

Media Framing and Effective Public Deliberation

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Thanks to recent advances in public opinion research, we now know that the origins of public opinion – the sacred icon of democracy – lay in elite discourse. We also know that the public relies on the mass media for its political information. However, the pathways of elite discourse, as it winds its way through the media, remain shrouded in mystery. The purpose of this paper is to probe this discussion of political issues that drives public opinion.

Some critics direct our focus away from these pathways altogether, focusing on the ability of some audience members to become their own producers of meaning – independent of elite discourse. In contrast, other scholars argue that elite discourse represents a powerful hegemonic force for indoctrinating the masses with the ideas of the ruling class. In this vein, they say that the discussion of issues and events in the media largely responds to, but does not cause, conditions in the material world, for example serving to "index" the level of conflict in government. Finally, to our mind, the most optimistic as well as accurate view holds that the media can be the locus for genuine public deliberation. We argue that the give and take of ideas that political argumentation in the mass media entails both follows the dictates of communicative rationality as it unwinds over time, and, more importantly, leads to deliberative outcomes that have substantial consequences in the real world.

This paper, then, documents these points with respect to media coverage of labor strikes.

Public discourse about strikes provides an exceptionally fertile ground for testing hypotheses about effective deliberation. First, these events provide an occasion for conflict between broad economic groups in society. Thus, strikes provide a reasonable arena for assessing the competing predictions of the discourse theories with which we are concerned. Second, the interactions between elites, such as union leadership, management, and public officials, can be clearly characterized in the terms used in these theories. For these two reasons, we can develop and test clear predictions as to the direction of causality between patterns of discourse and real-world outcomes.

Specifically, in this (our first effort) we employ a variant of framing analysis to examine the public discourse associated with a national labor strike – the 1997

Teamsters strike against United Parcel Service – in an effort to sort out these competing positions and to advance scholarly understanding of mediated public

deliberation. We predict that under proper conditions deliberation displaying a communicative rationality that mutually constitutes relationships in discourse as well as the material world emerges. To begin, we will review three distinct postures that scholars have taken toward elite discourse.

UNDERSTANDING ELITE DISCOURSE

At the outset we must first clarify our conceptions of elite discourse and deliberation. In simple terms, elites are those people who devote the bulk of their activities

to politics or public affairs and are the people "on whom we depend, directly or indirectly, for information about the world" (Zaller 1992, p. 6). We take the communication that originates from these people (politicians, government officials, journalists, and interest group activists) as elite discourse.

Inquiry into the deliberative quality of this discourse turns heavily on the relationship between the physical and discursive worlds. To be reasonably considered deliberative, discourse must stand in a particular relationship to the physical world. On the one hand, communication must be reasonably free from influence by factors such as inequalities in material power and discursive competence. At the same time, however, effective deliberation must exert influence on the physical world as the resolutions of conflicts carried out through discourse are implemented or received by interested parties. Unless both of these conditions are met,

deliberation is either non-existent or of questionable utility. Theoretical positions viewing the relationship between the physical and discursive worlds as inconsistent with this pattern leave little hope for deliberation while theoretical positions allowing for these possibilities lead us to expect that deliberation will occur and afford an opportunity to assess its effects.

Specifically, it is useful to analytically distinguish between theoretical positions based upon whether they view the two worlds as connected and if so whether they see the causal forces in this connection flowing from the physical to the discursive world, vice versa, or in both directions. One category of scholarly work denies the impact of public discourse on behavior and phenomena in the physical world. Consider, for example, the highly textualist and audience-centered postmodern variants of cultural studies research. Although he argues from a perspective at odds with expectations of effective deliberation, Kellner (1995) points out the deficiencies of these variants in terms of their excessive emphasis on the ability of individuals to construct their own meanings and interpretations of the world, resulting in a "new dogmatism" in which the "texts, society, and system of production and reception disappear in the solipsistic ecstasy of the textual producer" (p.37). In this work (see for example Fiske 1989, Fiske 1993) the ability of audience members to (re)interpret the content of the discursive world consistent with their own outlook is celebrated, rendering the two worlds independent of each other. For example, an individual who vehemently opposes affirmative action programs might ignore deliberation on this issue encountered through the media, choosing to listen only to anti-affirmative action communications and interpreting pro-affirmative action communications solely in ways consistent with her own views. Work in this category is fundamentally inconsistent with expectations of

deliberation in that it discounts the ability of deliberation to affect the understandings of inhabitants of the real world.

For those more familiar with the mainstream of mass communications and media effects literature, this 'new dogmatism' may be reminiscent of the uses and gratifications research, which similarly posited audiences as impervious to causal influence from the textual world. Although the uses and gratifications literature in many ways embodies a social theoretical perspective radically different from that of the postmodernists, the implications for the prospect of effective mediated deliberation are the same. If the phenomena of the discursive world are believed to have minimal effects on the cognition and behavior of those inhabiting the physical world then the central rationale for effective deliberation is lost and the edifice of communicative action falls. Moreover, these scholars often also see little reason to suspect that discourse follows a communicatively rational pattern.

A second category of scholarship posits that causal effects from the physical world on the discursive world exist in sufficient magnitude to preclude communicatively rational discourse. Consider for instance, that scholars working from Marxist perspectives, who assume a base-superstructure framework, argue that the communicative process is merely the reflection of material conflicts between economic classes and the forces of technical rationality pervasive in late capitalism. Examples of this perspective can be found in the works of the early Frankfurt School (e.g. Horkheimer and Adorno 1972; Marcuse 1964) as well as in more contemporary treatments of mass mediated communication that view public discourse as overwhelmed by power imbalances and the economic structure of capitalism (e.g. Chomsky 1989; Herman and Chomsky 1988; Parenti 1996). In these works the public discussion of politics and culture in the media is viewed as overwhelmingly driven by forces of material power outside of the public discursive sphere and the effects of discourse back onto society are argued to merely reinforce dominant material forces.

While Marxist scholars emphasize the influence of material power on discourse, however, many political communication scholars emphasize other limitations on public deliberation that stem from the determinative power of elites. Bennett (1990), for example, argues that public discourse in the mass media is "indexed" to the conflict visible within the formal mechanisms of government, such as congressional debate. In this vision of public discourse deliberation in the public sphere is

dependent upon and merely reflects discussion occurring among those at the highest political levels. Zaller (1992) takes a similar tack also viewing public discussion as highly dependent on the discursive behavior of political elites. He maintains that the positions of elite political actors in and out of government define the key parameters and points of reference in discussion and thought for media and citizens alike. Thus, these scholars present a 'top down' view of the relationship between elite discourse and mass opinions.

Looking beyond the behavior of governmental elites, other scholars (Entman 1993) simply view the character of public deliberation as largely driven by forces of political power that originate outside the discursive sphere. For these scholars, the 'frames' or political claims and counter-claims that appear in and dominate the

content of public discourse are merely the "imprint of power" (Entman 1993, p. 55). For example from this perspective, Entman (1993) interprets the parameters of discourse on the Gulf War as having been largely determined by the political power and preferences of the interests involved. In short, this view holds that those without significant political power are unable to leave their 'imprint' upon public discussion.

Thus these theoretical streams cut against expectations of effective deliberation in that they suggest public discourse lacks sufficient independence from imbalances of power and communicative competence for communicatively rational discussion to flourish.

In contrast to these perspectives, other scholars view the relationship between the discursive and material worlds in a manner much more favorable to expectations of a communicatively rational process of public discussion. Largely inspired by the work of Jurgen Habermas, many contemporary scholars of deliberative democracy view public discourse as driven as much by principles of communicative rationality as by the material forces of economic and political power (Bohman

1996; Ackerman 1991; Guttman and Thompson 1996). While these scholars acknowledge that causal influences from the material world can operate in ways that can sometimes constrain deliberation, they are slightly more optimistic in that they view the prospects for deliberation approximating communicative rationality more favorably (especially Ackerman 1991) and argue that the process of deliberation has visible effects on the material world. From this perspective then, one may

envision deliberative communication as a likely outcome in situations where virtually all of the relevant interlocutors meet each other on roughly equal footing in a given discursive arena. Under such conditions these interlocutors would be naturally inclined to present reasoned claims and counter-claims, justifying their arguments through commonly accepted principles when challenged until a resolution is reached. In short, the scholarship relevant to questions of the existence of meaningful and efficacious deliberation in our contemporary, mass-mediated public sphere leads to a number of competing expectations about discourse.

What is the relationship between the discursive world and the material world in our society? Do influences from the material world on discourse effectively swamp the conditions necessary for meaningful deliberation? Does public discussion merely reflect struggles for material and political power in the material world or does it

exhibit a more communicatively rational character? And finally, does public discourse have effects on the inhabitants of the material world that are consistent with a

deliberative process? Before raising and exploring the questions that flow from this discussion, however, we must first establish the rationale behind our deployment of framing analysis as a means to assess the quality of public deliberation and thus to answer these vital questions.

FRAMING AND PUBLIC DELIBERATION

One major goal of this paper is to link framing analyses to deliberation theory. In order to make this linkage, we will first describe framing theory working toward a definition that can be applied to deliberative settings. With this definition in hand, we will move on to discuss how processes of framing and deliberation interact.

The idea of framing first appeared in Goffman's (1974) seminal work. The underlying presumption was that the organization of messages affects subsequent thoughts and actions. In general, framing involves the organization and packaging of information. As Goffman (1974 p 21) puts it: "we actively classify and organize

our life experiences to make sense of them." These "schemata of interpretation" are labeled frames; they enable individuals to "locate, perceive, identify, and label.

When psychologists examine framing effects, they generally refer to the relationship between context and information as it determines meaning. Minsky (1975)

defined a frame as a template or data structure that organizes various pieces of information. Thus frames are discursive or mental structures that are closely related to the ideas of scripts and schemas as well as other standard constructs from the literature on social cognition (see Fiske and Taylor 1991 for a complete review).

Research also approaches framing from a constructivist standpoint. This point of view is especially common among sociologists and other communication researchers who also see framing as involving the organization of information, but simultaneously tend to focus on the way frames thematize accounts of events and issues. Gamson and Modigliani (1987) make this point clear when they say frames are the "central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning" (1987, p. 143) or "a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue" (1989 p 57). Their general idea is that a frame is an ever-present discursive device that channels the audience as it constructs the meaning of particular communicative acts.

Nelson, et al. (1997) provide the best, most comprehensive common definition, and the one that shows the way toward linking framing and deliberation. They see framing as "the process by which a source defines the essential problem underlying a particular social or political issue and outlines a set of considerations purportedly relevant to that issue" (1997a p 222). In other words, "framing is the process by which a communication source ... defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy" (1997b p 567). Because the ideas about organization and context are subsidiary to these statements, this definition elides some of the concerns raised earlier while it quickly pinpoints the heart of framing – the construction of political issues.

This idea of associations is critical to understanding the framing. A model of framing can be built on the premise that to frame a message in a given way entails that it

contains certain associations rather than others. Using a rather simple example, a message describing taxation as a way to achieve equitable income distribution would strengthen or create associations between taxes, equality, and income. In this way, the concepts of taxes, income and equality are framed together. This idea can be

applied to message content as well as individual level effects. To say a message constructs an issue, we are really saying that it has built-in particular associations between concepts. Thus, framing analyses is a careful examination of the way concepts are associated within discourse.

Deliberation involves the social creation and change of meaning over time. Deliberation theorists say that deliberation is a process of political argumentation which

proceeds through discursive give and take (Bohman 1996). In this way, deliberative processes entail the formation of associations between concepts within discourse. Thus, these processes are intimately linked to framing effects. We argue that the framing of issues naturally proceeds through the same path in all deliberative settings. In the phases of deliberation frames compete with each other to define the situation at hand. Each of these frames represents a contention or validity claim (cf. Habermas 1984) that is being advanced by some of the participants in the deliberative process. For example in the UPS strike, the idea that part

time workers were being treated unfairly was one of the contentions advanced, and represents one of the potential frames.

Modifying the framing paradigm in this manner goes a long way toward adapting it to research on public deliberation. The principal contribution of our modifications is that they allow researchers to explore public discourse in a way that is sensitive to the detection of deliberation by envisioning competing frames as the principal means by which interlocutors interact with one another in a mass media context. Secondly, our conception of framing and deliberation naturally suggests a study design that examines the interaction of competing frames within media discourse over time. Looking at these patterns over time uniquely allows us to assess discourse by a deliberative standard. After all, deliberation is a process that unwinds over time and displays particular patterns. Finally, our conception of framing and deliberation allows us to document the existence of univalent (one dominant frame), bivalent (two dominant frames), or multivalent (many significant frames) patterns of discourse and thus to determine if (ruling out other causes) discursive claims rise and fall in prominence consistent with a pattern of deliberation where multiple issues are considered publicly and recede from discussion as they are resolved. Thus by applying framing analysis to studies of deliberation in these ways, we create a critical window on the dynamics of rhetorical interaction in the public sphere.

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Simon &
Yenor, p. 10*

Based on the data gathered by peering through this critical window we interpret discursive patterns as indications of the presence and quality of deliberation in the following manner. First, deliberation requires a bivalent or multivalent discourse in which at least two claims relating to an issue of public concern interact and compete for dominance. Evidence of this is the presence of multiple frames in the content of public deliberation in the mass media, which can be verified through a traditional non-temporally sensitive assessment of a given universe of discourse through content analysis.

Secondly, we posit that deliberation is a process in which conflict takes place when validity claims are raised in the public sphere and subsequently resolved through

a communicatively rational process. Thus, a temporal pattern in which competing frames rise in prominence and then decline in single-peaked fashion is, assuming other causes have been ruled out, an indication that these competing claims have been entertained and resolved in public deliberation. The fact that frames rely on intersubjectively held norms and understandings further underscores our interpretation that this dynamic is evidence of a communicatively rational deliberative process. Third, we interpret frames that remain in discourse over time as unresolved validity claims. Finally, we would expect that if external forces determine deliberation we should observe the relative positioning of frames over time to either stay the same or shift with patterns related to the external forces, which serves as an important test of whether discursive patterns are driven by deliberative dynamics within the discursive space.

THE TEAMSTERS STRIKE AGAINST UNITED PARCEL SERVICE

To shed light on these issues, we chose to examine media coverage of the 1997 strike by the Teamsters against United Parcel Service (UPS). Before discussing the finer points of the evidence suggesting that media coverage of the strike displayed characteristics of effective deliberation, it is important to briefly present some background information about the events surrounding the strike.

The strike by the Teamsters against UPS was clearly a significant event. As is well known, UPS is the single largest package delivery company in the world, controlling over 80 percent of all ground shipments within the United States (Smullen, et. al., 1997). Recently, some two years after the walkout, the company also made headlines, as it became a publicly traded company in the largest initial public offering in history (Peltz 2000). UPS also employs over 185,000 members of the Teamsters union, which are a familiar sight in offices, homes and on roads across the country (Peltz, 1997). In 1982, the union agreed to a contract that included a two-tier wage system under which part-time employees earned significantly less than full-time employees. In subsequent years UPS began to significantly expand its part-time workforce such that by 1986 60 percent of UPS workers were part-timers and by 1993 83 percent of new jobs at UPS were part-time. In 1996, the Teamsters began a campaign to counter this and other trends at UPS in the contract negotiations set for the following year. Among other things, the principal demand of the union was 10,000 new full-time jobs. In response to UPS's 'final' offer in the initial negotiations – which not only lacked provisions to create the requested new full-time jobs, but also proposed the withdrawal of the company from the union's multi-employer pension plan – over 185,000 Teamsters walked off the job on August 4th, 1997 (Brecher, 1997, p. ??). After 15 days, UPS ultimately gave in and accepted a contract that "favoured (sic.) the union on virtually every point" (Rothstein, 1997).

There are essentially four factors that make this event an important one for exploring the research questions at hand. First, the strike received a tremendous amount of media coverage for an event of its kind. A search of the LEXIS-NEXIS database of major newspaper articles for stories containing the words "United Parcel Service" and "Strike" in the headline and lead paragraphs appearing during the strike yields 940 stories, or roughly 470 per week. In stark contrast, similar searches

relating to the PATCO (in 1981) and Caterpillar (in 1991) strikes yield approximately 3 stories per week for each strike. Although these strikes differed from the

UPS strike in important respects, one cannot deny the extreme difference in the amount of coverage they received. Secondly, the UPS strike was also one of the most closely followed news stories of 1997. A national survey conducted by the Gallup organization found that 77 percent of respondents followed the story of the strike "somewhat" to "very" closely. To put this figure into perspective, consider that the same survey found that comparable figures for the Paula Jones lawsuit and Lieutenant Kelly Flinn adultery stories were 59 and 55 percent respectively. Third, the strike was also strikingly well received by the public. According to the nationwide Gallup survey, 55 percent of respondents expressed that they had favored the side of the union workers in the UPS strike while only 27 percent expressed that they had favored the side of the UPS company (Saad, 1997).

Finally, we believe that various factors justify expectations that the public discourse surrounding the strike displayed a deliberative character. Although some might

argue that a union would be disadvantaged in deliberative exchanges with management due to differences in material power and other structural characteristics of the

media industry (for example Parenti 1996), we believe that the Teamsters' efforts to compensate for this disadvantage – particularly their deployment of a sophisticated communications campaign capitalizing on the 'friendly image' of UPS delivery personnel – sufficiently placed them on roughly equal rhetorical footing as the company. Moreover, the communications efforts of both the union and the company were strikingly transparent and free of deception as well as directed at a general audience. Combined, these factors suggest the discourse surrounding the UPS strike of 1997 as an important case for exploration of effective deliberation.

HYPOTHESES

Based upon the foregoing analysis of framing and deliberative discursive patterns over time, we derive two basic hypotheses for testing in the case of the UPS strike of 1997. The underlying logic to these hypotheses is that our observations of framing in public discourse over time should be generally consistent with the logical course of an ideal typical deliberative exchange.

One characteristic of such exchanges is that validity claims made by parties to deliberation follow a particular pattern as they appear and disappear from the discursive arena. Specifically, claims are brought into the discussion, considered, and cease to appear as they are resolved. For example, part of a deliberative

exchange on social welfare policy might go as follows. A party opposed to such policies introduces the claim that they encourage individuals to defraud the system.

Parties in support of such policies would then respond to this claim, beginning a chain of argument and rebuttal that ends in either an acceptance or rejection of the claim by all parties. Once this issue has been resolved, further evaluation or calls for re-evaluation of the claim are no longer logical or necessary. In line with this characteristic of deliberative discourse, we hypothesize that validity claims in the UPS coverage will follow a single-peaked pattern of prominence over time. We

argue that such a pattern suggests that claims are raised, evaluated, and resolved, in a manner consistent with deliberation.

Another characteristic of deliberative exchanges that motivates our second hypothesis is that validity claims are raised and evaluated in succession. In other words, parties to deliberation proceed in a logical manner, considering one argument after another. Returning to the example of a deliberative exchange on social welfare policy, our discussants would move on to consideration of subsequent claims after dispensing with the argument concerning risk of fraud. Since the fraud issue has been resolved, opponents of welfare would logically turn to other arguments against such policies and supporters would also avoid further responses to the risk of fraud claim. In line with this second characteristic of deliberation we further hypothesize that the prominence of individual claims in the coverage of the UPS strike

over time will peak in succession, one after another. We contend that observation of this pattern would thus provide further evidence of deliberation.

Naturally, there are a number of potential observations that would disconfirm these hypotheses. One possibility, consistent with the expectations of those in the postmodernist or minimal effects camp, is that the relative dominance of frames in the coverage follows no clearly rational pattern at all, or at least not the patterns we expect. In some sense, this serves as our null hypothesis. A second possibility is that external forces such as material or political power (having ruled out significant "indexing" in this case) determine the patterns of discourse in the coverage. Assuming that power imbalances in the material world are constant during the

15 days of the walkout, evidence for this counter-hypothesis would come in the form of a constant pattern – rather than one of successive single peaks – in the relative prominence of various validity claims. For example, observations that the claims of UPS management uniformly overshadow those of the Teamsters would suggest that material or political power imbalances swamp deliberation.

METHODOLOGY

To test these hypotheses, we engaged in a two-step process of data collection and analysis. First, we carried out a detailed content analysis of newspaper coverage of the strike. Second, we analyzed the results of this content analysis across time.

Our content analysis of framing was carried out on articles about the strike that appeared in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Washington Post, between August 3rd and August 18th 1997. These parameters for the universe of text explored were chosen for two reasons. First, something close to a national sample was desired. Although future research will examine content from more newspapers, for this preliminary work we wanted to maximize the representation of national news coverage with a minimum of newspapers. In this sample, both the East and West coasts are represented and the papers involved are more nationally read than others. Although a comprehensive approach would have included examination of media content from television and other sources, we believe that coverage

in those media is substantively equivalent to newspaper coverage. Secondly, we chose the date parameters in order to capture stories about the event itself, while it was occurring.

The methodology of our content analysis used follows that employed by William Gamson in *Talking Politics* (1992). An in-depth analysis of the newspaper texts was used to generate six 'working frames' capturing the range of themes and story lines used to frame the accounts of the strike. Although detailed descriptions of the working frames can be found in Appendix A, We will now briefly describe each of these frames.

The first frame is termed 'Disruption.' This frame portrays the strike as a catastrophic and more or less decontextualized event that disrupted both the economy and the daily lives of Americans, highlighting the impact on small businesses and consumers among other things. Secondly, a 'Bargaining/Demands' frame captures discourse concerning the issues of the strike. This frame is used to tell the story of the strike through the substantive issues in controversy, again more or less absent context, including part-time vs. full-time employment and the dispute over the pension plan.

Further, two frames focused more closely on the issue of part-time work within the context of larger economic forces. One version, 'Part Time A,' emphasizes the allegations of the Teamsters that UPS was using the part-time workforce in an exploitative manner to increase profits and that part-time work made it difficult for workers to meet their financial obligations. Another version, 'Part Time B,' emphasizes management's claims that market imperatives necessitated the expansion of

the part-time workforce for efficiency reasons and that many workers choose to work part-time. Additionally, an 'Ulterior Motives' frame focuses on the motives of the Teamsters, drawing attention to both the checkered history of the union's ties to organized crime as well as the fact that the strike deflected public attention away from controversy surrounding Ron Carey's then recent election as president of the union. Finally, discourse within the 'Historic Turning Point' frame tells the

story of the strike within the context of an opportunity for union workers to reverse the steady decline the labor movement had experienced since their setback in the PATCO strike of the early 1980s.

After these working frames were generated, a two-stage process of manually coding the stories was carried out. Undergraduate research assistants were trained in coding techniques and were asked in the first stage to code slightly more than one half of the sample. In this stage, the coders estimated for each story a percentage of the content devoted to each frame and also generated a list of the component parts or 'sub-themes' of each frame identified. The purpose of identifying the sub-themes was to further refine the frames for the final analysis, and also to provide a basis for further distinguishing the degree of emphasis on different parts of each frame. In the second stage, the coders analyzed the full sample generating percentage estimates and recording the sub-themes deployed in each story. A sub-set of the final sample (18 articles) was randomly selected for coding by both assistants to test inter-coder reliability. Correlations for their detection of each of the six

frames produce an average correlation of approximately .86.

To explore the variation in relative dominance of validity claims – operationalized as frames and sub-themes – over time, we separated coverage into seven two-day increments, dropping the first day of coverage from the analysis. We chose to exclude the first day of coverage because as this was the day the story "broke" coverage was so scant (only five stories) as to render generalizations and clear inferences difficult. For the seven two-day periods of coverage, the number of newspaper stories ranges from a low of 8 to a high of 19. Although the period containing only 8 stories may appear troubling on the surface, analysis of the data reveals that if anything, this only makes our test for deliberative activity more rigorous for reasons we will explain in the next section. After parsing the coverage into these seven periods, we calculated mean percentages of the presence of each frame for each time period. Weighting these percentages by the number of words in each story produced no significant differences in overall discursive patterns and so we employed only the mean raw percentages in our analysis.

RESULTS

While the patterns of discourse revealed by our analysis do not paint a perfect picture of deliberative communication, they present modest support for our two hypotheses. Our basic findings can be seen in Figure 1. Three patterns in particular deserve close attention. First, we find a clear single-peaked pattern for the Part

Time B frame, which represents claims of how a shift to a part-time workforce is a logical economic move for UPS management. Specifically, analysis of the sub-themes of the Part Time B frame reveals that these claims turn heavily upon claims that UPS employees are well compensated in comparison to other

American workers and, to a lesser extent, upon claims that some UPS employees are against the strike. This pattern indicates that this validity claim enters the discursive space, is considered, and then loses its relevance to the public discussion. This is precisely the prediction from which our first hypothesis is derived.

Thus, we find a partial confirmation of the first hypothesis with respect to the Part Time B frame.

A second pattern of findings is that some frames appear to follow a double-peaked pattern over time. Specifically, the Disruption, Bargaining/Demands, Part

Time A, and Historic Turning Point frames all have two discernable peaks. On the surface, this seems to cut directly against our expectations. It is useful, however, to analyze the relative prominence of the various component parts of these frames to gain a better understanding of the implications of this pattern. If, for example, the emphasis of a frame in the first peak period is qualitatively different from the emphasis in the second peak period, then we may plausibly treat the two peaks as if they represent two unique and distinctly different validity claims. Indeed, analysis of the presence of sub-themes over time reveals such qualitative differences.

Consider, for example, the Disruption frame, which peaks both at time 1 and at time 6. Analysis of the sub-themes reveals that the discussion of disruption at time

1 is significantly different than the discussion at time 6, as is illustrated in Figure 2. Specifically, while the sub-themes referring to the disruption of thousands of deliveries and the country's dependence upon UPS for domestic shipping (D1 and D9 in Figure 2) are clearly dominant at the early peak point, in the second peak point these references recede to be nearly replaced by references to President Clinton's calls for the parties to settle their dispute (D7 in Figure 2). Thus, it appears that there are two validity claims captured by the Disruption frame and that each of these separate claims follows its own single-peaked pattern over time.

Second, consider the two peaks in the Part Time A frame occurring at points 1 and 4 on the timeline. Again, analysis of the sub-themes reveals that these two peaks represent qualitatively different discussions of claims related to the fairness of UPS' turn to part time labor. Figure 3 highlights these differences. Indeed, while references to "part time" workers who work full time schedules (PTA5) are considerable at time 1, they are not mentioned at time 4, and references to UPS' reliance

on part time labor as a cost-saving measure rise dramatically during the same time period. Similarly, Figure 4 shows the difference in emphasis in the Historic Turning Point frame between time 2 and time 5. While at time 2 references to the UPS strike as a microcosm of labor-management conflict around the country (HTP2) are just as frequent as references to other unions supporting the strikers (HTP3), at time 5 these references decline while all other sub-themes, including references to the implications of a union victory (HTP4 and HTP5). Thus we may safely interpret the four peaks in the Historic Turning Point and Part Time A discussions as representing four distinctly different validity claims. Finally, we find a similar, if slightly weaker, version of this pattern with respect to the sub-themes of the Bargaining/Demands frame. Close analysis of these sub-themes reveals that references to the union and management stalling negotiations decline significantly as the strike wears on.

Upon further analysis then, it appears that our measurement of the 'life-spans' of validity claims in the coverage of the UPS strike indeed support our first hypothesis. If we consider each peak as a separate validity claim, then our findings suggest that the public discussion of this event evolves in deliberative pattern.

Indeed, each claim appears to emerge into the deliberative space, and then recede after reasonable consideration.

A third pattern of findings concerns our second hypothesis, that validity claims peak in succession. To review, this prediction is based on the manner in which validity claims are raised and considered individually, and in logical sequence, in typical deliberative settings. Considering that we recognize nine separate validity claims within six temporal data points, it is clear that we fail to find strong support for this hypothesis in that individual consideration of separate validity claims is a logical impossibility within our measurement framework. However, tracing the appearance of each validity claim in sequence, the overall pattern of deliberation does appear to be rational. In the first time period, claims concerning the disruption of deliveries and "part time" workers who log full time hours are considered. In

the second, the claim that the strike represents nationwide labor conflict is aired. In the third time period the principal issues of the strike are considered, along with

claims that each side is stalling negotiations. Following this, the validity claims of the union and management concerning the use of a part time workforce – the central issue of the conflict – are aired simultaneously. In the fifth time period discussion returns to the principal issues of the strike and consideration of its implications for the US labor movement. At the close of the discussion President Clinton issues pleas for the two sides to settle their dispute. We consider this pattern to represent modest support for our second hypothesis. In as many time periods as not, discussion of a single validity claim peaks. Moreover, in the fourth time period, the two validity claims that peak are both related to the part time issue, suggesting a lively debate on these related points, and it is not surprising that discussion of the disruption caused by the strike would be highest at its beginning.

In sum then, we conclude that the discussion of the UPS strike as carried out in the nation's newspapers, generally meets the deliberative standard. Not only do individual validity claims display a rational pattern of introduction-consideration-dismissal, but also the overall sequence of claims considered follows a distinct logic.

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Figure 1. Framing of the UPS Strike

Figure 2. Components of the Turning-Point Frame During Peak Periods

Figure 3. Components of the Part-Time Frame During Peak Periods

Figure 4. Components of the Disruption Frame During Peak Periods