

ALL THE LABOR PROBLEMS FIT TO PRINT: THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE
CULTURAL PRODUCTION OF THE U.S. 'LABOR PROBLEM', 1870-1930.

By

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Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Sociology

December, 2013

Nashville, Tennessee

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To my wonderful parents, Mai Quynh Nam and Dang Hoang Phuoc Hien, and my lovely partner, Hoang Mai Linh. You know why.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am thankful for the guidance of my committee chair, Dr. Larry W. Isaac, and the reader, Dr. Daniel B. Cornfield. This project would not have been possible without your critical feedback and continuous support. I would also like to thank the wonderful students in various departments of Vanderbilt University, including but not limited to, Jonathan S. Coley, Marka M. Anderson, Benjamin D. Tyndall, Jeffrey S. Jorge, Guilherme A. Russo and Alvin F. Pearman II. I owe a great deal to all of you, who have offered tremendous and unwavering support for my ideas and research.

ABSTRACT

The period that spanned the Gilded Age to the onset of the Great Depression saw the rise and relative decline of the U.S. labor movement. The salient events of labor movements over these years undoubtedly shaped public perception about labor issues, and some scholars have been attempting to unpack the mechanisms through which depictions and characterizations of the “labor problem” were produced in authoritative venues that could have shaped the future of the movement. This study goes beyond the standard practice of explaining news report volume to feature the political valance of the reports on the labor problem over a 61-year time period. The aforementioned period also saw significant changes in news reporting practices, with the rise of objective informational writing and of the embracement of journalism as a profession. The change within journalism itself could potentially shape the depiction of the labor problem, yet such change has been overlooked by existing literature pertaining to the topic. This research makes a theoretical case for integrating social processes central to the labor movement and journalism from 1870-1930 and explains patterns in the cultural production of the labor problem in the New York Times by analyzing these two tracks of history in conjunction.

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Introduction

The Gilded Age witnessed an unprecedented insurgence of the ‘labor problem’. Although the roots of the labor movement can be traced back to the first half of the 19th century with the inception of early trade unions, it was during the period from 1870 to 1930 that the movement experienced major changes and really emerged as one of the most critical issues in American history. The labor problem, centering on wage labor, began to emerge as a national phenomenon in the Gilded Age (Isaac 2008,2009,2012). But how was mainstream mass culture constructing the meaning of the “labor problem” in the decades prior to the New Deal? At issue here are the various major genres of mass cultural production (see Isaac 2008, 2012, Morrison and Isaac 2012) through which the struggle over the “labor problem” or “labor question,” as then known, was produced and circulated. Taking a cue from Larry Isaac, who used the representation of labor problem in novels (Isaac 2009,2012) and extended narratives and pictorial art (Isaac 2008), I aim to study the ways in which newspapers depicted the labor problem. Using *New York Times (NYT)* articles from 1870 to 1930, I will track overall trends in the volume and content (i.e., political valence --anti-labor, pro-labor, neutral) of stories on the labor problem (or labor question) appearing in the *NYT*. This research operates at the intersection of social movement and media studies. My central question asks: *What are the conditions and processes underlying the trend and fluctuations in volume and content of stories contributing to the labor problem discourse?*

By answering this question, this study fills major gaps in the existing literature. Previous studies that analyzed media coverage of social movements were primarily concerned with determining particular aspects of SMOs that would yield higher

likelihood of getting covered. The conceptualization of media attention is reduced to a narrow operationalization of getting covered or not (Andrews and Caren 2010), and of the mere annual number of news pieces. This study, making use of valence content coding, will address *how* one major newspaper covered the labor movement with a particular slant, systematically tracking these newspaper accounts over a period of 61 years and attempting to reveal the factors that explain such coverage. Moreover, previous research also overlooked the ways in which journalism and news agencies changed over time. By ignoring these key processes, such research merely used newspapers as a ‘storehouse of data’, to use Barrington Moore’s (1958) terminology, without acknowledging them as dynamic social institutions. I propose a theoretical contribution that has the potential to overcome these limitations: the cultural production of social movements need to be seen as a function of both the exogenous change in the movement itself and the endogenous change in the media organizational structure.

The coverage of social movement organizations in media outlets: Where the literature stands.

Over the last century, the mass media- understood broadly to include radio, television, the internet along with print media- became essential venues through which social movements present their claims, and the process through which social movement organizations (SMOs) managed to gain media attention attracted attention from scholars of various disciplines. Early research on the topic affirmed the relationship between media coverage and movement influence (Lipsky 1968, Gans 1979, Ryan 1991, Shoemaker and Reese 1996). Media provide a platform for movements to expand their visibility among multiple audiences (Clayman and Reisner 1998, Ferree et.al 2002) and

to engage in framing contests with competing parties (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993, Cress and Snow 2000, Gamson 2007). The mere presence of SMOs in popular media venues is a justification for their legitimacy and an acknowledgement of their influence (Gamson 1975; Berry 1999). The process of popularizing their agendas through media outlets results in movements' capability not only to heighten the public attention but also to sway public opinion regarding the social issues they are advocating for or against (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988). Increased visibility and awareness that result from movement presence in the media also facilitate movement mobilization of human and financial resources (Donati 1996, Barker-Plummer 2002) and the diffusion of ideologies and tactics to various networks within the public sphere (Koopmans 2004; but see Gitlin 1980 and Sobieraj 2012). With the advantages that media provides, movements in the present day often view media as an alternative route - besides the traditional one of taking it to the streets – in the shaping of policy debates (Andrews 2004, Amenta et.al 2005, Amenta 2006, Baumgartner and Jones 2009).

Most research on the relationship between social movement families and their coverage in news media focus on identifying specific characteristics of SMOs that would yield media attention. In other terms, these works try to analyze how *exogenous changes in SMOs* are reflected in media arenas. Scholars have found ample evidence that, consistent with resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald 2001), support organizational resources as major determinants of an SMO's prospect of getting news coverage. SMOs can effectively make use of their resources to signal newsworthiness, pursue coverage and engage in coalitions to increase visibility (Staggenborg 1988, Barker-Plummer 2002, Kennedy 2008). In addition, differences in terms of

organizational capacity, size, disruption, tactical repertoire, and salience of the constituencies that the movement support have also been shown to be significant predictors of why some SMO families get more newspaper coverage than others (Gitlin 1980, Amenta et. al 2009, see. Andrews and Caren 2010).

Other research that studies coverage of public events from the vantage point of the media, drawing from insights on the gate-keeping role of the press as the fourth estate of power, pointed to news agency structure as a potential predictor of coverage. Danzger (1975) argued that the likelihood of events being covered is determined by the structure of local reporting networks. He showed that frequency of racial conflicts reported in newspapers is substantially affected by the differences in wire service reporting practices, as exemplified by whether or not a city has an office of Associated Press of United Press International. Criticizing Danzger's one-sided focus on media practices, Snyder and Kelly (1977) suggested that scholars need to consider both *event intensity* and *media sensitivity* as major determinants of coverage. Molotch & Lester (1974) and Oliver & Myers (1999) focused on the characteristics of news reporting as a profession and showed that news producing routines –which are constrained by time-related factors like deadlines and market-related ones like consumers' demands- can result in selection bias. Following the demand-based argument, Downs (1972) argued that public attention to specific social problems in general follow “issue-attention cycles.” The public attention cycle and the media attention cycle feed off each other to explain why a certain issue “suddenly leaps into prominence, remains there for a short time, and then-though still largely unresolved-gradually fades from the center of public attention” (Downs 1972:40). Compared to works reviewed in the previous section, this body of work focuses on

endogenous changes within organizational practices of news agencies as predictors of coverage. In an attempt to uncover specific mechanisms through which SMOs can gain media coverage, Andrews and Caren (2010) reviewed this field of studies. However, instead of analyzing how internal changes of news agencies affect reporting, their arguments highlighted the ways in which movements strategically align their frames to recognize news values in order to increase likelihood of coverage. In other words, internal changes in news agencies were not treated as explanatory conditions in their analysis.

In the body of literature focusing on the relationship between the media and social movements, newspapers – particularly the *New York Times* - have been frequently used as a reliable data source from which data on strike and protest events can be extracted (Jenkins and Eckert 1986, Jenkins and Perrow 1977, Kerbo and Shaffer 1992, McAdam and Su 2002, Soule and Earl 2004). The analysis of newspapers' articles as evidences of social movements' cultural consequences and the tracking of such articles through extended periods of time are but a recent scholarship development. The works of Amenta and colleagues are pioneering in this sense (Amenta et. al 2009, 2012a, 2012b). Amenta et. al (2009) made use of quantitative counts of the Times' articles that mentioned several SMOs throughout the entire twentieth century. Amenta et. al (2012a) looked at the production of 600,000 articles that had some treatment of 34 major SMOs over the same period from two major media outlets, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Amenta et.al (2012b) examine the newspaper coverage of the Townsend Plan over two decades provided by the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. These are valiant efforts without which the

theorization of why SMOs achieved coverage and how such coverage progressed over time would have been impossible. These studies also broadened the subfield by exposing future studies to the opportunities that time-series analysis of newspaper article counts can offer.

Despite their undeniable contributions, these works – I argue – still embed an important shortcoming. Amenta et. al (2012b)'s historical background section did not provide adequate treatment of the history of journalism and of the 5 news agencies during the period of 1934-1952. This period witnessed American journalism transitioning from the “Age of the Columnist” in the 1930s to the fight to maintain ground with the emergence of television in 1950s while trying to capture the social mood between World War II and the long Cold War. It is during this epoch that the *New York Times* underwent an energetic international expansion, the Tribune had to deal with major strikes from composing room staff, with threats to get shut down by FDR, and the notorious “Dewey defeats Truman” headline mistake. This period also saw the *Washington Post*'s struggle to gain momentum after being acquired from bankruptcy auction in 1933 and the *Wall Street Journal*'s swift rise to become prominent in the financial world with Bernard Kilgore appropriating the managing editorship in 1941. This is also a notable epoch for the *Los Angeles Times*, as it saw changes in leadership with Norman Chandler becoming the general manager in 1936 and winning its first Pulitzer Prize in 1942. All these events likely had major impacts on these news agencies and perhaps also influenced how they covered particular social movements, the Townsend Plan included. In other terms, the analysis of the internal changes in the news agencies in conjunction with the external manifestations in activities related to the Townsend Plan could have contributed to the

authors' examination of these newspapers' cultural production. As previously mentioned, Amenta et. al (2009) studied the portrayal of 952 qualifying SMOs across the period of a hundred years. Surely both American journalism and the *New York Times* underwent tremendous changes during the twentieth century, and it is indeed important to take into account these institutional changes in the analysis of news output. Providing sufficient treatment of the nuances of the news agency's internal transformations across the century is a method for scholars not to operate on the perilous assumption that the *Times* remained unchanged during that period. For works aiming to track media accounts of social movements over time, it is indeed critical to contextualize the arguments within the historical progression of American journalism in general, or of the news agency of interest in particular. I thus argue that the study of media portrayal of social movements can benefit from insights of journalist accounts on how changes in media practices map on to alterations in news output. Drawing from both research literature, this paper seeks to make a theoretical case for integrating the analysis of both exogenous changes in collective contention around social movements and endogenous changes in the practices and organizations of news agencies as determinants of the production of news articles' accounts of SMOs.

As demonstrated, the topic of how social movements are portrayed in mass media outlets has generated a sizeable body of literature. Besides overlooking endogenous factors as potential determinants of cultural production, these studies are also limited in another important way. Several studies are solely concerned with whether movements receive coverage or not (McCarthy et.al 1996, Oliver & Myers 1999) and why. These analyses usually fail to acknowledge the ways in which a "news story may marginalize,

trivialize, or denigrate a movement organization and its cause, while another article may celebrate or promote an organization” (Andrews and Caren 2010:858, but see Gitlin 1980). Perhaps scholars rely too heavily on Vliegthart et. al (2005)’s findings that visibility per se is customarily beneficial and overlook the valence of these portrayals. To my knowledge, there is but a small volume of research that makes use of systematic valence coding to address not only *why* but *how* certain SMOs are depicted in authoritative venues and the processes responsible for cross-temporal trends and fluctuations¹. As previously discussed, the works by Amenta and colleagues tracked the trend of newspaper coverage of movements over time (see Amenta 2005; Amenta et.al 2009,2012a), but these studies only record the annual number of mentions without examining articles’ contents to see how movements were characterized. A second contribution of my analysis is access to the political valence of articles, rather than just their annual frequency. The nature of my data and coding approach allow for a systematic analysis of long-term trends in not only the sheer number, but the volume of stories with particular types of political content regarding the labor problem, thus contributing to an understanding of the role of journalism in shaping the labor problem discourse.

This study provides important contributions to the study of social movements and cultural production. Theoretically, besides [1] analyzing the effect of collective contention that labor movements engender on the production of ‘labor problem’ articles and [2] predicting valences of newspaper accounts based on labor unions’ nature and activities, this research also makes use of the history of the *New York Times* as historical context within which labor articles are produced. 1870-1930 was a period during which the *New York Times* underwent significant transitions and reforms; and I will use the

periods that marked the administrative shifts of this news agency to predict ensuing changes in labor articles' valences. By taking into account both the internal changes in the *New York Times* and the external manifestation in labor-related activities, this study makes a theoretical case for integrating both *endogenous* changes in news production organizations and *exogenous* developments of the social movements of interest, as did Isaac (2009) for the labor movement and literary change that yielded the emergence of the labor problem novel. Spawned from the intersection of social movement and media studies, this theory acknowledges changes in news producing practices and changes in the social movements themselves as separate historical processes. The proposed theorization of historical multidimensionality has major implications for researchers who aim to study historical progression of social phenomena through the lens of "public arenas" (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988). A researcher should treat both the phenomenon of interest and the public arena in which the phenomenon is framed as objects of analysis and aim to analyze them in conjunction.

Scholarship on media' depictions of social movements typically rely on qualitative methods with selective sets of articles over a relatively short period of time: 1 year (Koplatadze 2004), 5 years (Claussen 2001) and 20 years (Ashley & Olson 1998). My study makes use of a dataset that covers a long period of time (61 years), coupled with valence coding which allows for a systematic analysis of long-term trends in the volume and politicization of news coverage of the labor movement as part of the mass making of the "labor problem" discourse in America. While previous research primarily asked why labor movements receive media coverage (Amenta et. al 2005, Andrews and

Caren 2010), my data allow me to unpack how the media portray labor movements and how such portrayals fluctuate over time and as a result of labor movement actions.

Historical background and hypotheses

1. Hypothesis derived from the historical context of the labor movement

From the early 1870s until right before the turn of the century, the United States underwent a tremendous industrial transformation. The astounding speed of industrialization and the conquest of inventions and technology that renovated the face of post-Civil War America are evidenced by the expanding metallurgical and textile industries in New England, by the swift emergence of mid-Atlantic cities, by the assembly line in the Mid-West and the widespread expansion of the railroad system all through the country. The history of the great American industrialization was not only tied to iron, steel and oil; it would be incomplete without the discussion of American labor organization. In order to keep up with the unquenchable demand, the nation needed to mobilize its substantial labor reserve, and labor forces – skilled and unskilled – were swept along on the rising tide of expansion. Confronted with multifaceted challenges from increasing division of labor caused by machinery, mass immigration, dwindling self-dependency and social status, it became increasingly clear that, in light of these new conditions, labor had to meet the standards of nationwide industry by itself organizing on a nationwide level (Dulles & Dubofsky 1984). And make important steps toward national organizations labor did. Unions also “grew in size and diversity, became nationally oriented, formed around modern notions of class rooted in wage labor, exhibited increasingly pronounced boundaries between workers and employers” (Isaac 2009:944).

Following the formation of the first large-scale labor organization, the National Labor Union in 1866, several notable unions were established including the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor. The Gilded Age was also a period during which “workers fought some of the most violent industrial conflicts in American history, developed the trade-union structures that came to dominate the subsequent evolution of the labor movement, engaged in a fratricidal struggle” (Dubofsky1985:33). A series of major strikes broke out during this period that Dulles and Dubofsky (1984:109) called “the Great Upheaval,” including the 1874 riot in Tompkins Square, the 1877 uprising of railroad workers and the Pullman Strike later on in 1894.

Following the Gilded Age, the Progressive Era is a period that witnessed further growth of industrialization and urbanization. The rising popularity of Taylorism coupled with the waves of immigration created an undesirable platform for labor. Workers suffered from continuing labor surplus and poor working conditions (e.g., sweatshop working conditions, child labor). The gains of labor organizations were “uneven and somewhat equivocal” (Dulles & Dubofsky 1984:176). Labor unions in this period adopted drastically different political stances. While the moderates (American Federation of Labor led by Samuel Gompers) and socialists (Debs’ Socialist Party of America) believed that changes in working conditions would come through collective bargaining and voting, the radicals of the Industrial Workers of the World saw class conflict as inevitable, requiring a thorough elimination of capitalism. This era witnessed the manifestation of several enormous strikes: the 1902 Anthracite strike, the 1912 Lawrence Textile strike, the 1919 “First Red Scare” and the 1922 Railroad strike, although the

prosperous Roaring Twenties turned out to be a low point for labor movement (Sloane&Witney 1977, Zieger 1986).

Overall, the labor movement underwent a drastic fluctuating cycle of growth and decline. I hypothesize that the ebb and flow of the movement stimulated the production of news articles dealing with “labor question” or “labor problem” in the NYT. Based on this general historical climate and Isaac’s (2009) central finding that the production of labor problem novels was, in part, a function of the labor movements’ contentious actions, I expect the following:

Hypothesis 1a. The variety of labor movement activities provided a platform for the emergence of labor problem as a new part of political discourse. The labor movement would thus be an important driver of the volume of articles produced on the labor problem. Specifically, I expect the combination (interaction) of annual changes in levels of strikes and unionization to have a positive effect on the volume of labor problem article production.

The existing literature suggests that protest activities typically receive high levels of coverage. In their discussion of selection bias, Earl et.al (2004) offered their explanation: Because several of strikes’ characteristics (notorious, uncommon, large, violent, dramatic, and/or rare) align with “newsworthiness” perceived by most news agencies, strikes would likely tend to generate a disproportionate amount of attention. The quality of coverage of disruptive collective actions is also theorized to be generally poor, with the SMOs generally covered in a negative light. The media has a high propensity to distort and denigrate SMOs and the causes they champion, to focus their attention on the disruptive or violent aspect of a strike (Gitlin 1980s, Smith et.al 2001, Sobieraj 2010, see Amenta et.al 2012b) rather than to objectively communicate SMOs’

messages. Based on the insights of these studies, I hypothesize that strikes- more associated disruption and sometimes violence- have a larger effect on the volume of negative stories than does unionization. Following a similar logic, I also expect more articles with negative valence would be published in years that witnessed major strikes. In other words, I expect that years in which major strikes occurred would generate a larger number of articles with negative valence. Isaac et. al (2008: Table III) lists all general strikes that took place during my period of interest and I rely on these scholars' listing of these extraordinary events to construct such variable.

Hypothesis 1b: Strikes will have a stronger impact on the production of negative valence articles than unionization.

Hypothesis 1c: Time periods in which major strikes occurred will lead to a higher level of negative valence coverage.

2. Hypotheses derived from the history of journalism in general and of the *New York Times* in particular.

a. On the *Times*' ownership change in 1896 and the rise of objective informational reporting.

During the period 1870 to 1930, the *New York Times* underwent significant internal policy changes. It went from being a Republican news outlet to a much more independent newspaper. The *Times* was founded in 1851 by Henry Jarvis Raymond –who later would become the second chairman of the Republican National Committee – and George Jones, a wealthy Albany banker. During the first few years from its initial publication, the *Times* started off as “effectively a party paper, in favor of business,

commerce growth” (Jacobs 2000:33). In the 1870s, the *Times* advertised itself as “the only Republican morning paper in New York” (Metrick-Chen 2011:126). However, the following years witnessed the sharp departure of the *Times* from the Republican Party to which it had customarily pledged its loyal support. In 1876, journalist historians commented that the *Times* displayed some “shades of independence unpleasing to true zealots of the party” (Davis 1921:130). In 1896, a transformative event took place that had more enduring effects on reconditioning the identity of the news agency: the then-beleaguered *Times* was acquired by Adolph Ochs, founder of the Southern Associated Press and publisher of the *Chattanooga Times*. Ochs advocated the idea of a purely informational, less sensational model of news reporting. After Ochs’ take-over, the *New York Times*’ self-advertising campaign emphasized “decency” as the prevailing virtue, rather than its political affiliation. This particular style of “objective” journalism reflects larger trends in the American public sphere: it is also during this period that observational, evidence-based science began to rise to popularity and that realism started to establish a solid foothold in various mediums of artistic expressions (see Schudson 1978 on journalism; Isaac 2009 on literature). Ochs coined the slogan “All the News that’s Fit to Print”, which remains the *Times*’ motto until today. Ochs wanted the *Times* to be a newspaper of records, to publish swift and accurate reports in high volume. In order to distance itself from their dramatic, “yellow journalism” competitors, the *New York Journal* and *New York World*, the *Times* chose to direct its focus on professionally documenting major events rather than on sensational stories. The progression of the *Times* since the ownership change of 1896 should thus be differentiated from its earlier history. The earlier *Times*, under Raymond and Jones, was a carrier of political opinions,

characterized by unsophisticated news gathering and presenting techniques. The paper was born again in 1896 and took on a completely different path: it valued the ideal of unbiased, fair-minded news, while debates of political ideologies assumed a secondary position (Davis 1921, Walker 1983). The contributions of Ochs in reshaping the *Times*' ideological trajectory is widely acknowledged: he is considered "the creator of objective journalism who pledged to report the news "without fear or favor" [...] Over time, he became a monument of journalistic probity, more a bronze figure than a man." (Tift 1999:1)

The slogan 'All the News that's Fit to Print' is also reflective of the drastic change in journalism at the turn of the century: the sharp decline in newspapers' partisanship and the rise of objective informational reporting. Newspapers during this period developed into profitable business and thus became less dependent on party sponsorship. Increasingly, newspapers underwent the transformation from partisan to commercial units (Baldasty 1992). The rise of penny press and sensational reporting put pressures on journalists to produce as much news as they could in relatively short periods of time. The focus now shifted to accurate and swift reporting, rather than adopting particular political slants. Moreover, as antiparty reforms relaxed the hold of parties on the press, reporters came to embrace a culture of party independence (Schudson 2012). The rise of commercial- professionalism among journalists resulted in adopting distanced and detached viewpoints in writing their columns. By the end of the nineteenth century, the *New York Times* even considered the elimination of all editorial columns, but ultimately decided to keep them (Jacobs 2000). On an important side note, the year of 1896 doesn't only represent the important changes in the management of the *Times*; it is

also widely considered to be the beginning of a new era in American politics (Williams 2010). The 1896 presidential campaign is viewed as a realignment election, which marks the shift from the Third Party System to the Fourth Party System. This important shift in the political arena can affect cultural outputs, given the tight relationship between the political sphere and media networks.

Based on this institutional history, I expect that the change in ownership in 1896 and the focus on objective informational reporting will result in the *Times* publishing more articles in general and more articles that address the labor movement in a neutral manner after 1896.

Hypothesis 2a: The New York Times published more articles with the language of “labor problem” or “labor question” after 1896. i.e The volume in stories significantly increased after this point.

Hypothesis 2b. The New York Times published more articles with neutral valences after the ownership change in 1896. . i.e The volume in stories with neutral valence significantly increased after this point.

b. On the *Times*’ price drop to 1 penny in 1898.

Another source of endogenous policy change in the *Times*’ news distribution process that could potentially affect the production of labor problem article is the change of price in 1898. Two years after assuming control of the *Times*, Ochs abruptly decided to lower the newspaper’s price from three cents to a penny a copy. With this change of price, the *Times* joined the New York penny press market traditionally reserved for its competitors, Joseph Pulitzer’s *World* and William Randolph Hearst’s *Journal*. Despite

sharing the same price with its yellow journal counterparts, the *Times* insisted on maintaining its quality as an authoritative venue for objective reporting. The editorial announcement of the change in price on October 19 reassured readers of the *Times*' commitment to delivering fast-paced, high-quality news: "It is the price of the paper, not its character, that is changed. In appealing to a larger audience, the *Times* by no means proposes to offend the taste or forfeit the confidence of the audience it now has [...] We wish to make it with all possible emphasis, so that no reader of The Times [sic] in the past need scan the columns of this morning's issue, or of any subsequent issue, with the least misgiving or apprehension lest the reduction in price may be concurrent with a lowering in tone and quality." (Davis 1921:233). Although historians still hold disagreements over the original motives of Ochs' decision (see Campbell 2006), its immediate effect on boosting the *Times*' circulation is undeniable. Within a year, the newspaper's circulation tripled (from 25000 to 75000), and continued to proliferate consistently for decades. The rising visibility and popularity of the *Times* also helped bring in additional income from advertisement. The number of agate lines of advertising rose from 2.4 million in 1889 to 4 million in 1900 and 7.6 million in 1910 and more than 23 million in 1920 (Schudson 1978).

Along with the heightened circulation, the price change of 1898 helped the *Times* to radically enlarge its readership base. The decreased price made the newspaper with high quality more affordable for many more readers with low or moderate incomes. Moreover, the innovations in methods of distribution that came along with the *Times*' price change – the cash system of distribution or street sales, for instance – contribute to making the paper more accessible for the working class. Journalism historians shared this

insight: O'Brien (1928:19) stated that the new method of distribution associated with the price change "wrought the greatest change in journalism that had ever been made, for they brought the paper to the people"; Lee (1923:201), in his assessment of the penny press, claimed that "for the first time journalism was brought directly to the people" (for a discussion of these arguments, see Nerone 1987). Schudson (1978:57) related the rise of penny press to a more "democratic market society", and stated that the middle-class penny papers were "spokesmen for egalitarian ideals in politics" and were willing to emphasize news and cater to a large audience. I expect that the *Times* will publish more articles on the labor problem because it is a matter of tremendous concern to the paper's middle class and potentially working-class readerships.

Hypothesis 2c: The New York Times policy change to a lower price in 1898 contributed to a larger volume of articles covering the issues of "labor problem" or "labor question".

Data and Methods

The use of newspaper articles as primary sources has several advantages, as scholarship in collective action has developed a rich tradition of using data extracted from newspaper reports. Earl et.al (2004) outlined the numerous opportunities that newspaper-based event data provide for scholars, both theoretically and methodologically: it allows for examination of various kinds of collective action, facilitates both comparative and historical research, and makes quantitative research on social movements more viable. This project departs from that tradition by using newspaper-based data to examine the changing patterns of the labor movement's

depiction over time, a task left undone by students of labor movement and media studies alike. My main rationale for focusing on the press is that it was (and still is) an important cultural venue for circulating ideas on important trends, events, social problems and issues in modern societies (Schudson 2002). Specifically, I use the NYT as my primary empirical base. Located in the largest American city, the *Times* was a prominent player in the journalistic scene with rising influence and wide readership.

The Dependent Variables:

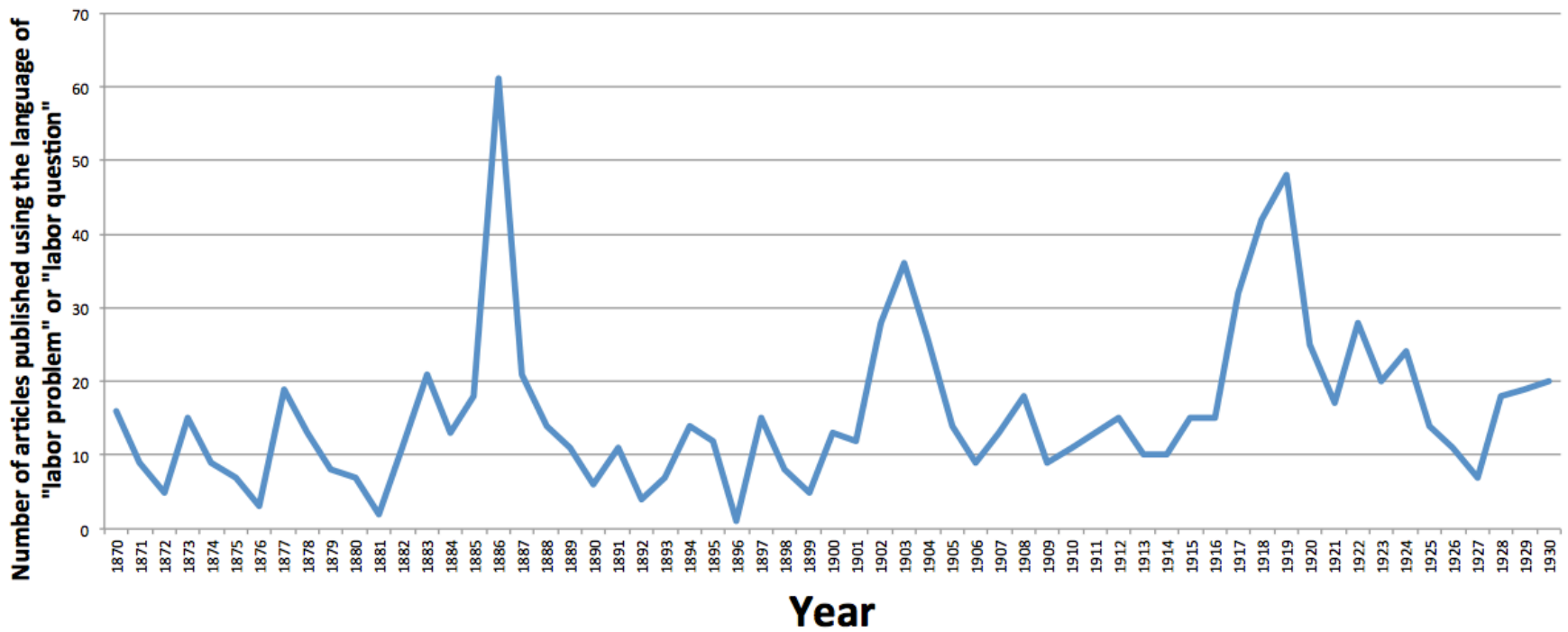
The dependent variables are constructed using the *New York Times* historical database provided by ProQuest. Isaac and Griffin (1989:874) forcefully argued that failing to offer concrete rationale for choosing the starting and ending date can lead to ahistoricism in analyses of time-series data, which can make “history virtually unrecognizable and the resulting theoretical interpretations of it seriously misleading”. My 61-year period was chosen with a clear theoretical-historical rationale. The choice of 1870 as a starting point is not arbitrary, as “labor problem” or “labor question” had not emerged until the eve of the Gilded Age. Before 1870, “labor problem” and “labor question” were very scarcely covered by the *New York Times*. Isaac (2009:945) found that these terms appeared in only 5 articles prior to 1870, all of which referred to slave labor. These 61 years saw the emergence of the labor problem as one of the most important discourses in American social life during the Gilded Age and its sharp decline due to economic prosperity, deficiency in leadership and rising anti-union sentiments in the decade prior to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The keywords “labor problem” or “labor question” were employed to search for all articles that had some treatment of the labor problem from 1870 to 1930. The use of the language of “labor problem” and “labor question” emerged during the Gilded Age and remained popular throughout the period. Kaufman (2008) noted that “the term “Labor Problem” (or “Labor Question”) entered popular discourse in the 1870s in the United States” (2008: 58). Kaufman (2012) discussed how the terms were hugely common among economic-history textbooks, but eventually faded from the literature as a new generation of scholars replaced the old one. He argued that early industrializations brought about rising number of strikes, increasing number of trades-unions and mounting conflict between capital and labor. He stated: “These individual problems became known collectively as “The Labor Problem” (p.66). The language of the “Labor Question” was also salient as a common term describing issues pertaining to labor organizations. The term is commonly capitalized in public discourses. An example from the preface of a book titled “Striking for life: Labor’s Side of the Labor Question” published in 1894 by John Swinton, a high-profile journalist who worked for the *Times*, can illustrate this point: “ The Labor Question is in the front. It is of supreme importance to all men, and to all women. It is related directly to the life of the whole people, to their natural and essential rights, to the welfare of the community, to popular freedom and to the public peace. The “War for the Union,” during the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln, grew out of the Labor Question...” (Swinton 1970[1894]: 1). Lichtenstein (2002), after examining the position of the “Labor Question” in the history of American public discourse, argued that democracy has been at its height in American history when the labor question played a central role the nation’s socio-political debates (see Krupat 2004). In sum, the terms

“labor problem” and “labor question” arose as salient linguistic tools that scholars and journalists frequently used in labor discourses. This paper is interested in the *Times*’ deployment of the terms in discussing problems relating to labor organizations. The dependent variables are thus measured as the count of newspaper articles that included at least some treatment, or using the language of the “labor problem” or the “labor question.” Figure 1 shows the trajectory of the production of such articles.

Figure 1 shows three “peak” years during which the number of labor article produced spiked - 1886, 1903, and 1919. A number of socio-political historical events might account for such noticeable spike in the trend of labor article production. The year of 1886 was an eventful one in labor history; it saw the establishment of the American Federation of Labor under the leadership of Samuel Gompers, as well as the tragic events that transpired in the Haymarket affair in Chicago. Following the massive coal strike of 1902, 1903 witnessed multiple large strike waves from Cripple Creek, Colorado to Oxnard, California as well as the Children’s Crusade organized by Mother Jones. Additionally, the January 1903 issue of the McClure magazine also took the world of journalism by storm and was widely credited to be the issue that sparked the muckraking movement in America (Weinberg and Weinberg 1964). The year of 1919 saw America transitioning to the post World War I period. A series of strikes during this period, including the Steel Strike in Chicago, General Strike in Seattle and Police Strike in Boston fed the social anxieties of Socialism and Bolshevism. The defeat of these labor unrest dealt major blows to the unions and contributed significantly to the decline of the labor movement as a whole in the 1920s.

Figure 1: The *New York Times*' Production of Labor Problem Stories from 1870-1930



After recording the yearly frequency of such articles, I employed content analysis methods to assess whether the labor problem story was written in a positive, negative, or relatively neutral manner. Articles in which the author clearly vilified the labor unions, workers or strikers were assigned a negative valence. These articles typically make the arguments that labor unions have the tendency to impair workers' productive power, to manufacture dissatisfaction among workers and to instigate violence. In these articles, strikes are generally criticized for their outcomes (violence, work stoppage, decreased productivity). Workers and unionizers are described as stubborn or aggressive. There are also a number of articles that praised the cause of labor. These articles consider workers to be earnest, hard working and spirited. They made the case that laborers should be entitled to wealth, since they are the ones actually generating it. This stream of articles also focused on describing poor working conditions and empathetically asked employers to consider employees as partners rather than machines or commodities. The articles that conform to these themes are coded with a positive valence. Additionally, the coding process also yielded articles with neutral valence. Articles of this kind generally called for arbitration between labor and employers, and argued that negotiation is a proper solution for the labor question. Other articles with neutral valence merely objectively report labor meetings or lectures on the labor question, without voicing particular judgments about the content of the event. I provide examples of how articles were coded in Appendix A.

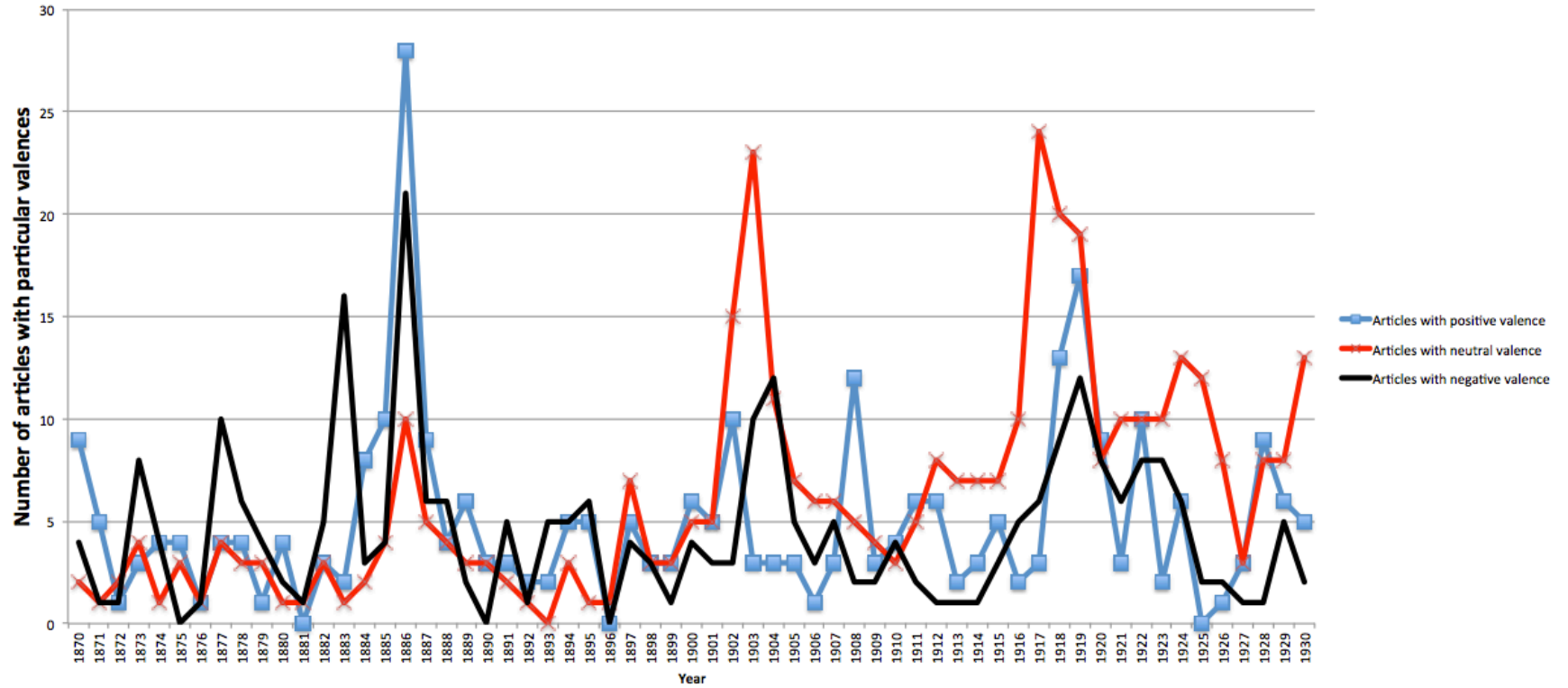
There are thus three dependent variables employed in this research: total number of articles, number of articles with neutral valence, and number of articles with negative valence⁴. A total of 963 articles were coded for valence. The longitudinal nature of the

dataset allows for tracking and close examination of the trajectory of such valences. Such an examination allows me to address how the portrayal of the labor movement in the press varied as the movement itself underwent substantial changes with internal and external conditions. Figure 2 shows the distributions of the articles with particular valences from 1870 to 1930.

Key independent variables

The first set of independent variables is associated with the first set of hypotheses. Δ Strike refers to the annual change in number of strikes over all issues. Δ Union Density captures the annual change in the percent of nonagricultural labor force unionized. Major strike is a dummy-coded variable that differentiates years that had general strikes versus the years that did not. The years coded as 1 are 1877, 1886, 1892, 1894, 1910, 1917, 1918, 1919; other years were coded as 0. The independent variables pertaining to the second set of hypotheses on competition are derived from archival search of the *New York Times*. The independent variables associated with the last set of hypotheses, the ownership/policy change and the price/policy change variables, are also dummy-coded. Since the ownership change took place in 1896, the years from 1870-1895 are coded as 0, and the years after were coded as 1. The logic for the price/policy change is similar with the years from 1870-1897 being coded 0 and others as 1.

Figure 2: Number of Labor Problem Articles with Positive, Neutral and Negative Valence, 1870-1930



Control Variables

Building from the insights of Amenta et.al (2009,2012a, 2012b) and Isaac (2009), I include a number of macro social, political, economic control variables with the intent of minimizing inferences claimed from spurious relationships. These controls include: the party of the President, the percentage of Republicans in both houses of Congress, average wage, level of unemployment, industrialization, urbanization and immigration. Details on definition, operationalization and data sources for all independent and control variables are presented in Appendix B.

Model Estimation

The effect of independent variables on the outcome variables is assessed by maximum likelihood estimations of a series of negative binomial regression models. The discrete and non-negative nature of the dependent variables drives the selection of negative binomial as the primary estimator (Cameron and Trivedi 2005). The negative binomial estimator is most appropriate for the purpose of my analysis because it assumes the outcome is a discrete count and tolerates over-dispersion, or conditional variance greater than the conditional mean (Fogarty and Monogan 2012), a condition likely with such count data.

The negative binomial probability distribution of the count of labor articles is expressed in the following mass function (see Hubbard 2005).

$$P(Y = y | X_1, \dots, X_i, k) = \frac{\Gamma(y+k)}{\Gamma(k)\Gamma(y+1)} \left(\frac{k}{k+\mu} \right)^k \left(\frac{\mu}{k+\mu} \right)^y \quad (1)$$

where Γ is the gamma function, the mean of the negative binomial distribution is μ , the variance is $\mu + \mu^2/k$, where k is the dispersion parameter. Using the link function $g(\mu) = \log(\mu)$, the systematic component can be expressed as followed:

$$g(\mu) = \log(\mu) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_i X_i \quad (2)$$

thus

$$\mu = e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_i X_i} = e^{x'\beta} \quad (3)$$

Assuming that $\mu = e^{x'\beta}$ where β is a vector of covariates with intercept of β_0 , the coefficients for regression of $\beta_1 \dots \beta_n$. Taking the exponential of $x'\beta$ guarantees that μ is non-negative (Mohd and Naing 2012).

I monitored issues pertaining to non-stationarity of the dependent variable series by performing the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test on each. The null hypotheses of dependent variables having unit roots are all rejected at 95% confidence level. I proceed with the knowledge that my dependent variables are stationary, meaning that their means, variances and autocorrelation structures are consistent over time.

The Augmented Dickey-Fuller test indicates the presence of unit roots in my major independent variables, annual number of strike and annual level of unionization. I adopted the approach of first-differencing these variables to remedy the issues of non-stationarity. Such transformation is ideal for the following reasons [1]: it removes latent heterogeneity (the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test confirms that the variables capturing annual changes in number of strike and annual change in levels of unionization no longer

have unit roots), [2] it does not complicate the interpretation of the coefficients and [3] it is consistent with my original hypothesis, which expects the *changes* in labor activities to be an important determinant of the cultural production of labor problem articles in the *Times*.

Results

1. Evaluating the first set of hypotheses:

Collective contention of the labor movement and its effect on the production of labor problem news articles.

The models presented in Table 1 show empirical evidence that can be used to evaluate the effect of the variables pertaining to labor movement activities on the production of all news articles that used the language of “labor problem” or “labor question”. No lag effect was introduced in the model, because the data is annual and newspaper articles typically react quickly to events that transpired. Table 1 shows that while the annual change in number of strikes is a weak predictor, change in levels of unionization consistently shows positive and significant effect on the dependent variable. The evidence showed in this table also supports the first hypothesis: The interaction term of annual change in number of strikes and level of unionization is a strong predictor: it shows a positive and statistically significant effect, in a constant and stable manner, on the production of news articles dealing with labor problems. This finding shows confirmatory empirical evidence of the insight that collective contention surrounding the labor movement partially shaped the production of news articles dealing with labor issues during this period.

Table 1. Negative Binomial Regression Estimates for the Production of Total Number of Labor Articles

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Independent and Control Variables	(se)	(se)	(se)	(se)
<u>Exogenous changes</u>				
Δ Strike	-0.00021 (0.00010)	-0.00018 (0.00010)	-0.00017 (0.00010)	-0.00017 (0.00010)
Δ Union Density	0.1543 *** (0.0412)	0.1407 *** (0.0406)	0.1199 *** (0.0399)	0.1177 *** (0.0395)
Δ Strike*Δ Union Density		0.00014 *** (0.00010)	0.00016 *** (0.00010)	0.00015 ** (0.00010)
<u>Endogenous change</u>				
Ownership Change			0.5442 * (0.2516)	
Price Change				0.5365 * (0.2250)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
President's Party Affiliation		0.348 † (0.188)	0.380 * (0.182)	0.308 † (0.180)
Percent Republican		0.697 (.000)	-0.051 (.701)	0.078 (.673)
Immigration		5.75E-07 (575.0E-9)	-4.40E-07 (554.0E-9)	-4.87E-07 (545.0E-9)
Urbanization		0.007 (0.006)	0.008 (0.005)	0.008 (0.005)
Industrialization		-0.042 (0.075)	-0.189 * (0.098)	-0.174 † (0.089)
Wage		0.001 * (.0004)	0.001 * (.0004)	0.001 ** (.0004)
Unemployment		-0.001 (0.024)	0.017 (0.024)	-0.016 (0.023)
Constant	2.696 *** (0.073)	1.157 † (0.662)	1.387 * (0.635)	1.424 * (0.628)
R ²	0.321	0.552	0.633	0.641
Adjusted R ²	0.298	0.460	0.549	0.559
Log Likelihood	-208.112	-196.687	-194.482	-194.040
LR Statistic	228.172 ***	251.021 ***	255.432 ***	256.316 ***

Note: Unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses

† p < 0.1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

The effect of strikes on the number of articles with negative valence

Hypothesis 1b anticipates that strikes will be a strong predictor of the number of articles that denigrated the labor movement, and the effect of this predictor will be higher than that of unionization. This hypothesis is not supported by the data. The models in table 2 show that on one hand, the annual change in number of strike had no statistically significant impact on the production of articles with negative valence and on the other hand, change in level of unionization positively influences the number of such articles. The effect of the interaction term between these two variables is inconsistent⁵: it showed marginal significance in model (2), but not in model (4). This counter-intuitive finding can be explained based on the ways with which data on annual number of strikes was collected. The events defined as ‘strikes’ included in these data have varying levels of intensity and are located in very different locales. The strike variable takes into account, for instances, minor strikes or work stoppages in the West Coast - labor activities that are unlikely to be covered by the *Times*.

The effect of time periods with major strikes on the number of articles with negative valence

The variable ‘major strike’ addresses this problem from another angle. It offers a standardization of strike intensity: only major general strikes, more specifically the years during which they took place, are recorded. Model (3) and (4) of Table (2) exhibits a significant and positive effect for this variable on the number of articles with negative valence. These effects confirm hypothesis 1c: the *Times* produced more articles that trivialized or belittled the labor unions during years of general strikes.

Table 2. Negative Binomial Regression Estimates for the Production of Number of Labor Articles with Negative Valence

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Independent and Control Variable:	<i>b</i> (se)	<i>b</i> (se)	<i>b</i> (se)	<i>b</i> (se)
Δ Strike	-0.00021 (0.00018)	-0.00025 (0.00018)	-0.00026 (0.00017)	-0.00030 † 0.000171
Δ Union Density	0.14895 ** (0.05448)	0.12677 * (0.05870)	0.11099 † (0.05681)	0.09176 † (0.05714)
Δ Strike*Δ Union Density		0.00015 † (0.00008)		0.00013 (0.00008)
Major Strike			0.72012 ** (0.27664)	0.65724 * (0.26870)
Control Variables				
President's Party Affiliation		0.40249 (0.28912)	0.25362 (0.25901)	0.43328 (0.27643)
Percent Republican		0.67187 (1.03176)	1.40606 (1.01832)	1.13588 (0.99961)
Immigration		2.35E-07 (8.69E-07)	6.82E-07 (8.76E-07)	7.58E-07 (8.51E-07)
Urbanization		0.00791 (0.00842)	0.01432 † (0.00816)	0.01162 (0.00805)
Industrialization		-0.16126 (0.11661)	-0.16099 (0.11168)	-0.11085 (0.11198)
Wage		0.00067 (0.00066)	0.00043 (0.00066)	0.00021 (0.00065)
Unemployment		-0.03533 (0.03848)	-0.03250 (0.03775)	-0.03967 (0.03683)
Constant	1.45975 *** (0.09999)	0.38546 (1.00845)	-0.22962 (0.99338)	-0.02290 (0.96866)
R ²	0.209	0.419	0.429	0.484
Adjusted R ²	0.181	0.300	0.312	0.365
Log Likelihood	-148.741	-143.218	-141.737	-140.401
LR Statistic	63.607 ***	74.653 ***	77.616 ***	80.288 ***

Note: Unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses

† p < 0.1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

2. Evaluating the second set of hypotheses: Endogenous change within the organizational norms of the Times and the effects it exerts on the production of labor problem news articles.

Model (3) and model (4) of Table 1 provide the evaluation of hypothesis 2a and 2c, the theoretical expectations that the *Times*' outputs will be affected by endogenous changes in its organization. The coefficients corresponding to the ownership change and price change variables are both positive and statistically significant. Such regression estimates demonstrate that 1896 and 1898, the years that the paper saw fundamental changes in managerial personnel and price policies, really operated as switch-points after which the *Times*' production of labor articles really heightened. These estimates offer support for hypotheses 2a and 2c

Table 3. Negative Binomial Regression Estimates for the Production of Number of Labor Articles with Neutral Valence

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Independent and Control Variables	(se)	(se)	(se)	(se)
<u>Exogenous changes</u>				
Δ Strike	-0.00012 (0.00017)	-0.00006 (0.00015)	0.00012 (0.00012)	0.00094 (0.00068)
Δ Union Density	0.12841 * (0.06454)	0.15462 ** (0.05561)	0.10486 * (0.04630)	-0.09221 (0.10825)
Δ Strike*Δ Union Density		0.00009 (0.00007)	0.00015 * (0.00006)	0.00021 ** (0.00007)
<u>Endogenous change</u>				
Ownership Change			1.61676 *** (0.31824)	1.65848 *** (0.31868)
<u>Interaction</u>				
Ownership * Δ Strike				-0.00099 (0.00070)
Ownership * Δ Union Density				0.26021 * (0.13121)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
President's Party Affiliation		0.23439 (0.26203)	0.41180 † (0.23466)	0.43325 † (0.23511)
Percent Republican		0.77015 (0.96116)	-0.73256 (0.87456)	-0.95795 (0.87197)
Immigration		-2.97E-07 -7.27E-07	5.11E-08 -5.84E-07	2.94E-07 -5.84E-07
Urbanization		-0.00103 (0.00847)	0.00274 (0.00767)	0.00080 (0.00768)
Industrialization		0.19961 * (0.09883)	-0.23921 * (0.11633)	-0.24124 * (0.11453)
Wage		0.00056 * (0.00054)	0.00101 * (0.00044)	0.00096 * (0.00043)
Unemployment		0.00796 (0.03063)	-0.03215 (0.02567)	-0.03485 (0.02536)
Constant	1.80884 *** (0.10237)	0.14700 (0.90200)	0.61896 (0.76056)	0.83004 (0.76115)
R ²	0.079	0.210	0.584	0.603
Adjusted R ²	0.047	0.049	0.489	0.491
Log Likelihood	-168.908	-151.904	-141.191	-139.271
LR Statistic	108.367 ***	142.376 ***	163.802 ***	167.642 ***

Note: Unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses

† p < 0.1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

The variable reflecting the 1896 change in ownership behaves similarly in model (3) and (4) of Table 3, when the dependent variable is the number of articles depicting the labor problem in a neutral manner. The only endogenous change considered in this set of models is the ownership change; the decrease in price of 1898 was not part of the

evaluation since I did not hypothesize any potential relationship between the price change and number of articles with particular valence. The *Times* produced more articles with neutral valence after 1896 when Ochs assumed control of the company and worked to produce unbiased news rather than to steer the paper's ideologies along party lines. The evidence supports hypothesis 2b. In a word, the endogenous change within the organization of the newspaper indeed mattered in determining its output, as hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c all expected. Also noticeable in Table 3 are the inconsistent effects of labor movement action variables. While the annual change in number of strikes shows no effect at all, the change in level of unionization and its interaction term with change in strikes exert unstable influence on the number of neutrally toned articles. Table 3 also demonstrates the influences of some control variables. While the level of industrialization has a dampening effect on producing articles with neutral valence, the average annual real earnings for nonfarm workers positively impact the dependent variable.

Table 4: Summary of the evaluation of hypotheses

Hypotheses	Outcome		Relevant Table
	Accepted	Rejected	
First set: Labor Movement Activities and Cultural Production			
<i>Hypothesis 1a: The variety labor movement activities provided a platform for the emergence of labor problem as a new part of political discourse. The labor movement would thus be an important driver of the volume of articles produced on the labor problem. Specifically, I expect the combination (interaction) of annual changes in levels of strikes and unionization to have a positive effect on the volume of labor problem article production.</i>	X		Table 1
<i>Hypothesis 1b: Strikes will have a stronger impact on the production of negative valence articles than unionization.</i>		X	Table 2
<i>Hypothesis 1c: Time periods in which major strikes occurred would lead to a higher level of negative valence coverage.</i>	X		Table 2
Second set: History of Journalism and the Times			
<i>Hypothesis 2a: The New York Times published more articles with the language of “labor problem” or “labor question” after 1896. i.e The volume in stories significantly increased after this point.</i>	X		Table 1
<i>Hypothesis 2b: The New York Times published more articles with neutral valences after the ownership change in 1896. . i.e The volume in stories with neutral valence significantly increased after this point.</i>	X		Table 3
<i>Hypothesis 2c: The New York Times policy change to a lower price in 1898 contributed to a larger volume of articles covering the issues of “labor problem” or “labor question”.</i>	X		Table 1

Table 4 displays a summary of the hypotheses evaluation process. I hypothesized that the endogenous changes within organizational practices of the *Times*, along with general changes taking place in American journalism during the process, influenced the ways in which stories of the labor movement were produced. I interpret the summary presented in Table 4 as supportive of this perspective. Statistical evidence also backs the claims that labor stories are reflective of contentions surrounding the activities of the labor movement. In sum, the outcomes of the estimation process support 5 out of 7 proposed hypotheses.

Conclusions and Implications

This paper makes a theoretical argument that views the production of labor problem stories as a function of both the changing levels of contentiousness generated by the labor movement and the renovation in the *Times*' identity as a news agency embedded

within larger transformations in journalistic practices during the American Gilded Age. The empirical estimates presented in this paper showed that both (exogenous and endogenous) sources of change are critical predictors of not only volume, but also content of the New York Times' articles dealing with labor issues. As for the effect of external changes, the interaction between factors pertaining to the collective actions of the labor movements –change in levels of strikes and unionizations- positively predict the total output of articles using the language of 'labor problem' and 'labor issues'. The Times was also very critical of the labor movement during years of general strikes: more articles with negative valence are produced in such years as compared to years without major strike activities. My analysis showed how the Times' internal changes -important shifts in management and organizational practices - influenced the quantity and quality of labor articles. The newspaper published more articles in general and more articles with neutral valence in particular after the switch-point of 1896, when Adolph Ochs – a champion of objective informational reporting and fast-paced news producing – appropriated the leadership role. The news agency also published more articles on labor after the price drop to one penny in 1896, as an effort to boost circulation and enlarge its influence among the laboring mass.

Besides the five confirmed hypotheses, two other propositions were not supported by the data. Compared to the annual change in levels of unionization, the yearly variation in number of strikes was not a stronger predictor of the production of articles with negative valence (although change in number of strikes significantly dampened the volume of articles with positive valence).

These findings proved the fruitfulness of combining insights from production of culture scholars (Kaufman 2004, Peterson and Anand 2004) and from journalism scholars (Danzger 1975 and Downs 1972) to the study of media portrayals of social movements, a task left largely undone by sociologists working on this topic (see Amenta et.al 2005, 2009, 2012, Andrews and Caren 2010). The creation of media accounts for social movements cannot be adequately explained only by analyzing movement-induced contentions. The finding that endogenous changes in ideologies and practices of news agencies also profoundly shaped the emergence, the trajectory and the quality of cultural outputs urges scholars with an interest in studying media accounts of certain social phenomena to take these internal changes seriously.

Additionally, previous studies (see Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993) on the topic have only been able to show how social movements' efforts to organize, mobilize resources and align their frames are rewarded by media appearances while overlooking the nature and quality of those media accounts. This paper contributes to filling that vital gap. Adding three important valence-specific dependent variables, this paper assessed the effects of extra-institutional and intra-institutional factors while controlling for other covariates on not only the sheer volume of articles but also their contents.

The theory presented in this paper urges scholars to give agency to media organizations rather than treating them as passive indicators of social contexts. This theorization, despite being empirically evaluated using a historical case, is very much relevant in modern social life, especially in light of the relatively recent events that transpired in the world of media corporations. How will the *New Republic* – the almost-a-hundred-year-old and underperforming magazine - transform itself after being acquired

by the Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes last year? To what extent did the *Wall Street Journal* make a conservative turn after the 2007 Rupert Murdoch's acquisition? Will we see major identity changes from the *Washington Post* after it was sold to Jeffrey Bezos, the technologist and founder of Amazon.com in 2013? The theory proposed gives important insights on how this dynamic will play out in the years to come.

This study opens various avenues for future research. The theoretical vision of incorporating changes in social movement organizations' activities with changes in media infrastructure provides solid foundation on which further studies can build. Future research -featuring multiple media outlets and agencies- can confirm or challenge this paper's insights. Using only the *New York Times* as the primary news production case, it cannot offer comparative insights, a limitation that should be addressed in the future. It would be intriguing to analyze how the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* or the *Washington Post*, for instances, react differently to the same changes in the labor movement's actions. The effect of the locale should be exciting to investigate as well: compared to the *Times*, the *Tribune* would most likely report more extensively on the major strikes that took place in Chicago (the Haymarket Affair in 1886 for example). The question of how the proximity of the events interacts with the relative position of the newspaper within the journalistic sphere to effect cultural output is yet to be thoroughly addressed by scholars. Additionally, the potential for alternative media venues to be engaged in comparative studies is immense, with television, radio, novels, films and weblogs being interesting candidates. Moreover, the bulk of this paper attempted to examine how collective contentions surrounding the labor movement affected their cultural production; but it did not address the flipside of the equation. How do mass

cultural discourses about a social movement, collectively synthesized from various media venues, affect its progression or outcome? That is an important question that can inspire social movement and media scholars alike.

Notes:

1: Rohlinger (2001, 2002) analyzed the ways in which social movement organizations deploy organizational tactics to gain coverage and manage media coverage using qualitative methods. While analyzing how media covered social movements, her studies differ radically from this research. The labor movement's strategies to gain coverage and its response to how they were covered are not among the concerns of this paper.

2: Amenta et. al (2012b) did include a measure of editorial slant as a robustness check. This variable was based on the coding of 50% of articles, and did not play a central role in their analysis.

3: But see Kimeldorf (1999) for commonalities shared by both the AFL and the IWW.

4: The number of articles with positive isn't considered a dependent variable, since I did not make any prediction on the factors giving rise to such articles

5: It is intriguing to note, however, that annual change in number of strikes consistently yields a dampening effect on the production of news with positive valence. The coefficient is -0.00029 with the standard error of 0.00014, statistically significant at the 0.05 level. (Table not shown since I did not make any predictions about articles with positive valence)

Appendix A: Examples of Articles with Various Political Valences

The following article was coded to have negative valence, since the journalist used terms such as “stubbornly”, “aggressive attitude” to describe workers.

STRIKES ON THE ERIE ROAD. SWITCHMEN DEMANDING INCREASED WAGES-STOPPING ALL FREIGHT TRAFFIC

Salamanca, N.Y., Aug 18.—The monotony of this town has been broken by the strike of switchmen employed by the New-York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad company, and as there appears to be no indication of an early adjustment of the difficulty, the excitement augments momentarily. The malcontents so stubbornly maintain their aggressive attitude, and at this writing the prospects are exceedingly unfavorable for any solution of the knotty labor problem, or a resumption of work on the part of the dissatisfied railroad men [...] A serious result of the strike is a freight blockade”.

New York Times, August 19, 1881, page 5

The following article was coded to have neutral valence, because the article did not take a particular stance with regards to labor.

WILL MOBILIZE LABOR FOR WAR; Co-operation with Capital as Basis of Administration Proposed by Secretary Wilson. STRIKES TO BE ABOLISHED Joint Board of Mediation Planned; -Lind Council Wants Production Control Centralized. Seven New Labor Bureaus. Centralized Production.

[...] Taking up the first most difficult task confronting him, that of bringing capital and labor together in an arrangement to end strikes, it was learned tonight, Secretary Wilson will call on both sides immediately to form a joint board to meet in Washington to agree on general principles to govern their relations during the war [...] Officials generally believe that the representatives of capital and labor, when they meet here, will have no great difficulty in getting together on the general principles governing their relations. Both sides, it is held, will have to make some concessions. Labor probably will demand the right to proselyte and to organize workmen in all shops, and capital is expected to hold out for arbitration of all differences.”

New York Times, January 30, 1918, page 7

The following article was coded to have positive valence, because the article defended labor, declared that unionization is “highly beneficial” and “entirely lawful”.

TAFT WOULD LIMIT INJUNCTION POWER; Secretary Says None Should Be Issued in Strike Cases Until After a Hearing. ANSWERS LABOR QUESTIONS A Temporary Restraining Order Served on Strikers Arouses Fears and Is an Injustice, He Says.

[...]Secretary Taft prefaces his statement with a declaration that he believes "it to be highly beneficial and entirely lawful for laborers to unite in their common interests," [...] I see no objection to the enactment of a statute which shall define the rights of laborers in their controversies with their former employers.[...] Men leave employment on a strike; counsel for the employer applies to a Judge of threatened violence, and making such a case on the ex parte statement that the Judge feels called upon to issue a temporary restraining order is served on all the strikers; they are not lawyers; their fears are aroused by the process with which they are not acquainted; and, al-though their purposes may have been entirely lawful, their common determination to carry through the strike is weakened by an order which they never have had an opportunity to question, and which is calculated to discourage their proceeding in their original purpose.”

New York Times, January 10, 1908, page 2

Appendix B: Definitions and Data Sources for Independent and Control Variables

Variables	Description	Source
<i>Independent variables</i>		
Strikes	Annual number of strikes over all issues	Years 1860 to 1879 from online search of New York Times and Chicago Tribune (search terms = “strike” and “work stoppage”); years 1880 to 1930 from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series D-977, p. 179, and Griffin (1939), see Isaac (2009:960)
Union Density	Percent nonagricultural labor force unionized	Years 1880 to 1919 from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series D-941, p. 177; years 1870 to 1873 from Ulman (1955:19) and Montgomery (1981:140); 1877 from Dulles and Dubofsky (1993:106); and interim years in 1860s to 1870s estimated by linear interpolation, see Isaac (2009:960)
Major Strike	Dummy variable	Binary variable that distinguishes years that had major general strikes and years that did not. The years coded as 1 are 1877, 1886, 1892, 1894, 1910, 1917, 1918 and 1919. Refer to Isaac et. al (2008) for additional details on the years.
NYT Ownership change	Dummy variable	Binary variable that distinguishes periods before and after the NYT change of ownership in 1896. 0=1870-1895; 1=1896 to 1930
NYT Price change	Dummy variable	Binary variable that distinguishes periods before and after the NYT change of price in 1898. 0=1870-1897; 1=1898 to 1930
<i>Control Variables</i>		
President Party	The political affiliation of the President at a given year	National Journal Data Center, American President section. Democrat=1, Republican=0

Percentage of Republicans	The annual percentage of Republicans in both the U.S Senate and House of Representatives	Data collected from Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives. http://rangevoting.org/CongParty.htmls
Wage	Average annual real earnings for nonfarm employees	Years 1870 to 1900 are from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series D-736, p. 165; years 1901 to 1930 are constructed from the current average annual earnings for all nonfarm workers and the CPI U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series D-780 for earnings and Series D-727 for the CPI, see Isaac (2009:961)
Unemployment	Number of unemployed as percent of the labor force	Unemployment data from 1870-1899 are collected from Vernon(1994:710) and 1900-1930 from Lebergott (1957)
Industrialization	Total annual manufacturing capital stock	U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 2, Series P-107, p. 683 ,
Immigration growth	Annual increase in number of immigrants entering the US	U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series C-89, p. 105.
Urbanization	Percentage of the population in Northeast and North Central states living in urban areas	U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series A-178 and A-179, p. 22.

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