Protesting the Invasion of Cambodia:  
A Case Study of Crowd Behavior 
and Demonstration Leadership  

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Protest and protest behavior deserve more attention from political scientists. Using four theories of crowd behavior developed in sociology—transformation, predisposition, emergent norms, and purposive behavior—we investigate the antiwar protests of May 6, 1970 at Iowa State University, one of the more than 1300 campus protests responding to the invasion of Cambodia and the shooting of students at Kent State University. These events are instructive because of their variety and complexity, their transition from symbolic to intervention forms of protest, and the interactions among protest leaders and between leaders and the assembled crowds. We find purposive behavior theory as well as several taxonomic concepts recently developed in sociology particularly helpful in understanding crowd and protest leadership behavior.

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Protest and protest movements warrant study by political scientists for many reasons. Protest has been a feature of the major social movements—labor, civil rights, anti-Vietnam War, feminism—of twentieth-century America. Protest is a significant form of political participation for many citizens, a recurring dilemma for political authorities, and a potential source of countervailing power for the least powerful in society. Protest crowds remain a fea-
ture of the on-going political struggles over such issues as abortion, the environment, gay and lesbian concerns, race relations, social welfare programs, animal rights, and fundamentalist calls for a return to traditional values.

The study of social movements and protest demonstrations has generally been the bailiwick of sociology, but it is not clear why this should remain the case since their nature and consequences are clearly political. Political scientists concerned with the forms of mass participation in politics, the dilemmas of legitimization in the face of articulate and active opposition, and the institutions of democracy have much to gain from a better understanding of the crowd behavior inspired by social movements seeking change in current policies and institutions. To do so, political scientists, like their sociologist colleagues, must go "beyond simply 'telling the story'" by providing more than a chronological account of what happened—traditionally the province of journalists in the immediate aftermath and of historians later on—to uncover the broader dynamics at work.²

We seek to develop such an analysis by applying the insights of four sociological perspectives of crowd behavior to the series of anti-Vietnam War demonstrations at Iowa State University (ISU) on May 6, 1970. At first glance, ISU seemed an unlikely site of antiwar protest. One of the sixty-nine colleges established as a result of the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act, it has been known for decades as "Moo U" because of its origins as the Iowa Agricultural College and its continuing international prominence in agricultural research. Though the curriculum expanded over the years, the initial commitment to "practical education" was evident in 1970; more than half of the 21,000 students attending ISU in 1969-70 were enrolled in the various professional schools. The student body as a whole, drawn largely from small rural towns in Iowa, had a reputation for being conservative and career-oriented.

The May 1970 events were the zenith of a highly active antiwar movement at Iowa State in the 1969-70 academic year. Most of the activity was coordinated by the ISU Moratorium Committee, which organized the local part of a slowly escalating "end of business as usual" campaign around the country. As initially planned, one day of antiwar activity would occur in October, two in November, three in December, and so on until the war ended. While the national Moratorium had shut down by mid-spring 1970, the ISU chapter still


functioned in a struggling form. Like similar groups around the country, it revived after President Richard Nixon ordered the invasion of Cambodia on April 30th on the rationale of destroying North Vietnamese staging areas and when National Guardsmen opened fire on student demonstrators at Kent State University in Ohio on May 4th, killing four. Emotions were again heightened on May 14th when Mississippi Highway Patrolmen and local police killed two students when they fired into a dormitory at Jackson State College.3

At Iowa State, in the aftermath of the Cambodia invasion, students took over a campus building twice, interfered with access to another building, disrupted a ROTC drill, organized numerous rallies including memorials for the Kent State and Jackson State students, marched by the thousands on and off campus, blockaded intersections, staged a sit-in at the local draft board office (with twenty-three arrested), blockaded a passenger bus full of young men on their way to pre-induction physicals (fifteen arrested), raised thousands of dollars in bail money, lobbied the university administration to cancel classes, collected thousands of signatures on petitions, and conducted a public education campaign involving teach-ins and public speaking appearances. ISU Assistant Dean of Students Tom Goodale described the time period as “more emotionally exhausting” than serving in the National Guard in Detroit during the 1967 insurrection.4

We have chosen to focus on the single most densely packed day, May 6th, when there were nine distinct yet interconnected gatherings and actions. The research involves a combination of historical reconstruction, contemporaneous interviews, and an element of participant observation.5 Co-author Clyde Brown was a coordinator of the Iowa Moratorium Committee and a leading antiwar activist at ISU in 1969-70, so a major participant in the events described. We also had access to contemporary news accounts and the transcripts of interviews with thirty-eight participants conducted by the Special Collections division of the Iowa State University Library in May-June 1970.6


4. Thomas G. Goodale, interview by Stanley Yates, 2 June 1970, transcript, “University General—Political—Demonstrations—Vietnam War, 1968-1974,” Iowa State University Archives, Ames, 34. Subsequent citations to interviews conducted by Yates are referred to as “ISU transcript” and will contain the name of the person interviewed, date of the interview and page number(s). See note 6.

5. For a broader account of antiwar activity at ISU in 1969-70 see Clyde Brown and Gayle K. Brown, “Moo U and the Cambodia Invasion” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association, Philadelphia, PA, April 1995).

6. The interviewing was coordinated by Dr. Stanley Yates, Director of Special Collections, and transcripts were deposited in the manuscript collection entitled “University General—Political—Demonstrations—Vietnam War, 1968-1974.” They include sessions with antiwar leaders and
In the sections that follow we first review how social scientists have studied crowd behavior and protest demonstrations. This section serves as a brief literature review of protest crowd behavior. Then we recount the events centered on the May 6, 1970, protests at Iowa State. Finally, we evaluate how useful sociological theory is in helping us understand what happened.

I. Sociological Theory

Sociologists have tackled the subject of crowd behavior at many different levels of analysis. At the macro-level, they are interested in how social movements originate and how they sustain themselves over time under different political conditions. Smelser's structural approach with its well-known elements of (1) precipitating factors (in our case, an escalation of the war and the shooting of students), (2) conducive setting (geographically concentrated student populations),
impaired social relations (an ongoing war, racism, and the emergence of a self-conscious "youth culture"), (4) mobilization (existing antiwar organizations and leaders), (5) generalized beliefs (opposition to the war and anti-establishment ideology) and (6) reactions of social control agents (police and University officials trying to manage the situation), seems tailor-made for analyzing the student antiwar movement. The Iowa State situation fits it quite well. McCarthy and Zald's resource mobilization explanation and Tilly's political process model seem less applicable in understanding a local movement organization organized on voluntarism such as the one at ISU. Efforts have also been made at the microlevel to account for individual behavior. However, mid-level theories of crowd behavior seem most applicable to the events of May 6. Such a focus has two advantages: (1) it limits the phenomena under study to manageable proportions and (2) it is appropriate to the available evidence.

Sociologists have struggled with defining exactly what it is that they are studying, focusing variously on crowds, gatherings, demonstrations, collective action, and collective behavior. Many use a dictionary definition of "crowd" as "a compact gathering or collection of people" with connotations of homogeneity of characteristics and unanimity of behavior. A "gathering" is "large number of people in the same place at the same time." McPhail defines a "demonstration gathering" as "two or more persons in a common space-time frame whose modal individual and collective behaviors involve the protest or celebration of some principle, person, collectivity, or condition." "Collective action" is "people acting together in the pursuit of common interests" and "collective behavior" is "two or more persons engaged in one or more behaviors judged common or concerted in one or more dimensions."

Of course, not all crowds are political in nature; sports events, the performing arts and religious gatherings also attract crowds. Further, not all political crowds are engaged in protest; they may be involved in public hearings, meetings, nom-

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14. The "collective action" definition is from Tilly, From Mobilization to Revolution, 7, and the "collective behavior" definition is from McPhail, The Myth of the Madding Crowd, 159.
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inating conventions, or campaign rallies. Even protesters engage in various forms of activity. Researchers have found it helpful to delineate different forms of protest: symbolic (rallying, marching, picketing, vigiling), noncooperative (slowdown strikes, boycotts), intervention (harassing, blockading, occupying buildings), and creating alternative institutions (communes). It has been generally noted that protests are attempts by protesters to communicate messages to authoritative decision makers and the public.

Theories of crowd behavior more generally can be divided into four perspectives: (1) transformation, (2) predisposition or convergent, (3) emergent norms, and (4) purposive behavior. The transformation view holds that individuals are changed by their participation in crowds so that they come under a collective impulse and lose their ability to behave rationally. The predisposition perspective holds that crowds are collections of like-minded people who have similar innate drives. Although crowds may intensify feelings, they do not transform the individuals involved. Mass behavior of a collective characteristic results from individuals acting on their internal predispositions.

Emergent norm theory grows out of Sherif’s psychological experiments. Its key insight is that behavior is social; each individual’s behavior is affected by the presence and actions of others. It begins with the insight that while most situations are governed by well-known rules of behavior, a few are not. Turner and Killian were interested in how crowds develop collective behavior when faced with novel situations. Unlike transformation and predisposition theorists, their emphasis is not on the breakdown of social control processes but on coordination when social rules are unclear. They theorize that individuals communicate with each other in an attempt to solve the problem at hand (ambiguous situation). By listening to leaders (keynoting) and talking to each other (milking), a shared definition of the situation emerges that clarifies appropriate individual behavior.

We include a variety of researchers within the purposive behavior perspec-

16. Lipsky, “Protest as a Political Resource.”
18. Floyd Allport, Social Psychology (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924); and Neal Miller and John Dollard, Social Learning and Imitation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941).
These researchers maintain that collective or crowd behavior is the result of purposive behavior by individuals engaged in a problem-solving process brought on by a perceived grievance. Group behavior is a "rational response" in some situations because individual behavior would be ineffectual. These researchers have adopted theoretical perspectives as varied as rational actor models, entrepreneurial approaches, and cybernetics. We take purposive behavior as a defining characteristic, but supplement it with others identified by these researchers. It is generally recognized that large political gatherings engaged in complex behaviors do not happen spontaneously, but instead involve planning, mobilization, and coordination by organizers. They are aware that the physical alignments of gatherings can also facilitate or inhibit different forms of collective action. Reciprocal alignments involving small face-to-face clusters promote different interaction patterns than parallel alignments involving large face-to-face crowds oriented towards a leader. These researchers have followed Couch in debunking the stereotypes of crowds as marked by unanimity of behavior, irrational and violent behavior, composed of riff-raff, or distinguished by emotion and emergent norms. Cooperation, not conflict, is the norm in the vast majority of collective gatherings.

Collective action often involves the clash of competing claims, e.g., a demand that a nation's foreign policy change versus an insistence that social order be maintained. Police and other social control agents, as the defenders of order and the status quo, often seek to control protest groups engaged in actions that test the limits of legality and political acceptance. Drawing a distinction between violence against property and violence against persons, historical studies have con-


21. "Rational" behavior has been a thorny issue in all of the social sciences. Models of rationality come in a variety of forms. The strong version insists upon an individual cost-benefit analysis that focuses exclusively on tangible rewards to explain participation (Olson, The Logic of Collective Action). Softer forms take into account the anticipated actions (support or non-support) of others [Berk, Collective Behavior; and Dennis Chong, Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991)] or other considerations, such as expressive benefits and feelings of group solidarity (Salisbury, "Political Movements in American Politics"). Although the researchers in our fourth category agree that individual protest behavior is purposive, there is not agreement on the definition of rationality.


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cluded that violence against persons is usually initiated by control agents rather than protesters. Rude found the pre-industrial political crowd of Europe to be “violent, impulsive, easily stirred by rumor, and quick to panic; but it was not fickle, peculiarly irrational, or generally given to bloody attacks on persons.” Tilly states violence “is rarely a solo performance. It usually grows out of the interaction of opponents.”

McPhail has found it helpful to distinguish among the assembling, assembled, and dispersal phases of a gathering and has distinguished behavior-in-common (“people engaged in the same behavior at the same time”) from behavior-in-concert (“the merger of different behaviors by different individuals at the same or different times”). He notes that contrary to assumptions of “mass society” approaches, there are few “individuals” in crowds. People assemble in small


27. Tilly, From Mobilization to Revolution, 175. This is not to say that some social movement organizers have not hoped for and attempted to provoke police violence in response to specific demonstrations [Jerry Rose, Outbreaks (New York: Free Press, 1982), 112-14; and David J. Garrow, Bearing the Cross (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1986), 227-29, 360]. From this perspective, leaders in the civil rights movement selected specific cities for demonstrations (for example, Birmingham, Alabama in 1963) with the belief that police brutality could be counted on and that such images (peaceful demonstrators attacked with fire hoses and police dogs) in the media would garner the movement public sympathy and force the Kennedy administration to intervene [but Aldon Morris, “Birmingham Confrontation Reconsidered: An Analysis of the Dynamics and Tactics of Mobilization,” American Sociological Review 58 (1993): 621-36, for an alternative interpretation]. The 1965 Selma, Alabama, protest, which drew a police response of billy clubs and cattle prods is a prime example of this sort of planning and police reaction. Some, such as the Berrigan brothers and the War Resisters League, suggested purposively disruptive tactics and noncooperation to increase domestically the cost of continuing the Vietnam War. The sincerity of protest behavior coupled with government oppression was seen as engendering political consciousness and support among the public. Political officials and police have become more sophisticated and, perhaps, restrained since the civil rights and Vietnam protest eras. In particular, police training no longer includes simplistic LeBonian assumptions about crowd behavior and police avoid actions that would play into the hands of organizers. Those who lost faith in the efficacy of moral persuasion, such as Students for a Democratic Society’s (SDS) Weathermen, openly advocated violence as the only effective strategy to change society. The October 1969 “Four Days of Rage” trashing of the Chicago Loop and the subsequent bombings by the Weather Underground were the clearest expressions of this view during the Vietnam War period [Kirkpatrick Sale, SDS (New York: Random House, 1973), 603-14]. The Weathermen faction was numerically small and their tactics reduced public and political support for the antiwar movement.


clusters of friends and acquaintances, remain together during the assembled phase and leave together at the end. As parts of clusters, individuals engage in many sequences of behavior, both with those nearby and collectively with those in the larger gathering. Coordination among large numbers of individuals is usually the result of signals from a third party (a leader) and raises the question of whether “collected” (a gathering of individuals doing something in the same location) or “collective” (a group of people doing something together that has been jointly determined) behavior is occurring.

Both Lofland and McPhail have developed level of analysis typologies. McPhail’s, which explicitly incorporates increasing time and spatial frames, includes: (1) individual behavior sequences, (2) collective behavior sequences (behavior-in-common or in-concert), (3) gatherings (a temporary collection of two or more people in the same space-time frame), (4) events (a related sequence of two or more gatherings in different places in the same time frame), (5) campaigns (a recurring sequence of gatherings and events within the same community over time), (6) waves (the diffusion of forms of collective behavior over space and time), and (7) trends (changes in the frequency of forms of collective behavior over time in geographical units).

One should not conclude that everyone who studies crowds or gatherings is in agreement. Our quick review has to a certain degree “papered over” the healthy disagreements that exist over what is the appropriate domain of study (ordinary vs. extraordinary behavior), the role and importance of emotion, the mechanisms of purposive behavior, and the role of leadership. Yet, the theories and typologies noted help clarify the multiple features of protest gatherings. They provide a set of testable expectations as well as a standard language so social scientists can study these phenomena in a systematic fashion.

II. A Day of Protest

We now turn to a brief chronological summary of the events immediately before, on, and immediately after May 6. It draws heavily on the interviews in the Yates oral history archive and newspaper accounts. The two most prominent student protest leaders in this recounting are Clyde Brown and Robert Trembly. Brown was an ISU sophomore, a practicing pacifist, former State Moratorium Coordinator, and the best-known antiwar spokesperson on the campus. Trembly was a returning student, a former Vietnam War Navy veteran, who had just recently become active in public opposition to the war. Associated with a new group, Peace Now, he had a charismatic, but confrontational, style. The two also presented a contrast in appearance. Trembly looked like a stereotypical sixties radical with long bushy red hair and beard (a young Karl Marx) dressed in a green army jacket and combat boots. Brown was inconspicuous in personal appearance and dress, eas-
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ily blending in with midwestern college life.

Protest activity on the campus involving more than a few isolated individuals began on the day after the Kent State deaths and five days after the military incursion into Cambodia. There had been a few “sit-ins” by solitary individuals in the days leading up to the announced invasion and a “People’s Rally” of about 400 people in the Ames community on May 2nd. The Kent State fatalities seemed to have the effect of a “suddenly imposed grievance” and stimulated a search by those opposed to the war to find appropriate responses.30 The Kent State shootings and the protests organized on other campuses seemed to dramatically expand the number of students who were concluding that “something unusual is happening” and who wanted to express dissatisfaction with what was going on in society.31

At mid-day on May 5, under the impression that there was a weekly ROTC drill occurring on the field north of the men’s physical education facility, a group of students went to talk to the cadets. Learning that the drills took place on Wednesdays, not Tuesdays, the group moved their protest to the Naval (ROTC) Science Building where about fifty protesters blocked the entrance.32 Later discovering that there was a ROTC drill going on in the Armory, the students shifted locations and staged a sit-in there which disrupted the exercise. This sit-in became an occupation of the facility when the demonstrators refused to leave. The University tried to get Iowa Attorney General Richard Turner to issue an injunction, but he declined, claiming it could not be done before his office closed for the day.33 Instead, he advised ISU administrators to “use the football squad to go in and carry them out of there.”34 The students were threatened with disciplinary action by the Vice President of Student Affairs but remained until the next morning.35 That evening at the regularly scheduled weekly meeting of the Student Senate, at the initiative of Trembly, the Government of the Student Body (GSB) passed a resolution for a one-day strike and encouraged students to attend a “Mass Rally” and memorial service for the Kent State casualties at noon the next day on central campus.36

Before sunrise on the morning of Wednesday, May 6, two dozen of the Armory occupiers led by Brown moved to the flagpole on central campus where they planned to insist that the flag be flown at half-mast in memory of the Kent

31. Lofland, Protest, 37.
32. Des Moines Register, 6 May 1970, 1.
35. Iowa State Daily, 6 May 1970, 1, 3.
State dead. When a university employee arrived at sunrise to hoist the flag, he saw from a distance that his access to the flagpole was blocked by a ring of students. His superior instructed him by phone not to try to raise the flag. Later that morning there was a brief scuffle between antiwar protesters and two student members of Conservatives for Constructive Change who wanted to raise an American flag they had brought. Antiwar protesters prevented them from doing so. Ultimately, a compromise between the Administration and GSB resulted in the American flag being set at half-staff during the rally.

The Wednesday morning issue of the Iowa State Daily had a banner headline “STRIKE” and reported extensively on the previous day’s events. The “Mass Rally” drew three thousand persons to central campus. Scheduled speakers at the Rally included local ministers, GSB leaders, faculty, protest leaders, and the Mayor of Ames. Despite extensive discussions, protest leaders went into the rally without an agreement on their strategy. They agreed that the opportunity presented by the large gathering should not be passed up, but could not come up with a united plan of action. Trembly wanted to target ROTC, but Brown was opposed, favoring a sit-down on a nearby thoroughfare, Lincoln Way.

The Rally began without any agreement on what to do next. GSB leaders had been assured that no other plans were “afoot.” As the Rally progressed, antiwar leaders off to the side continued to discuss what to do even as they expressed concern to each other that the crowd was being lost as the speeches droned on. The lack of crowd involvement and the unwillingness of the two major leaders to differ publicly provided an opportunity for one of them to coopt the rally.

Unknown to other rally organizers, Trembly planned to call for a peaceful sit-in at the ROTC drill field if he learned that the regular weekly drill was occurring. When a “scout” reported back that the ROTC drill was on, Trembly took the microphone before he was scheduled to speak and urged the crowd to follow him over to the field. He said, “It is absurd for us to have a ‘peace’ rally while we have people only a few hundred yards away from us who are

39. Parkin, ISU transcript, 7; and Layton, ISU transcript, 5.
40. An important aspect of the mobilization at Iowa State was the triggering effect of the media’s reporting of major events, i.e., Nixon’s speech, reports from the battlefield, the photos of slain Kent State students, and accounts of demonstrations elsewhere. The local and state newspapers were packed with such stories and local demonstrators eagerly awaited the latest editions for new information. The Iowa State Daily was clearly the most important news source and an unparalleled mobilizing instrument in the events described.
41. Robert Trembly, 28 May 1970, ISU transcript, 12; and Brown, ISU transcript, 17.
42. Trembly, ISU transcript, 9.
getting ready to go over there and kill."43 At that point a small cadre led by a
student with a red flag, the universal symbol of revolution, started for the
ROTC drill field; many in the crowd began to follow.44 As the group left,
Brown asked them to go "with love and not hate"; more than half of those
assembled followed.45

At the field they found an Army ROTC unit practicing; the students dis-
rupted the drill by sitting on the field, putting flowers in the cadets' uniforms,
and talking with the cadets. Some shouting at the cadets occurred and protest
marshalls had to police the offending students.46 The ROTC unit was ordered
to fall out by their commanders and headed back to the Armory. Organizers
had to decide what to do next; a decision was made to re-occupy the Armory.
Brown was concerned about keeping the crowd unified rather than having it
splinter, which would make coordination and control impossible. Within min-
utes two thousand persons occupied the nearby Armory again. Inside the
Armory, bleachers formerly used for Big 8 basketball games were pulled out
and the crowd sat down on the tiered seats. Leaders stalled for time by
having folk singers entertain the gathering. An episode of foot-stomping was
subdued by protest marshalls when it was feared that the bleachers would be
damaged. Brown favored staying in the Armory while Trembly was ambiva-
 lent. They did not have time to make a decision. After a short stay, the popu-
lar ISU football chant of "All the Way to Lincoln Way!" (the south end zone
at the football stadium) was taken up by the crowd and those assembled dis-
persed in a flash, heading back across campus. Their route took them past the
library, the main administration building, central campus where the rally was
ending, and the Memorial Union, picking up additional students as they went,
until they spilled onto Lincoln Way (also U.S. Highway 30), Ames's main
street, and filled all four lanes of the boulevard. In short order, three thousand
protesters blocked traffic by occupying the intersection of Beach and Lincoln
Way on the University's eastern edge.

At this juncture, protest leaders were again divided about what their next
move should be. Protest actions had occurred at both the ROTC field and on
Lincoln Way rendering moot the original point of disagreement between
Trembly and Brown. Some urged going downtown to the business district, but
Brown feared vandalism and wanted the group to remain where it was.47
While the leaders debated and a local jug band entertained the crowd, a break-

43. Des Moines Register, 7 May 1970, 7.
44. Trembly, ISU transcript, 12.
46. Jeff Klomp, 22 May 1970, ISU transcript, 10; Douglas M. Marks, 26 May 1970, ISU
transcript, 8; and Jerald L. Schnoor, 25 May 1970, ISU transcript, 3-4.
47. Brown, ISU transcript, 19.
away group with the red flag headed east down Lincoln Way towards the business district. The group paused and returned when many in the main crowd yelled for them to “come back.”

After serious debate among the organizers, it was decided to let the crowd vote on what to do next. Options were made known to the crowd by means of a police car sound system and a hand vote was taken. Brown came out in favor of going to the draft board and Trembly favored returning to campus and talking to Administrators about canceling classes for the rest of the semester. During this time, the red flag group again embarked for downtown. Meanwhile, a majority of the group in the intersection voted to march downtown to the draft board. Approximately one thousand students with Brown as the head parade marshall started moving toward the business district shouting “We Don’t Want Nixon’s War!” A little while later a smaller third group, headed by Trembly, followed so that the protest march was strung out in three distinct segments. During the march, parade marshalls kept some marchers from laying down in front of cars and the crowd dissuaded a few individuals from confiscating the Highway Commission’s American flag.

Eventually, the groups came together in the business district, a few blocks from the draft board. At this point, Trembly reported being sternly warned by Brown “not to interfere” because Brown still feared that some marchers might turn destructive. At the draft board there was a peaceful rally. Again, leaders were uncertain as to what course of action to take. When no plan of action was immediately forthcoming, the gathering quickly dispersed. Those remaining continued to search for a course of action. Some were interested in occupying the draft board to keep the draft board employees from leaving at the end of the work day and a half-hearted sit-in was staged. However, concerned about bad publicity and unwilling to physically prevent employees from departing, those involved decided after debate and a vote that rather than locking in the draft clerks and causing them personal inconvenience, the office should not be allowed to open the next morning.

Early in the morning on Thursday, May 7, protesters congregated outside the draft board office. About twenty went inside the building and staged a sit-in on the stairwell leading down to the Selective Service Office while many more milled outside. The demonstrators were warned by police that they would be arrested if they did not vacate immediately. Dean of Students Office personnel tried without success to talk the students into leaving. At 9:00 the Ames City Attorney ordered the police to “move them out,” according to

48. Des Moines Register, 7 May 1970, 6, 7.
49. Trembly, ISU transcript, 15.
51. William M. Bell, 8 June 1970, ISU transcript, 5; and Sandeen, ISU transcript, 14.
Brown who was negotiating near the entrance to the building at that moment. Brown was arrested when he requested police to move aside so he could join the group.52 Those inside the building agreed to lock their arms to make their impending arrest more difficult, but "not to hit anyone."53 Police pulled out six persons at the top of the stairs, using blackjacks to break the protesters' grip on the stair rail, but others could not be extracted. They were then told that tear gas would be used against them if they did not leave. Shortly thereafter, the police dropped a cannister of tear gas, which immediately emptied the building. As protesters staggered out they were arrested by officers of the Ames Police, Story County Sheriff's office, and the State Bureau of Criminal Investigation. Trembly and another student locked arms and legs together claiming passive self-defense on their part.54 Some observers took exception with Trembly's account, feeling force had been used to resist arrest.55 In several instances, police used blackjacks, mace, and hair pulling in making arrests.56

In the aftermath of the protest, twenty-three arrested students were taken to the Ames City Jail for processing and the draft board office was closed because of tear gas fumes.57 All were charged jointly with illegal assembly and disturbing the peace. Trembly, Brown, and two others were also charged with a state felony of resisting arrest, which carried a maximum sentence of one thousand dollar fine and one year imprisonment. Many felt at the time that the more serious charges involved a strategy by legal authorities to neutralize the protest leaders. The City Attorney and the Assistant County Attorney suggested at a press conference that the arrests would prevent a "disruptive element" from causing more trouble.58

Though we end the chronology here, it is important to point out that significant protest activities continued for another two weeks.59 Continued gatherings at the draft board building, a "People's March," the induction bus blockade and arrests, and another major rally occurred in the next four days. The Jackson State deaths stimulated more public events. Community outreach programs were initiated state-wide. Eventually, the students' physical exhaustion, widespread shock throughout the community when the Municipal Building was bombed by dynamite placed in a window well on May 22, and the end of the school year brought this local protest campaign to a close.60

52. Brown, ISU transcript, 28-29.
56. Iowa State Daily, 8 May 1970, 1, 7; Lendt, ISU transcript, 5-6; and Claudia E. Johnson, 3 June 1970, ISU transcript, 10.
57. Ames Daily Tribune, 7 May 1970, 1; and Des Moines Register, 8 May 1970, 1, 5.
59. Brown and Brown, "Moo U and the Cambodia Invasion."
60. It has not been determined who was responsible for the Ames bombing or for several
III. Analysis

In this section we evaluate the usefulness of the various sociological theories and concepts of crowd behavior for understanding the events at Iowa State University. We do so fully aware of the limitations of this kind of study. It is a single case study, which means that it is impossible to generalize to other gatherings; the task is to generalize to theory. This many years "after the fact" analysis also suffers from the limitations of other studies that have depended largely on newspaper accounts. Fortunately, the abundant newspaper reporting could be supplemented with the extensive interviews conducted by the ISU Special Collections Department and the recollections and observations of a major participant. A draft of the May 6 account was shared with about ten other major actors in order to identify needed additions and corrections. Even so, we are limited by not having field observations of individual level behavior or focused individual interviews.

Transformation theory claims that individuals in a crowd succumb to an irrational, often violent, group mentality. We find little to no evidence of this sort of contagion process at work in the ISU events. First, there were no reported instances of physical violence on May 6. Second, individuals were obviously capable of making independent decisions on the spot as to whether to participate or not participate in developing events (proceed to the ROTC field, occupy the Armory, march downtown, etc.). Furthermore, they participated in "in situ" decisionmaking. These instances strongly refute LeBon. Only the "All the Way to Lincoln Way" exodus from the Armory appears to have had any element of spontaneity about it.

Convergence theory contends that like-minded individuals congregate and feed off similarly perceived external stimuli and each other's mental states. The result is an increased level of excitement and agitation in individuals but, contrary to contagion theory, not one inconsistent with the individual's initial preferences. It is undoubtedly the case that many like-minded individuals congregated for the Noon Rally and participated in the subsequent events. But it is not the case that the initial gathering was of one mind. While the protest

62. The newspaper coverage was truly phenomenal, with some issues being devoted almost exclusively to antwar activities. The media were clearly important in sustaining and validating the local efforts.
63. We do not find any evidence in the written record that this behavior was organized or stimulated by a third party. That, of course, does not prove that it was not, only that if it was it escaped the attention of many active participants and witnesses.
leaders and many in the crowd were primarily focused on expressing opposition to the war in Vietnam, many others, including the GSB leaders, were motivated to express mourning for the slain Kent State students. This was a bone of contention between both the antiwar and the GSB leaders (who saw a memorial as less controversial) and the few radicals (who saw the shootings as the beginning of a campaign of orchestrated repression). Again, the clearest indication of this may have been the “fifty-fifty” split that resulted from Trembly’s call to go to the ROTC field. This kind of division was played out again with the decision to march downtown and again with the decision to sit-in at the draft board the next day. Each decision produced smaller groups of like-minded people, but like Zeno’s paradox seemed capable of going on forever. Even among those who participated in all the events on May 6, however, one finds a range from liberals to radicals, from pacifists to self-proclaimed revolutionaries. Except for the migration from the Armory to Lincoln Way, there is little evidence of a spiraling escalation of excitement and none regarding violence.

Emergent norm theory suggests that social interactions lead to the development of new forms of behavior in unusual situations. Faced with a situation that cannot be handled with traditional norms of behavior, such as the escalation of the war and Guardsmen shooting students, individuals in consultation with each other generate new norms of behavior on the spot. We do not find this approach very useful for three major reasons. First, rallies, marches and even actions at the draft board were not new forms of behavior for many participants; they had already developed norms of behavior months or years before. Second, the theory does not seem to take into account the role of demonstration leaders in directing and coordinating gatherings. Finally, we note the various episodes (harassing of ROTC cadets, foot-stomping in the Armory, movement towards lowering the flag at the Highway Department) where leaders and parade marshalls engaged in “policing” behavior and “offending” individuals complied. It seems more a case that the norms were already established rather than instances where norms had to be developed. We attribute this “norm establishment” to the prior activities of the peace movement at ISU. Emergent norms theory would seem more appropriate when people operate without preestablished repertoires of behavior or established leaders, but that was not the case during the ISU May protests.

64. It is interesting to note the differences in the perspectives of university administrators and demonstrators at this point. While administrators felt things were on the verge of spinning out of control, demonstrators and their leaders did not.

65. Brown and Brown, “Moo U and the Cambodia Invasion.”

66. The repertoire of collective actions engaged in by the ISU protesters—rallying, speech-making, chanting, marching, occupying university property, and demonstrating—were behaviors familiar to them either from prior experience or general knowledge about previous social move-
Purposive behavior theory focuses on the “rational” decisions of individuals to respond to a perceived problem or grievance. The “perceived grievance” and “response” are self-evident in this case. Pinning down individual motivation has been a difficult task for social scientists even under the most controlled conditions. Identifying individual motivations requires psychological indicators at the individual level for large numbers of participants, but what is usually available are after-the-fact journalistic accounts of crowd behavior and a few interviews with participating notables. Even the interviews do not have the sharpness that social scientists would desire; average people do not normally speak on their own with the focus ideal for theoretical evaluation. These limitations apply to the case at hand.

To claim that everyone involved in any of these protest gatherings was in complete agreement on a specific course of action would be illogical given what we have said about the other perspectives. Unanimity of action in crowds is an illusion because individuals are capable of making decisions. Protest behavior is often conceptualized as involving a hierarchy of risk and personal commitment. People often begin with the milder legal forms and progress to those that involve the risk of punitive retaliation or legal punishment. It is unusual to have agreement on strategy and tactics among large numbers of protesters because individual levels of commitment to the cause vary; this is the dilemma every protest organization and leader faces.

Protest crowd behavior is a mix of individual and social behaviors.\textsuperscript{7} It is plausible that an individual would act in isolation if she received a sufficient (noninstrumental) expressive benefit from doing so, but it is the rare political protester who would not prefer to join with others and to have the company of others since joining together increases the chances of the message being noticed by others, the press, and political authorities.\textsuperscript{68} Participation with others may affirm the merit of an individual’s action, thereby overcoming the sense of inconsequentiality. Thus protest behavior can serve multiple individual and collective purposes.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{7} Tilly recognizes that the repertoire of collective actions is limited but leaves room for improvisation by protesters as they interact with social control agents over time: “People know the general rules of performance more or less well, and vary the performance to meet the purpose at hand” [Charles Tilly, “Speaking Your Mind Without Elections, Surveys, or Social Movements,” \textit{Public Opinion Quarterly} 47 (1983): 463]. While one finds strains of the old (following the Moratorium march route downtown, the football chant, rallies on central campus, targeting ROTC and the Selective Service office, etc.), the Cambodia/Kent State protests were quantitatively and qualitatively different. Besides the sheer number of demonstrators, the protest tactics utilized on May 6 and subsequent days became more obstructive both on and off campus.

\textsuperscript{67} McPhail, \textit{The Myth of the Madding Crowd}.

\textsuperscript{68} Berk, \textit{Collective Behavior}; and Chong, \textit{Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement}.
\end{footnotesize}
The interviews are sprinkled with references to at least five interconnected objectives. First, there was a desire to demonstrate personal commitment to ending the war. Many protesters wanted to show those in power how committed they were as well as prove to themselves that they were willing to put their bodies on the line. Second, demonstrating solidarity with others at Iowa State as well as the larger national antwar movement was a goal. At least among those interviewed there was a history of personal acquaintance, often friendship, and they wanted to support each other. These events confirm the often noted importance of interpersonal networks in protest actions. Most protesters also realized that they were part of a larger protest movement and wanted to do their share in contributing to that national effort. Third, obtaining publicity was seen as important. Publicity was seen as a way of reaching the broader public and keeping pressure on decisionmakers. The archival records reveal that these events dominated the local and state-wide newspapers. Fourth, there was an urgency in opposing what were deemed disastrous public policies. Protesters wanted the government to stop doing what it was doing in Vietnam, Ohio, and Mississippi. In addition to general opposition to the Vietnam War and specific opposition to the Cambodia invasion, individuals expressed wider concerns such as that China would enter the war, Nixon was becoming a tyrant, the Constitution was being ignored, and it was open season for National Guardsmen on students. Fifth, some protesters alluded to a process of experimenting with nonviolent ways to effect change in society. In sum, we are confident that purposive behaviors were occurring.

We also find the recent emphasis in the literature on leadership, mobilization, and institutional protest behavior on the mark. Leadership, by definition, implies purposive behavior. We find evidence that demonstration leadership was at work in the May 6 events. The two major leaders, as well as others in the crowd, had differing views as to how to proceed and disagreement was a common occurrence. The demonstration leaders had a continuous “next action” problem and, accordingly, “search” was a continuous task. It is hard with the written word to convey the rapidity with which decisions had to be made.

69. For comments regarding personal commitment, see the following pages in the ISU transcripts: Brown (69), Nancy Davis (16), Steve Ewoldt (2), Mary Ann Kundrat (28, 31), Kenneth Patton (5), Trembly (3, 5), and John Wagstaff (34). Solidarity concerns (Brown 1, 70; Klomp 1-2, 41, 44; and Trembly 1, 6, 25) and publicity as a means of generating pressure on government officials (Brown 1, 69-70; Klomp 3, 30; K. Patton 5; and Trembly 17) were also voiced. Objections to and concerns about government policies were common in the interviews. For such remarks, see Brown (1, 9-10, 69), Davis (2, 6), Ewoldt (13), Ralph Gross (1), James Hannah (4, 15-17), C. Johnson (16-17), Klomp (1-2, 42), Kundrat (1-2, 31), Marks (23), Julia Patton (1-4), Shelton (3, 17), and Trembly (1, 8). Remarks on searching for ways to be effective are found in the interviews with Brown (23, 33), Gross (16-17), Kundrat (32), and Marks (3).
Search was necessary because leaders and followers generally felt that some response beyond what had happened in the past was necessary given the expansion of the war and the deaths at Kent State. The size of the gatherings on May 6 provided protest leaders with the opportunity to demonstrate greater public opposition to the war than had ever been possible before at ISU. The problem of course was to find an appropriate tactic when everyone was not in agreement. The two leaders were unwilling to fractionalize the antiwar segment of the gatherings by openly expressing differences. The more confrontational leader, Trembly, took the early initiative while the openly pacifist leader, Brown, attempted to set the tone. Leaders engaged in an improvisational decisionmaking process that at times included mutual consultation and resorted to street level democracy when the leaders' search reached an impasse. In these instances, however, the verbal process was remarkably devoid of emotion, referential rather than condensational. Creating opportunities for the articulation of concerns and public discussion, followed by group votes, had the effects of providing a sense of legitimacy for the chosen courses of action while working against the development of other alternatives, including the possibility of LeBonian type frenzies. Eventually, the Moratorium-based leadership reestablished control prior to the march downtown.

Sociological theory also provides a language for analyzing the situations that occurred at Iowa State and across the nation in May 1970. The initial Noon Rally can be designated as a “gathering,” the subsequent gatherings (ROTC field, Armory, Lincoln Way sit-in, march downtown, draft board rallies), collectively can be treated as an “event.” Significantly, the one day’s activity is longer and more complex (nine separate gatherings) than any sequence of events reported in McPhail’s study of demonstrations in Washington. The activities of May 6 combined with prior antiwar protests and the subsequent actions (draft board sit-in, blocking the induction bus, other rallies, etc.) were all part of a “campaign” in Ames, Iowa against the war. The local effort was part of a much larger national “wave” of protest that occurred

70. Antiwar activists at Iowa State had been engaged in a debate over and a search for appropriate tactics for many years. The Cambodia protests were the most recent round. Much of the effort during 1969-70 centered around how to sustain the monthly Moratorium activities (Brown and Brown, “Moo U and the Cambodia Invasion”). Countless days were spent defining problems, clarifying objectives, identifying and evaluating alternatives, forging tactical agreements and implementing decisions in a process that bordered on the “rational-comprehensive” ideal [Charles Lindblom, “The Science of ‘Muddling Through,’” Public Administration Review 19 (1959): 79-88]. A decisionmaking process of this sort was at work between protest events, even those on the same day, at ISU in May 1970. Even so, despite all the effort, the process usually produced incremental changes in strategy and tactics because of value disagreements among the participants [Michael Hayes, Incrementalism and Public Policy (New York: Longman, 1992), 136-40].

over several weeks in more than a thousand locations. Likewise the assembling/assembled/dispersal stages are clearly evident. In fact, much of the energy of the protest leadership was directed at preventing the dispersal of those assembled.

The Iowa State events also demonstrate why it is necessary to have more than one definition of protest. At one level, protest can be "polite" involving essentially symbolic activities such as marching, rallying, and picketing. That is the kind of protest Iowa State had experienced prior to the events described in this manuscript. Protest can also occur at the more confrontational intervention level (blockading streets and occupying buildings) "whereby one party seeks by public display or disruptive actions to raise the cost to another party of continuing a given course of action." This is the step the organizational leadership and many protesters took at ISU when they blocked streets and occupied buildings in response to the Cambodia invasion and the Kent State shootings.

IV. Summary

Our analysis of crowd behavior and demonstration leadership concludes that the ISU protests can be best understood as purposive behavior, broadly defined. This study illuminates the complexity of protest gatherings, the important roles played by demonstration leaders, and the difficulty of studying crowd behavior by means of archival sources.

A protest crowd is a complex social phenomenon. Multiple gatherings in sequence such as occurred at ISU compound the picture even more. McPhail suggests that the appropriate metaphor for a gathering is "a patchwork quilt of multiple and diverse sequences of individual and collective behaviors." Individuals engage in many sequences of behavior, some with just a few nearby people and others collectively with the larger gathering. The latter is generally characterized as collective behavior and defines the modal activities of the crowd. The ISU case study demonstrates the fluidity that typically characterizes protest events. It is a daunting task to study sporadic, quickly organized, short-lived, geographically dispersed phenomena such as protests. We were more fortunate than most researchers in having particularly rich historical evidence available to us. Without the ISU Special Collection's oral history interviews and the detailed news coverage, we would not have had the information base to do this research.

Our case study methodology fits into one vein of crowd behavior study, and utilizing the theories developed in sociology it can answer certain kinds of questions. Other kinds of questions require other kinds of evidence and that would seem to be the direction future research should take. To get at McPhail’s “quilt pieces” would involve not only the kinds of sources utilized in this study but also field methods that would allow for meticulous empirical observations and structured individual interviewing. Fortunately, the recent emphasis on taxonomic schemes seems to have helped break up the complexity of crowd behavior into more manageable and empirically investigatable parts.

The divisions between the social sciences oftentimes seem arbitrary. Productive work is often done by trespassing at the borders. Most social movements could just as accurately be designated political movements. The individual behaviors involved are forms of political participation and collective behavior (how people do things together) is fundamentally political. The actions taken by the participants in protest gatherings and larger movements have consequences for public policy and the political system. There is no reason for political scientists to leave the study of protest crowd behavior to sociology; there is plenty to do for everyone and it would benefit from cross-fertilization.