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# A Longitudinal Study of U.S. Network TV Newscasts and Strikes: Political Economy on the Picket Line

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A Longitudinal Study of U.S. Network TV Newscasts and Strikes: Political Economy on the Picket Line

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Abstract

News media coverage of labor traditionally has been used as a supporting example for Political Economy Theory. It holds that that content production and distribution, and hence the news content itself, is subtly influenced by ownership and control. Certainly one can notice over the past few decades a dramatic decline in the journalistic resources devoted to labor coverage. This has led some observers to suggest the growing corporate concentration of media ownership correlates with strike coverage that has declined beyond any ratio suggested by the declining power of unions and the reduced number of strikes.

This research examined whether U. S. network TV newscasts over time have shown less strike coverage, even adjusting for the lesser number of strikes. They did not, but fluctuated wildly based on when sports and other entertainment strikes occurred. The project also indicated a strike-impact-on-consumers focus with an element of social class that also may be at play. Network TV coverage opted for more time devoted to higher-class effects (airline strikes) as opposed to lower-class effects (intercity bus strikes).

Keywords: strike, labor, network news, political economy, television

Labor disputes involve workers banding together for increased power as a means to seek a redress of grievances (pay, benefits, working conditions) from employers. Employers tend to exert more overall power in a society, and have strong political connections to those in government. Strikes thus are moments of intense conflict, clashes that are newsworthy but present special challenges for news organizations. For example, reporters themselves are workers and may even belong to a union. They may be drawn to the worker grievances as a focus of the story. Publishers may lean more to the management perspective, the disruption the strike creates for the affected businesses. Publishers may not take a role in day-to-day, story-by-story decisions, but they do set a tone for the overall editorial direction of the publication. Editors may find themselves in the middle and take a safe, middle course of emphasizing neither the grievances of workers nor perspective of the business, but the strike effect on consumers and the general public.

Walter Lippmann noted, “If you study the way many a strike is presented in the press, you will find, very often, that the issues are rarely in the headlines, barely in the leading paragraphs and sometimes not even mentioned anywhere.”<sup>i</sup> Lippmann cited several factors: news routine, skill of the reporters, scarcity of resources, time and space constraints, and perceived audience involvement. He claimed those factors cause editors “to prefer the indisputable fact and a treatment more readily adapted to the reader’s interest. The indisputable fact and the easy interest are the strike itself and the reader’s inconvenience.”<sup>ii</sup>

Upton Sinclair lambasted press unfairness to labor in *The Brass Check*,<sup>iii</sup> presenting several incidents supporting his claim “whenever there is a ‘show-down’

between labor and capital, the press is openly or secretly for capital.”<sup>iv</sup> He further saw in coverage “deliberate and long-continued campaigns to render them [strikers] odious to the public.”<sup>v</sup> In particular, Sinclair criticized the Associated Press for exaggerating strike violence to turn public opinion against strikers.<sup>vi</sup>

Many new media forms, significant concentration of media ownership, and a large amount of research, critique, and theory related to news and labor all have happened since Lippmann and Sinclair launched their press critiques. This research seeks to answer whether their observations about strike coverage hold up when one quantitatively examines a significant U. S. news source for the past forty years, network television newscasts.

### *Literature Review*

This literature review begins with the broadest questions of how labor coverage fits into both Political Economy of Communication and the Propaganda Model of News. Then this literature review then summarizes specific claims and findings about labor and strike coverage.

A political economy approach to communication posits:

“Messages are situated within political and cultural assumptions about what is normal and acceptable within the society. In news production these include beliefs about hierarchies of access, about who has the right to speak, what are the key political institutions and what is

‘acceptable’ behavior. On an everyday level, the television, press and radio also provide information about specific events which tacitly relate to these unspoken assumptions.”<sup>vii</sup>

Greg Philo provides an example relevant to this study. He notes how journalists might assume their audience has reached consensus that violence should not be used in labor disputes, then the journalists cover and emphasize the violence, allocate blame to a “side,” typically workers. The violence as well as the attribution of fault then joins “the store of social knowledge” about a schema called trade union strife.<sup>viii</sup>

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky wrote, “[T]he observable pattern of indignant campaigns and oppressions, of shading and emphasis, and of selection of context, premises, and general agenda, is highly functional for established power and responsive to the needs of government and major power groups.”<sup>ix</sup> Their Propaganda Model of News, a logical extension of a political economy approach to communication, postulates an elite media relationship with government and economic power structures so strong the media lose analytical detachment, and self-censor without any usual coercion. Media become integral actors in class warfare on the implicit side of the powerful to establish and enforce corporate hegemony.<sup>x</sup> One could add that labor, especially organized labor, explicitly is on the outside looking in at that relationship.

Political economy of communications began in Marxist analysis with its emphasis on capital/labor relationships. Media production and distribution are examined as products. The political economy approach emphasizes concentrated ownership and its subtle but pervasive influence on the cultural production of content. News content is

treated as a cultural artifact of the larger economic processes.<sup>xi</sup> Mass media function to set the agenda that best serves the capitalist system. That agenda consists mostly of buying and selling commodities and producing audiences for messages serving the buy/sell imperative.<sup>xii</sup> What is systematically omitted by mass media, notably questions of class, societal structure, and corporate power, may be even more important than the incessant roar of consumption-driven messages presented in both formal advertising and other content.<sup>xiii</sup> Audiences themselves become “commodified” as they are measured and sold to advertisers, and subtly are encouraged to think of themselves as consumers much more than as citizens. Current policies exacerbate this trend by emphasizing a market model and its devotion to public wants rather than a public sphere model and its concern for public needs.<sup>xiv</sup>

Critics of a political economy approach to communications sometimes lament that it does not go far enough; it is watered-down Marxism, afraid to go from problem description to political action.<sup>xv</sup> David Croteau says this is a particular problem for labor studies and its existence on the “margins of academia,” attacked from both inside and outside the academy. He proposes a compromise between Marxist theory development and political activism. He suggests valuable effort may not always take the form of direct collaboration with labor and other social movements, but instead in the creation of research that yields useful information for those movements.<sup>xvi</sup>

News media coverage of labor has been used as a supporting example for Political Economy Theory. It holds that that content production and distribution, and hence the news content itself, is constrained by ownership and control.<sup>xvii</sup> Ownership and control lead to a subtle pattern of practices that maintain what former BBC news editor Stuart

Hood called “a tradition of impartiality on the side of the establishment”<sup>xviii</sup> or what Gaye Tuchman called Objectivity Rituals, news practices that appear designed to assure objectivity, but implicitly are biased toward the status quo.<sup>xix</sup>

Christopher Martin was blunt about how corporate media simply are functionally not able or inclined to cover “the link between consumption and production, often because the production process and treatment of labor doesn’t reflect very favorably on their advertisers or own corporate parents. In fact, it scares the hell out of businesses when they can’t control the images of production” such as sweatshops. “In other words,” Martin concluded, “the mainstream news media won’t cover labor news, and won’t cover it with favorable frames, unless such stories are thrust on them. Then, of course, corporate damage control teams work to reestablish corporate-friendly framing of news events.” He detailed the example of the 2002 United Parcel Service “brown” branding campaign, dropping the company’s former symbols—the UPS workers.<sup>xx</sup>

Martin offered five major frames regarding overall labor coverage: (1) The consumer is king, (2) The process of production is none of the public’s business, (3) The economy is driven by great business leaders and entrepreneurs, (4) The workplace is a meritocracy, (5) Collective worker economic action is bad.<sup>xxi</sup> Martin’s consumer-is-king frame may need further explanation. It is the tendency in strike coverage not to deal with the worker issues (pay, benefits) or the citizen issues (labor laws), but only with the disruption to the buying of good or services.

“Labor coverage has fallen off the map,” complains Robert McChesney. He claims it has plummeted in the past generation and “barely exists any longer in the news media.” This he attributes to ever-more-concentrated corporate news media focusing on advertiser

desired middle-and upper-class audiences, leaving behind the middle class and the poor. Workplace conflict still occurs, but he claims it is less newsworthy now that labor unions are less powerful.

Conrad Smith, Geetu Melwani, and Prabu David used the Television News Archive and Index to study labor coverage. They looked at all U. S. network TV news stories, 1990 through 1995, containing the words strike, labor, employee or management.<sup>xxii</sup> Their coding confirmed claims, made separately by William Puette<sup>xxiii</sup> and Michael Parenti,<sup>xxiv</sup> that it is much more newsworthy when labor is denied to capital, as in a strike, than when capital is denied to labor, as in layoffs.

Despite the difficulty strikes present for news organizations, strikes remain the primary occurrences through which news organizations present labor unions. Diane Schmidt examined *New York Times* coverage of unions between 1946 and 1985. She found such coverage exaggerated the frequency of strikes, and strike-centered coverage had a strong and negative influence on public opinion about unions, especially among those who lacked group or ideological attachments to unions.<sup>xxv</sup>

A few authors have sought to document strike news framing first asserted by Lippmann and recently expanded by Martin, an approach that ignores class, concentrates on the “safer topics” such as effect on consumer, and refrains from an emphasis on issues motivating the workers to strike.

A detailed analysis of U.S. network TV newscasts in the first ten months of 1996 found anti-union bias on several fronts. The term “demand” was used for the union position in a dispute; the term “offer” was used for the business position. Never did the reverse occur. Worker compensation, especially in highly paid industries such as auto

work, was mentioned extensively. Executive compensation never was. Worker and management sources appeared in roughly equal number, but the total tilted toward business when typically pro-business external experts appeared. Contradicting Lippmann, the issues in dispute were a common topic. Supporting Lippmann, the effect on the company, related businesses and the consumer also were common topics, while the effect on the striking workers barely rated any mention at all.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Few potential news stories present in such graphic relief the constraints of ownership and control as strike stories. Strikes are class struggles between management and labor. Reporters are laborers in news organizations, but must operate within the constraints and practices of the businesses that employ them. Political Economy Theory says the business imperative will prevail in that news situation. Strike stories, under this theory, will be presented generally from one of two perspectives, the unreasonableness or futility of the striker cause, or the disruptive effect of the strike on consumers, related businesses, or the overall economy.

The Glasgow University Media Group explained, “[C]learly not all strikes will be covered equally. The process of selection operates to make some strikes more newsworthy than others. This newsworthiness is a function of the dominant view presented of the strike within a basic frame of reference that attaches to all strikes.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

Winter reviewed analyses of U. S. and Canadian strike coverage, as well as complementary analyses done separately by Parenti and Puette, to develop a further list of strike reporting assumptions:

- Strikes are depicted as senseless acts that could have been avoided by discussion, or a strikes-as-senseless frame.

- Labor, not management, is unwilling to negotiate in good faith.
- Management makes ‘offers’ while labor makes ‘demands.’
- The impact on the economy and the inconvenience caused to the public is highlighted, while little is said about the deeper cause of strikes.
- Offers that reflect favorably on the company are emphasized, while concessions are not mentioned.
- Workers appear to be irrational, greedy, and self-destructive.
- Large salary increases and stock options of management are not mentioned, while emphasis is on supposed high wages of labor.
- Public support for the strikers is neglected.
- The state, police etc., are regarded as neutral arbiters rather than corporate property protectors and strikebreaker bodyguards.<sup>xxviii</sup>

It also appears likely that the amount of strike coverage overall has declined because fewer reporters are assigned to the beat, making less coverage available both to the public and to other news organizations. In the 1940s heyday of U. S. labor reporting several hundred labor reporters covered the beat for newspapers. By the 1980s no more than a couple dozen labor reporters toiled for U.S. newspapers; now the number is nearing zero.<sup>xxix</sup> David Simon, a former Baltimore newspaperman, lamented in congressional testimony that profit-obsessed newspaper chains have cut back on beat reporting, leaving Baltimore with a lot of labor stories but no labor reporter.<sup>xxx</sup> Steven Greenhouse has covered a labor and workplace issues for *The New York Times* since the mid-1990s, and he crafted a book from all the untold labor stories left largely untold in

many news media.<sup>xxxi</sup>

### *Hypothesis and Research Questions*

This research project does not replicate past findings regarding individual story deficiencies, but instead it examines three areas suggested by Political Economy Theory and past work but not tested.

Hypothesis One is that U.S. network television newscasts, following the noted national trend of fewer resources devoted to labor reporting, over time devoted less time to strikes even after adjusting for the lesser number of strikes to cover.

One should stress this approach is entirely quantitative using prima facie data: time length of stories, number of stories, and (from government data) numbers of strikes, workers affected, and working hours lost. These are limitations, but necessary ones. Future researchers may want to pick up the framing and presentation issues raised by others. This likely will require some sort of sampling technique from the 4349 stories, 6576 minutes of coverage identified in this content analysis.

Two research questions sought indirect measures regarding the class issues raised in past criticisms of strike coverage, especially the “consumer as king” frame identified by Martin, and MeChesney’s complementary observation that “some consumers are more valuable than others.”

Research Question One asks whether network television news coverage gave extensive coverage to strikes with large and immediate consumer disruption, namely transportation strikes, but within that coverage gave greater attention to those strikes

affecting a predominantly higher-class consumers (airlines) as opposed to those strikes affecting mostly lower-class consumers (intercity bus).

The researchers thus looked at the coverage tallies for “paired strikes,” whether the networks would give greater attention (by number of stories and minutes) to strikes by airline pilot strikes than to strikes by intercity (Greyhound) bus drivers. Airline pilot is a high-wage, high-prestige occupation. Travel by flight simply by ticket price skews toward middle- and upper-class travelers. Bus driver, by contrast, is a lower class occupation, and intercity bus travel for many recent years has been associated with lower-class, lower-income individuals.

Research Question Two asks if network TV newscasts gave greater attention to strikes by high-profile major-league sports players as compared to high-impact strikes by miners, a group more typical of union membership by class, income, and grievance.

This second research question combined both the “consumer as king” and “strikes as senseless” frames. The 1994-1995 baseball strike, as noted by Martin, was portrayed by both the fan angle (“Just Play Ball”) and by the senseless frame, millionaire players versus billionaire owners.<sup>xxxii</sup> This “major leagues v. miners” comparison is useful because both groups had several long-term strikes or lockouts during the analysis period.

### ***Methods***

The researchers conducted a content analysis, gathering coverage information from the Television News Archive and Index housed at Vanderbilt University,<sup>xxxiii</sup> and strike data from the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>xxxiv</sup> The BLS compiles annual data

on the number of work stoppages, number of workers idled by those work stoppages, and number of “worker days” lost to work stoppages.

The network TV flagship early evening newscasts peaked in the early 1980s as a news source. The combined television households figure for ABC World News, CBS Evening News, and NBC Nightly News eroded from 42.3 million in 1980 to 16.9 million in 2007. Nevertheless, they remain a significant news source, and, as one report put it, “still feature the most traditional hard-news-oriented agenda on commercial television, and in some way the broadest.”<sup>xxxv</sup> Thus, they remain a valuable place to learn about broadcast news and the conundrum presented by strike coverage.

The archivists at Vanderbilt began taping and indexing network TV newscasts in August 5, 1968; work has continued to this day. In recent years the archivists also have indexed tapes of news specials and some Cable News Network and Fox News programs. For consistency across time the researchers used only the news stories appearing on the national early evening newscasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC. Yearly BLS strike data were available for all years for which there was network coverage data. Therefore, August 5, 1968, until the end of 2008 was the period studied.

The researchers conducted keyword searches of the Vanderbilt archive, using the keywords “strike” and “lockout.” Non-relevant hits such as hunger strike or military air strike were ignored. Non-U.S. strikes also were excluded. Only a very small number of lockout stories were found; and many lockout stories also contained the keyword strike. Only 61 “lockout only” stories were identified.

The individual news story was the unit of analysis. Stories were coded in four *prima facie* areas: date, network, story length in seconds, and occupation title of the

laborers in the dispute. The tallies represent a census of the network TV early evening newscasts during the time period studied. Strikes declined during this period, so a simple tally of coverage would be insufficient in that it might be measuring a simple decline in potential strike stories to cover. Instead, the researchers constructed yearly measures of the number of strike stories (and seconds of strike stories) per number of days idled by strikes.

### *Findings*

Contrary to Hypothesis One, network television news strike coverage did not decline as measured in story seconds per thousand days idle. Strike stories, number of seconds coverage, number of stoppages, and number of days idle all declined during the period. When the amount of coverage and the number and duration of strikes are put together in a yearly ratio [strike story seconds per 1000 days idle] the pattern is neither one of increase nor decrease. Instead one sees a pattern of increasing year-to-year fluctuation (Figure 1).

Correlation analyses show the number of strikes stories was positively correlated to the number of work stoppages reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics ( $r = .41, p = .01$ ). Time devoted to strike coverage also positively correlated with the number of work stoppages ( $r = .47, p = .005$ ).

A paired t-test revealed that over time the number of strikes covered ( $M = 17.31, SD = 11.86$ ) was significantly lower than the number of work stoppages reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics ( $M = 119.6, SD = 125.37$ ),  $t(38) = -5.27, p = .00$ . The standard

deviation of the number of strikes covered by the networks was smaller than the standard deviation of the number of work stoppages reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which indicated network strike coverage did not mirror the real-world strike environment (Figure 2). Networks, of course, have their own news routines, resources to allocate and judgments to make regarding strike coverage. Nevertheless, the number of covered strikes at times appeared to “cap out” at certain numbers, no matter how many work stoppages happened in society. Overall, the discrepancy between the number of strikes covered and the number of work stoppages as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics did not get larger over time.

On close inspection the recent large fluctuations mostly were a consequence of sports labor disputes or strikes inconveniencing modern and generally upper-class lifestyles. The researchers looked at any year with a “peak” of coverage, operationally defined as more than 1.5 seconds per 1000 days idle. Coverage spurts in 1994, 1995, and 2002 all were years where the bulk of strike coverage time was devoted to baseball players. The years 1982 and 1987 were dominated by National Football League players in labor disputes.

In 1985 baseball players and pilots were the dominant images in strike coverage. Pilots and auto workers were the key players in 1998; air traffic controllers and the busting of that union/strike by President Reagan dominated 1981. A Teamster strike against UPS pushed up coverage in 1997. Writer’s Guild strikes and the effect on movies and television dominated the otherwise low-coverage and low-strike years of 2001 and 2007. Coal miners received significant attention only in 1978.

Research Question One was answered in the affirmative. High-consumer-impact transportation strikes received substantial coverage, but bus driver strikes generally received less coverage than airline pilot strikes, even when the pilot strikes often were of shorter duration.

Greyhound Bus Drivers in 1983 were on strike for seven weeks, and that conflict drew 2450 seconds of network TV newscast coverage. Drivers again were on strike from March 1990 to May 1993, drawing less attention, 2160 seconds. All but one of the stories were in 1990, during the early days of the strike when roadside snipers targeted buses driven by strike-breaking replacements. This coverage of a lower-class occupation which generally transports a lower-class clientele stands in sharp contrast to the middle- to upper-class airline pilots and the middle- to upper-class passengers on airline flights.

The three years of Greyhound bus drive strike tallied fewer minutes of network attention than the three-week 1993 strike against American Airlines. That strike was led by pilots but with support from flight attendants and machinists. The three U. S. network TV flagship newscasts gave it 2260 seconds. A month-long pilot strike in 1985 tallied 3475 seconds. A 17-day flight attendant strike the same year received 2210 seconds. In fact, the three-year strike by Greyhound bus drivers barely outpaced the 1850 seconds for a three-week 1998 Northwest Airlines pilot strike.

Network TV news attention to transportation strikes clearly was greatest, 9760 total seconds of coverage, for the strike against Eastern Airlines. That strike began on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1989 with machinists but soon was joined by pilots and flight attendants. They were part of the dispute through the bulk of the coverage, but dropped out in November. The strike lingered until the demise of Eastern on January 18, 1991.

Research Question Two also was answered in the affirmative. Major League Baseball and National Football League labor disputes with small assist from National Basketball Association and National Hockey League lockouts garnered substantial attention from U.S. network TV newscasts. These sport labor clashes drew 561 stories, totaling 58,910 seconds. That is more than 970 minutes, or more than 16 hours of network newscast television news stories. The numerous miner strikes during this period tallied less coverage, 344 stories, 43,995 seconds.

The researchers also tallied the top five number of network strike stories by striker occupation. They were: professional athletes, 589 stories; auto workers, 471; airline workers, 451; Miners and steel workers, 401; and teachers, 301. These numbers varied a bit when examined by number of seconds: professional athletes, 62,055; airline workers, 51,474; miners and steel workers, 48,370; auto workers, 35,955; and truckers/Teamsters, 34,915.

The researchers further examined the questions of class, employing Thompson and Hickey's social class categorization of jobs:

- Upper class: individuals who hold strong economic or political power or have high pay, such as celebrities and professional athletes.
- Upper middle class: white-collar professionals with advanced post-secondary education, such as doctors, air traffic controllers, and pilots.
- Lower middle-class: semi-professional workers and craftsmen with some autonomy; these workers usually have a bachelor's degree or some college education. This would include teachers, machinists, auto workers, flight attendants, and many public employees.

- Working class: blue collar (low skill heavy labor) or pink collar (traditionally female labor) workers whose job security tends to be low, such as clerk, garbage collector, maid, construction worker, or miner.
- Lower class: lowest level, sporadic day labor and part-time workers.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Lower class workers rarely are sufficiently organized to strike, and received no network coverage of any activity during this period. Lower-middle and working classes are, of course, the groups most likely to organize as workers and to strike. By story number and minute volume, these classes had the bulk of total network TV news strike coverage. However, upper-middle class strikes (e.g. pilots) and upper-class strikes (e.g. major league athletes) had noticeably longer stories in mean number of seconds (Figure 3).

### ***Discussion***

These findings create a clearer understanding of class and U.S. network television strike coverage. The number of U. S. strikes has been declining, and television news coverage has been declining in a roughly proportional manner. Overall figures, however, disguise a time-line trend of more erratic swings up and down in yearly attention as measured by seconds of coverage per thousand days idle. Network TV news, as demonstrated in the tallies, is drawn toward high-profile, high-income athletes on strike, rather than high-impact, lower-class miner strikes. Further, given the choice between lower-class bus drivers with lower-class passengers and high-income pilots with their

middle-class passengers, TV news will opt for the higher-class items and spend more time on them.

One final point should be stressed. As the authors tallied the data, an additional pattern became clear. The initial years on study saw the network news presenting a vast array of laborers—teachers, municipal workers, longshoremen, truckers, pilots, athletes, garbage collectors, farm workers, nurses, doctors, transit workers, phone employees, machinists, hotel workers, flight attendants, miners, rubber workers, auto and railroad workers.

In recent years, however, there have been fewer strikes to cover; and network newscast reporters and producers have selected an even smaller subset of occupations to cover. In 2007, for example, network newscasts only showed three occupations in labor disputes: auto workers, the Writer's Guild, and Broadway stagehands. In 2006 only two strike stories were presented. In 2005 only striking mechanics and transit workers were covered.

One also can see an increasing focus of strike coverage on celebrity and entertainment, notably anything that disrupts major league sports or movie/television production. For example, in 2008 only 20 strike stories appeared on U.S. network TV newscasts, 19 on the TV writers strike and one 20-second brief on the end of a strike at Boeing. Fourteen major strikes, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, went uncovered.

As the Glasgow University Media Group pointed out, no major news organization covers all strikes, and the choice of what to cover reflects both journalistic habits and expected manners of presentation. The data from this analysis, however, show that

network TV news in the just-completed decade covered fewer strikes (even when adjusting for the fewer worker-days lost to strikes), but lavished attention on entertainment and celebrity disputes.

These observed trends increase the significance of each journalistic strike news choice. When reporters and producers drift toward a small and unrepresentative set of strike stories, viewers get a distorted and incomplete picture of the class and worker struggles that continue, often unattended by media, on the picket lines.

Finally, one should close with some cautions and recognitions of limitations. Political economy is a useful, but very broad, formula for understanding the forces at play in network TV news coverage choices. Though some of these results fit with a political economy approach, that does not mean other approaches also do not have good explanatory power. One also should recognize that strikes present news organizations with important and newsworthy clashes, but labor coverage can and does address other workplace concerns. Certainly one can disagree with our choices as to strike comparisons (e.g., professional athletes versus miners), but the broader class tallies help provide more generalizable points.

This research set out not to engage in qualitative or quantitative analyses of strike frames, terms, visuals, and sources. Others have done that. This research set out to see if network news attention to strikes faded faster than the number of strikes to cover. Overall, network news attention to strikes declined proportionally, though in the past decade it has fluctuated wildly. Those wild fluctuations have reflected significant attention to strikes related to sports and entertainment. The research also suggested, by virtue of the type of strikes covered and the time given to them, social class issues

associated not only about who is striking, but also who is affected by the strike. These differences merit further attention in future research.

Figure 1. U.S. Network TV Newscasts, Yearly Seconds of Strike Coverage per 1000 Worker Days Idled by Strikes

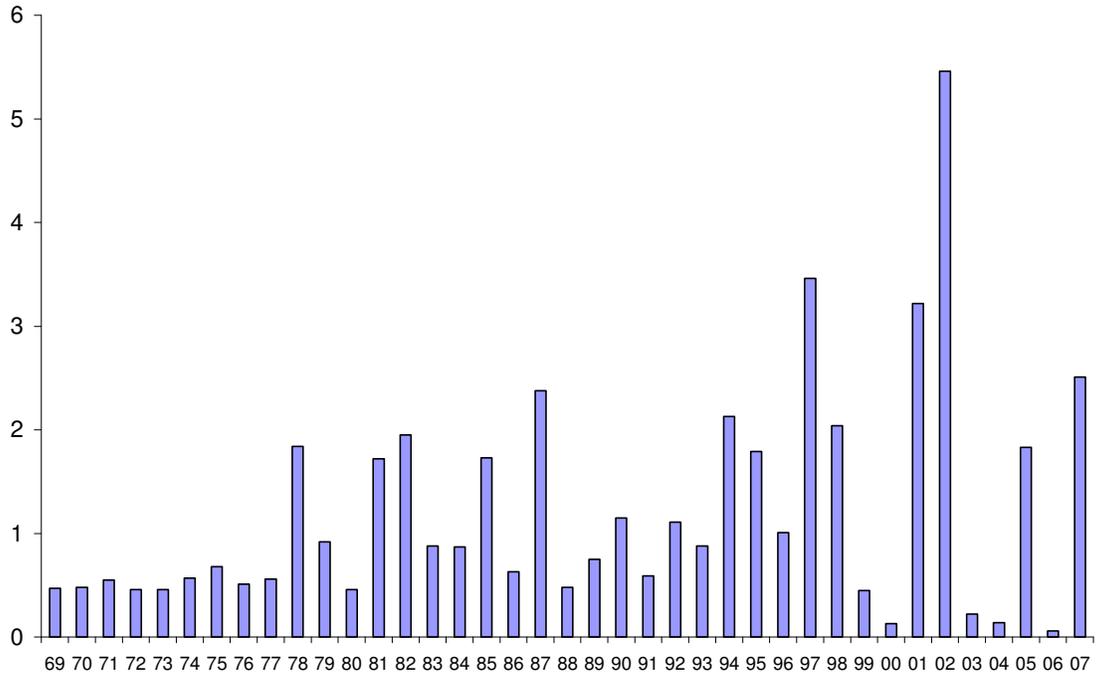


Figure 2. Timeline: Number of Strikes Occurring and Number of Strikes Covered

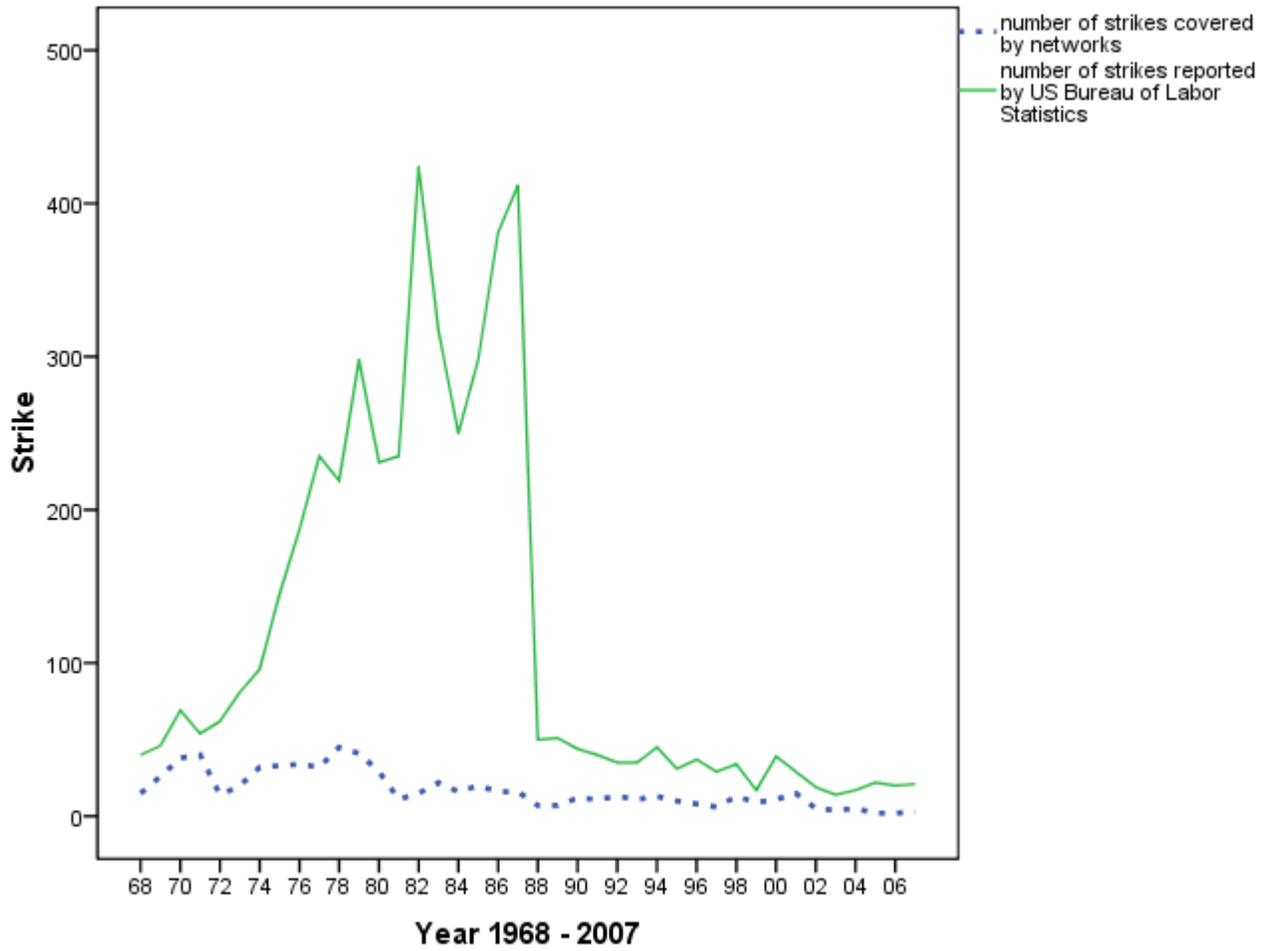


Figure 3. Strike Coverage by Social Class

	Upper Class	Upper Middle Class	Lower Middle Class	Working Class	Lower Class
Time (sec.)	66,775	49,514	144,355	143,717	0
# Stories	648	411	1849	1551	0
Mean sec.	103.05	120.47	78.07	92.66	0

Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Walter Lippman, “Public Opinion” [NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1922; Reprinted as Chapter 3 “Newspapers”] in *Media Power in Politics*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, ed. Doris Graber (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2000), 38.

<sup>ii</sup> Lippmann, “Public Opinion,” 38.

<sup>iii</sup> Upton Sinclair, *The Brass Check* (NY: Bonibooks, 1936), 346-361.

<sup>iv</sup> Sinclair, *Brass Check*, 346.

<sup>v</sup> Sinclair, *Brass Check*, 346.

<sup>vi</sup> Sinclair, *Brass Check*, 353.

<sup>vii</sup> Greg Philo, “Getting the message: Audience research in the Glasgow University Media Group” in *Getting the message: News, truth, and power*, ed. John Eldridge (NY: Routledge), 254-255.

<sup>viii</sup> Philo, “Getting the Message,” 255.

<sup>ix</sup> Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent* (NY: Pantheon Books), xv.

- <sup>x</sup> Jeffrey Klaehn, “A Critical Review and Assessment of Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda Model,” in *Filtering the News*, ed. Jeffery Klaehn (Townawanda, NY: Black Rose Books, 2005), 1.
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- <sup>xii</sup> Dallas W. Smythe, *Counterclockwise: Perspectives on Communication* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 253.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Dallas W. Smythe, *Dependency Road: Communications, Capitalism, Consciousness, and Canada* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1981), 13-21.
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