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The Scope of Political Conflict and the Effectiveness of Constraints in Contemporary Urban Protest*

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This paper examines the effectiveness of the use of constraints (e.g., direct action tactics and violence) by protest groups. It is suggested that the development of theoretical understanding of protest movements requires that scholars turn their attention away from the question, "How effective is the use of constraints by protesters?" and instead address the more refined question, "Under what conditions is the use of constraints by protesters both most effective and least effective?" In pursuit of answers to this latter question, hypotheses are developed suggesting that the effectiveness of constraint utilization depends on the degree and direction of public (third party) involvement in the protest incident. An examination of 212 protests targeted at elected officials and public administrators in American cities during the period between 1960 and 1971 provides support for the following propositions. Constraint utilization will be most effective when third parties are either uninvolved in the protest or when they are involved and unsupportive of protester demands. Under these conditions, constraints may be effective resources enabling protesters to coerce targets into being responsive to their demands. Constraint utilization will be least effective when third parties are involved and supportive of protester demands or are attentive but initially neutral or divided in their support of the protesters. Under these conditions, the use of constraints may alienate those third parties who might otherwise be influential allies of the protesters.

In recent years, sociologists and political scientists have conducted a number of theoretical and empirical investigations into the effectiveness of militant political action undertaken by persons involved in protest movements. A major question addressed in these studies concerns whether those persons whose interests are underrepresented in the political arena by permanent organizations, and who thus pursue their interests by mobilizing on an ad hoc, issue-specific basis, are most likely to obtain their preferred policy outcomes by using direct action tactics and violence or by using more moderate, conventional strategies such as entering into peaceful and polite negotiations with authorities. A review of theory and research regarding this question, presented in Part I of this paper, suggests the difficulty of making broad generalizations about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of militant political action. The contradictory and weak findings concerning the relationship between the use of militant tactics and obtaining the desired policy outcomes suggests that militancy is sometimes effective and sometimes ineffective. Theoretical development thus requires a specification of the conditions when

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militant action is both most effective and least effective. In Part II, the argument is developed that the effectiveness of militant strategies by challenger groups or protesters depends upon the extent and direction of public or third party involvement in conflicts between protesters and their targets. In Part III I describe the data about the interrelationships among the extent of constraint utilization by protesters, the level and direction of public involvement, and policy outcomes. The results are presented in Part IV.

I. Theory and Research on Protest Effectiveness

Most recent analyses on the mobilization and effectiveness of protest movements have been conducted within the framework of resource management theory (Oberschall, 1973; Olson, 1971; Berk and Aldrich, 1972; Stark et al., 1974; Gamson, 1975; and Tilly et al., 1975). In the most comprehensive development of resource management theory, Oberschall (1973:27-9) argues that involvement in protest movements is rational, and that instrumental political activity is undertaken by those whose objectives are to challenge the status quo in order to obtain economic and political benefits. Persons involved in political protest make rational risk/reward calculations prior to adopting particular actions. From the resource management perspective, protest leaders consider the resources available to the protest movement and determine how these resources can be effectively utilized in order to obtain maximum rewards while minimizing the costs (risks) for those in the protest movement.

Two critical issues regarding the effectiveness of militancy are raised by this perspective on protest movements. First, what resources, including the militant application of force and violence, are available to protest groups? Second, what are the risk and reward potentials associated with the application by protesters of various types of resources?

While Oberschall has not developed a classification scheme indicating the types of resources available to protest groups, a suggestive typology has been presented by Gamson (1968:75-81), who distinguishes among persuasion, inducements and constraints. According to Gamson, the ability of protest leaders to persuade their targets is a potentially useful, although intangible and elusive, resource. Based on the legitimacy of the group's demands and on the goodwill of the targets, persuasion—unlike the use of inducements and constraints—can enable protest leaders to attain their policy goals without engaging in an exchange of resources with the targets of the protest. Inducements refer to those resources which a protest group possesses and the target desires. A protest group having such inducements is in a position to exchange its inducements for a positive policy response from targets. For example, protest leaders may promise to deliver the votes of their constituents to the political incumbents at the next election if the authorities adopt policies which are responsive to the group's demands. Persuasion and the exchange of inducements thus involve the usage of relatively conventional resources by protest leaders. It has been frequently argued, however, that most protest groups cannot rely on the use of these resources. Relative to others in a political community, protest leaders have few positive inducements to ex-

change with targets, and the controversial nature of their demands makes it difficult to persuade targets of their legitimacy (Piven, 1975). Thus Gamson argues that protesters must frequently employ a third type of resource, constraints, in their political activity. Constraints are resources available to protest groups which the target wishes to avoid. According to Gamson (1968:75) "constraints are the addition of new disadvantages to the situation or the threat to do so, regardless of the particular resources used. A student group threatening to hold a sit-in unless the university administration takes a desired course of action is using constraints." In short, constraints enable protest groups to coerce targets. By using, or threatening to use, direct action tactics (strikes, boycotts, obstructions, etc.) and/or violence, protesters are using their ability to apply costly contingencies on targets as a bargaining resource.

In short, Gamson's typology of power resources suggests a fundamental distinction between resources that are applied through the adoption of conventional, nonmilitant political activity—by persuasion and exchange of positive inducements—and resources that are applied through the adoption of unconventional, militant political activity—by the application of constraints. Because protesters are relatively powerless in terms of the conventional political resources they possess (Lipsky, 1970:2), considerations of what resources are available to the movement may, according to resource management theory, prompt protest leaders to apply constraints. Still, resource management theory is very ambiguous concerning the issue of whether the application of constraints is likely to be effective. In his discussion of protest effectiveness, Oberschall (1973:177) argues:

> A demonstration or violent outburst as a whole might be characterized as nonrational if one could show that it is an inappropriate means of obtaining group goals and that other channels for seeking redress for grievances are available and are more effective. But recent history shows that collective behavior episodes have been more effective and have been the only means of forcing policy reversals from entrenched elites.

But while asserting the possible rewards associated with the militant application of constraints, Oberschall (1973:261) also cautions about the risks associated with direct action and violence.

> Disaffected groups have to avoid a situation in which they appear to be dangerous, unyielding, irresponsible radicals against whom repression without restraint becomes a welcome and legitimate enterprize.

Such claims about the effectiveness of constraint utilization have stimulated a number of systematic empirical investigations concerning the relative effectiveness of militant and nonmilitant protest activity. Three important studies were published in 1975 which presented evidence that protest groups utilizing constraints are more effective than groups avoiding constraint utilization. In perhaps the most widely cited study in this regard, Gamson (1975) examined the activities of 53 American protest groups that mobilized between 1800 and 1945. As part of his analysis, Gamson measured both the extent to which each protest group utilized constraints and the outcome of the protest activity.

Gamson found that "unruly groups, those that use violence, strikes and other constraints, have better than average success rates" (Gamson, 1975:87). However, it is important to note that in Gamson's analysis the generalization that constraint utilization is associated with increased success (defined here as obtaining the "new advantages" sought by the group) is a fairly weak relationship having numerous deviant cases; 20 percent of the protest groups employing constraints failed to secure new advantages and 43 percent of those groups which avoided using constraints succeeded in gaining new advantages.

In a second study concerned with the effectiveness of militancy, Astin and his associates examined the impact of student protest occurring on 2,367 American campuses between 1968 and 1971. Their analysis suggests that universities made numerous concessions to students during this period and that the most significant changes occurred on those campuses where students engaged in the most severe and disruptive protest (Astin, et al., 1975:145-54). Third, the Tillys examined collective protest in France, Germany and Italy between 1830 and 1930. Although precise statistical evidence regarding the outcomes of militant protest was not presented in their analysis, the Tillys argue that very few "initially powerless groups accomplish any significant part of their objectives without some involvement in violence" (Tilly et al., 1975:283).

Other investigations into the outcomes of militant and violent protest have not replicated these findings. For example, Welch (1975) investigated the policy consequences of black violence in American cities during the mid 1960s. She found that although riot and nonriot cities did exhibit minor policy differences in areas of black concern in the period immediately following the riots, these differences disappeared (and, in some cases, reversed themselves) when a longer time period was considered. In short, her analysis suggested that black violence in America has had few policy effects, and the few policy changes which occurred resulted in only transitory gains for blacks.

In addition, three studies can be cited which directly compare the effectiveness of militant and nonmilitant protest groups and which present findings that contradict those of Gamson, Astin and the Tillys. In a study of 4,793 industrial disputes in Italy between 1878 and 1903, Snyder and Kelly (1976:156-8) found that "nonviolent strikes (are) most likely to succeed." Although Snyder and Kelly note several possible alternative explanations to the inference that protester violence directly reduces a movement's effectiveness (for example, protester violence may be a result, rather than a cause, of official repression), they interpret their results to be clearly at odds with those of Gamson and the Tillys. Two studies of contemporary American urban protest also challenge the generalization that the use of constraints enhances protester effectiveness. In a study of school desegregation in ten cities in the 1960s, Crain (1969:153-9) found that those civil rights groups which avoided direct action tactics in pursuing their policy goals were more successful than groups which used militant strategies. And in an analysis of 212 protest incidents which occurred during the 1960s and early 1970s involving issue-specific groups making a variety of demands on governmental officials in American cities, Schumaker (1975:521) concluded that "the effectiveness of militancy may be overestimated

by some scholars." This conclusion was based on the development and examination of a model that hypothesized that groups making more militant demands, having more militant leadership and using relatively militant strategies were likely to attain reduced levels of support from targets and other politically relevant persons in the community, and that this reduced support would result, in turn, in fewer policy concessions for militant groups. Although the data analysis was generally supportive of this model, the strategy adopted by protest groups (the extent to which groups used constraints) was found to have only a weak direct impact on the policy outcome.

In short, the lack of consistent findings in systematic empirical investigations regarding the effectiveness of militancy suggests that the general overall relationship between constraint utilization and protester success is relatively weak. Broad generalizations that constraint utilization by protesters is either effective or ineffective in a variety of contexts have not been established. This inability to generalize about the effectiveness of constraints, which are key resources available to social movements, has thwarted the development of a valid resource management theory of protest. If broad generalizations in this matter are not possible, theoretical development will thus require a specification of the major conditions when constraint utilization will be both most effective and least effective. It is the purpose of this paper to contribute to such theoretical development by hypothesizing that the effectiveness of constraint utilization depends on the fundamental character of the conflict involving the protesters, their targets (usually political authorities), and perhaps other citizens and groups within the political community.

II. Constraint Utilization, Public Involvement and Outcomes

Because political conflicts take many forms, social theorists have constructed a variety of conflict models, each purporting to describe the essential character of these conflicts. For simplicity, let us examine two alternative characterizations of political conflict—a two-player conflict model and an N-player conflict model—and consider the likely effectiveness of constraint utilization when each of these models is an accurate representation of the basic character of a political conflict.

One frequently discussed conflict model is analogous to a two-player, zero-sum, game situation (Riker and Ordeshook, 1973:202-39, Brams, 1975:1-50). This model views political conflict as restricted to two players—the protest or opposition group and the incumbent political regime. The winner in this conflictual situation is assumed to be that party which most effectively utilizes its existing resources. Because protest groups have relatively few conventional political resources (money, status, authority, etc.), their best chance of winning is to make use of constraints, such as inflicting property damage or personal injury on the authorities and their supporters. In this two-party conflict model, the use of constraints by protesters should succeed when it becomes in the interest of rational authorities to meet the protesters' demands in order to remove the costs imposed by the application of constraints. These considerations yield our first principal hypothesis:

P-1: When a political conflict is confined to the protest group and their target (when the scope of conflict is narrow), the use of constraints will usually enhance the chances of a successful outcome for the protest group.

A second very different characterization of political conflict has been developed by E. E. Schattschneider; the application of this model to the study of social movements suggests the limitations of the use of constraints by protest groups. According to Schattschneider (1960:1-19), political conflict is best understood as a process involving an audience in addition to two principal opponents. In this view, the initially stronger of the two opponents—the protest group or the incumbents—is not necessarily the winner in a confrontation between parties. This is because members of the audience, third parties, can be drawn into the conflict and upset the existing balance of power between the principal opponents. The importance of Schattschneider's view of political conflict to the resource management perspective on social movements is indicated by Oberschall (1973:28-9).

The social system of conflict is an open system, since groups initially outside the conflict . . . may be progressively drawn into the conflict and commit some resources to one or the other side.

If a social conflict is best characterized as an N-player game where third, fourth, or N-players or parties are drawn into the conflict, the effectiveness of constraints as a resource for protest groups is brought into question. When the conflict model depicted by Schattschneider is operative, the chief concern for both protesters and incumbents is to win portions of the audience to their side (Lipsky, 1970). But it can be suggested in this regard that if protesters utilize militant tactics involving the use of constraints, they are likely to experience difficulties attaining the support of the audience. For example, Turner (1969) has noted that the use of disruption and violence by protesters, under most conditions, will result in the public viewing the protesters as criminals and rebels rather than as citizens with justifiable grievances. At least in contemporary American society, the evidence clearly suggests that the public tends to view the use of constraints by protesters as illegitimate (Sears and McConahay, 1973:158-69; Eisinger, 1974:593, and the works cited there). Thus when protesters utilize constraints, it is likely that members of the public who enter the political conflict as third parties will oppose the protesters. For these reasons, our second principal hypothesis is as follows:

P-2: When the public is involved in the resolution of a political conflict (when the scope of conflict is broad), the use of constraints will usually reduce the chances of a successful outcome for protest groups.

In addition to these two principal hypotheses, it is instructive to consider four subsidiary hypotheses which elaborate upon the role of the public in the resolution of conflicts between protest groups and their targets.

First, it is important to recognize that certain conditions may immediately involve the public in the protest incident; when the public is initially involved,

the protest group must respond to the existing distribution of public support in formulating their protest strategy. Our first subsidiary hypothesis suggests that the extent of initial involvement by the public—or the initial scope of conflict—may be a function of the types of demands which protesters make.

S-1: When protesters make zero-sum demands (i.e., demands that imply substantial burdens to other citizens in the political community), the scope of conflict is broadened. The more zero-sum the demands of a protest group are, the greater will be the public involvement in opposition to the protesters.

The significance of this hypothesis lies in its recognition that sometimes protesters make demands which ensure that they must operate in a hostile environment. In certain circumstances—as when civil rights groups made desegregation demands in the deep South in the early 1960s—the targets and the politically relevant public are united in their opposition to the protesters. When the public is widely involved, owing to the threatening nature of protesters' demands, the scope of the conflict is unlikely to expand significantly. Thus, although the public is involved, the protest context may resemble a two-player game where the protest group is aligned against both the authorities and the public. In such circumstances, the theoretical considerations developed in regard to our first principal hypothesis (P-1) suggest that constraint utilization by the protest group may be effective. When protesters have fewer conventional resources than their adversaries and when the protesters have little hope of obtaining the support of an uncommitted audience, the use of constraints may enhance the protesters' chances for a successful outcome. Only by the application of costly contingencies are authorities likely to capitulate to protester demands. Thus, our second subsidiary hypothesis is as follows:

S-2: In a context where protest groups confront an activated and hostile public, constraint utilization may be positively related to protester success.

In many protest incidents, however, the public will not be initially involved in the conflict between protesters and their targets. Because the protesters are likely to have fewer power resources than their adversaries, the protesters may wish to widen the scope of conflict in hopes of obtaining the support of previously uncommitted third parties. Our third subsidiary hypothesis suggests that protest groups may be able to affect the scope of conflict by the strategies which they employ.

S-3: When protest groups employ strategies that involve the use of constraints, the scope of conflict will usually be enlarged.

As Lipsky (1970:169-72) has observed, public involvement in political protest is stimulated by media publicity. When protesters engage in militant and controversial activities, the media are most likely to consider the protest newsworthy and inform the public about the nature of the protesters' demands and activities. However, if protesters refrain from the militant application of constraints and instead engage in quiet and conventional negotiations with their targets, the media are likely to be either unaware of or indifferent to the protest.

Thus, it is hypothesized that the public will be less informed about peaceful protest and will consequently be less involved in its resolution.

It is important to recognize that constraint utilization should not just activate the public. If the theoretical considerations underlying our second principal hypothesis (P-2) are correct, constraint utilization should normally activate the public against the protest group. In those societies where the public views disruption and violence as illegitimate political tactics, the following hypothesis should be valid.

S-4: The more that a protest group utilizes constraints, the more opposition it will attain from the relevant public.

Hypotheses S-3 and S-4 predicting the effects of constraint utilization on the public have important theoretical and practical implications. Suppose that a protest group is confronted with unresponsive authorities and wishes to broaden the scope of the conflict so that various third parties will apply their resources in the conflict on behalf of the protest group. Our hypotheses suggest that the protesters are caught in an unresolvable dilemma. In order to broaden the scope of the conflict, the protesters are encouraged to utilize constraints, but such constraint utilization is likely to incur public opposition to their cause, which is likely to reduce their chances of attaining a successful policy outcome. In order to attain public support, hypothesis S-4 suggests that protesters should avoid the use of constraints; but the adoption of such strategy will mean that third parties are less likely to learn of the protesters' grievances, and any support that the protesters may have among the public is likely to remain latent. By avoiding the use of constraints, protesters are likely to find themselves in a context resembling a two-player game theoretical situation where they have insufficient resources relative to their more powerful adversaries—the political authorities—to attain a successful outcome.

In summary, the hypotheses developed here suggest that the effectiveness of constraint utilization by protesters is dependent on the extent and direction of public involvement. Protesters may be able to coerce targets through the utilization of constraints, particularly if they can apply constraints without activating the public in opposition to their demands. This tactic is dangerous, however, because constraint utilization will frequently activate previously uncommitted third parties in opposition to the protesters. Protesters may be able to use constraints effectively when the public and the targets are united in their hostility to protesters. Under these conditions, there are few uncommitted third parties whose potential support is jeopardized by the coercive use of constraints. Finally, the use of constraints will be least effective when the protesters depend on initially uncommitted third parties to apply their resources on behalf of the protesters and when these third parties view the application of constraints as a tactic of questionable legitimacy.

III. Data

In order to test the above hypotheses, two samples of data regarding protest activity were collected and analyzed. In this section, these samples are first

described and then measures of the variables used in this analysis are presented. Finally, the limitations of these data are considered.

Samples. The units of analysis in this paper—conflicts between protest groups and political authorities—are similar to the units of analysis adopted by Gamson (1975:145-53). Specifically, a case of protest is defined as occurring when a previously unorganized group of citizens mobilizes for political action and makes demands upon the incumbents of some local governmental office. The protest is terminated when the targets have responded positively to the protest group demands—or if the response of the target is negative—the protest group has ceased active pursuit of its demands.

It should be clear that the concern here is with *protest groups* and their success and failures. Protest groups are defined as groups of citizens who do not normally interact with governmental officials, but who, under certain conditions (when they perceive that their interests are threatened by the activities of others or that the political system can be of use in furthering these interests), organize on an informal, issue-specific basis to make demands on public officials. According to this definition, protest groups are similar to what others call "challenger groups" (Gamson 1975:14-8), "political movements" (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1974:237-40), "opposition groups," and "negatively privileged groups" (Oberschall, 1973:31-2). Specifically excluded from consideration here are conflicts involving traditional interest groups. Such groups tend to have a variety of resources—regular access to public authorities, financial well-being, expertise, etc.—which are lacking in protest groups and which enable interest groups to attain successful outcomes without the utilization of constraints.

Our first sample consists of 93 incidents where such protest groups mobilized during the 1960s to make demands on governmental authorities in American cities. This sample, which shall be referred to throughout this paper as the case studies sample, utilized data collected through content analysis of case study descriptions by scholars and journalists of these protest incidents. Examples of the types of protest incidents examined and the primary data sources analyzed include the protest by New York West Villagers in 1961 to stop an urban renewal project in their neighborhood (Davies, 1966:72-109), the rent strike in 1964 by a group of Newark blacks seeking to improve housing conditions (Parenti, 1970:510-2), the marches organized by Father Groppi in Milwaukee in 1967-1968 in support of an open housing ordinance (Aukofer, 1968), and the battle by Mexican-Americans in Crystal City, Texas, in 1969-1970 for various antidiscrimination measures (Shockley, 1972).

The second sample, which consists of 119 protest incidents occurring primarily in 1970 and 1971, utilizes data obtained from mail questionnaires sent to informants in 46 American communities. The informants consisted of officials in agencies which are the chief providers of controversial services (e.g., school administrators, directors of welfare departments, directors of housing agencies). As potential targets of citizen protest, these officials were asked to provide information, elicited through a combination of forced-

response and open-ended questions, regarding the most recent protest incident targeted at their agency. The sample of protest incidents studied by this data collection procedure will be referred to as the questionnaires sample in this paper. A more thorough discussion of both the case studies sample and the questionnaires sample can be found in Schumaker (1973:112-25; and 1975:504-09).

Measurement. In order to test the hypotheses developed in Part II, it was necessary to obtain measures of five variables for each case in the two samples. Appendix A presents these variables, their conceptual meaning, the scales used in the measurement of these variables and (where appropriate) the reliability of these measurement scales. For the case studies sample, all variables, except the scope of conflict variable, were coded using the methods for obtaining subjective scales outlined by Gurr (1972:76-84, 91-101). In order to check the reliability of the resulting measures, two coders independently scored these variables. The reliability coefficients in the appendix indicate the degree of correlation between the estimates of the two coders.

For the questionnaires sample, the measures of policy responsiveness and zero-sumness of demands were derived from information attained from open-ended questions concerning the demands of the protesters and the outcome of the protest. As in the case studies sample, two coders independently scored these variables, and the reliability of these measures are reported in the appendix. Forced-response questions regarding the extent and direction of third party involvement and public concern with the protest provided the measures of public hostility, and forced-response questions regarding the tactics employed by protesters provided the measures of constraint utilization in the questionnaires sample. Because the resulting measures were not dependent on coder judgement, no reliability scores are provided.

For both samples, an index of the scope of conflict was created using data concerning three indicators of public involvement: (1) the extent of media coverage of the protest incident, (2) the degree of involvement by other active groups or third parties in the protest, and (3) the degree of concern regarding the outcome of the protest incident exhibited by the community as a whole.[1] When testing hypotheses S-1 and S-3, the scope of conflict index, as a continuous variable, was used. However, in order to test the principal hypotheses, P-1 and P-2, it was necessary to dichotomize the scope of conflict variable because, in this part of the analysis, we were seeking to determine the effectiveness of constraints under two contrasting conditions: When public involvement is *relatively* low (when the scope of conflict is narrow), when public involvement is *relatively* high (when the scope of conflict is broad).[2]

[1]In both samples, each of these indicator variables was measured on three-point scales. The resulting additive index of the scope of conflict had scores ranging from 3 (when media coverage, group involvement and community concern were each scored as low or 1) to 9 (when media coverage, group involvement and community concern were each scored as high or 3). Because most incidents in the case studies sample had high media coverage, the scope of conflict scores were, on the whole, higher in that sample than for the questionnaires sample.

[2]Although it would be desirable to investigate the relationship between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness for each of a number of degrees of the scope of conflict, the number of cases in the samples did

Limitations. The data used in this study clearly have certain deficiencies which make tentative the results of the subsequent data analysis. First, although the samples contain a wide variety of types of protest incidents and there was no apparent bias in the procedures for selecting cases, neither of the two samples was drawn by random selection procedures (this point is developed in Schumaker, 1975:507). Second, data on only one outcome variable, policy responsiveness, were available. Policy responsiveness—the extent to which authorities adopt policies that are congruent with the explicitly stated demands of protest groups—is an important, but limited, measure of a protest group's effectiveness or success. For example, authorities may adopt responsive policies but not implement them (Lipsky, 1970:130-62). Or protesters may fail to win any policy concessions, but nevertheless be successful in terms of publicizing their cause (Zikmund, 1971) or in terms of gaining acceptance as spokesmen on behalf of legitimate concerns and grievances (Gamson, 1975:31-4). In a more comprehensive analysis of political protest, it would be useful to incorporate additional indicators of protester success and effectiveness. Third, the data gathering techniques employed in this study—content analysis and mail surveys—unquestionably have resulted in some measurement error (Schumaker, 1975:508-9). Although the reliability of our measure is normally satisfactory, it would be desirable if more precise measures of the variables were available.

It is also appropriate to consider certain limitations of the data analysis techniques used in this study. First, we employ regression-based statistical analysis on ordinal level measures. However, in analyses not reported here the hypotheses under investigation were examined using various nonparametric tests of association. Because these results were very similar to those reported here, it can be inferred that little error is introduced by treating our ordinal level measures as interval level data (see Kim, 1975 for a recent justification of the use of regression-based statistics on ordinal level data).

Second, the simple models tested in this paper are not conducive to drawing causal inferences. When examining the relationship between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness, we would like to infer at the theoretical level that constraint utilization causes or affects the policy response. Of course, such an inference may not be warranted. For example, a negative relationship between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness may be due to the fact that a lack of responsiveness by targets induces protesters to use constraints, not that the use of constraints causes targets to be unresponsive. In short, the relationship between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness is potentially a reciprocal one, and thus may not be adequately tested by using static regression models (Blalock, 1969:48-75). However, elsewhere the relationship between these two variables has been examined using both the type of simple

not permit such a refined analysis. By dichotomizing the scope of conflict variable, we only divide the number of cases available into two subsets which leaves a sufficient number of cases in each subset for meaningful analysis. By treating the scope of conflict variable as a continuous variable having N categories, we would have to divide the number of cases available into N subsets for this portion of the analysis; this would not leave a sufficient number of cases in each subset for meaningful analysis.

Table 1. The Relationship Between the Use of Constraints and Policy Responsiveness Under Various Conditions of Public Involvement

	The Case Studies Sample			The Questionnaires Sample		
	Zero-Order r	Beta Weights[a]	N	Zero-Order r	Beta Weights[a]	N
All Cases	-.02	.03	93	-.26	-.14	119
When the scope of conflict is narrow	.30	.31	30	.07	.02	67
When the scope of conflict is broad	-.11	-.05	63	-.46	-.37	52
When the public is mostly supportive	-.20	-.21	18	-.44	-.58	26
When the public is mostly hostile	.45	.44	21	-.05	-.02	21
When public attitudes are mixed	.13	.07	24	—[b]	—	5

[a]The beta weights examine the relationship between constraint utilization by protesters and policy responsiveness, controlling for the zero-sumness of protester demands.
[b]There are insufficient cases here for meaningful analysis.

recursive model reported in this paper (where it is assumed that constraint utilization affects policy responsiveness, but not vice versa) and a more complex nonrecursive model (where it is supposed that constraint utilization may affect policy responsiveness and policy responsiveness may affect constraint utilization). Although tentative, the results of that analysis suggest that the causal relationship between these variables is as specified in the models tested here: Constraint utilization affects policy responsiveness, but not vice versa (Schumaker, 1974).

IV. Results

Zero-order Pearsonian correlation coefficients and beta weights concerning the relationships between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness under a variety of conditions of public involvement are presented in Table 1. The beta weights indicate the relationship between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness when controlling for the zero-sumness of protester demands. The zero-sumness of protester demands is introduced as a control variable because it can be hypothesized that groups making zero-sum demands (demands that would significantly burden others in the community) are both more likely to use constraints and less likely to attain a responsive policy outcome. Thus, the zero-sumness of protester demands is a possible spuriousness-producing variable in the relationship between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness.[3]

As suggested in the review of previous research concerning the effectiveness of constraints, these data indicate that the general overall relationship

[3]In analyses not reported here, the stability of protest group organization was also considered as a control variable. This was done because Gamson (1975:92) had found that the extent of bureaucratization of protest groups was related to both the extent to which protesters used constraints and protester success. However, in the present study controlling for organizational stability did not significantly alter any of the reported relationships between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness.

between constraint utilization and responsiveness is very weak. There is no significant causal relationship between these two variables in either of our two samples where all cases are considered and analyzed (β=.03 for the case studies sample and β=-.14 for the questionnaires sample).

In order to test our two principal hypotheses—which together suggest that the effectiveness of constraints is dependent on the scope of conflict—each of our samples was divided into two subsamples. This permitted an examination of the relationship between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness for (a) only those cases having relatively narrow scopes of conflict and for (b) only those cases having relatively broad scopes of conflict. The data in Table 1 support our principal hypotheses by indicating that constraint utilization is more effective when the scope of conflict is narrow than when the scope of conflict is broad. In general, when the public is little involved in the resolution of the protest conflict, constraint utilization appears to be positively related to policy responsiveness. However, when the public is highly involved in the conflict, the use of constraint is negatively related to policy responsiveness.

Although these findings are consistent with our principal hypotheses, the relationships between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness are not very strong, even when the scope of conflict is specified. Thus, in order to attain a fuller understanding of the role of the public in the resolution of protest incidents, it is helpful to consider not only the level of public involvement, but also the direction of that involvement. Our second subsidiary hypothesis (S-2) suggests that the effectiveness of constraints will depend upon whether the involved public is hostile or supportive of the protesters. In order to test this hypothesis, those cases of protest having broad scopes of conflict have been divided into three subsamples depending upon whether the involved public was mostly supportive of the protesters, mostly hostile to the protesters or fairly evenly divided in supporting and opposing the protesters. The data in Table 1 indicate that the direction of public involvement is an important factor concerning the effectiveness of constraints. Protesters are more likely to find that the use of constraints will lead to a responsive policy outcome when they face a hostile public than when they face a supportive public. We interpret these findings to indicate that when protesters are operating in a supportive environment, the use of constraints is counterproductive because it alienates those who would otherwise be allies. But when protesters are operating in a hostile environment, they have few allies which can be alienated by the use of

Table 2. Constraint Utilization, Zero-Sumness of Demands and the Level and Direction of Public Involvement
(Zero-Order Pearson Correlation Coefficients)

	Extent of Public Involvement		Extent of Public Hostility	
	Case Studies	Questionnaires	Case Studies	Questionnaires
Constraint Utilization	.27	.29	.21	.21
Zero-Sumness of Demands	.19	.23	.40	.27

constraints. When the public is hostile toward the protesters, the protesters are operating in a context resembling a two-player game where the authorities and the public are fairly united in their opposition to the protesters. Under these conditions, the protesters have little to lose by using constraints. And the application of constraints under these conditions may place sufficiently aversive contingencies on the targets and the public such that the targets will sometimes capitulate to protesters' demands in order to remove the application of these contingencies.[4]

Table 2 presents data testing and confirming hypotheses S-1, S-3 and S-4.[5] As suggested by hypothesis S-1, the type of demands which protest groups make affect both the level and direction of public involvement. The more zero-sum are the demands of the protesters, the greater is the level of public involvement and the more hostile is the public to the protesters. These findings, together with our previous findings, suggest that when protesters make demands that are highly burdensome to others in the community they are likely to find themselves in a context where they confront an involved but hostile public and thus may find constraints to be a useful political resource.

In addition, the data in Table 2 indicate that the level and direction of public involvement is affected by the extent to which the protesters use constraints. As suggested by hypothesis S-3, protesters can enlarge the scope of conflict by using constraints; however, as suggested by hypothesis S-4, the use of constraints will normally activate the public in opposition to the protesters. These findings suggest again the difficulty of making broad generalizations about the effectiveness of using constraints. Although constraint utilization can enhance policy responsiveness for protesters operating in a hostile environment, constraint utilization can also create the hostile environment which

[4]Under each of the various conditions examined in Table 1, it can be observed that the measures of association between constraint utilization and policy responsiveness are more positive (or less negative) for the case studies sample than for the questionnaires sample. It is interesting to speculate about why the use of constraints appears to have been more effective for those cases considered in the case studies sample than for those cases considered in the questionnaires sample. One possible explanation may be that the differences between samples are artifacts of the different data collection procedures employed in the two samples. On the one hand, the scholars and journalists who provided data for the case studies sample often appeared to approve of the militant strategies employed by many protest groups analyzed in that sample, and they may, consequently, have overestimated the responsiveness of targets to militant groups. On the other hand, the administrators who provided data for the questionnaires sample may have been more disapproving of militant strategies and consequently underestimated their responsiveness to groups utilizing constraints.

Other possible explanations for the differences in the effectiveness of constraints suggested by the two samples might focus on the real differences in the protest incidents included in the two samples. For example, for the most part, the protest movements examined in the case studies sample were bigger and more sustained than the movements considered in the questionnaires sample. Thus, these groups may have had the resources to apply constraints more effectively than militant groups in the questionnaires sample. Additionally it might be suggested that the use of constraints was more effective in the 1960s (when the incidents in the case studies sample occurred) than in the 1970s (when the incidents in the questionnaires sample occurred). As militant protest became less novel, political authorities may have developed procedures to deal with militant groups without capitulating to protester demands (Lipsky, 1970:175-81).

[5]In Table 2, only zero-order correlation coefficients are reported. In analyses not reported here, controlling for the zero-sumness of demands did not significantly alter any of the reported relationships between constraint utilization and the level or direction of public involvement. And controlling for constraint utilization did not significantly alter any of the reported relationships between the zero-sumness of protester demands and the level or direction of public involvement.

makes it difficult for protesters to achieve their policy goals regardless of the tactics they employ.

V. Summary and Conclusions

This analysis of the effectiveness of constraints in political protest suggests two conditions when the use of constraints may be an effective protest tactic. First, constraint utilization may be effective in direct confrontations involving only the protesters and their targets. If the public can be kept uninvolved in the protest incident, then the use of constraints adds to the resources of the protesters without affecting the resources available to their targets. Under these conditions, the use of constraints may tip the balance of power resources toward the protesters, enhancing their chances of obtaining their desired policy outcome. However, it must be recognized that the use of constraints by protesters in an incident having a narrow scope of conflict is likely to have the adverse side effect of expanding the scope of conflict by arousing public hostility toward the protesters. Thus a problem of confronting protesters concerns their ability to use constraints against their targets without simultaneously arousing public hostility. If this can be done, protesters may find the use of constraints to be an appropriate means of enhancing their effectiveness.

Second, constraint utilization may be effective when protesters confront a hostile public, as is likely to be the case when protesters make zero-sum demands. Under this condition, there is little potential support that protesters can alienate by using constraints. Constraints may then be power resources which can be used to coerce targets into capitulating to protester demands.

However, in American communities, these two conditions do not normally prevail. Seldom is the public uninvolved and unconcerned with the outcome of a protest incident. And seldom is the public strongly involved in opposition to the protest group right from the start. Most frequently, the public plays the role of spectators who eventually can become involved on either side of the conflict. When third parties are observing a conflict involving protesters and their targets, the demands made and the tactics employed by protesters appear to affect the direction of their subsequent involvement. Public hostility to protesters is enhanced when groups make zero-sum demands. And, at least in contemporary American society, the use of constraints by protesters is frequently viewed as being illegitimate and enhances public hostility toward the protesters. Thus, in a context where protesters depend on public support to attain their policy goals, constraints are not effective resources available to protesters.

APPENDIX A

The Variables and Measures Used in This Study

A. Policy Responsiveness: the extent to which targets adopt public policies which are congruent with the explicitly stated demands of the protesters

(1) policy outcome is repressive to the protesters
(2) no policy actions are taken
(3) a token or minimal policy change is made
(4) protester demands are partially satisfied through compromise
(5) the policy outcome is congruent with protester demands

Reliability: Case Studies Sample = .93; Questionnaires Sample = .90

B. Constraint Utilization: the extent to which protesters use constraints

(1) constraints avoided; protesters use private negotiations only
(2) disruptive constraints avoided but protesters discredit or embarrass officials by publicizing demands in public forums
(3) protesters employ nonviolent and minimally disruptive direct action tactics such as marches or rallies
(4) protesters use nonviolent, but disruptive or obstructive tactics such as sit-ins and boycotts
(5) protesters use violence resulting in personal injury or property damage

Reliability: Case Studies Sample = .91; Questionnaires Sample = N.A.*

C. The Zero-Sumness of Demands: the extent to which responding fully to protester demands would burden other members of the political community

(1) demands place no (or almost no) burdens on others
(2) demands place minor burdens on some
(3) demands place minor burdens on many, *or* demands place moderate burdens on some
(4) demands place major burdens on many
(5) demands threaten the dominant values of a large part of the community

Reliability: Case Studies Sample = .78; Questionnaires Sample = .72

D. The Scope of Conflict: the extent to which members of a political community other than the protesters and their targets are involved in the protest incident

(1) narrow: those protests having relatively little media coverage, involving few other active groups or third parties, and arousing little public controversy.
(2) broad: those protests having relatively extensive media coverage, involving many other active groups or third parties, and arousing considerable public controversy

E. Public Hostility: the extent to which the public supports or opposes the protest group

(1) there is more support than opposition for protesters
(2) support and opposition for protesters is about equal
(3) there is more opposition than support for protesters

Reliability: Case Studies Sample = .92; Questionnaires Sample = N.A.*

*Reliability coefficients are not appropriate because these measures did not depend on coder judgement.

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