: "I don't really give a rat's ass."  
 Reese: "That's what I thought. Have a nice day."<sup>75</sup>

In A16 coverage this trend continued. For instance, a *New York Times* story described the encounter on the street between a "bearded protester in a Mad Max outfit with chain loops and leather leggings" and Joseph Orlow, who is not described physically, but we are told has "for some time ... manned his own quieter protest on 15th Street on behalf of insurance claims by Holocaust victims." Orlow, a member of the Institute for Insurance Ethics, looked at "the ragtag jubilation of the visitors" and said, "I think a lot of these people are not interested in core issues but just want an excuse to demonstrate. I'll bet most of them never heard of HR 3750, a bill that would cut off funding if the I.M.F. doesn't reform."<sup>76</sup> Even potential allies could not resist discussing the alleged ignorance of World Bank and IMF protesters.

Of course, adversaries of the protesters were even more inclined to adopt the Ignorance Frame. For example, on FOX News, correspondent Brian Wilson discussed his views on the protesters:

I've been trying to figure out very carefully exactly what it is that they are concerned about. I know that it has to do with the debt of third world nations and the ... loaning policies of the IMF and the World Bank. But basically, when you try to start getting to the fine points of this with the protesters, they don't really have all the answers. They don't have all the details. It's just generally that they don't like the policies of the World Bank. That's kind of the way it is. That's their enemy, the World Bank, the IMF. But when you get into the real firm

<sup>75</sup> Juju Chang, "WTO Protests Lead to Seattle Curfew," *World News Now*, ABC, December 1, 1999.

<sup>76</sup> Francis X. Clines, "A New Age Protest Tackles Globalism with Polite Chants," *New York Times*, April 14, 2000, p. A13.

details of what it is specifically that they do that bothers them, they get a little fuzzy on the details.<sup>77</sup>

Just as the more outlandish elements of the Global Justice Movement are used as synecdoche for the entire movement, so are individual protesters—replete with their already established ignorance—held up, if tacitly, as typical representatives of the movement. For example, a front-page *Washington Post* story featured Jeff Slagg, a 21-year-old student from Tennessee who at the time of the interview “was playing a green toy accordion and making up words about peace” and whose “activist lineage” included “his ex-hippie mother and his anti-fascist grandfather.” The author of the article noted, “None of his interests or activities has an overt tie to the World Bank or the IMF” and that Slagg “didn’t have a clear set of demands.” Slagg is quoted as saying he was in DC because “whenever you see oppression, you try to find out the root cause, and a lot of times it comes back to these government organizations and international organizations.” Such framing makes dissidents appear to be transient protesters-on-demand who are virtually ignorant of the causes they rally against and only able to articulate their ideas in vague terms. The author proceeded to extrapolate outwards from Slagg’s dearth of clearly delineated demands to the demands of the entire movement: “Whatever the turnout today and tomorrow, it will be a strange experience for Washington, the capital of protest rallies. Here will be that rarest of creatures—a demonstration without demands.”<sup>78</sup>

Not only did straight news portray dissidents as ignorant or uninformed, but so did op-eds, and often in vicious fashion. For example, George Melloan wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that the protesters “display no understanding of what is visible all around them”<sup>79</sup> while in the *Los Angeles Times* John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge characterized the Global Justice Movement as “a disenfranchised, angry minority with a minimal grasp of economics.”<sup>80</sup> In the *New York Times* Thomas Friedman asked rhetorically, “Is there anything more ridiculous in the news today than the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle?” Answering himself, he wrote, “I doubt it. These anti-W.T.O. protesters—who are a Noah’s ark of flat-earth advocates, protectionist trade unions and yuppies looking for their 1960’s fix—are protesting against the wrong target with the wrong tools.”<sup>81</sup>

#### *Amalgam of Grievances Frame*

While dissidents are often criticized in the mass media for their ignorance, they are also accused of fighting for too many disparate issues. Such an amalgam of grievances, assert many journalists, leads to the Global Justice Movement having

<sup>77</sup> Brian Wilson, “Protesters Fail to Shut Down IMF/World Bank Meetings,” *The Edge with Paula Zahn*, FOX, April 17, 2000.

<sup>78</sup> Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. A1.

<sup>79</sup> George Melloan, “Welcome to the Seattle World’s Fair, Circa 1999,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 30, 1999, p. A27.

<sup>80</sup> John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge. “World Trade Organization; Skewered in Seattle; Fringe Protesters at Center of Global Mainstream,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 1999, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, “Senseless in Seattle,” *New York Times*, December 1, 1999, p. A23.

**Table 9.** Amalgam of Grievances Frame

	No. of articles/reports	% of total articles/reports
<i>Seattle</i>		
Newspaper	38	34.2
Television	14	12.7
Total	52	23.5
<i>DC</i>		
Newspaper	24	34.8
Television	17	25.0
Total	41	29.9

no clear message.<sup>82</sup> Roughly one in four news stories feature this Amalgam of Grievances Frame, as shown in Table 9. Yet, most activists and scholars assert that such decentralization of cause and organizational structure affords a level of flexibility that, according to Benjamin Shepard, “allows movement interaction to remain dynamic rather than dogmatic.” Such flexibility also facilitates the possibility of “engaging, listening, and learning from the multitude of narratives from which different players locate their struggles within the movement.”<sup>83</sup> However, this more optimistic viewpoint, which highlights the ability of protesters to make complex connections between what may on the surface seem like disparate causes, is rarely aired in mass-media accounts of Global Justice Movement convergences.

The Amalgam of Grievances Frame is an analytical category that can be broken down further in order to interrogate its normative underbelly. In fact, there are three variations on this mass-media frame, whereby such an array of causes and goals are portrayed as: (1) value-neutral, (2) a positive trait, or (3) a negative trait. In Table 10, combining mainstream-media coverage of both episodes of contention, 47.3% of reports were value-neutral, 6.5% were positive, and 46.2% were negative. All but one of the six positive assessments of movement multiplicity appeared in the op-ed section of the prestige press, whereas the other two categories were prevalent across media and source, across the opinion pages and the hard news. On the whole, these numbers contrast sharply with the general sentiments of Global Justice Movement participants.

Negative portrayals of movement diversity were seven times more common than positive representations. For instance, in the article mentioned at the outset of this article, *USA Today* reported, “A bewildering spectrum of voices has converged on Seattle” in order to give trade “a black eye.” The authors later asserted, “Anti-WTO forces are united by a profound mistrust of globalization—and almost nothing else.”<sup>84</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* editorialized that protesters were a “bewildering array, ranging from anarchists to environmental activists and labor unionists to rebels without any cause at all. Their message, largely lost in the din of street violence, was muddled, blaming free trade for ills such as poverty,

<sup>82</sup> Prominent intellectuals on the left who are sympathetic to the goals of the Global Justice Movement have offered similar critiques. See Alex Callinicos, *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003).

<sup>83</sup> Shepard, *op. cit.*, p. 596.

<sup>84</sup> Cox and Jones, *op. cit.*, p. A1.

**Table 10.** Amalgam of Grievances Frame

	No. of articles/reports	% of articles/reports with A of G Frame
<i>Seattle</i>		
Value-neutral	25 (18 newspaper, 7 TV)	48.1
Positive	5 (5 newspaper, 0 TV)	9.6
Negative	22 (15 newspaper, 7 TV)	42.3
Total	52	100
<i>DC</i>		
Value-neutral	19 (10 newspaper, 9 TV)	46.3
Positive	1 (1 newspaper, 0 TV)	2.5
Negative	21 (13 newspaper, 8 TV)	51.2
Total	41	100

unemployment, child labor and rain forest destruction.<sup>85</sup> Op-ed writers also chimed in, with Francis Fukuyama writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, "The 500-odd organizations on hand range from staid ones like the Sierra Club and the AFL-CIO to fringe groups like the Raging Grannies and Dyke Action." Fukuyama further asserted that "serious people on the left need to repudiate the kooky fellow travelers who have come to party this week in Seattle. Globalization is too serious a business to be the occasion for a radical nostalgia trip."<sup>86</sup>

This deprecatory nostalgia trope was not uncommon. In deriding the Global Justice Movement's wide range of issues and goals, commentators and journalists often compared modern-day dissidents with protesters of the Vietnam War. In a representative example, Michael Medved commented in a *USA Today* op-ed that in Seattle there was "utter confusion about the goals of today's demonstrators. Protesters carried signs ranging from 'Free Tibet' to 'End the Cuban Blockade' to 'Save the Sea Turtles.' Anti-Vietnam protests focused on a single goal: End the war and bring the boys home." Therefore, he concluded that unlike Vietnam War protesters, "the WTO demonstrators face certain failure."<sup>87</sup> Such criticism of the Global Justice Movement exhibited historical blinders, as if the struggle to end the Vietnam War was not intertwined with civil rights, feminist, and anti-capitalist struggles.

Coverage of A16 also made use of the Amalgam of Grievances Frame. On CBS, viewers were told to "Pick a topic, any topic, and chances are, it's being protested this week in Washington."<sup>88</sup> A report in *USA Today* concluded, "Despite whatever views they share, their differences are dramatic and their partnership peculiar."<sup>89</sup> This frame was again echoed in the editorial sections of major newspapers, such as the *Wall Street Journal*, where James Taranto, in an op-ed entitled "Global Village

<sup>85</sup> "A Failure to Communicate; The World Trade Organization is Widely Misunderstood, and It Hasn't Helped Its Own Case. But It Isn't a Global Ogre," *Los Angeles Times*, December 2, 1999, p. 10.

<sup>86</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "The Left Should Love Globalization," *Wall Street Journal*, December 1, 1999, p. A26.

<sup>87</sup> Michael Medved, "Battle in Seattle: No, This Wasn't the '60s All Over Again," *USA Today*, December 7, 1999, p. 19A.

<sup>88</sup> Jim Stewart, *op. cit.*

<sup>89</sup> Blake Morrison, "IMF Protesters' Goals as Varied as Their Styles," *USA Today*, April 14, 2000, p. A4.

Idiots,” said that A16 was not a demonstration, but rather “a massive collection of tiny demonstrations.” He went on to write:

Hammers and sickles haven’t been this abundant since the Soviet Union fell. Every commie organization imaginable is represented here, from the venerable Communist Party USA to the Progressive Labor Party to Bolshevik Tendency, publisher of a newsletter called 1917. Single-issue outfits oppose nuclear power, genetically modified food, the tobacco industry . . . Other groups oppose the military government of Burma, America’s military presence in Korea, Turkey’s treatment of Kurds and the Cameroon–Chad pipeline . . . It must be frustrating to be a young left-wing demonstrator in 2000, longing for the glory days of the Vietnam era. Back then, protesters had a clear and simple message: End the war. By contrast, nothing of consequence unites today’s demonstrators. Do the Mumia Abu-Jamal guys lose sleep over Nicaraguan turtles? Do the hearts of the free-Tibet crowd bleed for the victims of Buddhist persecution in Burma? Has a member of the D.C. Statehood Green Party ever shed a tear for the plight of the Kurds?<sup>90</sup>

On November 29, 1999, Fox television’s, Mara Liasson predicted that “the big story from this meeting is going to be the demonstrators and their message.”<sup>91</sup> Liasson was only partly correct, however. The “big story” was the demonstrators, but only rarely were their ideas—or “their message”—brought to the fore. In fact, when the protesters’ ideas and goals were discussed, they were often expressed only through vague platitudes or misrepresented through oversimplification and/or inaccuracy, thereby reducing them to hollow sound bytes.

Such mass-media misrepresentation was commonplace. For example, ABC’s *Good Morning America* reported, “The protesters’ main message has been that globalization is leaving poor nations behind”<sup>92</sup> while a *USA Today* editorial explained the protesters’ message as: “Global institutions are evil. By fostering free trade, they destroy jobs and devastate the environment, all to profit multinational corporations. So, close them down.”<sup>93</sup> Sebastian Mallaby opined in the *Washington Post* that “If the demonstrators had their way, there would be no WTO. There would therefore be less trade and hence more poverty”<sup>94</sup> while the *New York Times* editorialized that protesters were “rallying against what they view as the malign forces of economic globalization.” After offering this vague explanation, the *Times* went on to assert: “The dissidents’ message is sometimes confused and misplaced, especially in wanting to dismantle essential institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization” since these goals were “a retreat into nostalgia and economic nationalism.”<sup>95</sup>

The media were also sometimes inaccurate in their portrayals of dissident citizens. One consistent inaccuracy was the assertion that protesters were “anti-trade.” In reality, most of the protesters of the WTO, World Bank, and IMF are no

<sup>90</sup> James Taranto, “Global Village Idiots,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 18, 2000, p. A18.

<sup>91</sup> Hume, *op. cit.*

<sup>92</sup> Jim Sciutto, “Protesters Continue Attempts to Disrupt Talks of World Bank and International Monetary Fund,” *Good Morning America*, ABC, April 17, 2000.

<sup>93</sup> “Protesters Target Institutions Most Able to Help the Poor,” *USA Today*, April 14, 2000, p. A14.

<sup>94</sup> Sebastian Mallaby, “D-Day in Washington,” *Washington Post*, March 24, 2000, p. A23.

<sup>95</sup> “Stopping the World,” *New York Times*, April 15, 2000, p. A16.

more against trade than protesters of genetically modified organisms are against food. Nevertheless, the anti-trade label was so consistently affixed that CBS *Morning News* began a story on the DC protests by remarking, “In Washington, this is expected to be a very loud weekend with thousands of people in town to protest against world trade,” even though protesters were demonstrating against the World Bank and IMF.<sup>96</sup>

### **Framing Dissent**

When it comes to the mainstream media’s coverage of the Global Justice Movement, five deprecatory frames emerge inductively from the data. These frames are not mutually exclusive, as they often appear within the same news segment, reverberating and reinforcing each other. While these frames are analytical categories, not normative judgments, these analytical categories have perceptible normative implications.

Table 11 combines data from the two episodes of contention and summarizes it according to the five analytical frames. In general, the Violence Frame is the most dominant of the five, as it appears in 59% of all mass-media accounts. In other words, the Global Justice Movement was portrayed as violent in nearly three of every five segments, even though a slender minority of its adherents advocate or engage in violent acts as part of their tactical repertoire. This frame is followed in frequency by the Disruption Frame, which appeared in nearly half (47%) of all mass-media segments. This statistic is more explicable given the fact that shutting down the meetings of the WTO and World Bank/IMF was one of the stated goals of the movement. The high incidence of the Disruption Frame in relation to the routines and schedules of the general citizenry—more than 22% of all news segments—is more of a surprise, since such disruption is only very rarely a stated goal of the movement. Yet one of every five media accounts detailed how the anti-corporate globalization movement allegedly disrupted the lives of everyday people who were simply trying to make a living. The third most common frame overall was the Freak Frame, which appeared in 39% of all media accounts. This statistic would have almost assuredly been higher had I not been working almost exclusively with television transcripts, which rarely register the powerful images that television produces. The fourth most common frame was the Amalgam of Grievances Frame, which appeared in more than a quarter (26%) of all mass-media accounts. Such a variety of goals and groups was rarely portrayed as a positive characteristic (less than 2% of all accounts); rather, such multiplicity was more often portrayed as a liability (12%) or as value-neutral (12%). Finally, nearly one in five (19%) mass-media accounts presented Global Justice Movement participants as ignorant or naïve via the Ignorance Frame. This is remarkable, given the commitment and dedication exhibited by a large number of individuals and organizations over a sustained period of time.

Yet, combining the data for both episodes of contention smoothes over differences between coverage of Seattle and DC, and between newspapers and television news. In fact, there were notable differences in coverage. For example, the Disruption Frame was used with greater relative frequency in DC, especially

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<sup>96</sup> Jim Stewart, “Thousands of People Gather in Washington to Protest Against Everything from World Trade to Defending Sea Turtles,” *Morning News*, CBS, April 14, 2000.



**Table 11.** Overall framing data: Seattle and DC combined

	No. of articles/reports	% of total articles/reports
<i>Violence Frame</i>		
Newspaper	89	49.5
Television	123	69.1
Total	212	59.2
<i>Disruption Frame</i>		
Newspaper	72	40.0
Television	95	53.4
Total	167	46.6
<i>Freak Frame</i>		
Newspaper	78	43.3
Television	60	33.7
Total	138	38.5
<i>Ignorance Frame</i>		
Newspaper	51	28.3
Television	17	9.6
Total	68	19.0
<i>A of G Frame</i>		
Newspaper	62	34.4
Television	31	17.4
Total	93	26.0

the disruptions to DC residents. While both protests led to great use of the Violence Frame, the frame was even more common in coverage of Seattle. Perhaps not surprisingly, given its visual nature, television news tended to rely on the Violence and Disruption Frames more heavily than newspapers. While 50% of all prestige press accounts featured the Violence Frame, nearly 70% of television segments focused on the ostensibly violent protests. As for the Disruption Frame, newspapers used the frame 40% of the time while television news used it in 53% of its segments. Yet, due to its ability to engage in greater detail and word length, newspapers employed the Freak Frame, Ignorance Frame, and Amalgam of Grievances Frame with greater frequency than their TV news brethren, 43% to 34%, 28% to 10%, and 34% to 17%, respectively.

This brings us to the question of whether violence, or symbolic violence, led to an increase in substantive coverage of the protesters and their protestations. DeLuca and Peeples assert that in Seattle “symbolic violence and uncivil disobedience in concert produced compelling images that functioned as the dramatic leads for substantive discussions of the issues provoking the protests.” They go on to write, “Far from discrediting or drowning out the message of the WTO protesters, the symbolic violence generated extensive media coverage and an airing of the issues.”<sup>97</sup> Additionally, Rojecki maintains that the media gradually became more engaged with the Global Justice Movement’s issues and ideas, eventually eschewing “blanket characterization of movement participants” and instead allowing movement participants to offer their own detailed critiques.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>97</sup> DeLuca and Peeples, *op. cit.*, pp. 139, 140.

<sup>98</sup> Rojecki, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

**Table 12.** Does violence lead to deeper coverage?

	No. of articles/reports with five or more issue-sentences	% of articles/reports with Violence Frame
<i>Seattle</i>		
Newspaper	8	14.0
Television	6	7.3
Total	14	10.1
<i>DC</i>		
Newspaper	2	6.3
Television	2	4.9
Total	4	5.5

To test whether violence and disruption drew more attention to the issues, I revisited each story that featured the Violence Frame, assigning an additional code: whether such stories contained five or more sentences that explained why the protesters were in the streets. Each sentence offering a critique of the WTO, World Bank, or IMF, or explaining movement reasoning, goals, or ideas was tallied. Table 12 summarizes the results.

As Table 12 shows, newspaper coverage of the WTO protests in Seattle offered the deepest coverage of protester issues and ideas, although only 14% of all stories that adopted the Violence Frame also offered five or more sentences explaining why demonstrators had taken to the streets. Only 7.3% of television segments on the WTO protests offered such depth. With the IMF/World Bank protests in DC, the media fared even more poorly, with only 5.5% of the mainstream media digging into protester issue with five sentences or more of depth (6.3% of prestige press accounts and 4.9% of television segments).<sup>99</sup> Ironically, a number of media accounts featuring protesters who were concerned that the vandalism and corporate window-breaking would drown out their message, proceeded to completely ignore their message, offering no explanation of why the protesters were demonstrating.<sup>100</sup> In sum, this study did not come up with convincing empirical evidence to support the claim that violence in the streets—if “symbolic violence,” or vandalism—was a step on the road to deeper, broader coverage of the issues and ideas that galvanize the Global Justice Movement into action. Therefore, based on this empirical analysis, I cannot share Rojecki’s optimism that the mainstream media “helped articulate a critique that is setting an intellectual foundation for a democratic check on transnational economic institutions. The result is a reenergized pluralism in which the media may play a constructive role in building democratically responsive institutions.”<sup>101</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Of the eight in-depth newspaper accounts from Seattle, one appeared in the *Boston Globe*, two in the *Los Angeles Times*, four in the *New York Times*, and one in *USA Today*. Of the six television segments, one appeared on ABC, four on CNN, and one on FOX. As for the DC protests, of the two in-depth newspaper articles, one was published in the *Washington Post* and the other in *USA Today*, while both television segments were aired on CNN. Three of the four accounts appeared *before* any violence broke out in the streets.

<sup>100</sup> For example: George Lewis, “Seattle Still Under Curfew This Morning after Protesters of World Trade Organization Became Violent Last Night,” *Today*, NBC, December 1, 1999.

<sup>101</sup> Rojecki, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

It is possible that I draw less optimistic conclusions because my analysis continues through a second round of protests, whereas Rojecki focuses exclusively on the WTO demonstrations in Seattle. Coverage of the Seattle protests may evince a glimmer of promise, but when one continues media analysis through the DC protests, one can see that in-depth coverage of Global Justice Movement grievances actually trails off. Part of the discrepancy between my conclusions and those of DeLuca and Peeples (whose analysis does extend through the DC protests, if in abbreviated fashion) stems from the fact that we have disparate research questions (they are more concerned with the role of images and the “public screen”) and therefore different methodologies (they tally up screen minutes on the television or number of front-page stories and visual images in the newspaper, whereas I explore in detail the content of these media accounts).<sup>102</sup> I agree with them that symbolic violence (which I would prefer to call vandalism or property destruction) can wedge open room for additional media coverage, but the content of such additional media coverage needs to be carefully scrutinized in order to decide whether, on balance, the coverage aids the protesters’ causes or whether it hinders them. What are the dominant impressions and images a reader or viewer is left with?

### Conclusion: The Perils of the “Media Spotlight”

The mass media play an important role in the construction of social issues and problems. “Because the mass media play such a central role in modern societies,” writes Bert Klandermans, “social movements are increasingly involved in a symbolic struggle over meaning and interpretations.”<sup>103</sup> Therefore, media discourse is not only vital in terms of framing social issues and problems for the attentive public, but it is also a place of ideological and ideational struggle for various social movements, state actors, and institutions. Mass-media attention is crucial to social movement development. Yet even if social movements are able to work their way under the “media spotlight,” as Wisler and Giugni put it, they may receive mass-media coverage that could do them more harm than good.<sup>104</sup> The news media—through framing practices—set the parameters of acceptable public discourse. Voices that fall outside the range of acceptable discourse are occasionally permitted space on the mass-mediatized terrain, but their price of admission is often subjection to mass-media deprecation.

While the *New York Times* reported that protesters “rejoiced that their once obscure objections to international monetary policy were now on the front pages,” this analysis demonstrates that such conclusions are more complicated than they may seem.<sup>105</sup> In Seattle and Washington, DC, five frames predominated in mass-media coverage of the Global Justice Movement: the Violence Frame, the Disruption Frame, the Freak Frame, the Ignorance Frame, and the Amalgam of Grievances Frame. Such tendencies are not necessarily the result of a conscious

<sup>102</sup> DeLuca and Peeples, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–143.

<sup>103</sup> Bert Klandermans, “The Social Construction of Protest and Multiorganizational Fields,” in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 79.

<sup>104</sup> Wisler and Giugni, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>105</sup> John Kifner, “In This Washington, No ‘Seattle’ Is Found, by Police or Protesters,” *New York Times*, April 19, 2000, p. A16.

conspiracy to demobilize social movements. Rather, less conspicuous and dramatic forces and actions are at work. Journalistic norms and values—such as personalization, dramatization, fragmentation, and the authority-order bias—affect what is deemed news and how that news is framed. Adherence to these norms and values—a sign of journalistic professionalism—often results in deprecatory coverage of participants in the Global Justice Movement.

Now that these analytical frames have been identified, comparative research can begin. Where do we find variation in the mass media's treatment of different groups that reside under the Global Justice Movement umbrella? Has such framing of corporate-globalization-related protests occurred after these two major episodes of contention? As John Giuffo noted, "The protests are organized, they're global, and they're not going away."<sup>106</sup>

Other potential questions abound. How has media coverage of the Global Justice Movement changed, if at all, after the attacks of September 11, 2001? How relevant are these five analytical frames for studying media coverage of other dissident citizens operating in our contemporary, post-9/11 socio-political milieu? Do these same frames apply to coverage of protesters at the Democratic and Republican National Conventions? Where do we see variation within the prestige media? How do US mass-media outlets compare with international news sources? Hopefully, this content analysis of the Global Justice Movement will help open the way for the pursuit of such questions.

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<sup>106</sup> Giuffo, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

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