Protesters as the new gatekeepers?
An analysis of how journalistic language and new technologies shape the identity
of UK protest movements

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Word Count
(excluding bibliography and notes): 5,002

Please note: as some of the incidents described in this paper were contemporaneous to its writing, they may be subject to change.

Abstract

Radical forms of direct action and protest have undertaken a new cycle in the past three years. Climate Camp protests re-emerged at Drax in 2006 and against the third runway at Heathrow Airport (2007-present), juxtaposed with a resurgence in anti-capitalist/global justice protests from the late 1990s and early 2000s and the recent G20 Meltdown (2009) in central London.

Drawing on the work of Halloran et al.'s (1970) use of Lang and Lang's (1955) notion of an inferential structure (where news reports often frame protest stories as violent or potentially violent), this study will argue that journalists' continual use of this structure, through set linguistic patterns, influence how the mainstream media construct our cultural understanding of protest movements. Historically, journalists reported on (UK based) protest events by following an established news agenda, and this work will show how journalists covering these events follow such an agenda. The G20 protests were no exception, with the usual formulaic build-up in coverage focusing on the threat of, or potential for, violence. The Sunday Mirror newspaper headline two days prior to the event proclaimed "Anarchy in the UK; Exclusive the London summit 2009 countdown as world leaders head for G20 summit rioters come out of retirement secret plans to 'take over' city" (29 April:9); and The Guardian newspaper reveals "Police tactics queried as Met says G20 protests will be 'very violent'" (28 April:1).

At the Heathrow Climate Camp of August 2007, news reports repeated the language of earlier protests. Echoing Halloran, Elliott and Murdock's findings, protestors identities are framed in a context of what Hall would argue (1968, 1978) as being 'scoundrels', 'deviants' and 'violent' (Halloran et al., 1970). In 1968, The Times newspaper carried the headline "Militant plot feared in London", whereas the Evening Standard coverage of the Heathrow Climate Camp ran with "Extremists to hijack climate camp demo" and "Militants in plot to paralyse Heathrow" (2007).

However, this paper will show that with the emergence of citizen journalism, Web 2.0 and new technologies, it is becoming increasingly difficult for journalists to repeat the patterns that shape the identity of protesters. The G20 Meltdown and Heathrow Climate Camp protests flagged up important shifts in the relationship between mainstream media organisations and protest groups. At both events, protesters engaged with new technologies to produce their own news reports. To counter this approach, journalists increasingly are 'embedded' with protest movements. These two factors, citizen journalism and embedded journalism have, I would argue, led to an opening up of the relationship between protest movements and journalists. Journalists will now struggle to follow the inferential structure in the light of clear evidence of state and protest violence. Moreover, it shifts the cultural perception of protest groups and the wider field of new social movements.

This paper will argue that such use of new technologies and forms of communication raises questions around traditional forms of reporting. The new forms of communication initially offer a balance between protesters and gatekeepers in the style of reporting, but does dispensing with the journalist rely too heavily on the protester for footage? In other words how does Web 2.0 mean changes in the pattern of protest reporting?

Introduction

A new form of radical protest movement is emerging in the UK. It is a movement that has extracted many elements from previous protests, creating new ideas through technological developments. It began during the G8 protests of 2005 and its aim is to "build a movement for radical action".[1] This most recent protest cycle merges the ideologies of the global justice/anti-capitalist movement (1999-present), the anti-roads protests (1990s), Greenham Common (1980-1984), the Situationist and anti-war protests of the late 1960s with the mediatisation of twenty-first century activism. In the age of spin and multimedia channels, the latest cycle of protesters are changing the shape of UK protest movements.

Historically, 'cycles of protest' occur as a reaction to political decision-making, yet exist 'outside' the boundaries of society. Their autonomous nature "represent[s] a particular 'market' situated outside of any established political institutions" (Burstein, 1995). This 'insider-outsider' distinction developed in an earlier period of pressure group politics (Grant, 2005) and extends to the mainstream media. Previous protest movements have rejected any relationship with the mainstream media, who are seen as a voice of the institutions. A consequence of rejecting the media means that journalists can, and have, written about such protest groups without being challenged or questioned. Evidence shows that journalists rely on a framework of violence and misadventure when representing radical protest movements. The autonomous nature of such endogenous groups means that no spokesperson or individual is representing the whole - there is no voice for the protester. Consequently, as this work will show, journalists frame radical protest groups in unfavourable terms. Until recently, a lack of engagement between the mainstream media and each cycle of protest formulated a media framework which relied on deviance and violence in representing radical protesters. However, as this work will show, the Internet offers a way of altering the constant representation of radical protest as being acts of violence; to the point where some protesters are engaging with the mainstream media and also producing their own news reports through citizen journalism.

Mobile phones, webcams, miniature cameras, along with the Internet and Web 2.0, mean that activists are able to upload their own news reports within minutes of an event, by-passing the traditional forms of mass media. However, the limited resources of protest movements means that they do not have the ability to broadcast to a wider, non-specialised audience. I suggest protesters find alternative ways of communicating by engaging with the mainstream media and utilising social network sites (e.g. Twitter and Facebook). The recent Camp for Climate Action (2009) was arranged via the Web 2.0 technology of text messaging to co-ordinate a 'swoop'. Prior to the camp, interested parties signed up to an emailing list and were requested to give their mobile phone numbers. Activists were encouraged to gather at pre-determined companies around London, who were targeted for their environmental record. Activists were then told to

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[1]   This is taken from an anonymous document "Media Q&As: Camp for Climate Action, Summer 2009" (Campbell, 2009), as one of the four key aims of the camp.

await instructions for the location of the camp, via text messaging and the social networking site, Twitter. Using mobile phones and a social networking site, it opened up the event, enabling anyone with an interest to be part of the 'swoop', either physically or at a virtual level. Not only interested individuals utilised Twitter, Tweets weren't just coming from camp participants - news organisations,[2] local politicians, local residents and the Metropolitan Police were all using Twitter as a communication tool. *The Guardian* and *The Times* newspapers ran with live commentary and blogs as events unfolded. The Sky News website had an overall view of different 'Tweets' on their front page.

The success of the 'swoop' shows how new technologies can offer a wider range of news sources. Technological developments and the Internet are easily adaptable by both mainstream news agencies and protest movements. Television news footage of the Heathrow Climate Camp (August 2008) and the G20[3] Meltdown protest (April 2009) was sourced by the mainstream media from traditional pieces to camera and also mobile phone footage. Satellite news channels, Sky News and the BBC News reports were backed up with footage from protesters' mobile phones or Twitter. In essence, the Internet signals a major shift by giving the activists a media voice. This form of "tactical media - an imaginary exchange of concepts outbidding and overlaying each other" (Lovink, 2002:254) is a 'here today, gone tomorrow' means of communicating, which means that activists can flourish in the "public part of cyberspace" (ibid.). This position, between the state and the market, is currently demonstrated as the point where workshops on citizen journalism and editing mobile phone footage became prominent features of the Camp for Climate Action's media tent.

The 'hyper textual architecture' (Kahn and Kelner, 2003) of the Internet as a non-hierarchical 'rhizome' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1989:7), is a non-linear abstract which connects any point to another point, understood in terms of a "non-signifying system without an organising memory. The Internet is reducible neither to the one or the multiple" (ibid.) which makes it an appropriate communication form for protest movements. The adding and layering which forms the Internet is neither structured nor organised, mirroring the make-up of radical protest movements. Historically, radical protest movements adapt to new social movement paradigms. The ideology of new social movements encourages an autonomous civil society, founded on grass roots and informal networks (Martell, 1994:112). A lack of structure or control means the Internet can be used to challenge the dominant ideology of mainstream media or, as Becker (1967) defines it, the 'hierarchical credibility' - namely, the media's application of an inferential framework defining radical protests as violent. This paper will try to establish if the use of the Internet and social network sites can bypass negative press coverage, and even have a reverse impact on mainstream media reporting of protest movements in the UK. In

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[2]   Most international news organisations and media houses used twitter to carry reports of the day, including Euronews, Sky, ITV and CNN.

[3]   See http://www.g-20meltdown.org/

other words, can social network sites such as Twitter and Facebook reverse the 'hierarchical credibility' of the British press? Could protesters become gatekeepers?

This work will show that by comparing the reporting of key protest events (1968 -2009), there is a consistent use of what Lang and Lang (1955) term an 'inferential structure', whereby the framing of an event is pre-decided in advance. Analysis of journalistic language used in reporting protests from anti-Vietnam (1968) to the present day Global Justice Movement (1999-present) will show it frames the identity of protesters in hostile terms. Moreover, by employing Stuart Hall's notion of the Signification Spiral (1978), it shows how despite the poly-vocal nature and variety of activists at the G20 Meltdown and other such events, there is a convergence (Hall, 1978) of ideologies and collectives to create a discourse of violence, and place radical protest groups 'outside' of social norms.

Historical Perspectives

Halloran *et al*. (1970) draw on Lang and Lang's (1955) notion of an 'inferential structure' to test if there is a bias in news reporting techniques. Lang and Lang's study focuses around the reporting of local elections in the USA. Lang and Lang analysed the coverage of four different news outlets. Their study of a local election reveals that certain candidates were framed so that television producers were following a pattern or structure that inferred a specific meaning and bias around each candidate. Lang and Lang found that either intentional or unintentional bias "can influence public definitions" (1955:177) and that such preconceived bias, in the form of an 'inferential structure' significantly directs the "public definitions in a particular direction" (1955:171).

Halloran *et al*. applied Lang and Lang's study to the reporting of an anti-Vietnam protest. Based on Lang and Lang's inferential structure, they found that newspapers framed the marchers in an unfavourable light. In order to establish how linguistic styles shape the public perception, they categorised journalistic language into nouns and adjectives. The categories were then slimmed down into sub-categories of nouns which were either 'neutral', 'specific descriptions' or 'unfavourable'. Adjectives were sub-categorised as 'favourable', 'neutral' and 'unfavourable'. Specific descriptions included the terms 'militant', 'activist', 'student' and 'left-wing'. Unfavourable terms included 'confrontation', 'attack', 'riot', 'mob' and 'extremist' (1970:107-112). In fairness, Halloran *et al*. also found the use of less aggressive adjectives, such as 'peaceful', 'sincere' and 'good humoured'. In general, Halloran *et al*.'s findings reveal that news reports of the anti-Vietnam protest (1968) in London focused on either violence or the potential for violence.

At the protest, marchers split into two groups; one going to Trafalgar Square for speeches and a rally, with the other to Grosvenor Square where there was a confrontation between the protesters and the police. Halloran *et al*. (1970) found that the news media focused on the confrontation between police officers and protesters, virtually ignoring the rally in Trafalgar Square. They found that 'bias' in the reporting of the anti-Vietnam protest reveals not only an overarching theme of violence or the potential for violence, but

reporters framed the marchers as "young people out for a laugh or hooligans out to cause trouble" (1971:53), leading to a dismissing and re-articulation of their political ideology. The representation of marchers as young hooligans empties the event of any political context, shaping the identity of the protesters as violent, giving "…an indication of the way in which ideas about current events are structured, simplified and fed into the general social consciousness" (Halloran *et al*., 1970:216).

This deliberate ploy of structuring a news story to undermine the political validity continues throughout the history of radical protest. In looking at today's reporting of protest, one can see the continual use of an inferential structure. A brief look at the reporting of the Greenham Common women's camp (1980s) shows how the inferential structure is not limited to the 1960s protest movements. Linguistic techniques show a reaffirming of bias towards radical protest over the past forty years. A study of the reporting of the Greenham Common peace camp (1980-1984) reveals a familiar pattern.[4]

Eldridge's study "Breaching the peace at Greenham Common" (1995) found that initial news coverage of the anti-nuclear or peace camp was limited.[5] Despite the all female focus of the camps, the women were not deemed, by the media, to have a high news value. Eldridge found that when coverage did occur reporters would couch the women's actions as violent and aggressive. News reports on confrontations applied a language of "force", "blockade", "tear down" and "bare hands" (1995:327). In contrast, much of the "violence against the women" (1995:329) went unreported, and accusations of police violence did "not make the news" (ibid.). In one example, when women tried to prevent a delivery lorry from entering the base, reporters focused on "the police view: the men and supplies" (Eldridge, 1995:328). What is evident is the repetition of linguistic styles to reaffirm and depoliticise such protest events through a biased framework.

Returning to Halloran *et al*.'s study, applying the same coding method with the reporting of the 2008 'No Third Runway at Heathrow' protest reveals similar linguistic traits. Protesters at the Heathrow Climate Camp were identified as "Militants", "activists", "Hippies", "crusties" and "strangers to soap" (Francis, 2007:20). There are strong similarities between headlines from both periods. In 1968, *The Times* newspaper described the anti-Vietnam protests as "Militant plot feared in London". The copy states that detectives had "uncovered a startling plot… [by a] small army of militant extremists" (Halloran, 1970:109). In 2007, the *London Evening Standard's* headlines also used the adjectives of 'militant' and 'extremist' with a front page declaring "Extremist to hijack

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4   Anecdotally, Hamish Campbell encourages citizen journalism at the Camp for Climate Action and runs the website 'VisionON.TV' (the main news platform from the camp). His family were involved with the Greenham Common peace camps - evidence, I would suggest, that each protest cycle takes and reinvents elements of previous protests and builds a historical discourse around the UK protest movement.

5   The protest was against the USA's storage of nuclear warheads at an RAF base in Berkshire, England.

climate camp demo: militants in plot to paralyse Heathrow" (Mendick, 2007:1).[6] The lead describes "militants" who are "plotting to bring the airport to a halt", "stretch police resources… [and] cause trouble".

A major protest in the latest cycle was the 'G20 Meltdown in the City'[7] which saw a shift in the style of reporting. Journalists continued to use the same linguistic patterns, but also applied 'convergence' (Hall, 1978) between protest groups. Reporters began linking radical protest movements to wider social issues. The linguistic style connects together (or labels) all the collectives - climate camp, environmentalists, anti-capitalists - with other (often more violent) collectives, which heightens or "escalates" (Hall, 1978:223) a sense or threat of violence spreading across other parts of society. Journalists identify a specific issue or concern, and then link it with a "subversive minority" (ibid.). Reporting of the London G20 event converged collective environmentalists, Whitechapel Anarchists and a university lecturer as one violent group against city workers. Newspaper reports in *The Times* (O'Neill, 2009a, 2009b) advised bankers to 'dress down' or 'work from home' on 'police advice' - for fear of violent attacks. Journalists applied a language linking collectives such as the G20, climate camp and Heathrow protesters with wider more fundamental groups. A language of 'terror' pre-empts the protests as potentially violent. *The Times* pre-empted the protest with threats of terrorism as "Hospital all set for victims of G20 violence; London is braced for riots in City streets as protesters vent anger" (O'Neill, 2009b). Adjectives used to define the march included "alert", "injured", "bombings", with protesters expected to "storm buildings". Similarly, *The Guardian*'s adjectives defining the day included "pandemonium", "anarchist cells" and "resurgent anarchists" (28 March 2009:4). This form of 'converging' reaffirms the protesters as being outside of society, or deviants.

A closer comparative study of the language used by a protester from anti-Vietnam (1968) to the climate camp at Heathrow (2008-present) reveals many similarities concerning how the news media shape the identities of protest groups. Much of the evidence here shows a continual reaffirming of a negative framework, prior to events. I suggest this to be a form of power relations and control, to shape public perception of radical protest movements as being violent or potentially violent.

This perception that such protest groups are violent has some merit. Indeed, violence against representations of the state and economy (i.e. not people) is seen as a legitimate

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[6]   The Press Complaints Commission upheld a complaint by Alex Harvey at The Camp for Climate Action on levels of accuracy. The commission found that the *Evening Standard*'s reporter behind the headline had made unsubstantiated claims about the climate camp, whose basis was a conversation with "no more than four protesters… [saying] 'We need to make people sit up and take notice. Leave some packages around Heathrow. That'll make them take notice'". The Commission found these comments were the basis of the headline and article. I would argue that regardless of the post-headline complaint, the *Evening Standard* continues to use the same framework as newspaper reports from the 1960s to reaffirm the idea that protesters are often linked to acts of militancy. This is also evidence that this framework applied to the G20 protests earlier in the year.

[7]   See http://www.g-20meltdown.org/

form of protest by many of these groups. Violence can be applied as a political tool, whereby "certain targets are legitimate" and a "confrontational attitude towards cops or property" (K, 2001:31-32) is seen as acceptable. Such shared belief that violence can be effective against the state leads to an organisational structure through key themes - which means autonomy from state and institutions. The three key themes which organise the "ongoing principles of socialist anarchist thinking; firstly, movements over institutions - a distrust of the state; secondly, attention to 'temporary autonomous zones' and thirdly, a place located to direct action" (Downing, 2003:248). Participants of protest movements can choose at which level, if any, they can engage in violent acts.

Studies (Kingsnorth, 2003; McKay, 1998; Starr, 2006) reveal that the structure of global justice movements follow a colour coordinated coding. As a general rule, violent or actors participating in violence against the state and/or property are advised to "keep it fluffy" or with violence and confrontation "keep it spiky" (McKay, 1998:15). Starr's (2006) study reveals 'fluffies' are often found in 'pink' zones. Green equals safe activities (which run no risk of arrest), yellow zones are defined as non-violent direct action, while 'black' almost always includes a member of 'Black Block' who, at the opposite end of the spectrum, actively seek confrontation. A black block is not a prescribed collective, but more a group of individuals who believe that "violence against the police" is a legitimate political tool, a form of self-defence against the state (Viejo, 2003:371), although some activists see the black block as "a tactic… a dress code. Nothing more" (K, 2001:31). So, for example, during the G20 protest, the red zone would be where 'four horsemen of the apocalypse' converged with police outside the Bank of England, while the climate camp on Bishopsgate, outside the London Stock Exchange, could be either a green or yellow zone. These tactics "aim to achieve revolutionary social change, not social reforms" (Starr, 2006:62), as is "masking-up".

Masking-up is often interpreted as a "threat of violence" (Starr, 2006:70). Protesters mask-up for numerous reasons; some in solidarity with groups who can't speak for themselves, others in support of the Zapatista movement in Mexico, or simply to avoid surveillance by the police and media. One protestor, Eigol (1994, cited in Holloway, 1998), states that "If you say nothing they [the media] can't misquote you. Look away or mask-up if you see a camera pointing at you".

So far, this paper has discussed how newspaper reports of radical protest clearly follow an inferential structure of bias against protesters. Stories, both before and after events ranging from student and anti-war marches (1960s), Greenham Common (1980s) to the Global Justice movement (1999-present), continue to define protesters as 'militant', 'violent' or 'anarchic'. The analysis of newspaper headlines produced forty years apart is evidence that journalists apply the same linguistic style and a similar lexicon to representing radical protests. The result of this is it reaffirms the public opinion that such protests have the potential for violence. Yet, as the 'swoop' demonstrated, Web 2.0 technology can be used to mobilise large numbers of people, and bypass the mainstream media. The rhizomatic nature of the Internet and new technological developments in modes of communication, I suggest, opens up a *gap* between mainstream and alternative

media forms and, importantly, challenges Hall's notion that "once the inferential structure is established, then it becomes more difficult to alter" (1978: 58-9). In the next section, I will explore the possible reasons why this gap has emerged and suggest that protesters are potentially becoming gatekeepers.

The Future for Representation of Radical Protests

Simon Cottle's argument in *Reporting Demonstrations* states the multifarious nature or, to borrow his term, the "cacophonous field of protest" combined with a "media ecology and complex communication flows" (2008:7) means it should be increasingly difficult for mainstream media to continue a biased representation of protest movements. Cottle's general argument highlights how protests in the twenty-first century no longer focus on environmental or anti-capitalism, but in today's society political protests include a variety of discourses and ideology. Large protests in the UK more recently have been from the British Tamil Forum (2009), Countryside Alliance (2004), Fathers4Justice (2004) and Stop the War (2003). The wide variety of ideologies and causes means that "much has changed since earlier studies documented how the mainstream news media invariably report protests and demonstrations through a dominant law and (dis)order frame, labelling protesters as deviant, spectacle and violence" (Cottle, 2008:5). Each protest group adopts different tactics to raise awareness, from hunger strikes (Tamil protest) to dressing as Batman (Fathers4Justice) - all have websites, but I suggest it is the global justice movements and climate camp protest groups which are utilising the gap between old media discourses and new media and Web 2.0 technologies.

The correlation between the 'non-hierarchical' (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2004) or the 'hypertextual architecture' (Kahn and Kelner, 2003) of the Internet and new social movements makes for a symbiotic relationship between new forms of communication. The most obvious example is Indy Media - an autonomous Internet site where users are both producers and consumers of news and events. Websites such as Indy Media act as "communication nodes for political resistance on both local and international issues" (Downing, 2003:243). Since the early days of Indy Media (in 1999) to the present day, collectives have used the Internet as their main source for publishing news stories. IMC reports and footage of the Seattle protests (1999) came from around "100 independent videographers [who] roamed the streets during the confrontations… and so were able to capture the reasons people were there in their own words… not the 'violent anti-trade flat-earthers' story that widely circulated in mainstream accounts" (Downing, 2003:251).

Websites are not only a source of information for collectives and protest movements, but have also become a source of information for the mainstream media. The Internet has allowed websites to become "sources of contact, interest and information, seeking to become sources of news journalism in search of content" (Hutchins and Lester, 2009:583). For example, with the 'No Third Runway' protests by both Greenpeace (February 2009) and the anti-aviation collective 'Plane Stupid' (February 2009), media houses such as the BBC and Sky News carried images from the websites of each collective. Greenpeace has placed images of their protests onto their website, and news

reports have carried images directly from the website. Plane Stupid and Greenpeace also placed contact details onto the website as a direct source for mainstream news reporters. In both cases, journalists were able to speak directly with the protesters during the direct action.

The Camp for Climate Action has take the relationship between the Internet and traditional forms of news sources one step further by utilising a media tent. Their aim is to contest "media power" and develop "new forms of communication" (Couldry, 2003:40), whereby mobile phone and miniature cameras offer an opportunity to create new media frames. Hutchins and Lester show that rather than challenging the protesters' need for access to traditional forms of new media, the Internet provides an opportunity to "bypass corporate, multinational media" and to "become another device in the strategic toolbox of the environmental movement for gaining mainstream news media access" (2009:580-581). It is exactly this approach which those behind the G8, G20 and Camp for Climate Action (2009) protests utilised via the non-hierarchical architecture of the Internet. Unlike previous protest movements, the G8, G20 and the three climate camps have an "ideology of alternative media, without the counterculture label and ideology certainty of previous decades" (Lovink, 2002:254). This new shift came about before the G8 protests of 2005, when activists began producing their own media and worked with the mainstream media. Traditionally, radical protest groups have shunned any relationship with the media, but the development of new technologies was an opportunity to challenge the hierarchical credibility of mainstream media. The effect was to create "new hybrid forms of media consumption-production which challenge the entrenched division on labour (producer vs. consumer of media narratives) that is the essence of media power" (Couldry, 2003:45). A media tent is part of a school of thought which explores and experiments with the "emancipatory and democratizing potential of new media technologies" (Hutchins and Lester, 2009:581). Protest movements are becoming their own gatekeepers, which was abundantly clear at the recent Camp for Climate Action.

At this camp, aside from the welcome tent, much of the focus was on the media tent. Protesters were offered workshops and leaflets on citizen journalism and its potential to shift away from negative representation. Workshops were there to "do media work, from making an online sensation with your mobile phone to staying on message" (Anon, 2009:9). Footage was then uploaded to VisionON.TV,[8] which encourages and trains activists to produce their own news and commentary footage. Leaflets advised potential journalists and film makers on the fundamental elements of news reporting. The media tent provided a template for a 'one minute news report', adopting the basic journalism principle of the inverted pyramid - the where, what, who and why of a news story.

The media tent, the hub of VisionON.TV, aims to (and does) compete with mainstream media. Protesters' engagement with mainstream media houses is unique to the camps, and is clearly part of a media strategy. The strategy is to get a message across - that the

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[8]   http://VisionON.tv

camp is trying to educate people on the effects of climate change. This is a hybrid form of media relations, as it appears to contradict the autonomous and non-hierarchical paradigm associated with radical protest movements. It is unlike previous protests, understood in terms of ideology that aims for an autonomous civil society, whose foundation is built on informal grass roots networks and who engages in direct action and cultural politics (Martell, 1994). It neither fully adopts that "the social movement perspective emphasises a lack of hierarchy and formal organisation" (Jordan and Maloney, 1997:47) or that the "pressure group perspective focuses on the groups' relationship to the political system" (Lowe and Goyder, cited in Jordan and Maloney, 1997:47). This 'new' form is neither autonomous nor organised; it is a hybrid of previous protest movements, which engages in new forms of communication. It puts forwards the argument that if a protest group is to be effective, it must fill a gap in the media market. What I find problematic with this approach is not the shift in engaging with mainstream media but, as previously shown, a lack of engagement leads to a bias in reporting. Neither do I discourage citizen journalism, as evidence shows there is clearly greater news value in mobile phone footage than more traditional forms of news reporting. For example, the mobile phone footage of a policeman pushing Ian Tomlinson to the ground just before his death was central to the media narrative of the event. Indeed, as Cottle (2008) rightfully argues, today's plethora of protests and changes to society and culture means that the media's continual use of bias is neither effective nor conducive to debate on the merit of protest as a political tool. What I find problematic is the 'pick and mix' elements of new social movements and lack of autonomy.

The camp 'handbook' advises participants that "TV crews and press photographers are allowed in the camp between 10am and 7pm, so long as they have a friendly guide from the media team" (Campbell, 2009:12). Media spots can be arranged outside of these hours providing "[journalists] are accompanied on and off the site" (ibid). This form of gatekeeping focuses around a nine page handbook (ibid.), which covers the "key message and general guidelines" and advises activists on questions about "The Camp", "The economy and workers", "policing" and "solutions". A key theme to emerge from the document is the ideology that the camp is "building a new movement". Activists are advised to "take control of the interview by bridging the key message", which links political economy with climate change. There are several indicators that this year's camp is about building a movement, "educating" and "training fellow activists" (ibid.). Training comes in the form of templates on news and video production. Again, I find this approach very constructive, but what I find problematic is that each one finishes with the tag line "stick to the template" (ibid.). There is no longer the total autonomy of radical protest; there is a form of control and direction given by some camp members as part of a wider media strategy and gatekeeping by the protest movement.

Overall the G8, G20 and three climate camps show that news media reporting of radical protest groups has been influenced by new technologies and Web 2.0 means of communication. This latest protest cycle has built on the loose organisational elements of previous movements. The addition of the Internet means they can engage or bypass the mainstream media on their own terms. By producing media images, VisionON.TV co-

ordinator Hamish Campbell argues "it is better to have a carnivalesque image, than a violent one".[9] Yet, I suggest, projecting a carnivalesque image depoliticises their attempt to "build a movement" (Campbell, 2009) and, just as the definition of anti-Vietnam protesters as "young hooligans" (Halloran *et al.*, 1970:216), it empties the protest of any political context. By removing any political context from such events, I argue that the mainstream media can return to an inferential structure. There is already evidence that news organisations are following the pattern of protesters by embedding themselves in with protests.

At the recent G20 protest, journalists were reporting on events, not from the traditional position behind police lines, but from within the protest itself. Echoing the style of Indy Media reports, journalists are now "working inside the demonstrations, not on the other side of the police lines" (Downing, 2003,251). In the past, journalists have often positioned themselves at a distance from events, in a safe area, detached from the story while observing events. Just as the early IMC videographers were in amongst the activists, at G20 some national newspaper journalists were no longer the 'other side of police lines', but part of the protest. I suggest this has an impact on the inferential framework, for journalists were able to witness for themselves the events of the day and, in the case of G20, the confrontational nature of the police tactics used. Indeed, much of the coverage of the G20 protest focused on the police tactic of 'kettling' - a panoptical approach that surrounds the protesters to contain and observe. Because journalists had adopted the same position as the protesters it became the focus of subsequent news reports - even though the tactic had been used at the May Day protest back in 2002, it was presented as a practical police tactic. This is evidence of journalists also filling the gap with new technologies, but with far greater resources they will be able to maintain a hierarchical credibility.

Conclusion

This paper has shown how, since the late 1960s until the present day, there has been a continual reaffirming of UK-based radical protests and protestors being violent and aggressive. The repetitive use of linguistic terms such as 'militant', 'extremism' and 'violent', and the convergence between 'fluffy' and 'spiky' collectives shapes public opinion that radical protest is violent. This convergence is then set against wider social issues of terrorism and conflating protest, with the 'other' as aggressors against the state. The last decade has seen an increase in new media technologies. The rhizomatic nature and hypertextual architecture of the Internet, along with Web 2.0 developments, allows for wider, non-hierarchical forms of communication, mirroring the loose organisational position of radical protesters. New media means radical protest collectives can bypass traditional forms of media, and websites can be used as a new source for journalists. As Cottle (2008) notes, the media cannot continue to use the inferential structure as it stifles political debate. However, the alternative put forward by VisionON.TV could equally

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[9]   This issue was discussed in a private conversation between Hamish and myself at the 2009 Summer Camp (on 24 August 2009).

depoliticize their ideologies and attempts to build a new movement. A new movement using new media is neither autonomous nor organised. It is a hybrid form of new social movement with a 'managed' media strategy. It may be the future of radical protest in the UK, but it runs the risk of being overtaken by the mainstream media with their own tactics.

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