

**The London School of Economics and Political
Science**

*'I Predict a Riot' – Mediation and Political
Contention: Dissent!'s media practices at the 2005
Gleneagles G8 Summit*

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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Abstract

International meetings such as the G8 Summit have evolved from the sequestered gatherings of the economic elite to full-scale political media events. Using the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit as a case study, and focusing on one specific 'autonomous' activist network – Dissent! – this thesis investigates how the process of mediation is articulated in activists' practices in preparing and enacting acts of contention. Dominant approaches to such events in the field of media and communications are often text-centred, focussing on the media's framing of protest, overlooking the actions against and interactions with the media at such sites. This oversight is significant given that contemporary political struggle occurs on the ground, as well as with and through the media.

The theoretical framework applies past media/movement scholarship to emerging discourses on mediation which view media – its content, producers, users, technologies, culture and rituals – as an ongoing and reflexive process, actualised through analysing activists' media-oriented practices (Couldry, 2004, Silverstone, 2005). The methodological approach follows Burawoy's (1998) "extended method" drawing on a year of participant observation and 32 in-depth interviews.

Analysis is undertaken on an activist, group and network level; before and at the Summit. The findings show that activists demonstrate a reflexive awareness of media, including lay theories of media which inform their actions. On a network-level, Dissent! established a policy abstaining from media interaction. Yet, despite this, on a group-level, the CounterSpin Collective formed within Dissent! to manage media interest. The Collective's media practices are shown to be characterised by a strategy of dual adaptation; adapting to both Dissent!'s political limitations and the media's demands. The analysis of the site of protest in Scotland – Hori-Zone eco-village – and the protest actions undertaken from it, further demonstrates the way in which media orients and permeates activists practices. The concept of spectacular action is developed to analyse a shift in the type of protest activities conducted at a media event from direct action to the simulation of direct action, valuing symbolic over physical disruption.

This thesis contributes to a growing interest in the concept of mediation through the emerging field of media practice, offering both empirical evidence and revised theory. Moreover it addresses the largely neglected role of the media in social movement literature. Research undertaken also demonstrates how the logic of media now permeates the practice of activism, marking the rise of spectacular action as a cause for concern for both activists and academics.

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TABLE of CONTENTS

Declaration.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	10
List of Tables and Figures.....	11
Chapter 1: Introduction - From Birmingham to Gleneagles.....	12
<i>Central and Sub Research Questions.....</i>	<i>17</i>
1.1 Contextualising the Current Cycle of Contention.....	23
1.2 Gleneagles G8 Summit: Actors and Actions.....	27
<i>The G8: What is it?.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Make Poverty History and Live 8.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>G8 Alternatives.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Dissent! A Network of Resistance Against the G8.....</i>	<i>36</i>
1.3 Thesis Chapter Plan.....	47
Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework: Mediation - Life in the Mediapolis.....	53
<i>Mediation – A Theoretical Orientation.....</i>	<i>56</i>
2.2 Mediation, Power and Political Contention.....	58
2.3 Mediation and Practice.....	65
<i>Practice and Lay Theories of Media.....</i>	<i>69</i>
2.4 Differentiating “Levels” of the Global Justice Movement.....	73
2.5 The Media/Movement Dynamic – Three Alternate Approaches.....	78
<i>Text-Centred Approaches.....</i>	<i>79</i>
<i>Relational Approaches.....</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>Alternative-media Approaches.....</i>	<i>88</i>
2.6 Routinised Media Events: Inside the Media Frame.....	93
<i>Media Events.....</i>	<i>94</i>
<i>The G8 as a Hybrid Site.....</i>	<i>99</i>
2.7 Conclusion.....	109

Chapter 3: Methodology	114
3.1 Selecting the Modes and Methods of Research	115
<i>Mediation and the Extended Case Method.....</i>	<i>118</i>
3.2 Case Selection and Rationale.....	124
<i>Selecting Dissent!.....</i>	<i>125</i>
<i>An emphasis on lay people.....</i>	<i>127</i>
<i>Drilling Down – Studying Dissent!</i>	<i>128</i>
3.3 Data Collection, Research Techniques and Analysis.....	135
<i>Interviews.....</i>	<i>135</i>
<i>Interview Sample and Recruitment</i>	<i>137</i>
<i>Participant Observation.....</i>	<i>144</i>
<i>Data Coding, Analysis and Challenges.....</i>	<i>150</i>
3.4 Practical Issues in Fieldwork.....	156
<i>Role of the Researcher: An Activist and an Academic?</i>	<i>156</i>
<i>Ethics.....</i>	<i>158</i>
<i>Time and Access – On the Ground.....</i>	<i>159</i>
3.5 Conclusion	160
Chapter 4: Media-Oriented Practices in the Mediapolis	164
4.1 Self-Reported News Media Practices	167
4.2 Lay Theories of News – Perceptions of how the media works	174
1) <i>Economics of News</i>	<i>175</i>
2) <i>Production of News.....</i>	<i>177</i>
3) <i>Defining news: Three elements.....</i>	<i>180</i>
4.3 G8 Summit – Perceived News Scripts and the Gleneagles G8 Summit	188
<i>News Scripts: Implications for Action.....</i>	<i>198</i>
4.4 G8 as a Media Event: Selecting the G8 Leaders Summit and a ‘Duty’ to Protest.....	201
<i>A “Duty” to Protest</i>	<i>202</i>
4.5 Conclusions	205
Chapter 5: Dissent!’s Media Policy and the Rise of the CounterSpin Collective.....	212
5.1 Network Abstention: The Devolution of Media Strategy, From October 2003 to February 2004	216
5.2 Contemplating Adaptation: From Local Geographies to Event-Oriented Logistics	227

5.3 Adaptation in Action: The Festival of Dissent	230
5.4 Accommodating Adaptation: The Rise of the CounterSpin Collective.....	234
5.5 Abstention and Dual Adaptation: The CounterSpin Collective and the “Final Media Policy” ...	242
<i>CSC, At Your Service</i>	<i>243</i>
<i>The Final Media Policy.....</i>	<i>245</i>
5.6 Chapter Conclusions	248
Chapter 6: The CounterSpin Collective – Media-Oriented Practices and the Strategy of Dual Adaptation.....	252
6.1 Media as a Site of Struggle? Understanding the CSC	253
6.2 Digital Dissent!: CSC media-oriented practices in the build-up to the Gleneagles G8 Summit..	255
<i>Organising Online: A tale of two listservs</i>	<i>256</i>
<i>Unpacking Adaptation: Media-oriented Practices of the CSC</i>	<i>261</i>
1) <i>Network-facing communication.....</i>	<i>261</i>
2) <i>Research</i>	<i>263</i>
3) <i>Representation</i>	<i>269</i>
6.3 Offline and On the Ground: CSC Media-oriented Practices at Gleneagles and the Strategy of Dual Adaptation	280
<i>Media Contacts – Friends and Foes</i>	<i>283</i>
<i>“Random” Interviewees.....</i>	<i>288</i>
6.4 Reflections on the CSC and its Repertoire of Media-oriented Practices	291
6.5 Conclusion.....	295
Chapter 7: Inside the Media Frame.....	300
7.1 Hori-Zone: A Space Inside the Media Frame	303
1) <i>Creation of a “No Mainstream Media On Site” policy</i>	<i>313</i>
2) <i>Hori-Zone Media “Open Hour”</i>	<i>317</i>
3) <i>The CounterSpin Collective and the “Media Gazebo”</i>	<i>320</i>
7.2 A Day of “Spectacular” Action: Mass Blockades Inside the Media Frame.....	324
7.3 Blockades as Direct Action	334
7.4 Blockades as Spectacular Action.....	337
7.5 The July 7th London Bombings – “We had our 15 minutes”	343
<i>The Media Frame Closes, the Camp Stays Open.....</i>	<i>345</i>
<i>Closure – Activist Action, Reflection and Representation.....</i>	<i>349</i>

7.6 Conclusion.....	352
Chapter 8. Conclusions	359
8.1 Reflections on Research Design and Method	362
8.2 Key Empirical Findings	365
1) Activists.....	366
2) Network – Dissent!	369
3) Group – CounterSpin Collective.....	370
4) Site of protest	375
8.3 Contribution of Empirical Findings to Theory	376
<i>Mediation, Practice and Lay Theories of the Media.....</i>	<i>376</i>
<i>Political Struggle in the Mediapolis.....</i>	<i>380</i>
<i>Media and Social Movement Literature.....</i>	<i>383</i>
8.4 Discussion and Ways Forward	387
Works Cited	398
Appendices	432
<i>Appendix 1: Interviewee Profiles</i>	<i>432</i>
<i>Appendix 2: Dissent! Network Timeline and Events Attended During Fieldwork</i>	<i>436</i>
<i>Appendix 3: G8 Alternatives - Membership and Activities</i>	<i>440</i>
<i>Appendix 4: Interview Schedule Pre-G8.....</i>	<i>442</i>
<i>Appendix 5: Interview Schedule Post-G8.....</i>	<i>444</i>
<i>Appendix 6: Interview Consent Form</i>	<i>446</i>
<i>Appendix 7: Data Disk.....</i>	<i>447</i>

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAL = Activist Action List
CSC = CounterSpin Collective
EDA = Environmental Direct Action Movement
EF! = Earth First!
EGMSG = Edinburgh and Glasgow Media Strategy Group
FTAA = Free Trade Area of the Americas
FAQ = Frequently Asked Questions
FoD = Festival of Dissent!
G8A = G8 Alternatives
GJM = Global justice movement
ICT = Information and Communication Technologies
IFI = International Financial Institution
IMC = Independent Media Centre
MPH = Make Poverty History
MRL= Media Response List
MRT = Media Response Team
MSL = Media Strategy List
NGO= Non-governmental organisation
NSM = New Social Movements
NVDA = Non-violent direct action
PGA = People's Global Action
RoC = Repertoire of Collective Action
RTS = Reclaim the Streets
SMO = Social Movement Organisation
TSMO= Transnational Social Movement Organisation
TMs = Transnational movements against neoliberal globalisation
WTO = World Trade Organisation

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Sub-research questions and empirical chapters	50
Table 2: Overview of research techniques and data sources.....	162
Table 3: Dissent! Network convergences and media strategy phases	215
Table 4: CSC media-oriented practices deployed prior to and at the G8 Gleneagles Summit.....	261
Table 5: Overview of letters to the editor submitted by CSC members	272
Figure 1: July 2 nd Make Poverty History march.....	32
Figure 2: Storefront seen on the route of the July 2 nd MPH march.....	32
Figure 3: Graffiti seen on the streets of Edinburgh, July 2005.	39
Figure 4: Dissent!-affiliated banner "Make Capitalism History" at MPH march.....	41
Figure 5: The Infernal Noise Brigade, Make Poverty History march.....	42
Figure 6: Discarded placards at the Make Poverty History march.....	42
Figure 7: Policing of the July 4 th "Carnival" in Edinburgh, Scotland.....	44
Figure 8: Activists demonstrating during July 4 th "Carnival" in Edinburgh, Scotland.....	44
Figure 9: Researcher position	149
Figure 10: Graph of emails posted to the media strategy listserv.....	258
Figure 11: Graph of emails posted to the media response listserv.....	259
Figure 12: Inside Hori-Zone camping area	306
Figure 13: Map of the location of Hori-Zone, Stirling, Scotland.	311
Figure 14: Entrance of Hori-Zone, Stirling, Scotland.....	316
Figure 15: London bombing memorial created at Hori-Zone.....	351

Chapter 1: Introduction - From Birmingham to Gleneagles

On May 16, 1998, in Birmingham, England, 50,000 activists formed a human chain around the International Convention Centre, the site of the 24th G8 Leaders Summit. The symbolic protest was organised by the international religious and nongovernmental organisation (NGO) collation Jubilee 2000 to call on G8 leaders to drop debt owed by developing countries (Harding, 1998). Later that day the environmental group Reclaim the Streets (RTS) who had previously expressed intentions of protesting at the G8 (Burrell, 1998), held a street party in the city's centre to protest "car culture" resulting in what the BBC reported as "clashes" (BBC News, 1998) between demonstrators and police. The protests received little media attention with *The Observer*, folding coverage of the "clashes" into an article about football hooliganism (Mchardy & Midgley, 1998).

In retrospect, the Birmingham G8 Summit stands as an early example of action by the anti-capitalist movement. A little over a year later saw the J18 "Carnival Against Capitalism" held in the City of London¹. The London protests resulted in property damage as well as "riots" (Bale, 1999) in Trafalgar Square. It was the J18 action that catapulted the anti-capitalist movement to the attention of the British media.

Klein (2000) has argued the global 'coming out party' for the anti-capitalist movement came five months after J18 with the now infamous protests at the November 1999 World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Seattle,

¹ The J18 protests were part of a larger Global Day of Action (Infoshop.org, 1999).

Washington. Although this may have been the point where the movement came into the spotlight, Seattle did not mark the start of demonstrations against international organisations. Rucht (1999) has shown that protests accompanying the meetings of international organisations preceded the demonstrations in Seattle by at least a decade. However, Bennett convincingly argues that protests arising out of Seattle are independently significant for their “global scale, organizational complexity, and *communication strategies*” (2003a, p. 123, my emphasis).

Such demonstrations have been attributed the “movement of movements” (Klein, 2000; Mertes, 2004), “anti-globalisation movement” (Ayres, 2004; Gollain & Stephens, 2002; Ryder, 2003; Seoane, 2002; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2002), “anti-capitalist movement” (Bramble & Minns, 2005; Donson, Chesters, Welsh, & Tickle, 2004; Welsh, 2002), “anti-corporate globalization” (Juris, 2005a), or the term preferred in this thesis for its removal of the negative adjective “anti”, “Global Justice Movement” (GJM)².

The 31st annual G8 Leaders Summit took place at the five star Gleneagles Hotel between July 6th - 8th, 2005. Unlike the Birmingham G8 Summit seven years prior, the Gleneagles Summit was held in the wake of a series of loosely coordinated mobilisations against international institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, WTO, World Economic Forum and the G8 itself. The delineable history of protest positioned the Gleneagles G8 Summit as

² The term “Global Justice Movement” has been deliberately selected as a blanket term to refer to the cycle of mobilisations which began with the 1999 Seattle demonstrations against the WTO. The term has been used by academics including Klobb (2005) and Della Porta (2005). I feel “Global Justice Movement” best reflects what I understand to be the goals and motivations of the movement and is in line with other academic studies (Atkinson, 2006).

a significant episode in an ongoing cycle of domestic and international contention that has played out in newspapers, on television and on computer screens since (and arguably before) the 1999 WTO protests.

This thesis argues that the activities of the Global Justice Movement are significant both for their use ICTs (Bennett, 2003a) but also for their role in the transformation of Summit-style protests into international “media events” (Dayan & Katz, 1992), confirming contemporary political struggle as something that not only occurs on the ground but simultaneously through and with the media. This thesis is driven by a desire to ask what is it like for political actors to organise and engage in acts of contentious politics in a media-saturated society, and what the consequences are of this? Moreover, what does this reconfiguration of politics reveal about the relationship between the media and social movement actors as provocateurs and catalysts of social change?

This thesis presents an analysis of a specific event within the cycle of contention – the Gleneagles G8 Summit – paying specific attention to one network – Dissent! – and the impact of mainstream media on the configuration and deployment of contentious politics by this network.

The project emerged from personal activist involvement. At the close of the Genoa G8 Summit it was announced that the 2002 G8 Summit would be held in Canada. Months later, the location was revealed as Kananaskis, Alberta. The closest major city to Kananaskis was Calgary, where I was living at the time. Once the summit location was confirmed, I immediately became involved in organising demonstrations against the Summit. This was undertaken not under

the banner of an NGO but through a purpose-oriented grassroots network: the *G8 Activist Network*.

The media coverage in Calgary played out like many previous demonstrations, with the “activist threat” topping the media agenda. However it wasn’t just local media interested in the violence angle, but international media too. Well in advance of the Summit, it was clear there would be a large media presence in Calgary. Activists thought a plan was needed to try and manage the representation of demonstrators in the media. So, along with assisting with other aspects of the mobilisation, I became involved in setting-up the unofficial “media group” for the network. As with many consensus-based mobilisations, the group did not have any media spokespeople but the goal was to try and cope with the deluge of media interest and use the opportunity to our advantage. The Summit came and went. A database of media contacts was amassed and utilised. Interviews were given, press was monitored and some journalists were blackballed. Despite our efforts, familiar media headlines appeared during the Summit and as soon as the Summit ended, the protests were off the media radar.

Despite not studying the Kananaskis G8 Summit, the inspiration for studying the relationship between social movement actors and the media is rooted in my experiences there, where I was puzzled by the disconnect between the media coverage of the event, the perceptions people had of the event, and my experiences as an “insider” organising demonstrations. It became clear that my perception of events was not the same as what I saw playing out in the

media. After returning my focus to academic endeavours, I began to explore the issue of social movements where Gitlin (1980) became an important source of inspiration for thinking about the relationship between social movements and the media³. In the shadow of Gitlin and in designing my research, it became clear there already existed a healthy amount of research on how the media tend to portray social movements. There also appeared to be an existing literature on how formal social movement organisations deal with media. There was little information, however, on how autonomous networks – such as those I participated in Calgary – deal with media. I also felt that both media and social movement theorists had undervalued the knowledge that “unprofessional” social movement actors have of the media. I noticed a “common knowledge” of media existed amongst these groups, and was used to navigate and interact with media. However the use of these “lay theories” was not acknowledged by academics. Consequently, this thesis has evolved, in part, to address this oversight as the formulation of “lay theories of media” in Chapter 2, and its empirical analysis in Chapter 4, demonstrates. The central research question and the sub-questions of this thesis were also influenced by my experiences in Calgary on a more general level, as reflected in the emphasis on media-oriented practices.

³ While this thesis does not replicate Gitlin (1980) as far less emphasis is placed on analysing media output, the study featured prominently in early discussions about my research with my advisors. Thus, while it is not referenced extensively, its formative role in my work is acknowledged.

Central and Sub Research Questions

The central research question driving this thesis asks:

How is the process of mediation articulated in the practices of Global Justice Movement activists towards mainstream media in the preparation for and enactment of acts of contention at a political media event?

The above question is both broad and ambitious. In its current form, my research requires both theoretical and empirical specification. Theoretically, concepts within the central research question must be contextualised and unpacked, necessitating the articulation of sub-research questions. Empirically, the political media event as well as the type of activists must be specified and links to the wider research questions forged.

As already intimated, this thesis uses the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit as an example of a political media event in order to analyse the ways in which mainstream media are incorporated into activist practice in the preparation for and enactment of political contention. There were three networks who organised protests against the Gleneagles G8 Summit: Make Poverty History (MPH), G8 Alternatives (G8A) and Dissent!. Briefly, Dissent! – the focus of this thesis – was chosen both for methodological issues of trust and for practical necessity. It was also selected for its lack of a formal organisational structure which meant that Dissent! did not have a top-down media strategy, nor did it appoint formal media spokespeople. Instead, network members had to internally negotiate how, if at all, mainstream media would be responded to. These characteristics of Dissent!, and similarities with the network in Calgary, were seen as affording an excellent opportunity to study how mainstream media influenced and was incorporated by

activists in the planning and execution of an act of political contention at a political media event.

The shift from the general category of “activists” discussed in the central research question to the specific network of Dissent! at the Gleneagles G8 Summit narrows the academic aperture of this thesis. However the study of any Global Justice Movement network and, in the case of this research Dissent!, requires conceptual work to analytically differentiate between the overlapping and often fluid levels of organisation within it. To this end and as argued in Chapter 2, I achieve this by conceptualising social movements as consisting of four distinct but overlapping levels: (1) activists, (2) group, (3) network and (4) movement. I am aware that these distinctions make empirical realities appear more clear-cut than they actually are. However, they also allow me to unpack my central research question to query the actions of individuals and groups within Dissent!, as well as consider the network as a whole. The movement-level is not studied in this thesis but recognised conceptually to situate the other three within it. With the layers acknowledged, the central research question is divided into the following four sub-research questions:

1. How is the process of mediation articulated in activists' conceptualisations of the practices and routines of mainstream news media and more specifically in relation to political media events?
2. Drawing on Rucht's (2004) "Quadruple A framework," within the context of a political media event, how can the way in which mainstream news media interaction is planned for, managed and responded to be understood?
3. What are the media-oriented practices devised and deployed to manage mainstream news media interaction within Dissent! and

specifically by the CounterSpin Collective in the lead up to and during a political media event and what are the implications of such practices?

4. How does the presence of mainstream media, and processes of mediation more generally, impact on the practice of contention at the site of a political media event?

As will be shown in the last section of this chapter, each of the sub-research questions is the focus of its own empirical chapter. This thesis, through the sub-research questions and the central research question undertakes to contribute a mediation perspective to the rapidly expanding body of research on the rise of global social movements and studies of the Global Justice Movement sparked by the actions at and since Seattle (see: Cohen & Rai, 2000; Glasius, Kaldor, & Anheier, 2002; Green & Griffith, 2002; Guidry, Kennedy, & Zald, 2000; Jiménez, 2003; Kaldor, Anheier, & Glasius, 2003; Seoane, 2002; Sklair, 2002; Smith, 2002; Starr, 2000; Tilly, 2003). As will be argued in Chapter 2, within the field of media and communications, scholars interested in the current cycle of mobilisation have focused largely, though not exclusively, on the impact of computer media communication on social movement structure (Atkinson & Dougherty, 2006; Ayers, 1999; Bennett, 2003a, 2003b; Bob, 2005; Cammaerts, 2005a, 2005b, 2007; Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007; Castells, 1997, 2007; Chadwick, 2006; Costanza-Chock, 2003; Cottle, 2006, 2008; de Jong, Shaw, & Stammers, 2005; Della Porta & Mosca, 2005; Diani, 2000; Downing, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2006; Downing, Villarreal Ford, Gil, & Stein, 2001; Fenton, 2007, 2008; Juris, 2008a, 2008b; Keck & Sikkink, 1998a, 1998b; Langman, 2005; Mamadouh, 2004; Pickerill, 2003; Rheingold, 2002; Routledge, 2000; Rucht, 1999, 2004; N. Snow, 2003; Tarrow, 2002b, 2005; Welsh & Chesters, 2001).

More generally, media and communication scholars who have studied the interactions between media and social movements tended to take one of three general approaches. They have either taken a *text-centred* approach analysing media output often involving the “framing” of events (Ayres, 2004; Craig, 2002; McFarlane & Hay, 2003); a *relational approach* studying the asymmetrical “relationship” between social movement organisations (SMOs) and the media (1991, 1993, 1997; Carroll & Ratner, 1999; Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Gitlin, 1980; Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986; Wolfsfeld, 1984, 1991, 2003); or they have taken an *alternative-media* approach examining how social movement actors create and use new, computer-mediated and alternative media which has particularly focussed on the rise of Indymedia (Atton, 2003; Downing, 2002, 2003a, 2003b; Downing et al., 2001).

This thesis argues previous approaches have fallen short on two fronts. First, while much is known about how media tend to portray protestors, there is little research on how social movement actors use and interact with traditional media. Research that does exist chronicles the media strategies of formal organisations – often NGOs or political parties – but less is known about the processes “unprofessional” networks engage in. This gap in knowledge is significant as networks such as Dissent! are typical of the type of grassroots autonomous networks associated with the GJM and while their mobilisation strategies have attracted academic attention, their media strategies have remained overlooked. The gap is also significant as the individuals involved in such networks are not paid professionals, nor are they necessarily trained in

media but are ‘free radicals’ who draw on their individual and collective knowledge about, and experience with media to inform themselves and orient their (re)actions. I argue that it is not just media professionals who think strategically about media but it is a regular and unavoidable – though empirically neglected and underappreciated – feature of activist practice.

Second, a key argument of this thesis is that the Gleneagles G8 Summit is representative of a new type of heavily-mediated, politically-motivated social movement event. While DeLuca (1999) has helpfully put forward the concept of “image events”, and Scalmer (2002) has suggested the “dissent event”, the focus of both authors has been on political stunts performed to capture the media’s attention. However, this thesis argues that the Gleneagles G8 Summit is distinctive in that it was a high profile international media event long before the summit was held. That is, the Gleneagles G8 Summit was not a prolonged campaign waged through the media but a short (3-day), intense, highly mediated occurrence with an established international legacy of media attention. Making this claim moves beyond a simple cataloguing of media event characteristics to open up, problematise and explore how the nature of the G8 Summit as a pre-planned media spectacle transforms, underwrites and arguably orients the actions of social movement actors. Such a perspective goes “inside the media event” (McCurdy, 2008, p. 300) to understand the experience of social movement actors at the event and, extending from this, the implications of the routinisation of such media-event style protests on the effectiveness of social action.

Underwriting the theoretical and methodological approach taken in this thesis is the concept of mediation. Drawing from a growing discourse on mediation (Couldry, 2000; Martin-Barbero, 1993; Silverstone, 1999, 2007; Thompson, 1995) this thesis conceptualises mediation as an uneven and often contested process that involves multiple social actors – individuals and institutions – in the (re)construction, (re)circulation and (re)consumption of symbolic forms. It further recognises that the process of mediation occurs on multiple, overlapping levels across a range of experiences on an ongoing, reflexive basis within the political, social and technological context of a society. The study of mediation, as discussed in Chapter 2 and 3, is realised by analysing social actors’ “media-oriented practices.”

I argue that a mediation approach to the media/movement dynamic is significant because it permits the study of media interaction *as a process* allowing the analysis of how activists have become what Cottle (2008, p. 853) referred to as “reflexively conditioned” by life in the “mediapolis” (Silverstone, 2007, pp. 25-55). This line of inquiry is significant for questioning how social movement actors make sense of, resist and challenge the contemporary power dynamics of media-oriented and particularly media-event politics. Lastly, this thesis responds to a recent call for research made by Cottle (2008, pp. 858-859) to study “How does today’s media ecology mediate the politics of demonstrations and protests?” by presenting an analysis of how the contemporary media ecology – referred to as the mediapolis – influences the dynamics and strategies of

contention at a specific media event (the Gleneagles G8 Summit) and through the study of a specific network (Dissent!).

1.1 Contextualising the Current Cycle of Contention

Social movements are situated within, and the product of, specific social, cultural, political and economic factors (Tarrow, 1998, p. 2-3). Protests against the Gleneagles G8 Summit may be placed within a history of political contention within the United Kingdom, specifically the Environmental Direct Action movement (EDA) as well as within the current cycle of Global Justice Movement protests. My review is not comprehensive, but illustrative in order to emphasize key events and trajectories that influenced the shape of contention at Gleneagles.

Activism and social movements within the United Kingdom have a long history of political struggle with many movements laying the foundation for contemporary political freedoms and struggles. The late and prolific social movement scholar Charles Tilly offers a concise review of social movements from 1768-2004 (Tilly, 2004). Tilly goes even further into the depths of British history with his analysis of *Popular Contention in Great Britain 1758-1834* (Tilly, 2005). While this thesis can not possibly review all movements, studying the present requires acknowledging the past.

The eighteenth century saw the formation and rise of the labour movement in Britain. Trade unions began forming in the 1820s though, until the 1870s, they were largely “craft unions” with workers segregated by their speciality. However, the 1880s saw the rise of new unionism in Britain, Workers

from less skilled occupations that had been traditionally excluded from craft unions began to organise and form unions such as the Dockers' Union, National Union of Dock Labourers, Gasworkers Union and National Sailors' and Firemen's Union. A pivotal point in new union history was the London Dock Strike of 1889 (see: McCarthy, 1998). That same year saw the Trade Union Congress (TUC), which previously was only for craft unions, begin to accept new unions. The TUC went on to facilitate the creation of additional organisations including what became the Labour political party. The labour movement had a strong influence on workers rights and politics in Britain the scale of which can not be captured here. However, the topic has received much attention by historians such as Henry Pelling (1963) and Richard Price (1980) to name but two.

While there were undoubtedly events prior, the mid-eighteenth century saw the first green shoots of the women's movement. Pugh (2000a) offers an account of the rise of the women's movement in Britain and the campaign for suffrage between 1866 and 1914. The publication ends one year after Emily Davison's act of resistance at the Epsom Derby and 14 years before suffrage. Pugh (2000b) offers a more comprehensive analysis of the women's and feminist movement in Britain running from 1914 through each successive decade ending in 1999, just prior to the book's publication. Pugh's account details the rise of women's liberation, feminism, second wave of feminism along with details of additional resources for analysis of the movement.

The anti-fascist movement has also impacted the trajectory of politics and counter-politics in Britain. Copsey (2000) offers an analysis of the British anti-

fascist movement from its roots in the 1920s right into the 1990s. While Copsey's account begins in 1923, he argues that the anti-fascist movement "[reached] maturity at the 'Battle of Cable Street' on 4 October 1936" which saw upwards of 300,000 people mobilise in opposition to the British Union of Fascists (BUF) (2000, pp 12-13). In the years and decades following, the movement took different, often militant and confrontational forms. This included an ongoing challenge to Oswald Mosley's fascist and anti-Semitic BUF through to the actions of the opposition of the National Front from the later 1960s, all of which are documented in Copsey's account.

Byrne (1997) presents a review of the rise of social movements in Britain since the late 1960s arguing that, "it is generally agreed on that there have been four major new social movements in advanced industrial societies over the last thirty years – centred on students, women, environmentalism and peace activists" (p. 26). Plows (2002, p. 19) argues that the EDA is situated on a "continuum" of social movement activity since the student movements of the late 1960s and 1970s, the anti-nuclear movement and within the wider environmental movement of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

The EDA may be differentiated from the wider environmental movement by its commitment to direct action (Plows, 2002). Within the UK, Doherty, Paterson and Seel (2000) argue the birth of the EDA was characterised by a shift towards direct action:

In the 1990s there was a dramatic rise in the amount of direct action...what distinguishes [this] new wave of direct action is an ethos characterised by an intention to affect social and ecological conditions *directly*, even while it also (sometimes) seeks indirect influence

through the mass media, changed practises of politicians and political and economic institutions (Doherty et al., 2000, p. 1).⁴

One of the most prominent organisations of the direct action movement of the 1990s was EarthFirst! (EF!). Wall (1999) offers a detailed and critical historical account of EF!'s rise and actions. Meanwhile Doherty, Paterson and Seel's (2000) edited volume presents a more general analysis of the use of direct action in the British environmental movement.

The politics of the green movement and EF!, specifically with its legacy of anti-roads protests, played a crucial role shaping environmental politics and specifically direct action politics in the UK. Many individuals who were previously involved in EF! were active in Dissent!. Moreover, the politics of Dissent! – its emphasis on autonomy, self organisation, commitment to direct action – can be seen as adoption, adaptations and extensions of past political practices including those of EF!.

Dissent! was also influenced by a legacy of UK-based anti-capitalist demonstrations and the rise of the Global Justice Movement. As stated earlier, the 1999 Seattle demonstrations were the tipping point for the GJM (Klein, 2000). Smith (2002) presents an analysis of the key groups and tactics involved in the Seattle protests while further detail may also be found in Barlow and Clarke (2001). Within the UK, Desai and Said (2001) trace the roots of the anti-capitalist movement, while the larger series *Global Civil Society* (Anheier, Glasius, & Kaldor, 2001; Glasius et al., 2002; Kaldor et al., 2003), of which their chapter is a

⁴ This quote was first read in Plows (2002, p. 19).

part, offers a chronological report of global civil society events in the UK and abroad.

Leclair (2003, p. 3) argues the 1999 “Carnival against Capital” held in London five months before Seattle marked the start of an international series of “major protest carnivals.” Juris (2008a, p. 48-51), who presents a detailed timeline of significant GJM events, identifies the start of the cycle of protest as the 1998 demonstrations against the Birmingham G8 Summit. While the exact date is debateable, what can be agreed is that there were a key series of international protest events in late 1990s which spawned the current cycle of contention. Arguably one of the most iconic events was the 2001 demonstrations against the Genoa G8 Summit which, due to the violence (from police and demonstrators), led summit organisers to move from city centres and head to fortified and isolated locations. Yet after 2001, even with attempts to isolate such meetings, demonstrations continued and the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit was no exception.

1.2 Gleneagles G8 Summit: Actors and Actions

In order to analyse acts of contentious politics directed towards the G8, it was necessary to select both an entrance point and vantage point to conduct this project. A conscious decision was taken to make Dissent! – Network of Resistance Against the G8 (Dissent!) the hub of this study; all the information gathered and recounted for the purposes of this thesis is connected to Dissent!. However, two other networks – Make Poverty History and G8 Alternatives – also mobilised around Gleneagles.

Although all three networks were separate entities and there were some very clear distinctions between them, membership to and participation in one network was not necessarily mutually exclusive. Make Poverty History was the largest of the three networks organising political activities around the Gleneagles Summit and, at its peak, was a network of over 500 British and Irish NGOs, religious groups and high-profile celebrities. The main event MPH organised – a rally in Edinburgh on July 2nd – was attended by 225,000 people (BBC News, 2005d). Moreover, MPH, as will be outlined below, also received additional support from a series of Live 8 concerts which, in London alone, was attended by 200,000 concert goers (ibid).

G8 Alternatives was a network of approximately 30, mostly Scottish, organisations including trade unions, political parties and NGOs. A handful of academics such as Noam Chomsky and low-level celebrities such as Mark Thomas were also affiliated with G8A. G8A organised, among other actions and after much police interference, a marshalled march past the fence of the Gleneagles Hotel on July 6, 2005, the first day of the G8 Summit, which was attended by 10,000 people (Vidal and Scott, 2005).

Dissent! was the smallest of the three networks consisting of a collection of 16 local groups dispersed across the United Kingdom and approximately 20 network working groups. Dissent! network meetings were usually attended by between 40 and 90 people. For the protests in Scotland, Dissent! worked to establish the Hori-Zone eco-village which provided space for 5,000 campers. The network organised a “Day of Action” on July 6th which saw around 1,000 activists

take part in blockade-type actions. Before delving into further specifics about Dissent! actions and the structure of the network itself, a brief overview of the G8 is provided as well as of the two networks not analysed in detail in this thesis, Make Poverty History followed by G8 Alternatives.

The G8: What is it?

The first G8 Summit was held in France in 1975 with six countries in attendance: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the US. In 1976 Canada attended its first G8 Summit and Russia joined in 1984, though did not become a full member until 1988 (Scottish Government, n.d.). The G8 Summit was initially conceived as an informal mechanism for the world's leading industrialised economies to discuss and attempt to resolve pressing economic issues. It has now evolved however to also convene on contemporary political issues specified by the G8. The G8 Summit, which has remained an informal institution, with G8 members taking turns to host meetings on a rotating basis (Bayne, 2005, p. 9).

Beginning with the Birmingham Summit of 1998, the G8 Summit was divided into a series of separate meetings whereby various ministers and heads of state each held their own summits including the creation of "heads-only Summits" (Bayne, 2005, p. 8). The "heads-only" or leaders summits were specifically for the leaders of the G8 countries and their entourages. Even in Birmingham it was the heads-only summit and not the ministerial summits which attracted political contention. As argued in Chapter 5, the same was true for

Gleneagles as activists took a conscious decision to focus almost all of Dissent!'s energy on organising demonstrations for the Gleneagles Leaders Summit.

Make Poverty History and Live 8

Make Poverty History (MPH) endeavoured to become, “the most powerful coalition ever against world poverty” (MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY, 2004b). When first founded, MPH described itself as “a wide cross section of nearly 100 charities, campaigns, trade unions, faith groups and celebrities united by a common belief that 2005 offers a(sic) unprecedented opportunity for global change” (MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY, 2004c). By the time the Gleneagles G8 Summit arrived, MPH membership exceeded over 500 organisations⁵.

The objective of MPH was to lobby for policy change in the areas of trade justice, debt cancellation and aid⁶. To do so, the coalition earmarked 2005 as a year which offered a series of “key moments” (MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY, 2005a) on the British and international calendar including, and most notably, the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit where the coalition called for and organised a “rally” held four days in advance of the Summit (more below).

As argued in Chapter 3, the explicit *professional* nature of the organisations involved in MPH meant that its key decisions were taken in a professional and structured manner. Debates around media tactics and strategies were confined to MPH professionals (MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY, 2006). The role of the individual was to participate in the campaign as instructed.

⁵ A list of MPH organisations may be obtained from:
<http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/whoweare/members-a.shtml>

⁶ The specific details of MPH demands may be found in their manifesto (MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY, 2005c).

Send a text. Send an email. Wear white. Watch a commercial. Watch a concert. Walk in a circle. As MPH themselves stated, “We don't want your money. We want a little bit of your time and your passion, and together we can Make Poverty History” (MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY, 2004a). In sum, MPH was a safe, family friendly, media friendly and media-savvy spectacle, methodically constructed by media professionals to dictate the prescribed participation of individuals in a series of symbolic acts in support of a trifecta of demands determined by the coalition.

The primary Gleneagles-related activity run by MPH was the July 2nd rally which sought to lobby but not criticise the G8. The rally was held in Edinburgh, Scotland on Saturday, July 2nd, 2005, four days prior to the start of the G8 Leaders Summit (See Figures 1 and 2). Individuals attending the event were asked to wear white in order to symbolically encircle Edinburgh in “a giant human white band” (MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY, 2005b, p. 5) much in the same way the Birmingham Convention Centre was encircled during the 1998 G8 Summit.

Organisers envisioned the march as follows:

Campaigners will march around a circular route...By mid afternoon, the march will have encircled the city centre, forming a giant human white band around Edinburgh and creating a message to G8 leaders that enough is enough (MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY, 2005b, p. 5).

According to media reports, the rally was attended by 225,000 people (BBC News, 2005d). That same day an international series of ten coordinated



Figure 1: July 2nd Make Poverty History march.



Figure 2: Storefront seen on the route of the July 2nd MPH march.

“Live 8” concerts were held in each of the G8 countries, as well as in South Africa⁷. The most spectacular of all was held in London’s Hyde Park and was attended by 200,000 concert goers (BBC News, 2005d). Unlike the 1985 “Live Aid” concert organised by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure to raise money for a famine stricken Ethiopia, Live 8 wanted to raise awareness. The series of concerts sought to create a phantasmagorical media spectacle – an unadulterated “media event” (Dayan & Katz, 1992) – through the calculated mobilisation of celebrity capital in the form of rock stars and celebrity endorsements to support MPH’s key messages. Individual participation in Live 8 was limited to the consumption – in person or on television – of the concert.

The use and effectiveness of celebrity capital by Live 8 and MPH for that matter is worthy of its own analysis. However, such a study falls outside the remit of this thesis. Instead, the activities of MPH and Live 8 are offered in order to position Dissent! along side these networks.

G8 Alternatives

G8 Alternatives (G8A) was a purpose-oriented network specifically created to facilitate “peaceful” demonstrations against at Gleneagles. Formed in October 2004, G8A described itself as “a coalition that includes organisations and individuals from a broad range of social movements that are coming together to plan for and organise massive peaceful protests and a counter-summit [against the Gleneagles G8 Summit]” (G8 Alternatives, 2004). Like MPH, there

⁷ For more on the Live 8 concerts such as the cities and artists involved see: <http://www.live8live.com/theconcerts/>

were a number of NGOs involved in G8A along with trade unions, community organisations and political parties such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Green Party⁸.

G8 Alternatives operated by holding a series of public meetings, predominantly in Scotland. Unlike MPH, G8A afforded a greater possibility for participation in the decision making process and the ability to influence the network's activities. Like MPH, G8A were conscious of media interest and issued a series of press releases and made spokespeople available for interviews.

Taking a chronological view of the protest actions either endorsed or initiated by G8A, the first was a statement of support for the July 2nd MPH rally in Edinburgh. On July 3rd, 2005, *G8 Alternatives* held a one day counter-Summit in Edinburgh covering issues such as "climate change" and "globalisation and privatisation" (G8 Alternatives, 2005b). G8A, like Dissent!, supported a blockade of the Royal Navy base Faslane called for by Trident Ploughshares, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and Scottish CND (Faslane G8 Action, 2005). According to organisers, the blockades attracted 2,000 people while police estimated between 600-700 people (BBC News, 2005a).

The primary act of political contention organised and supported by G8A was an unsanctioned march past Gleneagles Hotel on July 6th, 2005, the first day of the Leaders Summit and the same day as Dissent!'s Day of Action (G8 Alternatives, 2005c). G8 Alternatives encountered significant hurdles from the police in attempting to organise the march but it still went ahead as planned. It

⁸ For organisations involved with G8 Alternatives see: Appendix 3.

was attended by 3,000 people according to BBC News (2005c), while *The Guardian* estimated there were up to 10,000 participants (Vidal & Scott, 2005).

The march was intended to follow a planned route which included a walk past the Gleneagles perimeter fence. Predictably, and perhaps inevitably, some activists left the planned route to challenge the security fence resulting in altercations between activists and police. The scenes of rainbow flag waving activists charging a perimeter fence lined with riot police, reinforced by army helicopters, made excellent dramatic copy for the news and marked a visual continuation of the imagery from previous Summits.

On July 7th, the day following the march, the press and tabloids particularly indulged themselves with headlines such as “Extremists riot in G8 rampages; and Bush falls off his bike” (O’Kane, 2005), “March to justice that descended into another riot” (Hardman, 2005). In a page two article entitled “The Battle of Bannockburn II” *The Daily Mail* opened with the leader, “ANARCHIST rioters yesterday stormed the security fence surrounding the G8 summit as a widespread campaign of violence and disruption brought chaos to Scotland” (Ginn, Madeley, Thompson, & Macaskill, 2005). Meanwhile, *The Guardian* ran the headline, “10,000 march and protesters fight running battles with riot police” (Vidal & Scott, 2005), while *The Scotsman* reported “Confrontation: Riot squads repel swarm of activists from ring of steel” (Black, Bowditch, Brown, Chamberlain, Gray, Harrell, Howie, Johnston et al., 2005).

The July 6th march was the pinnacle action for G8A. The action was also attended by members of Dissent!⁹. The media coverage of the 6th, such as the articles quoted above, often mentioned activities associated with the two networks. The next section will discuss some of the actions conducted by Dissent! as well as briefly review relevant media coverage.

Dissent! A Network of Resistance Against the G8

Dissent! emerged as the result of meetings held in London, England during the November 2003 Anarchist Bookfair. The Dissent! website described those who founded the coalition as, “a group of people who have previously been involved in radical ecological direct action, Peoples’ Global Action, the anti-war movement and the global anti-capitalist movement” (Dissent!, 2004a). Like G8 Alternatives, Dissent! was a United Kingdom based network founded to coordinate protests at Gleneagles. However, while G8 Alternatives planning meetings were contained within Scottish borders, Dissent!, as is discussed in Chapter 3, held network meetings across England and Scotland.

Dissent! membership was open to anyone willing to work within the People’s Global Action (PGA) Hallmarks (PGA, 2001). First established in 1998, the PGA was envisioned as “an instrument for communication and coordination” (PGA, n.d.). The PGA Hallmarks presented a common political reference point for anti-capitalist organisations to sign onto facilitating coalition formation and signposting politics. The hallmarks were:

⁹ As will be discussed in Chapter 3, I did not attend the Aucterarder march as I stayed at the Hori-Zone camp for the mobilisation. Accordingly my understanding of the events is based on accounts from people who did attend as well as media reports.

1. A very clear rejection of capitalism, imperialism and feudalism; all trade agreements, institutions and governments that promote destructive globalisation.
2. We reject all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism of all creeds. We embrace the full dignity of all human beings.
3. A confrontational attitude, since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organisations, in which transnational capital is the only real policy-maker.
4. A call to direct action and civil disobedience, support for social movements' struggles, advocating forms of resistance which maximise respect for life and oppressed peoples' rights, as well as the construction of local alternatives to global capitalism.
5. An organisational philosophy based on decentralisation and autonomy. (Dissent!, 2004a).

In the spirit of the PGA, Dissent! was envisioned as a non-hierarchical network comprised of organisations, autonomous collectives and individuals. Dissent!'s structure carried forward the organisational model of loose, purpose oriented networks which have mobilised around international meetings since the late 1990s (Barlow & Clarke, 2001; Cammaerts, 2005a, 2007; de Jong et al., 2005; Fenton, 2008; Harvie, Milburn, Trott, & Watts, 2005; Juris, 2005a, 2005b, 2008a, 2008b; Kaldor et al., 2003; Klein, 2000; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006; Starr, 2000).

Dissent! described itself as follows:

the Network has no central office, no spokespeople, no membership list and no paid staff. It's a mechanism for communication and co-ordination between local groups and working groups involved in building resistance to the G8, and capitalism in general (Dissent!, 2004a).

As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Dissent!'s organisational structure centred around bi-monthly network-wide “convergences” where network decisions were taken. Like *G8 Alternatives*, Dissent! meetings were open to the public, however in the case of Dissent!, journalists were not allowed (in theory) to attend.

Dissent! was characterised by two types of groups: local and working groups. Greater detail is provided in Chapter 3 but, briefly, local groups were

autonomous, geographically-based nodes of Dissent!. They offered a reference point for individuals, affinity groups and various collectives to gather and plan protest on a local level while still connecting with the wider mobilisation. Working groups were, “groups of individuals working together on a specialised aspect of the organisational process” (Dissent!, 2006). They were established around various tasks such as catering, or actions such as blockades.

A key feature of Dissent! was its use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). As both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 argue, ICTs played a vital role in facilitating communication between network members and groups. Concerning the protests enacted by Dissent!, this thesis focuses primarily on the activities conducted from the Hori-Zone eco-village on the July 6th Day of Action. However, in order to contextualise the Day of Action within Dissent!’s wider programme of activities, a brief synopsis of additional actions is warranted which is accompanied by a selective overview of newspaper coverage from the events. A more comprehensive list of Dissent! Actions is provided in Appendix 2.

Dissent!-related activities began three weeks before the G8 Summit with the Cre8 Summit. Initially called “Fix Shit Up”, Cre8 Summit took place in Glasgow from June 12th – 17th and sought to use “guerrilla gardening” tactics to transform a derelict site into a community garden (see: Roman 2005). On June 28th a weeklong counter-Summit entitled “Days of Dissent! Edinburgh Convergence 2005 – Turning Ideas into Action” opened at the Teviot building, University of Edinburgh (Dissent!, 2005b). The gathering, which was jointly organised with Edinburgh People and Planet, offered a series of workshops as

well as meetings to discuss and plan protests, a full outline of which is provided in Appendix 7.

Dissent!'s first major act of contention took place on July 2nd, 2005 with its participation in the MPH rally (see Figures 4, 5, 6). Dissent! did not march in support of the rally objectives but in “critical solidarity” with it and encouraged its members to dress in bright colours or black to visually resist the MPH dress code. The ‘rally’ was also seen as an opportunity to promote the Dissent! July 6th Day of Action and flyers to this effect were distributed which read “Make History: Shut Down the G8.” Dissent!'s participation in the MPH march was largely uneventful; the majority of members who mobilised appeared to participate in the action¹⁰. There was, however, a small altercation with police but media attention on the dispute was, for the most part, drowned out by MPH coverage.

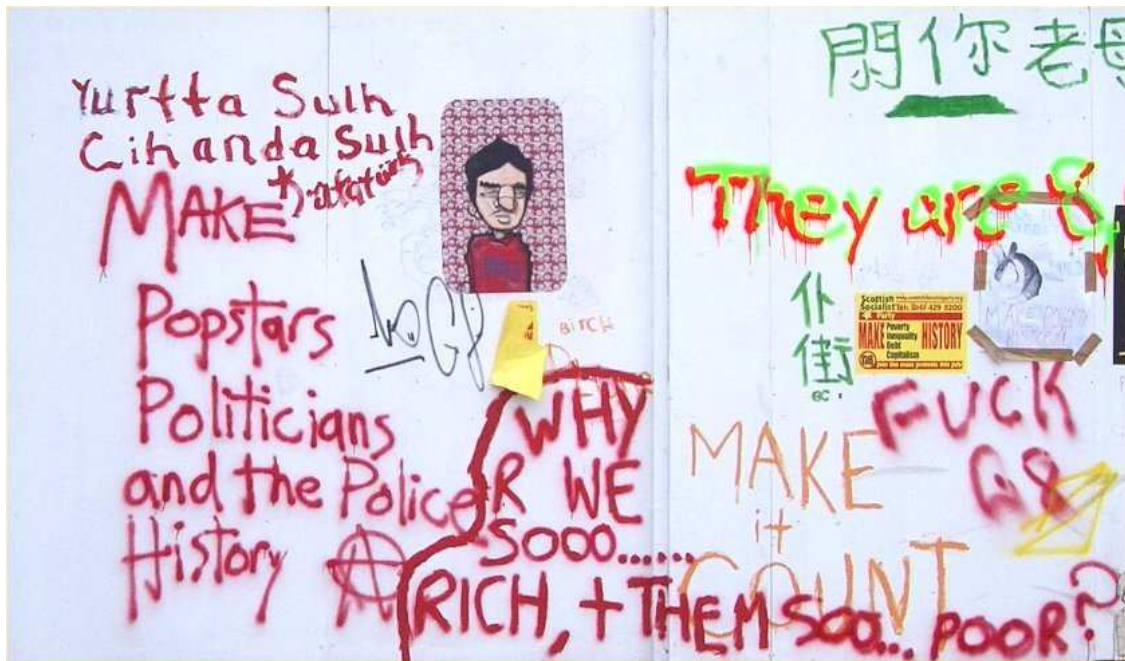


Figure 3: Graffiti seen on the streets of Edinburgh, July 2005.

¹⁰ This claim is based on participant observation at the march on July 2nd, 2005.

July 3rd was largely a travel day for activists to move from Edinburgh – where many activists were staying at the Jack Kane Sport Centre, a “tent city” run by the City of Edinburgh – to the Hori-Zone eco-village in Perthshire. On July 4th activists had two options: to attend the Faslane blockade (discussed above) or the “Carnival for Full Enjoyment” in Edinburgh.

Molyneaux (2005) offers a detailed review of the Carnival. Briefly, the Carnival, which did not have nor seek police permission, was described by its organisers as “a carnivalesque parade through Edinburgh, visiting places responsible for the increasingly precarious way in which we experience work and life” (Dissent!, 2005a). Despite the planned use of “pink” (Chesters and Welsh, 2004, p. 323) tactics which favoured bright coloured costumes and samba bands, there was an understanding within the network that the event might also contain direct action elements (See Figures 6 and 7).

The exact number of people who attended the Carnival is not known but, at least on Princess Street, there appeared to be a several hundred people including locals and tourists watching the event. According to media reports the Carnival resulted in 100 arrests many of which were due to an altercation between activists and authorities in a city park (Duncan, Henderson, Adams, & Simpson, 2005)¹¹. The Carnival was reported widely in the press with headlines such as: “City under siege as anarchists battle” (Roden, Summerhayes, & Edwards, 2005); “G8 Protests: The Carnival Turns into Anarchy” (Brown, Gray, Howie, & McGinty, 2005); The carnival that became a bloody riot” (Madeley,

¹¹ This is one of the events I attended though I did not see the confrontation in the park that solicited all the media coverage. However, I did watch a lot of the event unfold on Princess Street.



Figure 4: Dissent!-affiliated banner “Make Capitalism History” at MPH march.



Figure 5: The Infernal Noise Brigade, Make Poverty History march.



Figure 6: Discarded placards at the Make Poverty History march.

Macaskill, Tait, & Grant, 2005); “and “The Battle of Princess Street” (Duncan et al., 2005).

There was little action planned for July 5th. Instead, the day was used to make the final preparations for the July 6th Day of Action. Events conducted from Hori-Zone as part of the Day of Action are the focus of Chapter 7 with particular attention on the blockades. Activities linked to the Day of Action began at 3am when blockaders set out in waves from Hori-Zone. Blockades were held throughout the morning with the first journalists arriving at Hori-Zone at 7:20am. By 11am media interest had begun to shift towards the march in Auchterarder (described above). By 4pm the tide of activity at Hori-Zone had changed from a deluge of people leaving the camp to a steady flow of activists returning from actions. A site wide meeting was held at 7pm to debrief what happened during the day and make future plans.

Media coverage of the Dissent! Day of Action and the blockades was published in some of the evening papers on July 6th but mostly on July 7th.



Figure 7: Policing of the July 4th "Carnival" in Edinburgh, Scotland.



Figure 8: Activists demonstrating during July 4th "Carnival" in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Reports on Dissent! were largely folded into general protest coverage. The *Scotsman* printed stories such as “Rampage before dawn ignites chaos and confusion” (Black, Bowditch, Brown, Chamberlain, Gray, Harrell, Howie, Johnston et al., 2005), the *Times* reported “Police clash with protesters” (Lister, English, & Macleod, 2005). Meanwhile the left-leaning *Independent* employed a militaristic analogy, “G8 Summit: Army flies in extra police for the Battle of Gleneagles” (Kelbie, Brown, & Duff, 2005), “Battle of Stirling” (Sawer, 2005). The *Sun* labelled it, “The Battle of Bannockburn” with the leader, “Protestors Spark Orgy of Violence” (Goodwin & Hall, 2005).

According to the Dissent! newsletter distributed in Scotland, the only action planned for July 7th – day two of the three day Summit – was the “People’s Open Golf Tournament.” Although the tournament did have resources from the People’s Golfing Association (PGA) at its disposal, it was not planned on the same scale as the Day of Action. Instead, the logic was that additional events would organically emerge as part of the planning process.

The fact that very little protests were planned by Dissent! for July 7th reinforces the symbolic and *spectacular* nature of the protests. A general “Day of Action on Climate Change” was planned for July 8th – the last day of the G8 Summit – but the planned event did not have the same inertia as the July 6th actions. In the end, the fact that little protest was planned for July 7th or 8th mattered little for two reasons analysed in Chapter 7. First, the police responded sternly to Dissent!, essentially corralling Hori-Zone from the evening of July 6th until mid-day July 7th where, even then, access was severely and purposefully

limited. Second, even if large demonstrations had been planned, they would have undoubtedly been usurped by the July 7th London bombings.

The London bombings substantially deflated spirits at Hori-Zone. Confirmation of the explosions effectively signalled the end to Dissent!'s protests, its newsworthiness and, to some degree, the Gleneagles G8 Summit as a media event. Inside Hori-Zone, people turned their attention towards returning home. However, the evening of the 7th there was one last event. Perhaps capturing the disconnect both physically and informationally (for example, television access was extremely limited at Hori-Zone¹²) between London and Hori-Zone, the evening of July 7th was a celebration of the mobilisation complete with camp fires, music, jugglers and general revelry. The celebration was an almost surreal juxtaposition to the events that had unfolded earlier that day in London.

July 8th was the last day of the Gleneagles G8 Summit and there were very few protests, in part due to the stern policing, but largely due to the mood brought on by the London bombings. Throughout the day a steady stream of activists left the camp and by the evening of the 8th occupancy was at one-fifth of what it had been two days prior. July 9th, the day I left Hori-Zone, is when the majority of those left in the camp departed. The protests were over; the Gleneagles G8 Summit was over and the media had a new enemy. No longer was it interested in the "rampaging" antics of "anarchist thugs" or "hate mobs" but terrorists had become the new and more visceral antagonists.

¹² Efforts to access information about the London bombings from Hori-Zone are discussed in Chapter 7. While I did listen to media coverage on the morning of July 7th, I did not see any pictures of the bombings until they were published in the papers on July 8th.

1.3 Thesis Chapter Plan

This final section outlines the remaining seven chapters of my thesis. The next chapter, Chapter 2, presents the literature this thesis is grounded in, and the conceptual framework constructed to analyse Dissent!'s actions in the lead up to and at the Gleneagles G8 Summit. The chapter opens by contextualising political struggle with and through the media as a key feature of contemporary politics and life in the "mediapolis" (Silverstone, 2007). Attention is then directed towards the concept of mediation, its theoretical lineage and how it orients the approach taken. Issues of power and political contention in the mediapolis are then analysed. Next, I argue that the study of processes of mediation in the context of research into the media/movement dynamic may be actualised by the study of the media-oriented practices of social movement actors. To this end, the concept of practice is situated within sociological discourses on practice theory (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 1996, 2002) and an emerging dialogue within media studies (Couldry, 2004; Silverstone, 2007).

Extending the idea of practice and especially the aspect of "background knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249), the concept of "lay theories" of media is put forward as a way of capturing how social movement actors make sense of the motivations and processes of media. Lay theories of media are not academic theories but activists' own understanding about how the media work with a specific emphasis on news media. In order to analytically unpack the Dissent! network, conceptual tools to differentiate between various "levels" within Dissent! are presented. Next, the chapter briefly analyses the strengths and weaknesses

of three previous approaches to the media/movement dynamic: *text-centred* which focuses mainly on media output, *relational* which analyses the dynamics between social movement organisations and the media; and then *alternative-media* approaches, a broad category covering the use of ICTs and alternative media.

The focus of the chapter then shifts from social actors to the Gleneagles G8 Summit where the event is conceptualised as a *routinised media event*. This is achieved by reviewing and building upon Dayan and Katz's (1992) original concept of media events in order to establish political media events as sites of struggle. Next, conceptual work is undertaken to enable the analysis of the Gleneagles G8 Summit from *inside the media event*. To this end it is argued that locations associated with the Summit are "*hybrid sites*" (Routledge, 1997, p. 367) with both a *representational* and *immediate* presence. Key to this argument is the claim that the representational underwrites the immediate and therefore physical places (and social actors at them) become temporarily located *inside the media frame*. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the theoretical implications of conducting "direct action" inside the media frame which, I argue, has led to the rise of spectacular action

Chapter 3 focuses on methodology. It presents the general methodological approach, the specific research techniques employed, and the rationale for studying Dissent! as a single case study. The chapter opens by reviewing Burawoy's (1991a; 1998) "extended case method" and argues why Burawoy's approach is suitable and how it was applied in this thesis. The

rationale driving the selection of Dissent! is then presented which also includes an overview of the network's characteristics. Next, the advantages and limitations of the two primary research techniques – interviews and participant observation – are discussed. This is followed by a description of the data collected (interviews, movement documents) and how this data was analysed. The final section considers the practical methodological issues of fieldwork such as researcher position, ethics and time constraints.

Each of the sub-research questions is the focus of its own empirical chapter as Table 1 outlines. The empirical focus of Chapter 4 is on activists and is driven by sub-research question 1 (See Table 1 below). Drawing primarily on interviews, this chapter analyses activists' media-oriented practices beginning with their reported use of media. The chapter then shifts to study activists' understanding of the practices and routines of media in the form of lay theories of media using Tumber's (1999) categories of: economics of news, production of news and defining news. Next, the concept of "perceived news scripts" is presented to capture activists' view that the media have prefabricated news stories whose application by the media are seen as inevitable. After analysing two specific "perceived news scripts", the last section is driven by the question, why did activists want to attend the Gleneagles G8 Summit? It is argued that the Gleneagles G8 Summit was seen as a media event with a "tradition" of media coverage and a "tradition" of activism. Another argument advanced is that media coverage of past demonstrations brought about a "duty" to protest amongst activists; a perceived need for protests to continue to be visible in the media. The

chapter concludes by linking the duty to protest with activists' lay theories of media.

Table 1: Sub-research questions and empirical chapters

General Research Question: <i>How is the process of mediation articulated in the practices of global justice movement activists towards mainstream media in the preparation for and enactment of acts of contention at a political media event?</i>	
Sub-research Question	Chapter
1. How is the process of mediation articulated in activists' conceptualisations of the practices and routines of mainstream news media and more specifically in relation to political media events?	Chapter 4: Media Practices in the Mediapolis
2. Drawing on Rucht's (2004) "Quadruple A framework," within the context of a political media event, how can the way in which mainstream media is planned for, managed and responded to mainstream news media be understood?	Chapter 5: Dissent!'s Media Policy and the Rise of the CounterSpin Collective
3. What are the media-oriented practices devised and deployed to manage mainstream news media interaction within Dissent! and specifically by the CounterSpin Collective in the lead up to and during a political media event and what are the implications of such practices?	Chapter 6: The CounterSpin Collective – Media-Oriented Practices and the Strategy of Dual Adaptation
4. How does the presence of mainstream media, and processes of mediation more generally, impact on the practice of contention at the site of a political media event?	Chapter 7: Inside the Media Frame

Chapter 5 sets out to answer sub-research question two. The chapter, which is structured chronologically, is interested in how Dissent! planned for, managed and responded to mainstream media interest on a *network level*. This is achieved by drawing primarily on movement documents and field notes but is also informed by interview material. Conceptually, this chapter employs Rucht's (2004), "Quadruple A" framework which suggests four different strategies for

reacting to media coverage (abstention, attack, adaptation and alternatives) in order to understand the evolution of Dissent!'s overall media strategy.

Chapter 6 focuses on a specific collective within Dissent!: the CounterSpin Collective (CSC) and addresses sub-research question three. This question shifts attention from an emphasis on policies and posturing (the focus of Chapter 5) to an examination of the strategies and tactics used to manage media in order to unpack the strategy of “adaptation” (Rucht, 2004) employed by the CSC. The chapter is divided into two core sections with the first analysing practices conducted prior to the mobilisation. The second section analyses media-oriented practices at the Gleneagles Summit where the strategy of “adaptation” (Rucht, 2004) employed by CSC members is shown to be a strategy of *dual adaptation* by adapting to the needs of the media as well as the politics of Dissent!.

Chapter 7, the final empirical chapter, emphasises the *site* of protest and the actions emanating from it. The chapter addresses sub-research question four. The chapter analyses the Hori-Zone eco-village and the protest actions enacted from this site. I begin with an analysis of Hori-Zone in order to establish it as a site “inside the media frame” and consider how Dissent! negotiated and manage the tensions between the site as a space for showing protest (front stage) and planning protest (back stage). The chapter then turns to the protests themselves. Next, I argue that protests on the Day of Action should not be seen as “direct action” but spectacular action which I define as protest activities intended to create the appearance of physical resistance, while in fact placing an emphasis on symbolic over physical disruption. This is achieved through the

analysis of four blockading strategies deployed by Dissent!, first as “direct action” using definitions provided by Wall (1999), and then as spectacular action. I conclude the chapter by analysing the impact of the July 7th bombings on the protests in Scotland in order to illustrate the temporality of spectacular action. The London bombings are shown to have brought about an abrupt end to the planned protests in Scotland by deflating the spirits of activists and firmly shutting the window frame of media opportunity.

The final chapter, Chapter 8, returns to my original research question concerning the ways in which media have become embedded into the practice of Global Justice Movement activism. The chapter begins by reflecting on decisions which impacted the research design and methodology and how this influenced the shape of my thesis. Next, the empirical findings and contributions of my work are presented across activists, group and network levels as well as at the site of protest. The theoretical contribution of my thesis is then presented in two sections. First, I outline my contribution to media theory, particularly the concept of practice and, within this, lay theory. I also argue for the need to reconceptualise political struggle and the way in which media power is understood. The second section outlines my contributions to social movement theory. I give specific attention to the way in which Rucht's (2004) “Quadruple A framework” can be amended. The final section provides some conclusions about political contention in an age of media spectacle and offers ways forward for future research.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework: Mediation - Life in the Mediapolis

The late Roger Silverstone suggested the concept of the “mediapolis” to articulate the degree to which “contemporary political life” is constituted and experienced as a result of “electronically communicated public speech and action” (Silverstone, 2007, p. 31). For Silverstone, the mediapolis was “a mediated space of appearance” (Silverstone, 2007, pp. 25-55) that is contextual, unbalanced, characterised by difference, yet still a public space. Dayan (2007, p. 114) although paying tribute to Silverstone’s work criticised the concept of the mediapolis as normative and profoundly moral which, based on Silverstone’s moral claims, limits the possibility for action – and therefore change – in the mediapolis. In this thesis, I do not necessarily carry forward Silverstone’s moral agenda, but use mediapolis descriptively and analytically to capture the environmental role of the media, drawing attention to the inescapable role media occupy in our understanding of the world, of each other and, the focus of this thesis, of politics (Silverstone, 1999, p. 144; Thompson, 1995, p. 247). As Castells writes, media, “...have become the privileged space of politics” (1997, p. 309). This space is the mediapolis; this thesis analyses how the dynamics of this space informs and underwrites the actions of social movement actors.

Prior to Silverstone’s mediapolis, a prominent mode for conceptualising the media was as one of a collection of “scapes” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33). Appadurai (1996) placed the imagination – both the individual and the collective – at the centre of social analysis to argue that contemporary society is comprised

of a series of messy and overlapping scapes which include the mediascape. At the centre of Appadurai's model is the imagination – both individual and collective – whereby a primary function of the mediascape is to provide audiences access to distant or unreachable realities; to swell the imagination (ibid). However, not only do media offer more than an imagined scape of possibilities, but constitute a symbolic environment which is embedded into a larger “informational ecology” (Terranova, 2004, p. 141). Further, the media does not only provide access to distant imagined realities. It is a site where local, national and international political debates, ideas and realities play out and are struggled over; struggles both in and with the media.

Habermas' (1989) idea of the “public sphere” has been frequently used and adapted to capture the idea of an arena – or collection of arenas – where citizens converge, discuss, form and rationally debate political matters. The concept of the public sphere has been critically engaged with by academics to apply the concept beyond the bourgeois public sphere with particular effort placed in adapting the concept to theorise civil society (see: Calhoun, 1992; Downey and Fenton, 2003). Interested in civil society, and social movements post the 1999 Seattle WTO protests in particular, DeLuca and Peebles (2002, p. 134) proposed the concept of the “public screen” as a way of re-theorizing the concept of the “public sphere” (Habermas, 1989), to compensate its failure to appreciate the “technological transformations” of media on politics. The “public screen” which is defined as the “constant current of images and words, a ceaseless circulation abetted by the technologies of television, film, photography,

and the Internet” (DeLuca & Peeples, 2002, p. 135) acknowledges the visual turn in political culture brought about by media and television particularly. This has facilitated and encouraged the rise of political spectacle and image events. The concept, while incorporating television and computer screens, falls victim to a critique made by Gitlin (1998, p. 170) about the weakness of the “unitary” public sphere; there is no unitary public screen.

Even if an argument for public *screens* is made, the challenge becomes theorising multiple “public sphericules” (Gitlin, 1998, p. 170) and the connections and relation between these, something not undertaken by this thesis. DeLuca and Peeples (2002, p. 147) also reflexively acknowledge the paradox in their use of “public” to reflect a media space that is often a combination of public and private entities therefore necessitating a discourse over what constitutes public. The concept of the public screen is helpful for its grounding in, and engagement with the “public sphere”, along with its recognition of the inescapable role played by media. However, it is equally limiting for ongoing debates around the theorisation of a unitary versus multiple screens, and the understanding of what constitutes “public.” Lastly, the use of screen places media at the centre of research instead of *decentring it*, something Couldry (2004, p. 117) argues is necessary in media studies and is supported by my use of practice.

Aware of these debates, I use Silverstone’s “mediapolis” not as an absolute category but as an analytical term to capture the configuration of media in contemporary society, such that it now occupies an environmental role that social actors habitually navigate and orient themselves towards. As a result of

the familiarity and predictability of the ever presence of media, life in the mediapolis is premised on a fundamental, “ontological security” (Silverstone, 1994, pp. 5-8) in the media. Not necessarily a trust in specific media outlets, but an acceptance, ability and need to trust in the media system as a source for information, security and experience.

This thesis strays from the mundane to focus on a spectacular event in the mediapolis – a political media event – yet, as will be argued later, even media events have come to be routine features of the mediapolis. This routinisation has implications for the enactment (practice) of political contention. However, to understand these, the concept of mediation – the process of which, it is argued, maintains the mediapolis, must first be made clear.

Mediation – A Theoretical Orientation

A key premise of this thesis is that the mediapolis is made possible, shaped and maintained by the process of mediation. Consequently, the concept of mediation plays a central role in this thesis and as such, it is important to be clear what it means and how it is being used. Thumim (2007, p. 38) argues that there are at least four general uses of the concept of mediation¹³. First is the use of mediation to capture the “role of technology in the making of meaning.” Second, mediation is used to “indicate a shift away from a focus on specific media texts and productions, to a focus on the broader (reception) contexts

¹³ More recently, Livingston (2008) has noted the rise of the concept of mediation and the “mediation of everything.” This has resulted in an emerging debate over the terms “mediation” versus “mediatisation” (ibid; also see Hjarvard, 2008). Couldry (2008) has also recently meditated on differences between “mediation” and “mediatisation.” Aware of these recent debates, this thesis use the concept of mediation and sets out the framework for how it is used in this and subsequent Chapters.

within which media meanings come to be” (ibid). Third, mediation is “used in work on production-text-audience, to describe close readings of the processes (techniques, technologies, ideologies), which shape a representation that is produced and displayed in the media” (Thumim, 2007, p. 40). Fourth, is a perspective rooted in Katz (1998) which views mediation as the use of media professionals for communication through the media.

The “mediation approach” put forward in this thesis is informed by the positions in Thumim’s first and second definition. A mediation approach is viewed as a theoretical avenue to examine interaction with media – its content, producers, users, technologies, culture and rituals – as an ongoing and reflexive process. However, while mediation acts as an orienting concept, it is acted on by studying practices.

Martin-Barbero (1993) defined *mediations* as “the articulations between communication practices and social movements and the articulation of different tempos of development and practice” (1993, p. 188). Martin-Barbero argues that media research must begin by examining audience processes of media negotiation at *specific sites* of consumption or “places of mediation” (1993, p. 215). While Martin-Barbero’s work is recognised as one of the earliest writings on mediation, Couldry (2004, p. 119) has influentially argued that Martin-Barbero’s definition remained focussed solely on the *consumption of media*, yet places of mediation are not only sites where media is consumed, but also sites where media is made. Following Couldry’s argument, and particularly informed by past research on the Greenham Common protests (Couldry, 1999), the protest sites,

conference and city centres associated with the Gleneagles G8 Summit are viewed as places of mediation and specifically “hybrid sites”, a concept developed theoretically later in this chapter.

Silverstone (2005, p. 189) defines mediation as “a fundamentally dialectical notion which requires us to address the processes of communication as both institutionally and technologically driven and embedded.” Silverstone invites scholars to examine how, given the current concentration of symbolic power embedded in media practices and institutions, the process of mediation influences and shapes how individuals interact with and experience the world. Taking direction from this, this thesis defines mediation as an uneven and often contested process that involves multiple social actors – individuals, collectives, institutions, networks – in the (re)construction, (re)circulation and (re)consumption of symbolic forms. It further recognises that the process of mediation occurs on multiple, overlapping levels across a range of experiences on an ongoing, reflexive basis within the political, social and technological context of a society. The process of mediation is engaged within the everyday, although this thesis analyses how these are articulated in a specific context. Mediation opens a door, an orientation to analysing how social relations and power struggles characterise life in the mediapolis.

2.2 Mediation, Power and Political Contention

Issues of power are central to the mediapolis and the process of mediation, and are at the root of politics. Consequently, power – in all its forms –

needs to be unpacked to account for how it is asserted, subverted, resisted, challenged and countered. Power, drawing on Castells, in its most basic form can be conceived of as “the structural capacity of a social actor to impose its will over other social actor(s)” (Castells, 2007, p. 239). This definition may be elucidated by acknowledging how the “duality of structure” (Giddens, 1984, p. 15) informs the theorisation of power, seeing it as both “the capability of actors to enact decisions which they favour on the one hand and the ‘mobilization of bias’ that is built into institutions on the other” (Giddens, 1984, p. 15). Parallels can be drawn between Castells’ conception and Giddens’, particularly if “actors” in Castells’ sense are conceptualised simultaneously as institutions and the actors within them therefore recognising the duality of structure. Even with this distinction there is still the need to analytically differentiate these otherwise overlapping forms of power in order to understand their role and impact on social processes. Giddens (1984, 1991) has undertaken this task; however as Thompson (1995) argues, Giddens under-theorises the power of the media. Consequently, Thompson’s (1995, pp. 13-18) categorisation of four types of power are drawn upon for its emphasis, via Bourdieu (1991), on symbolic power.

Thompson (1995, pp. 13-18) argues power may be conceptualised as taking four overlapping but analytically distinct forms: economic, political, coercive and symbolic. Each form is characterised by its resources: economic power by “material and financial resources”; political power by “authority”; coercive power by the use or threat of “physical and armed force”; and the resources of symbolic power are the “means of information and communication”

(ibid, p. 17). Symbolic power, as will be argued, is a defining characteristic of mediation and the mediapolis. Thompson defines symbolic power as the “...capacity to intervene in the course of events, to influence the actions of others, and indeed create events, by means of the production and transmission of symbolic forms” (ibid). Symbolic power, for Thompson, encompasses multiple components, including the technical resources to transmit information; knowledge and skills to produce and transmit information; recognition as a “respected” authority for transmitting information together; and skills to receive and make sense of information (ibid).

In delineating these characteristics, Thompson recognises the position of cultural institutions such as, but not exclusively, the media, as occupying positions of power in their ability to offer representations of reality. A related concept is Thompson’s theorisation of the “management of visibility” (1995, pp. 134-148) which theorises the exercise of political and symbolic power through the use of specialists and specialised practices to control representation. It is about framing and presentation to and through media. However, this thesis also offers an inversion of Thompson’s concept in the *management of invisibility*. It too concerns the exercise of political and symbolic power, but instead of calculating how something is presented to the media, it is about trying to stay hidden from the media and/or trying to keep things hidden from the media, as Chapter 7’s analysis of Hori-Zone argues.

Like Thompson, Castells views media representation as a fundamental source of power in an age where information is a weapon. Power, Castells

argues, is no longer concentrated in institutions but distributed over networks, “the new power lies in codes of information and in the images of representation around which societies organise their institutions, and people build their lives, and decide their behaviour. The sites of this power are people’s minds” (Castells, 1997, p. 359). This has shifted the role of electronic media and they have now become “...the privileged space of politics” (ibid, p. 360). Castells has recently argued that it is this symbolic space where struggles over power play out arguing “the media are not the holders of power, but they constitute by and large the space where power is decided” (Castells, 2007, p. 242). While Castells is correct to identify a “space” created by electronic media – referred to in this thesis as the mediapolis – he is misdirected in his inference that media are “not the holders of power.” The “space” created by media – the mediapolis – is the product of the process of mediation and, invoking Giddens’ (1984, p. 374) “duality of structure”, is both “the medium and outcome” of the process of mediation. Thus media hold power in their infrastructural role in maintaining the mediapolis and their role within it; their ability to shape rules of access to the space as well as the ability to represent reality. Yet they simultaneously – collectively, yet in different degrees and contexts – create an environment for social actors to engage in their own struggles over and for power particularly, as is the focus of this thesis, in politics. This point will be demonstrated in the empirical chapters and returned to in the conclusion.

Having discussed forms of power, its configuration must be addressed. Thompson acknowledges that specific institutions may “provide the framework

for the intensive accumulation of a certain kind of resource and hence a privileged basis for the exercise of a certain form of power” (1995, p. 14). For media, this resource is reality construction; something which Carey (1988, p. 87) argues is a “scarce resource”. However, the power of the media is not static, absolute or uncontested (Couldry, 2000, p. 3-22). Nonetheless, to conceptualise the powerful social position of media and any challenges to it or social actors through it, it is helpful to draw upon the concept of hegemony. First proposed by Gramsci (1971, p. 181-182), the Marxist concept was put forward to explain the domination of a ruling class through direct but, more importantly, indirect means such as the shaping of “common sense” and achieving public consent for actions that are in the interest of a ruling elite. Gitlin (1980, p. 10), in his seminal study of the relationship between social movements and the media, draws on an adapted conceptualisation of hegemony in order to detach the concept from an over-determination by class and economics to open the study to cultural aspects. The cultural turn of hegemony opened by Williams (1977) and greatly expanded upon by Hall (1980; 1986; 1978) spawned the discipline of cultural studies. Consequently, Gitlin’s reading of hegemony which is rooted in Gramsci, but informed by Williams, is used in this thesis. Gitlin takes the view that:

...those who rule the dominant institutions secure their power in large measure directly *and indirectly*, by impressing their definitions of the situation upon those they rule...hegemonic ideology entrees into everything people do and think is ‘natural’ – making a living, loving, playing, believing, knowing, even rebelling... it meshes with the ‘common sense’... it tries to *become* that common sense (1980, p. 10).

Gitlin suggests that rebellion, via the incorporation of hegemonic ideologies, may reinforce dominant social forces. Yet the overt purpose of rebellion is not to reinforce hegemony, but to challenge it. This requires using Gramsci’s (1971, p.

323) concept of “hegemony” to develop the concept of counter hegemony.

Downing, Villarreal Ford, Gil, & Stein (2001, p 15) note that while Gramsci never used the term counter-hegemonic, the concept has become “fairly common... as a way to categorize attempts to challenge dominant ideological frameworks and supplant them with a radical alternative vision”. In the context of this thesis, counter-hegemonic is used in three ways. First, in a broad sense to characterise efforts to challenge hegemony which, in the case of the Global Justice Movement, is the hegemony of neoliberalism (Boden, 2008). Second, counter-hegemonic is also used to theorise challenges made by Dissent! activists, particularly those in the CounterSpin Collective, to the dominant - anti-media - ideology of Dissent!. Third, and more generally, this thesis analyses how media influences and underwrites the actions of activists and how, if at all, hegemonic practices underwrite the common sense of counter-hegemonic practices.

A concluding comment on how the configuration and distribution of power is conceptualised is necessary. The forms of power, as conceptualised by Thompson, are overlapping but distinguished for analytical purposes. There is an ongoing, and reflexive interplay between types of power; there are different combinations of types of power, and different social actors (from individuals to institutions) can have different amounts of power. Therefore power, in its various forms, is not conceptualised as something that only radiates from a single source, but can be held by, struggled over, gained and lost between social actors. Lastly, power influences and permeates all social relationships both

between conflicting political parties (i.e. social movements and their targets of contention) and within them.

Political Struggle

Whereas political struggle used to involve direct confrontation between parties, contemporary political struggle is simultaneously engaged on the ground and through the media. If the RETORT collective are correct, “control over the image is now key to social power” (RETORT, 2005, p. 28). The transformative impact of media on politics has moved performance and spectacle to the centre of contemporary politics. This is evident in the rise of media spectacles and particularly the transformation of international political summits into global political “media events” (Dayan & Katz, 1992; Fiske, 1994). While the mediapolis may indeed be the “privileged place of politics” (Castells, 1997, p. 311) – the arena where political spectacle is simultaneously manufactured and presented – the representation of political action in the media still (more often than not) requires a physical event to take place. Accordingly, the meetings of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and similar summit type meetings such as the G8 can be regarded as physical meetings which undertake tangible discussions and set into motion tangible policies which impact upon, direct and (re)construct the global economic architecture.

The meetings, and particularly the G8 Leaders Summit, are the epitome of power in contemporary society by displaying all four forms of power: economic, political, coercive and symbolic (Thompson, 1995 pp. 13-18). The G8 Summit

yields economic power through the material and financial resources of member countries, political power through its member countries and the fact that it is the leaders of said countries who are meeting and coercive power through the vast armed (police and military) forces both at the disposal of the G8 and on show during the Summit. Together these resources also imbue and attempt to reinforce the symbolic power of the countries, leaders and Summits. Thus, as if not *more* important than the physical meeting – the one to three day convergence of delegates at hotels or conference centres – is its *symbolic* manifestation. The significance of such international summits resides in their “primary definer” (Hall et al., 1978, p. 59) role and their ability to establish semantic boundaries around issues of pressing global importance.

The symbolic significance of these meetings has not gone unnoticed by activists and they have become “political opportunities” (Tarrow, 1998, p. 77) in the mediapolis to challenge, resist and make visible neoliberal hegemonies. While the state may outflank activists on economic, political and coercive power, it remains vulnerable, as RETORT (2005, p. 28) argue, at the level of the image. Consequently, politics and therefore counter-politics in the mediapolis have become image politics driven by the process of mediation.

2.3 Mediation and Practice

Mediation was presented above as a multilayered social process that social actors are both immersed and engaged in as part of life in the mediapolis characterised by the (re)construction, (re)circulation and (re)consumption of symbolic forms. Mediation was also presented as an uneven process with

symbolic power concentrated particularly in media institutions, yet this power of the media and the symbolic power of other social actors (not to mention other forms of power) is contested. While the idea of mediation has been presented as a process, this section argues that the forms of contestation in the mediapolis may be studied by analysing media-oriented practices.

Silverstone (2007, p. 42) hinted at the link between mediation and practice but neglected to ground it theoretically or expand upon his use of the term, remarking, “mediation is not just a matter of what appears on the screen, but is actually constituted in the practices of those who produce the sounds and images, the narratives and spectacles, as well as crucially, those who receive them”. Couldry (2004) develops the idea of “media-oriented practices” in greater detail, arguing that an emphasis on practice shifts the focus of media research from direct relationships with media texts, such as the proving or disproving of the “effects” of media, to a more general focus on the impact of media on everyday life.

The definition of practice used in this thesis is adopted from discourses in practice theory (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 1996; Warde, 2005). Practice theory takes a culturalist approach to social theory, putting “bodily movements, practical knowledge and routine” at the centre of its agenda (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 259). This thesis follows Reckwitz (2002, p. 249) viewing a practice as “a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of

emotion and motivational knowledge.” Schatzki (2002, p. 77) defines the aforementioned collective components of a practice as an “organised nexus of action” and simultaneously argues that for a practice to be maintained, it must be continually performed”. In this sense, and as Warde (2005, p. 134) observes, “a performance presupposes a practice.” Recognising that practices are discernible through their enactment, this research takes an active interest in the *media-oriented practices* of social movement actors as articulated by the actors themselves, as well as what is evident in their actions and in the discourses of movement documents. The methodological implications of this will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Four additional points must be made in conceptualising practices. First, some social practices “anchor”, “control” or “organise” other practices (Swidler, 2001, p. 83). Couldry (2004, p. 115) suggests that for media research, this means examining the “ordering” of social practices both towards the media and by the media. To mark this distinction, a differentiation is made between *direct* media-oriented practices which are conceptualised as those which dealt immediately with, involved, or were a reaction to media, and *indirect* media-oriented practices which are those that may not have involved immediate interaction with media but were “anchored” (Swidler, 2001, p. 83) by media. This differentiation is analytical. In reality the difference between direct and indirect practices is messy and the practices may overlap with each other. Simultaneously, this differentiation provides an avenue to analyse different

practices. A dialectic can also be made between *hegemonic practices* – those which reinforce or embody dominant ideologies and *counter-hegemonic practices* or those which challenge dominant ideologies. There is, of course, an uneasy tension between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic practices as counter-hegemonic practices may have the unintended consequence of reinforcing dominant ideologies and as such must be scrutinised closely.

The argument for commonly-shared practices between activists, groups, networks or movements holds a strong resemblance to the social movement concept of *repertoires of collective action* (Tilly, 1978, 1979, 2003, 2004). The idea of repertoires of collective action (RoC) has been traditionally used as a structuralist component to silo the actions and knowledge of social movement actors within the circumstances and intricacies of a specific time, place and culture (Swidler, 1986; Tarrow, 1998; Zald, 1996).

Admittedly, RoC offers a helpful analytic category within social movement research to compartmentalise, link and trace the actions of social movement actors. However, the same outcome may be achieved by separating practices into the four movement levels discussed below: activists, group, network and movement. Viewing practices on these overlapping levels offers a conceptual vehicle to generalise from the individual to the collective in order to examine strategic efforts to (dis)engage media, as well as the underlying rationale and motivation behind doing so. Moreover, the concept of practices appreciates the reflexivity of social actors in their conscious and unconscious ability to continuously monitor and change their actions based on both existing, as well as

incoming information (Giddens, 1984, 1991); something the original concept of repertoires of contention failed to do (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001; Tarrow, 2002a, 2003). At the same time, the idea of a “repertoire” is helpful to conceptually package media-oriented practices together and maintains a link with social movement literature. Before providing further details as to the levels of practice and indeed social movement levels, a specific comment on practices and its relation to lay theories is needed.

Practice and Lay Theories of Media

As argued earlier, practices depend upon shared skills and understanding (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001, p. 3). However, this does not imply that practices are standardised across social actors. Instead, a practice – its understanding and performance – may differ between social actors based on knowledge, skill, past experience or similar factors (Warde, 2005, p. 4). For the purposes of this thesis, a key component of a practice is “background knowledge” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249) which is expanded upon in order to analyse activists’ “lay theories of media.” Bennett (1975, p. 65) touched upon the concept in his discussion of “political scenarios” which “[provided] a lay theoretical framework in which to organize the sense data of politics.” Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 118) use Bennett’s work to put forward their idea of “framing” as a way of explaining how individuals make sense of reality and subsequently how the media frames reality.

Both Bennett’s and Gamson and Wolfsfeld’s use of “political scenarios”, which Bennett also refers to as “pseudo theories” (1975, p. 65), are applied in a

general manner to explain sense-making, particularly in relation to politics. The concept of “lay theories of media” analyses the ways in which activists understand the modes, motives and impact of media. Giddens (1984, p. 27) suggests, “the theorizing of human beings about their action means that just as social theory was not an invention of professional social theorists, so the *ideas produced by those theorists inevitably tend to be fed back into social life itself.*” Lay theories of media are not necessarily academic theories, but may be informed by them. The objective is not necessarily to give credibility to “lay theoretical frameworks,” but to recognise that such a theoretical framework exists and is a by-product of living in an age of heavy mediation, not to mention four decades of writing and teaching about media in the field of media and communications.

Parallels between the use of “lay theories” in this thesis can be drawn with Seiter’s (1999, pp. 58-90) discussion of “lay theories of media effects” which studied the lay theories of media held by parents and teachers. This thesis focuses on activists as political actors and their lay theories, specifically related to news. Lay theories of news were of interest given the role of news media in the political media event under study.

The relevance of lay theories resides in their influence over how activists think about media, news and the portrayal of reality. Philo’s (1990, p. 134) study of the influence of television news on people’s beliefs has argued that individuals may have a “very clear appreciation of the central themes in news reporting” learned from “cultural knowledge.” The concept of lay theory used in this thesis

delves into the black box of “cultural knowledge” to analyse the specific ways in which media is understood and how such theories may also impact the ways in which social movement actors conceptualise and present their actions to the media. This is captured in an analysis of *perceived news scripts*. Perceived news scripts are defined as activists’ perceptions of the social expectations news media have of them as demonstrators and are manifest in the form of anticipated news stories, headlines and stereotypes. Perceived news scripts are actualizations of activists’ lay theories of media. The dramaturgical allusion to my use of scripts is an intentional reference to the media. Scripts are prewritten texts followed by actors as part of a performance. Activists’ articulation of these scripts are their interpretation of the roles the news has for them. The concept of scripts has also been used by social movement scholars drawing from dramaturgical theory (Goffman, 1959, 1974). Benford and Hunt (1992, p. 38) introduced a “dramaturgical framework” to social movement scholarship which included the concept of “scripting” defined as “the development of a set of directions that define the scene, identify the actors and outline expected behaviour”. The concept is useful for analysing how social movement actors plan for and understand their own actions but also, in the context of this thesis, how this performance may be understood by the news and how this knowledge reflexively informs the “staging” (Benford & Hunt, 1992, p. 43) of their actions.

The concept of lay theories of media is also significant for recognising another layer of mediation that may be relevant to not only activists but to all social actors. Using politics as an example, not only may social actors attempt to

try and make sense of political messages received through media along the lines of Bennett's (1975) "political scenarios", they may also apply "lay theories of the media" in an effort to understand how the political, economic or structural factors of the media may have influenced the message. Further, lay theories are also helpful in studying social actor's "playful awareness" (Liebes & Katz, 1990, p. 143) of the seriality of news – the repetition of the themes, characters, story structure – and how this perspective may influence their use of media and the way in which they orient themselves towards media and perceive their own acts of political contention. Lastly, theories also provide insight into how social actors understand the power of media, how the hegemonic power of media is reflected in social actors' "common sense" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 323), and how their common knowledge – what Hardt and Negri (2004, p. 3) have referred to as "the common" – is used to counter hegemonies of power. Although the concept of lay theories may be used to study all social actors, this thesis is interested specifically in activists and, within this, the lay theories of activists involved in Dissent!.

To create a framework for analysing activist lay theories, categories have been taken from an academic or "expert" perspective on news media. This allows for the juxtaposing of "lay theories" with "expert" theories in order to consider the crosspollination of the two and the degree to which any common knowledge of "lay" activists resembles expert arguments. To accomplish this, Tumber's (1999) division of literature within the sociology of journalism was used as it represents a comprehensive review of key literature within the sociology of news. Moreover,

Tumber divides theories of news into five overlapping, but analytically separate categories. In order to create an analytical framework for differentiating aspects of lay theories of media as well as to contextualise them within relevant academic literature, three of Tumber's categories are used: (1) economics of news, (2) production of news and (3) defining news, with the last category exploring three interrelated aspects of newsworthiness. These categories were selected as they were the most prevalent groupings of theory within activists' discourse. Literature from Tumber's two categories which were not used (Sources of news; Objectivity and Ideology of news) inform this thesis, but are incorporated where relevant under the other headings.

2.4 Differentiating “Levels” of the Global Justice Movement

The concept of the Global Justice Movement (GJM) as a social movement is rather opaque and is the product of the overlapping, fluid and messy relations; what Hardt and Negri (2004) refer to as the “multitude”. The authors use the concept to differentiate between other aggregate terms such as mass, mob, crowd, people and working class to capture the way in which social actors may form open, coordinated networks of resistance from within society, as opposed to following a traditional political organisation (ibid, p. xiv-xvi).

The theoretical objective of the multitude is to present a concept capable of capturing the fluid and overlapping relationships between social actors as a body capable of challenging current power structures. While the concept of the multitude relays the complexities of social relationships and particularly networks

of resistance, more concrete analytical concepts are needed to separate out what is otherwise a messy reality in order to better understand media-oriented practices, highlight theoretical concepts and empirically divide material. This may be done by separating out “levels” within the multitude and is done first within a definition of a social movement.

My view of a social movement is rooted in Diani’s (2000, p. 387) definition of social movements as “networks of informal relationships between a multiplicity of individuals and organizations, who share a distinctive collective identity and mobilise resources on conflictual issues.” Diani’s definition was modified from a past publication (Diani, 1992) which sought to unify what was then a fragmented field of research. Diani (1992) identified four past schools of social movement research.

First was collective behaviour, whereby groups of individuals such as mobs or social movements were formed through a collective process of interaction that identified a problem, legitimated it and then took action (Blumer, 1951, 1971). While there were a number of variations of this approach, the underlying similarities were “that shared grievances and generalized beliefs (loose ideologies) about the causes and possible means of reducing grievances are important preconditions for the emergence of a social movement in collectivity” (Zald & McCarthy, 1987, pp. 16-17). Second was resource mobilization (RM) theorists who analysed how social movements acquire and employ their resources (political, social economic) to achieve their goals, and what level of success they achieve. RM theorists viewed social movements as

political “extensions” that contained a specific and delineable organisational patterns and structures (Buechler, 2000, p. 35). Third, was political process scholarship, undertaken by scholars such as Tilly (1978), it shifted from the view of social movements as isolated political actors, to a historical analysis of the ongoing processes, cycles and practices of contention and how these changed. The fourth approach, new social movement (NSM) research, shifted from questions of the processes, conditions and resources involved in mobilising social movements, to trying to understand the “large-scale structural and cultural changes” which caused conflict within a society and ultimately lead to the development of a social movement (Diani, 1992, p. 5). Initially a European approach inspired by the wave of social protest in the late 1960s, research in this vein was championed by scholars such as Alan Touraine and Alberto Melucci. This perspective placed a strong emphasis on the importance of solidarity and shared “collective identity” in the formation, organising and execution of social movement activity; something which was underdeveloped by RM theory (Melucci, 1996, p. 65).

For each of the four approaches to social movement research listed, there is a much larger body of work which accompanies it. There are multiple publications which review the state of social movement research (Buechler, 2000; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996; Meyer & Tarrow, 1998; Snow, Soule, & Kriesi, 2003; Tarrow, 1998). For my purposes, Diani’s (2000) definition cited above incorporates both the *how* and *why*; as well as American and European approaches to social movement scholarship. This thesis, while conscious of the

why elements, largely analyses the *how* with its interest in how the process of mediation is incorporated into the activities (practices) of social movement actors. At the same time, movements in the current cycle of contention share many attributes – or perhaps *carry forward* attributes – from new social movements. Yet, contemporary mobilisations are characterised by their *transnational scale* and the crucial role of ICTs (Bennett, 2003a, 2003b; Castells, 1997, 2000, 2007; Juris, 2005a, 2008a). Gerhards and Rucht (1992, p. 588), in an effort to understand the “mobilising structures” of social movements, identify social movements actors on three levels: (1) micro: individuals or in some cases local groups; (2) meso: groups or organisations; (3) macro or social movement-level actors.

A difficulty with these proposed levels is that there is no conceptual separation between individuals and local groups both of which are assimilated within the micro. However, this thesis takes an active interest in the practices of individuals *and* groups, therefore the two must be viewed separately. In order to do this, social movement actors are conceptualised on four levels. From micro to macro, they are: (1) activists, (2) group, (3) network and (4) movement. By using these four levels instead of the three proposed by Gerhards and Rucht (1992), the actions of individuals and groups which were formerly under “micro” can be differentiated. The use of “movement” instead of “macro” provides a flexible framework that networks can be situated in. Moreover it also allows for the possibility of multiple movements. Whereas the concepts of micro, meso and macro provides rigid categories which require group forms to be placed in one of

three categories, it is believed that the four levels of activist, group, network and movement allow for a greater degree of flexibility.

The four levels are used as analytical categories to differentiate social movement actors. It is recognised that individuals can, and do, participate within multiple groups in one network or groups across various social movement networks. It is also appreciated that the connections between the four levels (activist, group, network and movement) are complex and overlapping. Nonetheless, the levels provide an analytical framework to situate Dissent! (network level) within the Global Justice Movement (movement level); to differentiate collectives (groups) within Dissent!, as well as position individuals (activists) with Dissent!-affiliated groups and within the network more generally.

The primary focus of this thesis is on the “media-oriented practices” (Couldry, 2004, p. 115) of Dissent! affiliated social actors on an activist, group and network-level. Media-oriented practices are defined as the ways in which social actors think about, react to and use media as well as how media influences related social activities. It is also prudent to offer a brief contextualisation on the use of network as I use it in two related ways. First, network is used to reference the network-level of Dissent! in contrast to the other levels of the network such as activists level and group level. The term network is also used in a more general yet complementary sense to refer to Dissent! as a whole.

While Dissent! is viewed as part of the Global Justice Movement, this thesis is wary of extending any general claims from a network level to a

movement level given the diverse composition of organisations affiliated with the movement and the crucial role that context (social, political and cultural) plays in the trajectory of political contention. Moreover, any attempt to study the media practices of the Global Justice Movement even within a specific historical, social-political context of a specific mobilisation such as the Gleneagles G8 Summit would require resources far greater than those available for this thesis. Thus, while the movement level is recognised as an analytical level, and Dissent! is situated *within it*, the thesis does not analyse it explicitly.

2.5 The Media/Movement Dynamic – Three Alternate Approaches

The study of the relationship between the media and social movements - the media/movement dynamic - has received much academic attention since the 1970s. This section reviews dominant approaches highlighting some of its strengths as aspects which inform this thesis, as well as suggesting some limitations particularly in the context of this thesis.

Over three decades of research, a large volume of work has been generated which can be roughly divided into three areas: (1) *text-centred*, (2) *relational* and (3) *alternative media/information communication technologies*. These divisions are not absolutes but are presented as a way of organising and thinking critically about a diverse and expanding literature. Each of the three fields has made valuable contributions and this thesis is informed by, and builds upon, work from across all three areas. However, on their own, none of the three approaches are sufficient for analysing the process of interacting with media at

the site of protest, especially in the context of the current cycle of contention involving global social movements and “media event” style protests. Consequently, the “mediation approach” to examining such mobilisations was developed. In order to outline the rationale for the theoretical direction taken, all three approaches will be briefly reviewed by highlighting salient points, as well as the limitations of each body of work beginning with text-centred approaches.

Text-Centred Approaches

Text-centred approaches are defined as research that begins with or revolves specifically around media coverage which includes, but is not limited to, research drawing on newspaper articles, photographs, television reports, or radio coverage. Predominantly rooted in the tradition of *sociology of journalism*, it is the oldest and most-travelled trail in studying the media/movement dynamic. There is an extensive body of work within this approach though this thesis does not have space to present an extensive review and instead highlights select works and arguments.

Demonstrations and Communication, one of the earliest text-centred studies, focused on the “contradiction between the underlying reality of the situation and the event as reported” (Halloran, Elliot & Murdock, 1970, p. 90). Inspired by Galtung and Ruge’s (1965) influential examination of the patterns and values of international news reporting, Halloran et al. argued that the media’s portrayal of demonstrations was influenced and, in fact, restricted by the occupational and institutional arrangements of journalism. The authors suggest that event orientation of reporting, the short news cycle, the angles taken on a

story in the lead up to an event and the professional standards of journalism such as “objectivity” shape how a story is compiled and reported (Halloran et al., 1970, pp. 301-318)¹⁴.

Halloran et al., has had a large influence on text-centred scholarship inspiring the development of the “protest paradigm” which studies the “routinised pattern or implicit template for the coverage of social protest” (McLeod & Hertog, 1999, p. 310). Proponents argue that social protests are predestined for negative coverage due to the practices, conventions, frameworks and characteristics inherent in both journalism and the media system (see: Brasted, 2005; Cahill, 2000; Chan & Lee, 1984, 1991; Chan & Pan, 2003; Cooper, 2002; Craig, 2002; McFarlane & Hay, 2003; McLeod, 2000; McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Valencia, 2001).

Scholars not explicitly working within the protest paradigm have conducted similar research. Smith and colleagues used media output to assess the underlying selection and description bias of American media (Smith, 2002, 2004; Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn, 2001). Ketchum (2004) has examined how journalistic “routines” and “frameworks” constrict the way protest stories are told in the news. Likewise, Oliver and Maney have analysed the role of news values and the routinisation of media coverage in the portrayal and coverage of demonstrations (Maney & Oliver, 2003; Oliver & Maney, 2000). Jenkin (1998) analysed the representation of environmental movement politics in Australia finding that coverage tended to be both simplified and sensationalised.

¹⁴ A review of this research may be found in Murdock (1981) and a more condensed treatment is given in Cottle (2006, pp. 34-37).

Meanwhile Perlmutter and Wagner (2004) offer a powerful semiotic analysis of media images from the 2001 Genoa G8 Summit protest. The authors stress both the importance of “iconic” media images – in this case, “death in Genoa,” a picture of activist Carlos Giuliani after having been fatally shot in the head by Italian military police – in interpreting history.

The key concept linking the majority of these studies is the media frame and the process of framing. Indeed, the idea of the media frame and framing is arguably one of the most influential and important concepts in the study of media (Entman, 1993; Fisher, 1997) and social movements (Benford, 1997). Rooted in Goffman’s (1974) view of frames as a mechanism for allowing individuals to organise experience and negotiate reality, the concept has been adapted (and some would argue, abused) by media scholars to explain and analyse the media’s presentation of reality. One of the earliest and most well-known definitions of framing is in Gitlin (1980, p. 7), where media frames were defined as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organise discourse, whether verbal or visual.” For Gitlin, media frames were powerful, hegemonic devices which were unavoidable in the process of journalism and influenced what was reported and how something could be reported.

Writing on Gitlin’s heels, Gamson defined a media frame as a “central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events... The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143). Gamson has used the concept of

framing in subsequent analysis (e.g. Gamson, 1985, 1992a, 1995; Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gamson & Stuart, 1992; Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Entman, in an attempt to untangle framing literature, argued to frame something was, *“to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”* (1993, p. 52). There are clear parallels between the definition of media frame offered by Gitlin, Gamson and Entman. These can be roughly synthesized into a view of the media frame as an unavoidable product of journalism. Further, it is a practice that requires the deliberate selection and positioning of a specific media output so as to create an intended cognitive representation in the media for an audience. Despite similarities within the body of framing research, there remains a lack of consensus on conceptual definitions (Fisher, 1997; Scheufele, 1999). Nonetheless, framing research within text-centred approaches have often focussed on trying to outline the various “media frames” of social movement actors to showcase power differentials between the hegemonic actors (such as the state and/or media) and counter-hegemonic actors.

There is an undeniable value in assessing how political movements are framed in media to both make transparent political bias, as well as critically assess the powerful role media and the devices (frames) and implications of representation (framing). Research in this domain has offered a critical appraisal of the influential role of media in politics and counter-politics (e.g. Gitlin, 1980;

Halloran et al., 1970; Wolfsfeld, 1997). Koopmans (2004, p. 369) has argued that the strength of this tradition of research has meant, “we now know a lot about the factors that determine if and how the media cover protests.” Restated, the frames employed by media to cover protest are well documented.

Focusing solely on media output also has its limitations. First, analysing media output is often premised on the assumption that by studying media output, one can prove the impact of media. Second, studying media output fails to consider how texts are interpreted or even used by audiences. In the context of this research, a text-centred approach would overlook the struggle social movement actors engage in to get themselves and their message in the media focussing, instead on the outcome. After all, framing is about struggles for, and over, power. Therefore, it is important to open up the media’s framing of reality to understand how such processes are understood and struggled over. This is not to suggest the concept of the media frame – a key conceptual tool of text-centred approaches – does not have its place in this thesis. However, while text-centred research has privileged media frames developed from the analysis of media output, this research is interested in the struggles taking place *inside the media frame*; not the outcome. Consequently, the concept of the media frame is used in a much looser sense – as in Couldry (2000) – as a bounding concept to study struggles over framing with and through the media. This point will be revisited but, for now, attention shifts to the next general body of media/movement literature.

Relational Approaches

A second general approach to the media/movement dynamic is described as “relational approaches.” This label captures the collective emphasis of such approaches on understanding implications of the asymmetrical “relationship” between social movement organisations (SMOs) and the media. Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986, p. 74) argued that media coverage can “influence the nature, development and ultimate success of a social movement.” Informed by text-centred literature, relational approaches began to focus their efforts on how media “affects” the dynamics of social movements (e.g. Anderson, 1991, 1993, 1997; Carroll & Ratner, 1999; Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Gitlin, 1980; Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986; Wolfsfeld, 1984, 1991, 2003).

Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 115) view the media/movement relationship as “a transaction between two complicated systems of actors with complex internal relationships”. The authors argue that the relationship between media and movements is *not equal*: “movements are generally much more dependent on the media than the reverse, and this fundamental asymmetry implies the greater power of the media system in the transaction” (ibid, p. 116). The authors assert that movements rely on media for three reasons. First, to *mobilise* the public as mainstream media discourse distributes movement messages and advertises actions to a public beyond the reach and arguably outside of the scope of internal movement publications. Second, mainstream media serves to *validate* the existence of the movement. Third, media discourse performs “*scope enlargement*” whereby the media’s reporting of a conflict over

an issue opens it up to debate, potentially increasing the power of the social movement (ibid).

Writing around the same time, Anderson argues that media/movement literature has disregarded the relations *between* movements and the media stating, “we know very little about the way in which sources... view their relationship with the media, about the media strategies they pursue, or about the major constraints which affect them” (1993, p. 51). Focusing on environmental movements of the 1980s and 1990s, Anderson’s research offers a number of important contributions to conceptualising the relationship between the media and movements. First is Anderson’s recognition that social movements have become increasingly media savvy in their understanding and approach towards media. Further, social movement actors often occupy the role of “non-official” and “non-expert” sources which constrains the *amount* and *type* of media access given. Drawing on literature from the sociology of news (Gans, 1979; Schlesinger, 1990; Schudson, 1995) Anderson is sensitive to how the production process (time pressures, news cycles, sources, editors) shapes the news. Lastly, Anderson recognises that there is often competition *between* competing social movements for coverage and even discourses *within* social movements about media coverage (Anderson, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2003).

While useful, there are two key differences between Anderson’s research and this thesis: the type of organisation, and the type of event studied. Anderson’s early work predominantly focussed on organisations such as *Greenpeace* or *Friends of the Earth* who employ specialist personnel to design

and implement their media strategies. However, this research focuses on a network of “autonomous” social movement actors who are of interest for their lack of pre-established formal protocol and procedures for dealing with media. Instead such networks must often develop their own media policy to fit within their own political boundaries.

Anderson (2003, p. 125) acknowledges that within autonomous networks (such as Dissent!), the issue of responding to mainstream media is contentious but neglects to examine the issue in any detail leaving the media strategies of “autonomous” movements unstudied. At present, there is little research on the mainstream media repertoires of social movements. Carroll and Ratner (1999) offer a comparative analysis of the media strategies of three Canadian social movement organisations. Like the majority of media/movement research, it focuses on formal organisations with dedicated staff that employ long-term media campaigns. While informative, Carroll and Ratner also leave the media strategies of “autonomous” networks that characterise the current cycle of global social movements unaddressed. Similarly, Gaber and Wilson (2005) discusses media strategy but from an NGO perspective.

Rucht (2004) on the other hand, offers an historical overview of the media strategies of social movements beginning with the 1960s student movement up to the Global Justice Movement. While Rucht does not go into detail about each movement, he offers a useful model for charting a social movement’s “reaction” to mainstream media that will be employed in this thesis. Rucht asserts social movements select from four non-mutually exclusive strategies. First, is

abstention, “born out of resignation based on negative experiences with established media... it implies the withdrawal from attempts to influence the mass media and retreat to inward-directed group communication” (Rucht, 2004, p. 37). *Attack*, “...consists of an explicit critique of, and even sometimes even violent action against, the mass media” (ibid). *Adaptation*, “...means the acceptance/exploitation of the mass media’s rules and criteria to influence coverage positively” (ibid). Lastly, *Alternatives*, “...is the attempt by social movements to create their own independent media...in order to compensate for a lack of interest, or bias on the part of established media” (ibid).

While “alternatives” are recognised as a significant aspect of Global Justice Movement activities (see the next section on alternative-media approaches), this thesis has taken a conscious decision not to focus on “alternatives,” as such activities were conducted separately from mainstream media activities. Nonetheless, the four components of Rucht’s typology offer a useful framework for analysing the evolution and internal tensions and contradictions of Dissent!’s media strategy and its final media policy.

A second major difference between the focus of this thesis and the general body of “relational approaches” is the type of event under study. A prominent example from Anderson’s research is her analysis of Greenpeace’s “Brent Spar” campaign (Anderson, 1997, 2003), which successfully challenged the proposed dumping of a Shell oil platform into the Atlantic Ocean. The campaign was an extensive two month, global media endeavour which included the occupation of the Brent Spar oil platform and a company boycott. Whereas

Brent Spar gained media prominence through its campaign and the tactics and actions of Greenpeace, the focus of this study – the Gleneagles G8 Summit – was already recognised as a high-profile media event long before the Summit occurred. That is, the event under study was not a prolonged campaign waged through the media but a short (3-day), intense, mediated occurrence that has established an international legacy of media attention – a *routinised media event*. Before considering the theoretical implications of the Gleneagles G8 Summit as a routinised media event, the third area of media/movement research will first be reviewed.

Alternative-media Approaches

This category of media/movement research is the roomiest and perhaps most active of the three areas. The recognition of a “general banner of alternative approaches” (Fenton, 2008, p. 38) is gaining academic currency as a way of grouping work that while broad, has a common thread. Under the alternative heading are two overlapping types of research. First, studies into the use of ICTs for mobilisation and coordination purposes and second, research into the creation of resources such as on and offline forms of media as an alternative, and in an effort to, challenge the hegemony of mainstream media.

Under the umbrella of ICT-focussed research falls research on how individuals/groups employ ICTs to plan, communicate, diffuse and execute acts of political contention (Ayers, 1999; Cammaerts, 2005a; Diani, 2000; Fenton, 2007; Keck & Sikkink, 1998a, 1998b; Langman, 2005; Rheingold, 2002; Tarrow, 2005; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2002). Research into the use of ICTs by social

movements has also acknowledged their role in completing and facilitating group interaction including the maintenance of group “mediated solidarity” (Fenton, 2008, p.48; Fenton 2007) by providing both an online arena to extend and continue communication and planning (Bennett, 2003b; Castells, 1997, 2000; Juris, 2008a).

Costanza-Chock’s (2003, pp. 174-176) articulation of seven tactics of conventional electronic contention (representation, information distribution, research, cultural production, fund-raising, lobbying and tactical communication) are a useful starting point for conceptualising how to analyse media-oriented practices. At the same time, Costanza-Chock’s emphasis was solely on the use of electronic communication, whereas this thesis focuses on media-oriented practices both online and offline. A key objective of this thesis is to avoid perpetuating a “new media/mainstream media” divide that has dominated much of the “alternative-media approach” research. Thus while instructive, Costanza-Chock’s approach must be modified to recognise the grey areas in people’s use of media, whereby the same practice may shift between online and offline activities and between “new” and “old” media. Another point of differentiation is that Costanza-Chock’s categories deal with online practices, yet this thesis is specifically interested in media-oriented practices which occur online and offline. This is significant as the issue of representation plays a crucial role in this thesis but is given scant attention by Costanza-Chock.

Adapting Costanza-Chock’s approach, three general categories are used to classify the media-oriented practices of Dissent! and specifically the

CounterSpin Collective (CSC). First is *network-facing communication*. Media-oriented practices under this heading include the use of resources, often ICTs to facilitate communication between network members such as listservs. In describing practices as network-facing, the objective is to emphasise that communication is directed towards network members or affiliates and not (intentionally) the media. While some communication may be intercepted by the media (or the authorities for that matter), it is not intended for them. Second, *research*, a category identified by Costanza-Chock (2003, p. 174-176) is defined as the use of resources, often ICTs to gather information.

The third category is *representation*. For Costanza-Chock, representation simply meant having an online presence; a website. However, contemporary political contention occurs with, against and through the media in a struggle to influence and control the representation of reality (Castells, 1997; Silverstone, 2007; Terranova, 2004). Representation is not only online, but offline; it does not only occur in mainstream media but also in alternative media. It also involves representations to multiple publics: network-facing representation to those within, affiliated with or sympathetic to the movement, as well as outward facing representation to political opponents, authorities and the media. Consequently, the category of representation incorporates the panoply of practices both online and offline which are engaged in the construction, management and opposition of appearance in the mediapolis. Lastly, together these three categories assist in grouping the media-oriented practices and highlight the prominent role of new

media in the activities, but still allow for practices which may not be exclusively “new media” to be folded into an overall media repertoire.

The other component of alternative-media approaches involves the use of “alternative” (Coyer, Dowmunt, & Fountain, 2007) or “radical” (Downing et al., 2001) media. This broad programme of research analyses how social movements create and use their *own* media, as opposed to mainstream media, as a platform to express their ideas as well as to avoid, subvert and challenge dominant power structures (Atton, 2002; Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007; Couldry & Curran, 2003; Coyer et al., 2007; de Jong et al., 2005; Downing, 1996; Downing et al., 2001; Rodríguez, 2001). With respect to the Global Justice Movement, a particular hive of activity with this field is research into the rise of Indymedia (Atton, 2003; Coyer, 2005; Coyer et al., 2007; Downing, 2002, 2003a, 2003b; Kidd, 2003; Mamadouh, 2004; Pickard, 2006; Pickerill, 2003). Research in this area has documented how activists have used new communication technologies to challenge, subvert and bypass mainstream media. Since the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle, Independent media centres (IMCs) have become staples of summit-style mobilisations, Gleneagles was no exception. Despite the increased academic research into alternative media, Downing (2003c, p. 626) argues that there remains a crucial gap in the *audiences* of alternative media; the “users” of alternative media. Although this thesis does not directly analyse “users” of alternative media, it is a path crossed during the research and the importance of such work is supported by the conclusions of this thesis.

Academic interest in ICTs is both understandable and justified, as they have had an undeniable impact on how social movements organise, mobilise, and conduct contentious politics. Work on alternative, radical and independent media has also documented an important innovation in social movement media and representation. However a danger with research in this vein is its perpetuation of a mass media/ICT binary. By limiting one's focus to a specific technology (e.g. computers or mobile phones) or just alternative media (e.g. Indymedia), there is a danger of overlooking areas where one technology overlaps with another in the course of activity. Moreover, such work also overlooks areas which overlap with "mainstream media".

Some work within this domain is also problematic for its view of social movement actors simply as audience members. For example, the "Resistance Performance Paradigm" (Atkinson & Dougherty, 2006) uses social movement actors' position as audience members as its base category failing to theorise social movement actors as anything more than audiences members. This is both media-centric and limits crosspollination from related disciplines. The base category of social movement actors, even if they use alternative media, should not be audience members. Even though social movement actors use media (see: Chapter 4) and media play an important role in influencing the activities of social movement actors (see: Chapter 5 and 6), the base category as "audience members" is insular, limiting, and fails to provide the latitude for capturing activities outside of viewing media.

Research needs to go beyond audiences of specific media. A remedy to this rests in the suggestion that an analysis of the use of alternative media, any media for that matter, by social movement actors should be regarded as part of a larger activity. This can be conceptually achieved through a “mediation approach” and the study of media-oriented practices. By studying the practices of social movement actors and treating the interaction with media – all forms of media – as a process, one is able to account for both the use of ICTs and mass media in the enactment of political action. Having reviewed some general bodies of work within the alternative-media approach and outlined how such research is adapted to suit this thesis, the last section elaborates on the concept of the routinised media event and how social actors can be theoretically positioned inside the media frame.

2.6 Routinised Media Events: Inside the Media Frame

If we indeed live in the mediapolis, as argued earlier, it is sustained by *the media frame* (Couldry, 2000; Gitlin, 1980). This use of the media frame draws on the spirit of text-centred research, and indeed is still about power, but the objective is different. The goal is not only to highlight the hegemonic power of the media to represent reality, but to analyse how this position occupied by media is acknowledged by, and influences the actions of, social movement actors. Consequently, the concept of the media frame is used in a loose sense similar to Couldry (2000, p. 16-17) in order to acknowledge the rhetorical devices bound with processes employed in the daily production of media, and reflect the systems, protocols, practices and people involved in its production and

distribution. Within this open articulation of the media frame is the assertion that authorial function of media to offer specific (re)presentations of reality is what underwrites its power (Couldry, 2000; Silverstone, 1999; Thompson, 1995). In the context of this study, the concept of the media frame is used for two purposes. First, as a bounding concept to acknowledge the “symbolic power” (Thompson, 1995, p. 16) and related dynamics and imbalances of the media frame. Second, to analytically separate the media’s role in representing ‘reality’ in the mediapolis.

This perspective also provides an avenue for viewing the media frame as an “arena” for contestation where political actors struggle with the media and each other in “symbolic contest” (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 118). While Gamson has studied everyday news discourse on specific issues such as nuclear energy (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), and nuclear weapons (Gamson & Stuart, 1992), this thesis is interested in the struggles that take place at a large scale political news event. A key argument of this thesis is that the actions of the social movement actors at the Gleneagles G8 Summit (and all parties involved in the Summit for that matter) occur against the background of, and in the context of a routinised political media event. The following section outlines the theoretical specificities and implications of viewing the G8 summit as a routinised media event.

Media Events

The central role media occupy in contemporary Western politics has previously been highlighted (Castells, 1997; Couldry, 2006; Silverstone, 1999,

2007; Thompson, 1995, 2000). The involvement of and reliance upon media has brought about a rise in “image politics” (DeLuca, 1999) whereby political actors create and manage acts of contention specifically with media in mind. DeLuca and other authors who have chronicled the rise and use of media stunts have often focussed on activities devised and executed by social movement organisations for the benefit of media (e.g. Anderson, 1991, 1993, 1997; Carroll & Ratner, 1999). On their own, the majority of these campaigns may draw the attention of the media, but rarely with the reverence of a media event (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 7). Dayan and Katz (1992) view “media events” as pre-planned activities organised outside of the media that are anticipated by both the public and media, and are broadcast both live and with reverence. Media events typically take the form of *conquests* highlighting a momentous human achievement, *coronations* such as a significant wedding or funeral, or *contests* such as major sporting or political events (Dayan & Katz, 1992, pp. 25-53).

A premise of this thesis is that the combination of high-powered international delegates discussing contentious and pressing global issues against a background of varied and vibrant dissent elevated the Gleneagles G8 Summit to media event status. The G8 Summit is not necessarily a ‘classic’ media event, but a product of the media eventisation of current affairs, part of the perpetual “torrent” (Gitlin, 2001) of media events of the minute. A constantly changing, unfolding and breaking collection of happenings in the mediapolis propelled to public attention and perpetuated by a culture of 24-hour news and the rise of “infotainment” (Kellner, 2003, p. 12). Accordingly, this research does not

methodically run through Dayan and Katz's checklist of the required media event characteristics, but invokes the concept in a loose fashion to contextualise the Gleneagles G8 Summit as a routinised political news media event. The term *routinised* serves as an adjective of "media event" to recognise Summit demonstrations as reoccurring happenings that, since the 1999 WTO demonstrations in Seattle, have meant both regular protests and regular news media coverage.

Routinised also refers to the predictable pattern of news coverage which the event unfolds to. Dayan and Katz (1992, pp. 25-53), in their analysis of media events, note the "scripted" properties of media events which provide loose "formulas" which guide the event's coverage. Chapter 4 analyses activists' perspective as to the content and rationale of these formulas through the concept of *perceived news scripts*. Also within the sociology of news research, there is an established body of literature which has analysed the influence of pressures, hierarchies and production routines influencing, even scripting news output (Bell, 1991; Gans, 1979; Golding & Elliot, 1979; Schlesinger, 1978; Schudson, 1995; Tuchman, 1976, 1977, 1978; Tumber, 1999).

Returning to media events, an immediate conflict with my application of Dayan and Katz's concept is the authors' assertion that media events are unifying and reconciliatory and thus "differ from daily news events, where conflict is the inevitable subject" (1992, p. 8)¹⁵. Fiske (1994, p. 8) suggests that media events are "a point of maximum visibility and maximum turbulence" and do not

¹⁵ The difference between Dayan and Katz and Fiske is inspired by Delli Caprini and Williams (2001, p. 179).

shy from conflict, but “invite intervention”, “motivate struggle” and hence become “a site of popular engagement and involvement and, not just a scenic view to be photographed and left behind”. Fiske’s own interpretation of a media event is worth citing at length for his emphasis on the representational consequences of such events:

The term *media event* is an indication that in a postmodern world we can no longer rely on a stable relationship or clear distinction between a ‘real’ event and its representation. Consequently, we can no longer work with the idea that the ‘real’ is more important, significant, or even ‘true’ than the representation. A media event, then, is not a mere representation of what happened, but it has its own reality, which gathers up into itself the reality of the event that may or may not have preceded it (1994, p. 2).

Dayan and Katz (1992) and Fiske (1994) write from different theoretical positions with the former offering a dogmatic definition of media events that, while previously appropriate, no longer reflects the prevalence of media spectacle. Meanwhile, Fiske, has been rightly criticised for lacking any rigidity in his theorisation of power relations (Ang, 1996, p. 7). While this thesis, like Ang (ibid), views Fiske as too optimistic, his perspective – even if not fully embraced – is helpful on four fronts. First, he recognises media events as *sites of struggle* which parallels the idea of the “symbolic contest” (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 118) discussed above. Second, he appreciates that the media’s representation of an event can have “real” implications and for this reason its *representation* in the media is at least as important as its “real” counterpart. Third, Fiske (as well as Dayan and Katz) views media events as concentrated and temporal opportunities noting a media event’s “period of maximum visibility is limited, often a few days, though the discursive struggles it occasions will typically continue for much longer” (Fiske, 1994, p. 8). Fourth, implicit to his approach is recognition that media events have both a physical element and a “media” component. However,

despite viewing the media event as a temporal site of contestation, Fiske's (1994) concern is on media output; cultural events playing out on television. Consequently, his interests rest at the cultural intersection of news and entertainment and not with the processes of social action inside a political media event.

A view of media events rooted in either Fiske's work or Dayan and Katz would involve a critical and culturally grounded analysis of the media text and its attributes; a text-centred approach. It would ask "what are the characteristics of the 2005 G8 that compelled individuals to gather around the television, and what are the socio-cultural implications of this?" However, this study is not interested in those who are in front of the TV, *but those who are on it*. Beyond the ability of the Gleneagles G8 Summit to gather a public and media audience, it is significant as a political media event in its ability to encourage political actors – delegates and dissenters – to converge upon a given location to take an active role in a media event *from inside the media event* (McCurdy, 2008). Due, in part, to the representational legacy of previous summits, the media event status of the Gleneagles G8 Summit was recognised and anticipated by all parties involved including activists, politicians and the media. From this perspective, the Gleneagles G8 Summit was a routinised media event in the media, and a site of contestation and challenge over media representation. Exploring this claim further requires viewing the media event as taking place at a "hybrid site" (Routledge, 1997, p. 367) that has both a *representational* and an *immediate* component.

The G8 as a Hybrid Site

This thesis is interested in examining the experience and process of contestation in the lead up to, and at the site of a media event. This perspective requires acknowledging the physical space in which an event takes place while simultaneously accounting for the media space it occupies. This is achieved by viewing the Gleneagles G8 Summit unfolding on a “hybrid site”, an area with both a *representational* and *immediate* component.

The idea of the “hybrid site” is based on Routledge’s (1997, p. 367) discussion of “Free State,” a temporary anti-roads encampment. Free State, Routledge argued, was representative of a “post-modern politics of resistance” (1997, p. 360) as it presented both a *direct challenge* through the act of constructing and occupying an illegal camp, while simultaneously mounting a *symbolic challenge* through the creation of objects such as “Carhenge” which sought to challenge “people’s commonsense understanding of car culture” (p. 369). Routledge’s view of hybrid sites as dialectical spaces with both a representational (symbolic) and immediate (direct) component is useful but must be contextualised. Parallels can be drawn between Routledge’s argument of a hybrid site and Fiske’s argument already cited that media events have two “realities”, the physical “reality” of what happened and the “reality” of the event shown in the media. Hybrid sites are areas, inside the media frame, where these two aspects converge.

Routledge limited his argument to a single protest site whereas the Gleneagles G8 Summit was a series of physical sites (hotels, camp grounds and

city centres) scattered across Scotland. Moreover, Free State was a hybrid space born out of a physical space, which, once inhabited and transformed by activists, came to occupy a representational space. However, the Gleneagles G8 Summit as a routinised political media event was a hybrid site born from a representational space. That is to argue that the Gleneagles G8 Summit was a media event and therefore a representational event before it came to occupy a physical space in Scotland. Whereas in Routledge's study the representational is underwritten by the immediate meaning a physical space was transformed into a media space, for the Gleneagles G8 Summit this relationship is reversed. *The immediate is underwritten by the representational.*

Representational

The argument that political action has a representational component recognises that events, actions and actors may be represented by media (Castells, 1997, 2000, 2007; Thompson, 1995, 2000). The media's coverage of an event or actor imbues a *representation* which inevitably provides a different experience and portrayal of the event than would have been had firsthand (Lang & Lang, 1953, p. 3). Moreover, as Fiske suggests, for those who only experience an event through the media, this version may become its *true* representation¹⁶. The significance of this is underscored by the fact that "politics is largely a mediated experience" (Delli Caprini & Williams, 2001, p. 161).

¹⁶ I am not suggesting media audiences accept uncritically and wholeheartedly what they consume in media. However, without additional resources, or until alternative accounts are provided, the mediated representation of an event would exist as its only account and, even with additional information, would still serve as a reference point for sense making.

The representational component of the Gleneagles G8 Summit resides both in media coverage of the actual event as well as its legacy as an international media event. Therefore media – in its most general sense – coverage of previous demonstrations against the G8 coupled with “thematic coverage” (Iyengar, 1991, p. 2) of similar episodes such as demonstrations against the WTO, World Bank, IMF and FTAA built a representational legacy that preceded the event. This is to argue that the Gleneagles G8 Summit was recognised by the media and all the social actors involved as a media event in part, due to its representational legacy. With this legacy, and as a recurring media event, come expectations within the media as to how the event should unfold and the roles that various parties were expected to play. Restated, the media legacy of previous demonstrations provided scripted representational possibilities for how the event was to unfold and invited social actors to fulfil these roles¹⁷. Activist articulations of these scripted possibilities – perceived news scripts – are analysed in Chapter 4.

Due to the predictable pattern of the rotating cycle of the G8, there was the expectation that the 2005 Summit would be hosted somewhere in Great Britain. While organising against the Gleneagles G8 Summit started before the location of the Summit was revealed, the announcement that the Summit would be held in Gleneagles, Scotland created both an occasion in the mediapolis and revealed an *immediate physical* location of the event.

¹⁷ Thank you to Nick Couldry for helping me articulate this point during our discussions.

Immediate

Privileging social actors' experience of and actions at the event necessitates an exploration of, and emphasis on, the physical *or immediate experience* and space of social action. To suggest that an action is immediate is to recognise that social action occurs in a material setting that has specific cultural, spatial and temporal coordinates. At the risk of ontological reductionism, the immediate experience is the "real" and grounded physical experience. It is the planning or enacting of an act of contention and not the media's coverage of it. While immediate actions may have symbolic intentions, they still take place in a physical environment.

The Gleneagles G8 Summit was a political media event and therefore a representational event which came to occupy a physical space. As a media event, the G8 Summit transforms physical spaces associated with the Summit into a dialectic of immediate and representational arenas. The immediate is the collection of physical spaces where events take place. During the media event itself, the physical locations associated with the event become located inside the media frame. While not all actions may be done for the media, nor might they be covered by all media, many actions fall within its gaze. With the arrival of the Summit "reality is uprooted," luxury hotels, city centres and camp sites are transformed into "Hollywood sets" (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 17). Physical places become temporarily located inside the media frame. Physically-dispersed places become interwoven through media narrative.

The underlying “media logic” (Altheide and Snow 1979) of the media frame – rules of access, action, sourcing in tandem with the acceptance and internalisation of this logic – influences and underwrites the actions and interactions of social actors at the event. *To be at the Summit is to be part of the media event; to be inside the media frame* (McCurdy, 2008, p. 300). It is to be at a physical site which is simultaneously a symbolic arena. This transformation is reinforced by the physical separation of delegates and dissenters that has come to characterise G8 Summits and similar meetings whereby the common convergence point for political actors has become the media (Koopmans, 2004). Thus, to some degree, the “real” event *is its representation*.

To argue that the immediate components of the Summit are underwritten by its representational aspects is not to assert that the G8 Summit and the challenges that accompany it are purely symbolic; quite the opposite. Summits discuss, establish, amend and reinforce international political frameworks that have worldwide material implications. The actions of political challengers involve physical acts such as road blockades or street marches and may also involve surveillance from, obtrusive intervention by, and/or confrontation with authorities resulting in real consequences, from detentions and arrests to physical property damage. Lastly, to argue the immediate is underwritten by the representational is not to detract from any meaning imbued by social actors towards the act or experience of challenging the Summit. The act and experience of challenging the Summit can be an important, empowering, even life-shaping experience for an individual. The argument is that the very nature of the event as a large scale

routinised media event underwrites the actions and interactions of social actors at the event. This has implications for both the *sites of protest*, and the *actions* conducted both on, and from, these sites.

Sites of protest are hybrid sites (Routledge, 1997, p. 367). The immediate component of such sites is the physical location where the event takes place. For something as large as the G8 Summit, there are multiple physical sites such as luxury hotels and city streets, all associated with the event. This thesis analyses one specific site: the Hori-Zone eco-village, a protest camp created by Dissent! for the G8 protests. Hori-Zone, as argued in Chapter 7, followed a tradition of establishing protest camps – also referred to as convergence spaces – to plan and execute protest from, but differs from the past camps of the environment and peace movements. Analysing these differences requires acknowledging tensions exacerbated by Hori-Zone's location inside the media frame, this is done through the use of two dialectics: front stage/back stage and media/activist space. The first is inspired by Goffman's (1959, pp. 92-122) dramaturgical differentiation between front region or front stage and back stage. Goffman, writing about individual cognition, stated that the front stage is the area put on show; the region that is visible to the public and that is consciously made visible (Goffman, 1959, p. 93). Back stage is the area that is kept hidden and protected from view; where secrets are kept and where performances can be rehearsed (Goffman, 1959, pp. 97-109). Goffman is referring to the way in which individuals control and present themselves but the theatrical analogy may also be extended to groups, networks and social movements.

Rooted in Goffman (1959), scholars Benford and Hunt (1992, p. 43) introduced the front stage/back stage concept to social movement literature to recognise the challenges faced by social movement actors in differentiating and maintaining “back stage control” between front stage and back stage boundaries. Conceptualising Hori-Zone using the dialectic of front stage and back stage allows for analysis into the ways in which the spatial dynamics of the site were altered by being inside the media frame, and how these challenges were dealt with by social movement actors. In tandem with this, I use the dialectic of media space and activist space to differentiate between activists’ uses of the camp as they relate specifically to news media. Media space refers to the front stage use or conceptualisation of the camp as a space for performance or symbolic action; a place where activists are on stage. In tension with this, is the use or conceptualisation of the camp as an *activist space*, separate from, away from, the news media; a place where activists can go back stage.

The significance of this and implications of this transformation on political contention (action) are examined in this thesis via an analysis of the direct and indirect media-oriented practices of social movement actors. While direct media-oriented practices – which analyse the strategies activists use to manage media – have already been theoretically developed in Chapter 6, indirect practices – which study the influence of media on other aspects of activism and particularly acts of political contention – still require theoretical work which will now be undertaken.

From Direct Action to Spectacular Action

Dissent! has its roots in the British environmental direct action movement and is self-identified as a direct action network. However, given the above argument that action committed at the site of a media event is underwritten by the media frame (the immediate is underwritten by the representational), this should also be seen as having an impact on the use of “direct action.”

In his discussion of Earth First!, Wall (1999) identifies two activist perspectives on direct action, “radical-flank” and “non-mediated” direct action. Drawing from McAdam (1996), Wall’s first conceptualisation saw direct action as part of a “radical flank process” whereby the direct action and demands of “extremists” are deliberately enacted to make the moderate views more palatable (Wall, 1999, p. 14). In making this claim, McAdam also stresses the crucial role played by such radical activists in framing media coverage of such events (1996, p. 341). The second approach viewed direct action as “militant”, believing it “...should be applied with disruptive intent” (Wall, 1999, p. 156). Further, it was often employed without either the cooperation of related activist groups or interaction with media. Emphasis was on the physical over the symbolic and emphasized what Wall referred to as “non-mediatory” experience. Thus, activists sought “to act rather than to represent their demands to mediating institutions, such as the media or a pressure group” (Wall, 1999, p. 156). This view of direct action is grounded in a philosophy that immediate and often confrontational measures need to be taken in order to bring about immediate change using various techniques to occupy contested sites or sabotaging equipment to stop

work at such sites (Jordan & Taylor, 2004, p. 79). The explicit intention was to cause an immediate (if only temporary) halt to the project while simultaneously increasing financial costs of doing business (Seel et al., 2000, p. 2).

International gatherings have a history of direct action, most notably the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle, Washington where direct interventions successfully shut down the conference. Since then various movements and networks have carried forward the sceptre in the hopes of achieving a similar end (Barlow & Clarke, 2001; Jordan, 2002; Juris, 2004, 2008a).

Although successful in Seattle, on the heels of the 2001 G8 Summit in Genoa, Italy, international summits began sourcing more secluded and secure locations increasing the distance and physical barricades between delegates and dissenters. The move from urban conference centres to fortified rural locations has severely restricted the effectiveness of direct action and the ability to “shut down” a summit. While the landscape of international summits has changed, the rhetoric has not. From this perspective, Dissent! is seen as attempting to carry forward the tradition of “non-mediatory” direct action shown in Seattle via its efforts to blockade, and in so doing “stop,” the G8 Summit. Yet to argue that the actions of the network should be seen as “non-mediatory” overlooks the prevalent, though perhaps unspoken (within Dissent!, not within the literature), role of symbolism manifest in protest at a media event.

The use of symbolism and image has become a staple feature of new social movements and indeed the Global Justice Movement in order to resist, jam and challenge power (DeLuca, 1999; DeLuca & Peeples, 2002; Juris, 2005b,

2008a, 2008b; Scalmer, 2002). Given that such struggles take place in and through the media, it is “symbolic power” (Thompson, 1995, p. 13) that political actors must attempt to harness to compliment, amplify and even compensate other forms of power which they may lack or may be substantially outmatched. This thesis argues that the use of direct action – which is viewed as the strategic use of “coercive power” (Thompson, 1995, p. 17) – at such Summits has become underwritten and therefore altered by its position inside the media frame as this study of Dissent! will demonstrate.

Although Dissent! espoused a discourse of resistance to the G8 Summit, it never intended to “shut down” the G8 Summit and therefore engage in “non-mediatory” direct action, but only sought to be *seen as trying to do so* and therefore engaged in what this thesis calls *spectacular action*. Spectacular action is viewed in this thesis as the simulation of non-mediated direct action. It is also a way of trying to understand the use of direct action tactics inside the media frame. The notion of spectacular action is rooted in Debord’s (1977) concept of “spectacle” as a way of conceptualising social relationships in capitalist consumer societies dominated by images transforming citizens from political actors into spectators. The society of the spectacle is both environmental, hegemonic and functions to maintain current power structures. Spectacular society, from Debord’s position, could not be challenged by participating in the spectacle, but only by creating a “nonspectacular rupture” (Anonymous, 2008) a “situation” outside of the spectacle.

Debord's spectacle plays a foundational role in Kellner's (2003) work on "media spectacle" which is put forward as a way of understanding the way in which the logic of spectacle, which would include political spectacle and may therefore be extended to cover the 2005 G8 Summit, organises social relationships with and through the media in order to maintain the power of media. Media spectacles, Kellner argues, "embody contemporary society's basic values, serve to initiate individuals into its way of life, and dramatise its controversies and struggles, as well as its modes of conflict resolution" (Kellner, 2003, p. 2). So what does the rise and deployment of spectacular action reveal about the contemporary values of radical social actors, and how they make sense of and initiate social struggle? The concept of spectacular action will be used in this thesis, particularly in Chapter 7 as a way to understand the transformation of direct action at such events and as a window to theorise the implications of this.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter began by characterising contemporary life as taking place in the mediapolis. Drawing from Silverstone (2007), mediapolis was used as an analytical concept to unify an otherwise fragmented media and capture the inescapable role media occupy in our experience, understanding, shaping and interacting with the world particularly, but by no means exclusively, in the case of politics. It is the process of mediation, this chapter argued, which sustains and characterises the mediapolis. Building on emerging discourses on mediation (Couldry, 2000, 2004; Martin-Barbero, 1993; Silverstone, 1999, 2007; Thompson, 1995; Thumim, 2007) mediation was defined as an uneven and often contested

process that involves multiple social actors – individuals, collectives, institutions, networks – in the (re)construction, (re)circulation and (re)consumption of symbolic forms. This general definition was put forward as a way to conceptualise media as a process that social actors engage with, as well as an environment that is lived in. While this perspective may be used to study multiple aspects of social life, the focus of this thesis is on politics and specifically counter-politics.

Contemporary politics, this chapter argued, has been transformed to the point where the media have become arenas where power is struggled over (Castells, 2007; Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Media are also key holders of power through their concentration of symbolic resources and their ability to shape rules of access to and representation in the mediapolis (Carey, 1988; Couldry, 2000; Silverstone, 1999). Consequently politics, counter-politics and particularly the struggles of the Global Justice Movement must be understood as struggles that are simultaneously both through, and with, media and their systems of production and power relations.

This chapter argued that a key attribute of the mediapolis was the dominance of media spectacle propelled and maintained by the rise of 24-hour news and infotainment facilitating the media eventisation of the news (Gitlin, 2001; Kellner, 2003). To capture this, Dayan and Katz's (1992) concept of media event, which was originally intended to analyse the "high holidays of mass communication", was adapted with the help of insights from Fiske (1994) to view the 2005 G8 Summit as a political news media event. Moreover, it was further

argued that the 2005 G8 Summit was a *routinised* media event whereby such mobilisations of the GJM and, by extension, the G8 Leaders Summit, have become a regular, though still spectacular, feature in the news within a culture saturated by, and quickly growing accustomed to, media spectacles (Kellner, 2003).

With the G8 Summit established as a routinised political media event, theoretical work was undertaken in order to allow for research inside the media frame. Adapting the concept of hybrid sites from Routledge (1997, p. 367), the 2005 G8 Summit was viewed as a hybrid site with both an *immediate* and *representational* presence. The concept of the hybrid site served an important function by connecting protest sites on the ground with their appearance in the media. Key to the theorisation of hybrid sites was the argument that the representational component – the media portrayal – underwrites the immediate; the material site. Consequently, physically dispersed places become interwoven through media narrative and physical places become temporarily located *inside the media frame*.

Just as sites are conceptualised as inside the media frame at a media event, so too are social actors. The central research question of this thesis is interested in the ways in which the process of mediation influences how social movement actors engage in political contention at a media event. A key theoretical premise of this chapter was that the process of mediation could be studied by way of a focus on practices and specifically media-oriented practices. Inspired by Couldry (2004), it was argued that studying media-oriented practices

provided an avenue to analyse the ways in which media inform and influence the actions of social movement actors.

Two dialectics of practice were suggested. First it was argued that practices could be conceptualised as either *direct* – dealing immediately with, involving or reacting to media – or *indirect* – viewed as practices which may not have involved immediate interaction with media but were “anchored” (Swidler, 2001, p. 83) by media. Second, it was argued that media-oriented practices can be differentiated via a dialectic of *hegemonic* – those which reinforce or embody dominant power structures or logics and *counter-hegemonic* practices – those which sought to resist or challenge dominant power structures or logics. Given the lack of past research into the repertoire of media-oriented practices of the GJM, one of the objectives of this thesis is also to map the field of practices. Consequently, Costanza-Chock’s (2003) analysis of conventional tactics of contention was adapted to develop three categories of direct media-oriented practices: *network facing*, *research* and *representation* as a way of understanding media strategy components.

Rucht’s (2004) “quadruple A” framework discussed earlier may also be placed under the banner of media-oriented practice as each of the four “reactions” (abstention, attack, adaptation and alternatives) are indeed media strategies. The chapter argued for the need to view and differentiate practices across the “levels” of the Global Justice Movement to separate out what is otherwise a messy reality. While overlapping, it was argued that the levels provided a means to better understand Dissent!’s media-oriented practices,

highlight theoretical concepts and empirically divide material. To this end four levels were suggested: (1) activists, (2) group, (3) network and (4) movement. Separating media-oriented practices, it was argued, into these levels provides an avenue to highlight tensions and contradictions across media-oriented practices at different levels and enquire as to how such practices challenge or reinforce hegemonies of power both within the network as well as in relation to the network's political targets.

In conclusion, the conceptual framework contained in this thesis is interested in the media-oriented practices of contemporary social movement actors mobilising for a large scale media event. The Gleneagles G8 Summit has been conceptualised as a high profile media event with a significant representational legacy. What is of primary interest is not the media output of the event but the practices of social movement actors at the event – inside the media frame. It is believed that by studying the experience of social movement actors in planning for and at such an event, insight is provided both into the media-oriented practices of social movement actors as well as into the degree to which media have become embedded in contentious politics. However, there are a number of methodological considerations and challenges that must be navigated in order to undertake such a study. Accordingly, the next chapter will discuss how the research question was operationalised and accounts for the methodological trajectory taken in this research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The previous chapter outlined the central research question which conveyed an interest in how social movement actors planned for and interacted with media at a media event. The research question was situated within theoretical approaches to the relationship between social movements where I argued that past research has not considered how social movement actors – particularly those in autonomous networks – think about, organise for, and interact with media. Consequently, my conceptual framework provided the theoretical tools to analyse media-oriented practices in the build-up to and at a media event: the Gleneagles G8 Summit. This chapter discusses both the general methodological approach as well as the specific research techniques. Attention is paid to the theoretical and practical decisions available, those taken and the implications on data collected and the thesis findings.

Mediation, a core theoretical concept, also drives my methodological approach. In this chapter I argue that the “mediation approach” is innovative in the field of media/social movement research for its ability to open up questions concerning the implications of the current concentration of symbolic power on the media-oriented practices of social movement actors. I argue that examining how social movement actors think about, plan for and interact with media requires a dynamic approach flexible enough to traverse multiple field sites over an extended amount of time. I begin by discussing how “the extended case method” (Burawoy, 1998) provides an appropriate framework to operationalise the research.

3.1 Selecting the Modes and Methods of Research

Martin-Barbero (1993, pp. 215-221) identifies three “key areas” for studying “places of mediation”: the daily life of the family, social temporality and cultural competence. This means not only considering what media people use; where they use it; how this is done (alone or with friends); or even their preferred texts, but also analysing how people make sense of, and navigate, a *media saturated society*¹⁸. Inspired by Martin-Barbero, this research focuses on social movement actors but differs from much past movement/media scholarship as it neither employs a “media-text centred” or an “institutional centred” approach¹⁹. While explicit in its orientation towards and theoretical interest in media, this research does not focus on one specific media text or media institution. Nor does it assume that all social movement actors have explicit media agendas. Instead, media functions as a thread to explore the practice of contentious politics of a specific media event – the Gleneagles G8 Summit – through the lens of a specific network: Dissent!.

While my emphasis is on Dissent!, *this project is not a social movement network study* but a study of the media strategies of a social movement network and the resulting tensions and paradoxes brought about by this. A network study of Dissent! would no doubt have been a rich and interesting undertaking but requires a different set of research questions. Instead, this research is conceived

¹⁸ This objective is adopted from Ang (1996) and cf. Couldry (2004). Similarly, Bird (2003, p. 5) notes that the goal of media research “must be to contextualise and draw connections between media/audience and the larger culture.”

¹⁹ The division of media research into “media-centred” and “institutional centred” approaches is based on the loose analytic division provided in Couldry (2004).

of as an “exploratory study” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 143) that analyses how a sample of contextually-situated social movement actors perceived of, and involved themselves with processes of news production in planning and enacting contentious politics at sites connected to the Gleneagles G8 Summit. Of interest is both the blatant actions directed towards media such as “media stunts” or press statements, but also the reflexive processes of devising, creating and refining these acts, together with the underlying rationale and more nuanced expressions of social movement actors regarding the impact of media on political practice.

This research is not interested in the practices of media professionals²⁰. There exists relatively formal mechanisms, processes and relationships between professional organisations and the media. While professional organisations no doubt have their difficulties with media, the dance between the two establishments is both familiar and well studied (Anderson, 1997, 2003; Carroll & Ratner, 1999). My interest is on actors who are outside of formal politics, and as such I am drawn to social movement literature.

The study of media debates and processes within “autonomous” networks such as Dissent! has received significantly less attention, though there are some recent works in this area (Fenton, 2008; Juris, 2008a, 2008b). Moreover, while professional organisations often have formal protocols and procedures for soliciting and responding to media, within the Global Justice Movement the topic

²⁰ I consider someone a “media professional” if they are employed to think about and/or strategise about media coverage including media liaisons, press officers and the like.

of the mainstream media is a widely contested and fragmenting issue (Anderson, 1997; Juris, 2008a).

As argued in Chapter 1, the wider and more ambitious objective of my research is to open a dialogue around the implications of media and mediation to political contention. This requires a comment on the generalisability and necessitates drawing boundaries around claims that can be made. First, while Dissent! is similar to the autonomous networks which organise demonstrations against IFI meetings and was selected for this reason, social movements are contingent upon their social, political, economic and historical context (Tarrow, 1998, p. 3). The narratives collected from interviewees are individual experiences which may not provide access to true realities given the constructed and constricted nature of the interview. Moreover, I only interviewed a selection of Dissent! members and may not have captured the full breadth of perspectives. Conscious of this imbalance, participant observation was also used to triangulate information. This thesis is also only a study of one network (Dissent!) in a much larger mobilisation, and an even larger movement. Accordingly, the political stance of Dissent! should not be taken to represent other organisations involved in the mobilisation or the movement at large.

Acknowledging these limits, I should also state what claims are made by this thesis. My thesis builds on past research into the media/movement dynamic and the GJM by offering a case study of a specific network from a perspective that has been largely overlooked. Yet, my goal is not simply to document a moment in history but to also analyse and offer concepts extending beyond a

single case. Alasuutari (1995, p. 156) argues that generalisability is linked to the persuasiveness of theory presented. This thesis incrementally builds on the growing dialogue on the concept of mediation (Couldry, 2000; Martin-Barbero, 1993; Silverstone, 1999, 2007; Thompson, 1995; Thumim, 2007). Yet just as my claims about Dissent! may not necessarily apply to other social movements, the concepts employed and proposed in this thesis such as mediation are not absolutes. Instead, they are used and presented in an effort to increase our understanding of the role media occupy in contemporary activism and the impact this has on political contention.

I have taken steps to strengthen the concepts and claims made in this thesis by triangulating research methods and drawing upon diverse sources of data. Therefore, I hope the concepts developed and findings from this thesis contribute towards our understanding of how the process of mediation influences the actions of social movement actors. Yet the contribution is a modest one, shaped by the theories chosen and the decisions taken in the research methods and method of analysis.

Mediation and the Extended Case Method

As mediation is conceptualised as a *process* that social actors engage in, its study benefits from a qualitative approach. While a quantitative approach favouring structured surveys and statistics could have been employed to capture *en masse* the perspective of social movement actors, I am interested in their nuanced perspectives and detailed practices. Flick (1998, p. 2-13) argues that a

qualitative orientation is best suited for the examination of the knowledge and practices of social actors.

The choice of research method and analysis has a significant impact on what is studied and found. This thesis is premised on Burawoy's extended case method (Burawoy, 1991a, 1991b, 1998, 2000). Discussing this method first requires differentiating between a *research method* and *research technique*. Following Burawoy (1998, p. 6), a *research method* is seen as an overreaching research strategy which employs a collection of "empirical tools" in the reflexive pursuit of theoretical models. *Research techniques* are "empirical tools" of which interviews and participant observation are both used in this thesis.

The extended case method is a qualitative approach to social research characterised by a "sensitivity to process", an appreciation for context and a goal of building on social theory (Burawoy, 2000, p. 26). The method is ethnographic in nature and fits easily into Burawoy's loose conceptualisation of ethnography as "writing about the world from the standpoint of participant observation" (Burawoy, 1998, p. 6). However, the extended method is not a traditional ethnography as its objective is not only to obtain a detailed description of the "micro" but to use these techniques to build theory *extending* beyond the micro. Similarly, this thesis is ethnographic in spirit but does not claim to be an ethnography. This is, in part, to sidestep interdisciplinary debates over the ontology of ethnography. Within media studies, many academics have critiqued their liberal, if not misplaced, use of the term ethnography (see: Ang, 1996; Billig, 1997, p. 205-207; Bruhn Jensen, 2002; Nightingale, 1993; Seiter, Borchers, Kreutzner, & Warth,

1991). Further, the end objective of my thesis is not only to produce a detailed historical account of a specific social movement and event of contentious politics, but also to employ ethnographic *techniques* towards building and expanding theory.

The extended case method consists of four dimensions.

1. It involves taking an *active* role, making the researcher *more participant than observer*²¹. This is actualised through the use of participant observation (discussed below).
2. Research is conducted over an *extended* amount of time and space (Burawoy, 2000, p. 26). In part the beneficiary of “good timing,” this research is based on twelve months of *active* and *extended* field research across multiple sites. My use of extended has two meanings. First, in the straightforward sense meaning fieldwork conducted over a long period of time. Second, extended refers to an investigation which considers not just the site of the demonstrations but a variety of processes, activities and discussions in the lead up to the Gleneagles G8 Summit. This approach provides the distinct data gathering advantages of participant observation which ultimately enriches the context of the object under study (Burawoy, 1991a; Jorgensen, 1989; Litcherman, 2002). It also recognises that while the Gleneagles G8 Summit demonstrations were only a temporary news peg, there were a series of engaging and often empirically neglected

²¹ Burawoy describes this as “*the extension of the observer into the world of the participant*” (Burawoy, 2000, pp., *italics in original*).

processes before and at the event²². This includes, but is not limited to the actions, discussion and debates by social movement actors about, in, through, and with all forms of media. Extended fieldwork can capture these processes which would be overlooked if one only focussed on media output. Moreover, an extended approach also has the advantage of examining what media-oriented practices are available, employed, and how they changed over time.

3. Third, is an appreciation for the context in which the research is conducted coupled with a view to link the social processes witnessed at the research site to larger social forces. Critical to “extending out from process to force” (Burawoy, 1998, p. 19) is viewing the micro as reflexively linked to the macro through “structured” forces which are context specific²³. Research does not just occur *in* a world system but is simultaneously *of* the world system (Burawoy, 2000; Marcus, 1995). That is to say that the world system (in this case late capitalism) *does not simply serve as a scene setting, but is in fact an integral part of the research itself*.
4. Fourth, is *a commitment to extending theory*. Burawoy argues that research should *begin* with theory and *then* proceed to case selection. The extended method encourages researchers to employ pre-existing theory in a reflexive manner in an effort to build on theory. Theory plays an active role throughout the research process as the researcher is

²² For example, Benford (1997) suggests that social movement processes of frame construction have been ignored by academics and frames have often wrongly been treated as static objects and not processes.

²³ Burawoy's argument is grounded in *structuration theory* (Giddens, 1984, 1991).

encouraged to explore, revisit, modify and challenge the theoretical concepts at all stages of the project. A danger with this approach is that researchers bring their own personal biases and those of their chosen theories. This may be counterbalanced by the fact that these biases are up-front and made visible through the use and development of theoretical tools as opposed to being buried within theory built from the ground up.

Multi-sited research and the extended method

A distinguishing attribute of the extended method is its endorsement of “multi-sited” research. Rooted in Marcus (1995), a multi-sited approach encourages researchers to navigate and engage in a variety of venues as they emerge during fieldwork in order to track the object of study. What this means for the study of mediation in this project is a move away from a single “place of mediation” (Martin-Barbero, 1993, p. 215), such as a family household, to the study of a series of *loosely connected places of mediation* and people who occupy and traverse these spaces. This requires a “tracking strategy” (Marcus, 1995, p. 95).

The tracking strategy I deploy in this thesis is loosely based on Marcus’ (1995, p. 108) suggestion to “follow the metaphor” by “trying to trace the social correlates and groundings of associations that are alive in language use and print or visual media”. Given the interest in “media-oriented practices”, the concept of “media” served as the “metaphor” which has been “tracked” by exploring the discourses, actions and tacit assumptions of a collection of individuals associated with a specific network (Dissent!), and engaged in organising and participating in

acts of contentious politics related to the Gleneagles G8 Summit. Put differently, the concept of “media” served as a thread to string together multiple sites to analyse the media-oriented practices of social movement actors.

Having something as broad as “media” as a thread to track is methodologically challenging. It required selecting and prioritising some meetings, sites and events over others, which influenced the data collected and analysed for this thesis. Conversely, the openness afforded by tracking media presented the opportunity to traverse multiple field sites in its pursuit which was a critical methodological component of this thesis. In seeking to analyse the media-oriented practices of social movement actors, what is being studied is a *process* of interaction. Consequently, mobility (across both time and space) was necessary to track network discourses. The “field sites” drawn upon for this project were varied and consisted of mainstream and independent media coverage, electronic email listservs, web-based discussion boards, social movement publications along with multiple “real-world” gatherings, workshops, meetings, demonstrations, interviews, and direct actions that have traversed local, national, and international borders (discussed below).

A challenge with conducting multi-sited approaches is not only connecting the sites, but drawing boundaries around them. As a research method, the extended case study is advantageous as theoretical concepts can assist in this. However, a significant challenge is that mediation is an ongoing *process* and, as such, does not have a definitive starting or ending point. Consequently, this research necessitated the construction of artificial boundaries in the form of a

case study (Snow & Trom, 2002, p. 147). Lofland and Lofland (1995, p. 21) offer a nimble definition of a case study as “a holistic investigation of some space- and time-rooted phenomenon.” Snow and Trom expand on this definition and identify three “defining characteristics” of a social movement case study arguing they should consist of:

(a) investigation and analysis of an instance or variant of some bounded social phenomenon that (b) seek to generate richly detailed and “thick” elaboration of the phenomenon studied through (c) the use and triangulation of multiple methods or procedures that include but are not limited to qualitative techniques (Snow & Trom, 2002, p. 147).

This definition provides a useful guide for defining the boundaries of my thesis. The Gleneagles G8 Summit, and specifically the planning for and enactment of contentious acts by Dissent!, forms the initial case study borders. Case studies are not without their limitations. They are artificial constructs that impose analytical boundaries on an event from a predefined perspective and to a prescribed end. The case study of Dissent! is shaped by both the entrance and departure point of the research, as well as the “media” tracking strategy which gave prominence to specific characteristics over others. While this shapes the presentation of Dissent!, it may be justified given the focus of this thesis. The next section goes further into the rationale for selecting the 2005 G8 Summit and Dissent!, within this, as the focus of the single case study.

3.2 Case Selection and Rationale

Choosing a media event for analysis was relatively uncomplicated. This research project began in September 2003 and by January 2004 it became clear that the 2005 G8 Summit would be hosted in the UK. Following the 2001 G8

Summit in Genoa, Italy, the G8 Leaders Summit had established itself as a key “media event”; once it was guaranteed that the Summit would indeed occur in the United Kingdom, my research was designed with this event in mind. With the “media event” selected, it was necessary to secure both an entrance and vantage point from which to begin. Having been previously involved in an autonomous network similar to Dissent! for the 2002 mobilisation against the G8 Leaders Summit in Kananaskis (see: Chapter 1), I was already interested in how social movement actors navigate media. Having decided to focus on one event, a further decision was taken to make one network: *Dissent! – Network of Resistance Against the G8* (Dissent!) the hub of this study. This is to say that all of the information gathered and recounted for the purposes of my thesis is connected in some fashion to Dissent!.

There is undoubtedly a value in selecting more than one network for analysis to allow for comparative analysis such as Carroll and Ratner (1999). This section will justify the rationale in selecting one network and specifically Dissent!, and will consider the implications of this decision and discuss some of the challenges faced.

Selecting Dissent!

Three networks organised acts of political contention around the Gleneagles G8 Summit: Make Poverty History, G8 Alternatives and Dissent!. A brief profile of each network was provided in Chapter 1 where it was also made clear that my research centres only on Dissent!. Perhaps the single biggest influence on the research design was the decision to follow a single as opposed

to a “multiple case” design (Yin, 2004, p. 2). It could be argued that a multiple case approach to networks mobilising against the Gleneagles G8 Summit would have yielded more robust and generalisable results. While the advantages of a comparative approach are recognised, I felt that a single case study was more appropriate for four reasons: a focus on *depth*, issues of *trust*, *practical necessity* and the “lay” nature of Dissent!.

Depth of Material

This project places an importance on the *depth of material within one network* as opposed to breadth of material across networks. Studying the media-oriented practices of network members and the network itself required collecting detailed qualitative material obtainable only by in-depth qualitative research. Given the finite resources available to conduct fieldwork and analyse data, I preferred to undertake a deep and committed analysis of one network using multiple methods rather than a more superficial comparative analysis.

Trust

With a long history of police surveillance and media exposés, it is easy to appreciate the tendency for radical activists to have a healthy scepticism of being studied. The planning and execution of contentious political acts, especially illegal ones, requires an understandable level of anonymity and trust. Likewise, conducting overt research within a social movement requires, among other things, establishing a particular level of trust and acceptance by social movement actors (Plows, 2002, p. 76). As Dissent! was my primary interest, I felt that

promiscuously rotating between two networks ran the risk of diluting my credibility within Dissent! and might ultimately constrain my ability to collect the depth of data sought.

Practical Necessity

Favouring one network above others was also a practical decision. With three networks mobilising against the Gleneagles G8 Summit, focusing on one was an attempt to manage a potentially unmanageable situation. A finite amount of resources and time were available to conduct my research which placed unavoidable caps on what I could physically achieve. Focusing only on Dissent! functioned as a way to filter information. Yet, as will be outlined below, even undertaking to study one network was a daunting task which required further selectivity within the network.

An emphasis on lay people

Dissent! was selected for its emphasis on lay people. Dissent! was primarily comprised of individuals and collectives all of whom were volunteers; the network had no paid staff. Make Poverty History and, to a lesser extent G8A, had access to the *professional* resources of well-funded, international NGOs, labour unions and political parties. As argued at the start of this chapter as well as in Chapter 1, the relationship between professional organisations and the media is well studied. Moreover, a professional approach to media such as that taken by MPH and, to a lesser degree G8 Alternatives, requires an institutionally driven and predefined approach to managing the media. Yet as argued in

Chapter 1 and 2, Dissent!'s lack of a prefabricated "plan" to manage mainstream media coverage is what makes it so interesting. A lack of a plan or a formal body to implement it meant that individuals within the network had to draw upon their own knowledge of media to devise a collective position towards media.

Drilling Down – Studying Dissent!

While the decision to study one network significantly narrowed the scope of my research, studying Dissent! still posed a significant challenge. The biggest obstacle was determining a strategy to compensate for the fact that Dissent! had:

...no central office, no spokespeople, no membership list and no paid staff. It's a mechanism for communication and co-ordination between local groups and working groups involved in building resistance to the G8, and capitalism in general (Dissent!, 2004a).

Nonetheless, it is still possible to offer a rough approximation of the various connections between the groups associated with Dissent!. Despite having numerous international connections, Dissent! was a UK-based network. Although elements of Dissent! ventured, at least electronically, beyond Great Britain's national borders, the majority of the operations of the network, including the face-to-face, bi-monthly gatherings (discussed below) were held *within* the UK.

Within Dissent!, there are three separate but overlapping threads: 1) local groups, 2) network convergences, and 3) working groups. The following discussion charts how discourse related to media was tracked across the network by outlining the rationale and considering the implications, challenges and limitations of the selective approach applied to studying Dissent!.

Dissent! Local Groups

Dissent! consisted of 28 local groups²⁴. Local groups were city or even region-wide collectives that functioned as entry points and contact points to connect with Dissent!. Thus, many “local groups” are better thought of as local nodes rather than formal groups as they provided a framework for an otherwise potentially loosely associated aggregate of individuals, affinity groups and various collectives to converge on a local level. Dissent!’s multiple localised manifestations dotted across the UK each with their own schedule of events and meetings made studying mediation across the entire network an extremely demanding task for one researcher.

This was approached pragmatically by attending relevant meetings in London. Due to London’s large population, there were a number of local groups who associated themselves with Dissent!. However, instead of picking one local group, I associated myself with a regional network: Resist G8 2005 – South East Region Mobilising Network (SE Network). While the SE Network was not formally affiliated with Dissent!, there was considerable overlap between the individuals and collectives involved with Dissent! and the SE Network. I undertook a “floating” strategy of involvement with the SE Network and did not attempt to associate myself with a single local group. I felt that keeping my participation at a

²⁴ This figure is based on the local groups listed on the Dissent! website. The number should not be read as a conclusive representation for all the areas in which Dissent! was active. Due to delays in updating the webpage or a failure to provide contact information there may have been additional groups who were not included on the website. Further, each “local group” tended to be comprised of a number of individuals as well local organisations, collations, affinity groups and networks. Local groups for Dissent! were identified from the following cities: Aberdeen; Belfast; Birmingham, Brighton; Bristol; Cambridge; Cardiff; Carlisle; Colchester; Derby; Edinburgh; Glasgow; Hastings; Ipswich; Ireland; Lancaster; Leeds; Leicester; Liverpool; London; Manchester; Newcastle; Nottingham; Oxford; Reading; Sheffield; Southampton; Worthing.

regional network level would enable me to keep a focus on media-related discourse across a number of groups. This strategy had the advantage of increasing the breadth of interviewees at the cost of the insight that could have been achieved from detailed participation. Curtailing local involvement provided more time to participate in Dissent! on a national level especially at the network-wide convergences which proved to be one of the primary sites of media discourse and most important sites of fieldwork.

Network-Wide Convergences

Dissent! network-wide “convergences” were held on a bi-monthly basis. The convergences were the only forum where decisions about the direction, approach and policy of Dissent! could be taken. Consequently, convergences were focal points that influenced the network’s trajectory. Given the importance of the convergences and the fact that they were attended by a large cross-section of groups associated with Dissent!, I saw convergences as a natural opportunity to gain insight into how members across Dissent! thought about and reacted to media. Moreover, as network convergences had the ability to make network wide decisions, they also provided an ideal opportunity to track and monitor the network’s – and groups within the network – stance towards and reaction to mainstream media.

A full list of meetings attended during fieldwork is provided in Appendix 2 but it is worth commenting that I was not able to attend a Dissent! network convergence until the 6th convergence held in December 2004 in Newcastle. For meetings prior to this, I relied upon minutes and discussion forums. I was also

not able to attend all Dissent! network convergences missing the 8th (Leeds) and 11th (Glasgow), which meant that I undoubtedly missed some media-related discussions. Attempts to compensate for this gap in participant observation were made by following up with contacts as to what had happened at missed meetings, as well as reading discussions on relevant listservs and meetings which were often compiled and either placed on Dissent!'s website or sent out on its email list (discussed below). One of the primary functions of the convergences was to allow network working groups to meet.

Dissent! Working Groups

Dissent! working groups were “groups of individuals working together on a specialised aspect of the organisational process” (Dissent!, 2006). The list of working groups was not static, and additional groups were formed as needed. By July 2005, Dissent! had 27 working groups listed on their website (Dissent!, 2006)²⁵. Working groups were established around various tasks (e.g. catering, legal) or actions (e.g. blockades, hill walking). When Dissent! convergence meetings were attended, a similar “floating” strategy between groups was initially applied but always with an interest in and sensitivity towards discussion about mainstream media. Time and resources made it impossible to study all of the working groups within the network. Moreover, the practical nature of many groups meant that media was not likely to be discussed by many groups. I

²⁵ By July 2005, the following 27 working/action groups were listed on the Dissent! website: Bike Caravan; Blockading Group; Catering; Convergence Working Group; Education/Roadshow; Festival of Dissent!; Fundraising; Gathering; G8 Climate Action; Hill Walking; International Networking; Legal; Logistics; Media; Medical Support; Newsletter; People's Golfing Association; Process Group; Publicity; Research; Refugee Action Group; Skill Sharing & Translating; Training; Trauma Working Group; Working Group Against Work; Website; Welcome Group.

participated across a number of working groups but gave particular attention to a group which became known as the CounterSpin Collective. As argued in Chapters 5 and 6, the CounterSpin Collective (CSC) evolved from media discussions and media working groups within Dissent!. The discussions and actions of the CSC were an important resource for capturing Dissent!'s repertoire of media-oriented practices.

Focussing on the CSC meant diverting attention from other network aspects. This situation was no different from the decision network members faced when needing to choose which meeting to attend. Attending the CSC meetings often meant missing action meetings such as the "Blockades" working group where not only might there have been some peripheral discussion of media, there were also often undercover journalists present. However given my driving interest was in Dissent!'s mainstream media strategy, CSC meetings were the most suitable outlet for media related discussion and always took priority. Beyond face-to-face meetings, the issue of mainstream media was also discussed and debated on a number of electronic resources linked to Dissent!, many of which were monitored and analysed for this thesis.

Internet Based Resources

Dissent! employed a number of Internet-based resources which frequently took the form of electronic discussion lists or listservs. A listserv is an asynchronous form of electronic communication that uses email to send and receive e-mail messages to all users who have subscribed to a listserv. In essence, it is a group email list. Various web pages also provided valuable

information related to the mobilisation while online discussion boards also provided a space for network discussions. The amount of content generated by these sources greatly exceeded the resources available to collect and analyse data for this project, therefore this research is informed by, and has drawn from, a cross-section of relevant listservs, websites and discussion boards.

Listservs

A significant number of Dissent!'s local and working groups established their own electronic listserv. In order to manage and sift through the large number of listservs, I was selective in those I subscribed to and participated in. Although I was subscribed to a total of eleven listservs, three were of particular importance to this research. The first is "Resist G8 2005". This was Dissent!'s primary listserv and was used to disseminate and post information relevant to the network. It was formed in November 2003 and remained sporadically active though email activity radically dropped off after the mobilisation. Between November 2003 and August 2005, there were 2077 listserv emails. Dissent! had a policy that, while not always respected, explicitly prohibited the use of this listserv for either political debate or network wide decision making. I read this listserv regularly and sometimes posted to, but I did not analyse it in this thesis; instead it forms part of the background information.

The second listserv was "Media Strategy Against G8"(media strategy) which was established as an electronic manifestation for the network's media working group. Often the listserv supplemented discussions related to media which occurred at Dissent! convergences, or was used to post reactions to media

coverage. I read all the posts on the listserv as well as posted to the list. I was conscious that by posting to the list I influenced the direction of conversation and ultimately influenced what I was studying. However, participant observation is based on taking an active role in the group. My posts to the listserv mostly consisted of distributing CSC meeting minutes (more below) but I did distribute (along with many other members) news articles to share. I conducted a thematic analysis (discussed below) of the complete content – 484 emails – of the media strategy listserv.

A third listserv I regularly monitored was a spin off from the “Media Strategy” list called “G8 Media Response”. This was a low-traffic list that also handled media-related discussion but only had a total of 12 posts. Beyond the three aforementioned listservs, I subscribed to eight other listservs as the content provided great context to the operations of the network but was not directly analysed.

Websites & Discussion Boards

Two websites served as primary sources of information. Dissent!’s website hosted news articles, meeting minutes and electronic copies of network documents. The 2005 website is no longer active but is archived (<http://archive.dissent.org.uk/>). Content from the Indymedia website particularly the “major report” section on the 2005 G8 mobilisation was also read regularly²⁶. Indymedia content was not sifted through in a systematic fashion. Instead, the

²⁶ Indymedia has archived its “major report” coverage of the 2005 G8 here: <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/actions/2005/g8/>

website was accessed on a regular basis and submissions to the 2005 G8 mobilisation section were reviewed, looking out for postings that were related to, or cross-referenced mainstream media coverage. Lastly, as political discussion was formally discouraged on Dissent!'s listservs, an online discussion board was established at *Enrager.net* which I visited regularly. As there was not an overwhelming amount of content, I was able to read all the posts with an eye for discussion about or related to mainstream media and log relevant posts²⁷. Much of the Enrager.net and Indymedia information was used for context and is not necessarily directly quoted in this thesis.

3.3 Data Collection, Research Techniques and Analysis

Interviews

Weiss (1994, p. 9) notes that the qualitative interview is suitable when seeking to develop a detailed description of an event or process. In addition, qualitative interviews allow for the examination of perceptions and “nuanced understandings” (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 95) of social actors. It has also been argued that qualitative interviews are a useful tool for obtaining information in situations or activities that may not be easily accessed by the public (ibid p. 97). For these reasons, qualitative interviews were deemed appropriate.

The technique is not without critics nor its problems. Kvale (1996, p. 284-291) highlights ten common critiques of qualitative interviews which are often

²⁷ In December of 2005 moderators closed the Enrager discussion board without archiving it see it of little value. However, before this happened, I took screen shots of all of the topic headings and logged relevant articles which are provided in Appendix 7.

fielded against qualitative research in general. The criticisms may be summarised as viewing the qualitative interview as: unscientific, biased, unreliable, not quantitative, not generalisable, not trustworthy or valid due to its subjective and impressionistic interpretations (ibid). Qualitative interview enthusiasts have offered their own critiques of interview research as: individualistic, idealistic, trivial, cognitivist, static and devoid of context (ibid).

Interviews are not neutral or natural occurrences but socially constructed situations often initiated by researchers for a specific end (Miller & Glassner, 2004, p. 125-126). They are the product of an active, contextually grounded process between interviewer and subject governed by power dynamics between researcher and researched (Kvale, 1996, p. 126; Wengraf, 2001, p. 2-15). These limitations of the semi-structured interview are built into the method itself. While they may not be avoided, it is important to be aware of them and to employ efforts such as combining research techniques to increase the reliability of data (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000, pp. 336-350).

The semi-structured qualitative interview was selected for its emphasis on structure while still accommodating spontaneous, reflexive interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. A danger in conducting interviews, particularly with contentious topics, is that individuals may block, withhold or be selective in the information disclosed (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000, p. 43). To reduce potential difficulties an interview schedule was devised and used where necessary to keep

conversations focussed (Flick, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995)²⁸. The interview schedule also allowed for the triangulation of responses during analysis.

Concerning the interviews themselves, my familiarity of and comfort with the topic increased as I conducted more interviews, and as my participation in Dissent! increased. I found that the more interviews I did, the more refined my technique became in terms of my ability to listen, not interrupt and probe where appropriate. Further, the more interviews I conducted, the less apprehensive I became about approaching potential interviewees. Upon reflection, I believe the later interviews I conducted benefited from a decreased “social distance” (Miller & Glassner, 2004, p. 132) between myself and the interviewees. This ultimately fostering better text for analysis and increasing the internal validity of the data. Only one person I approached for an interview declined, but did so politely wishing to keep a focus on activism, and not the study of activism. Everyone else I approached consented.

Interview Sample and Recruitment

I did not set out to interview a pre-arranged number of activists. I conducted a total of 32 semi-structured interviews with 27 participants but, as disclosed below, eventually dropped two interviews - each from different individuals - due to concerns over interview quality. Thus, the analysis involves interviews from 25 unique individuals with some participants being interviewed twice. In total, five participants were interviewed twice – both before, and after

²⁸ The interview schedule is provided in Appendix 4.

the Gleneagles G8 Summit – accounting for 10 of the 32 interviews. Information as to who was interviewed twice and interview profiles is provided in Appendix 1.

In total, 30 of the total sample of 32 interviews were recorded on MiniDisk, with two exceptions: one interview (Harry) was conducted via email as he was unable to meet in person. Harry was emailed the interview questions and his emailed responses were treated as a transcript. Another interviewee (Jeff) agreed to an interview but did not want his voice recorded, instead consenting to me taking notes of the conversation. A summary of all interviews conducted including the date and type of interview is given in Appendix 1. Based on Flick (1998, p. 66), I decided to stop after conducting 32 interviews as I felt that a point of saturation had been reached and themes in the interviews were repeating themselves. The number of interviews also exceeds Bauer and Gaskell's (2000, p. 43) recommended "upper limit" of 15-25 individual interviews for a project conducted by a lone researcher.

As the process of interacting with media is being studied, I deemed it important to have a collection of interviewees that were spoken to both before and after the G8 Summit. This provided a level of consistency in reflections on the Summit. In order to extend the breadth of voices, 22 individuals were interviewed on a one-off basis at different times during the mobilisation. The objective of the one-off interviews was to collect a varied range of opinion of a large number of participants in order to map the diverse approaches toward and thinking about media. The first interview was conducted in March 2005, while the last interview was conducted in August 2005. Ten interviews were conducted

prior to the July mobilisation against the G8 Summit, seven interviews were conducted *during* the mobilisation and 15 were conducted *after*. Interviewee profiles are presented in Appendix 1.

Spreading the interviews out over time allowed for the collection of diverse perspectives from different periods in the mobilisation. However, given that both Dissent! and the media environment were constantly changing, comparing the data collected can be challenging. This was partially compensated for by using an interview schedule which increased the consistency of questions asked during the interviews. Also, six activists were interviewed twice which allowed for the comparison of view points to explore for any significant changes in perspective.

Whenever possible, face-to-face interviews were conducted. However four interviews were conducted by telephone and one via email. Shuy (2003, p. 181) argues that face-to-face interviews solicit “more thoughtful” and “more accurate” responses than telephone interviews. However, the geographic dispersal of interviewees *after* the G8 Summit necessitated some telephone interviews. Two factors help compensate for the limitations of the telephone interview. First, all of the telephone interviews were conducted after the G8 Summit and thus after establishing relations with interviewees. Second, two of the four telephone interviews were with individuals who I had previously interviewed.

Prior to conducting and recording each interview, a consent form was presented, discussed and the interviewee was asked to sign it. The consent form permitted the recording and transcription of the interview without further need to refer back to the interviewee. It also informed interviewees that they did not have

to answer a question if they did not feel comfortable and could ask to have the recording stopped at any time. Signed consent forms were collected for all interviews except two (Jeff and Harry); the form is provided in Appendix 6. Interviewees were assured that their participation would be anonymous. Consequently, the names and some interviewee details have been changed to protect their identities.

Interviews lasted between 40 and 80 minutes. In one rare case the second interview with Guy was only 20 minutes as he felt the responses from his first interview remained relevant (Guy's first interview was 49 minutes). Interviews were semi-structured and followed an interview schedule that had two variations, one for interviews before the Summit, and one for after; both are provided as appendices (Appendix 4: Interview Schedule Pre G8; Appendix 5: Interview Schedule Post G8). The interview schedule helped to ensure consistency in the questions asked and ultimately facilitated analysis. The interview schedule was slightly modified for interviews conducted after the Summit. This was done to further explore the role and impact of the CSC, to allow interviewees to reflect on their experiences at the Summit and comment on the July 7, 2005 London bombings.

In selecting interviewees, efforts were made to ensure that participants were not just taken from one geographic area. However, being based in London there was a natural predisposition to interview people from the South East. A range of involvement across various Dissent! working groups was sought. However, 16 of the 27 interviewees were involved in some fashion in the Dissent!

media group. The level of association individuals had with the Dissent! media group varied between participants. The strong presence of media group members in the interview sample is not problematic given the explicit interest in media-oriented practices. At the same time, I feel that there is still a sufficient number of interviewees who were not associated with the media group to provide some balance to the sample.

Four additional variables were kept in mind when approaching interviewees: 1) gender, 2) age, 3) student status, 4) activist experience.

1. *Gender*. On average, females comprised roughly one third of participants at various Dissent! related meetings. This research did not intentionally set out to replicate Dissent!'s disproportionate involvement of males and set the objective of having females comprise at least one third of the interview sample. Unfortunately, female participants fell slightly under one third with eight of 26 or 31% of my interviewees being female.
2. *Age*. The large majority of those involved in Dissent! appeared to be between the ages of 18-40 years old. While the age of interviewees was not directly asked, it is assumed that all of the interviewees fell into this age range.
3. *Student Status*. A large proportion of those involved in Dissent! were attending post-secondary education (both undergraduate and postgraduate). Efforts were taken to mix those who are currently receiving an education and those who are not.

4. *Activist Experience*. It is understandable that many individuals already involved with the Dissent! network have some amount of previous activist experience. However, levels of experience (such as years of involvement and events attended) amongst those in the network varied. Accordingly, in selecting interviewees an effort was made to mix, where possible, levels of involvement ranging from neophyte to veteran.

This sampling frame is similar to Roseneil (1995, p. 9) who, in her study of the Greenham Common protest site, identified a list of “important variables” and then proceeded to “strategically” select informants. Similarly, the two Dissent! group types (working groups/local groups), in tandem with the five aforementioned factors, served as a list of relevant variables that influenced the selection of informants. These aforementioned characteristics are beneficial as they cover a broad cross-section of experiences and opinions within the Dissent! Network helping to increase the diversity of the sample.

As with both Roseneil (1995, p. 9) and Plows (2002, p. 79), interviewee recruitment involved snowball sampling. This tactic was important as I initially felt uneasy about asking for interviews for fear of being ostracised or reprimanded. Consequently, early interviews were with individuals who I initially established relationships with during fieldwork, and who I determined would be open to academic research. As my participation in the network continued, my comfort level increased and my ability to approach and secure interviewees improved. Undoubtedly, my role as sympathetic participant observer in the network also facilitated interviewee recruitment.

Reflecting on my sample, it could have been strengthened with an increase in the number of interviewees who held an “abstention” (Rucht, 2004, p. 36) perspective. However those who were often the most vocal about rejecting any interaction with media, were often, though not always, the most vocal about the “infiltration” (let alone academic infiltration) of social movements, which created an air of unease. Although I did approach and obtain some interviews from this perspective, feelings of apprehension limited me from pursuing such interviewees too aggressively and the perspective is underrepresented in the sample.

Full transcripts were generated for 28 of the 30 recorded interviews. The two exceptions were interviews with Brian and Julie who, despite following an interview schedule, offered repetitious answers which focussed on specific yet tangential topics. The interview with Brian centred around the issue of law and its relationship to nature and the environment. Every question asked off of the interview schedule resulted in a response along these lines. Similarly, Julie’s responses almost always involved a critique of Tony Blair and a reference to the war on Iraq. Neither interview had sufficient scope for the purposes of this thesis and while the interviews were listened to, I decided not to generate transcripts. While the interviews do not feature in this thesis, they did offer a lesson in the challenges of conducting qualitative research and the unpredictability of dealing with human subjects. At the same time, the fault does not necessarily rest with the interviewees; perhaps if I had stronger interview skills or conducted the interviews differently then useable material could have been obtained. However,

in the interests of quality control, the interviews were withdrawn. Technical difficulties were also encountered which meant that one interview (Chris) had to be conducted a second time due to equipment failure but is only counted as one interview.

Direction as to the level of transcription detail required was taken from Flick (1998, pp. 174-175) who notes, “where linguistic exchange is a medium for studying certain contents, exaggerated standards of exactness in transcriptions are justified only in exceptional cases.” For health reasons the majority of transcription was contracted out to a professional service. However, I proofed each transcript by reading the completed transcript while listening to the interview and making any required edits. Efforts were taken to transcribe the interviews as accurately as possible, however emphasis was not placed on reflecting the paralinguistics of the discussion.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is defined as the *active involvement* of the researcher across multiple field sites over a specific period of time (Burawoy, 1998, p. 16-17; Litcherman, 2002, p. 120-121). Empirical data from participant observation can be generated by the researcher’s field notes which contain documentation of events, conversations, observations, reflections and texts. Dissent! movement documents collected included web page imprints, agit prop and the listserv emails.

Litcherman (2002) distinguishes between two types of participant observation: field-driven research and theory-driven research. Litcherman

classifies field-driven research as “traditional,” micro-oriented research whereby “a given subject matter ‘in the field’ directs the goals of research” (2002, p. 122). Two critiques are consistently made against this traditional approach. First, while field-driven research provides a rich account of the micro-processes of a specific empirical case, it is difficult to put forward more generalisable claims outside of the field site (Litcherman, 2002, p. 121-122). Second is the inability of field-driven participant observation to elucidate macro-level social structures (ibid).

Theory-driven participant observation, on the other hand, employs existing theory as a springboard for fieldwork. Therefore, “a field site or subject matter is meaningful only in the categories of a theory, from the very beginning” (Litcherman, 2002, p. 122). This approach, favoured by Litcherman, is situated in Michael Burawoy’s *extended-case study* research strategy (1991a, 1998, 2000). Theory-driven participant observation is to view, and subsequently theorise, the case study “as a very specific instance of social and cultural structures or institutional forces at work” (Litcherman, 2002, p. 122). By beginning with theory, field sites may be conceptualised in theoretical terms instead of an empirical object in and of itself (Burawoy, 1998, p. 20-22; Litcherman, 2002, p. 121-125). In the context of this study, the theory-driven approach to participant observation (in line with the extended case method) views the mobilisation around the Gleneagles G8 Summit, and the event itself, to be of interest for the opportunity it presented to examine the media-oriented practices of activists within the Global Justice Movement.

While I employ a theory-driven approach, it is not without its potential pitfalls. The most pressing danger is the overzealous researcher who, either deliberately or not, disregards or misinterprets his data because he is focused too heavily “on a theoretical prize” (Litcherman, 2002, p. 125). Using participant observation in tandem with one or more methods is a widely recognised and encouraged measure for increasing the interpretive validity of a project (Flick, 1998, p. 232; Litcherman, 2002, p. 139-141; Snow & Trom, 2002, p. 150-152). Thus my thesis draws upon two research techniques; participant observation in tandem with in-depth interviews to strengthen the interpretive validity of my analysis.

Researcher Position and the Experience of Participant Observation

In discussing participant observation, two dialectics must be addressed beginning with overt versus covert research. Seldom can covert participation be justified (Litcherman, 2002, p. 125). An overall overt approach whereby participants were informed of my researcher status was taken. However, in my initial entry into the network, my status as a researcher would not have been apparent to all Dissent! members as I disclosed my academic interest to network members on an *individual level* and I did not pursue informed consent in group settings such as network meetings. As a matter of good practice I informed network members as soon as possible – usually upon meeting them the first time – of my interest in studying Dissent! and consent was sought and obtained for my continued participation.

I recognise that by not overtly stating my position as a researcher to all network members, some people who may have objected to my presence were not given the opportunity to do so. While a valid criticism, I feel two factors justify my strategy. First, the fluid nature of Dissent! meant obtaining informed consent from all members would have been an almost impossible task. This would have required an announcement at each event and, more than likely, a discussion which would have been unnecessarily cumbersome to the network and potentially ostracising. Second, as a radical social movement, Dissent! may be considered a more “closed” than “open” field site (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 42). While by no means secretive, there was a healthy scepticism of any form of surveillance including that of researchers. Consequently, a level of negotiation was required to gain entry and acceptance into the network.

My presence in Dissent! started relatively early in the network’s trajectory when national meetings would only attract about 30 to 40 people. This presented an opportunity to build trust with key network members and be accepted into the group. A danger with this close level of involvement (yet part of the point of the method) is that people may forget that I was a researcher and they were being researched. The only time where there was a real conflict between my role as a participant and observer came during the mobilisation in Scotland at the Hori-Zone eco-village when I was asked a few times by CSC members to help out by giving a media interview to Canadian press. I politely declined as felt it was not my position to speak to the media, and CSC members accepted this point. I do not feel it impacted my standing in the group.

The second dialectic of participant observation is *insider* versus *outsider* research. Although I only had limited activist experience in the UK and no association with Dissent! prior to my research, I would describe my position as more insider than outsider. While studies from the 1960s and 1970s were afraid that over-involvement would not allow researchers to “observe,” Jorgensen (1989, p. 55) asserts that *as the researcher’s participation increases, the potential for misunderstanding is diminished*. Quite simply, insider research affords information that otherwise would not be available (Jorgensen, 1989; Plows, 1998; Roseneil, 1995). However, insider research requires a reflexive awareness and constant questioning of one’s position. Part of this approach involves acknowledging values and how they impact your research instead of burying them (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 55). It also involves, I believe, being prepared to be critical which, as the reader will observe, this thesis is.

If the dialectics of insider and outsider are placed on one axis and overt versus covert research on another, the following would be the visual representation of my research:

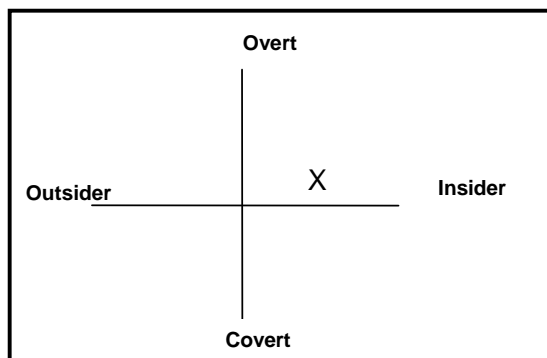


Figure 9: Researcher position

Upon reflection, I was more participant than observer, more insider than outsider and more overt than covert. I believe I was seen as a regular network member as opposed to an intruder or outsider. This may have been facilitated by the high number of PhD students in the network, though I was the only one studying Dissent!. Nonetheless, a common joke was that PhD students – as opposed to police and journalists – were the new social movement infiltrators.

I have no doubt that my previous “activist credentials” facilitated my entry to and participation in Dissent!. I believe I was viewed as a PhD student with past activist experience and activist sympathies. It was common knowledge that my area of interest was with the media and, in this sense, it is possible I could have been viewed as a “media expert”. Participant’s perception of me as a “media expert” was sometimes evident in interviews where an interviewee would preface his or her response by saying something along the lines of “you may know more about this than me.” However, this never seemed to limit an individual from giving his/her opinion.

As a technique of collecting data, and following Thorne (2004), I took an active role in taking meeting minutes particularly for the CSC. This afforded an opportunity to take detailed research notes while, at the same time, producing a document which could be used by the group. While my field notes were supplemented with observations and quotes, the minutes were stripped of these. The minutes I produced were distributed on the media strategy listserv and uploaded to the Dissent! website. I appreciate that by producing the minutes I was taking an active role in the representation by producing network documents. For this reason, I do not refer to any of the minutes I produced as “minutes” but instead attribute the quotation to my field notes.

Data Coding, Analysis and Challenges

The analysis presented is based on data gathered from interviews and participant observation which involved the generation of field notes and the collection of media stories and movement documents including email listservs. Data from field notes, media stories and the majority of movement documents were not analysed systematically as the emphasis was placed on interview material. However, they were drawn on for context, reference or to “triangulate” (Flick, 1998, p. 50) themes which emerged from analysis of interview transcripts or social movement documents. Field notes were valuable as they recorded events and experiences as they unfolded during the process of participant observation that may have otherwise been forgotten. Field notes were generated for each Dissent! meeting attended.

Concerning media output, this thesis did not conduct a detailed analysis of stories in the media however they were monitored as part of fieldwork with the CounterSpin Collective (see: Chapter 5 and 6). Within this thesis, media headlines are selectively drawn-upon in order to convey a sense of Dissent!'s representation in the media and the media environment during the mobilisation. Articles quoted in this thesis were either collected during fieldwork or obtained through a search of UK newspapers via the LexisNexis database.

Social movement documents created by Dissent!, and documents distributed at Dissent!-related events were collected at every opportunity. I archived over 100 texts such as flyers, meeting minutes, agit prop, stickers, posters, timetables. While I did not systematically analyse these objects, they did assist in contextualising the network. Electronic resources were also gathered along similar lines such as Dissent! graphics, flyers and electronic copies of movement documents to increase the breadth of information about the network. As part of my fieldwork I subscribed to 11 Dissent!-related listservs but only two were systematically analysed: the media strategy listserv and media response listserv.

Listserv Coding and Analysis

Listserv emails were compiled and entered into the qualitative analysis package *Atlati.ti*. The software provides a platform for analysis but required me to generate my own codes. Data analysis followed Flick's (1998, p. 187-192) method of thematic coding whereby texts were approached in an open manner

while simultaneously conscious of the conceptual framework in order to understand the ways in which the listserv was used by CSC members. Efforts were made to code listserv emails as falling into a specific category of media-oriented practice. That is, codes were generated to capture how the listserv was being used. Initially a large list of codes was developed but these were revisited and refined so as to capture and differentiate individual practices, yet eliminate overlap. Codes involved using the list for “discussion” and differentiating the types of discussion (e.g. group funding, meeting discussion, internal requests), coding the “distribution” of documentation as well as coding the repertoire of media-oriented practices such as: media phone; FAQ; media monitoring; press release; website; translation; media training. Once media-oriented practices had been coded, they were then grouped into three broader general categories of direct media-oriented practices: *network-facing communication*, *research* and *representation*. This analysis was undertaken largely in an effort to understand the *group level* practices of the CSC as the emails were viewed as evidence of a group practice or common knowledge held and/or shared between members.

The same listserv emails were also analysed on a *network level* to chart the evolution of Dissent!’s media policy (see: Chapter 5) and again on a *group level* to analyse group dynamics within the CSC. Codes for this component of the analysis were developed to organise discussion around specific issues. The two most prevalent codes were “Festival of Dissent!” to capture discussion on the event (see: Chapters 5 and 6) and then “Role and Structure of CSC” for emails which involved a discussion as to the remit of the CSC. Emails given either of

these codes were viewed as a reflection of group dynamics and then reanalysed to examine tensions and discourses within them. Results were cross-checked with field notes as well as interview analysis to strengthen the internal validity of findings.

Interview Coding and Analysis

As noted above, 32 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 27 participants with five participants being interviewed twice; before and after the Gleneagles G8 Summit. Two interviews were dropped due to the poor quality of the responses, meaning that the responses from 25 unique individuals inform this thesis. The failure of these interviews can be attributed to either poor selection on my behalf and or a need, in retrospect, to have been more instructive in my interview technique.

A concentrated period of analysis began once the fieldwork was completed and interviews had been transcribed. Interview transcripts were compiled and entered into *Atlati.ti* and, like the listserv emails, were analysed using thematic coding based on predefined theoretical interests. Interviews provided data for all three levels (activists, organisation and network) and were coded accordingly. Codes on the activists level centred around use of media, views on protest and the G8, perceptions of newsworthiness and news scripts, the results of which are presented in Chapter 4. Interviews also contributed to the group-level analysis of the CSC. A specific set of interview questions were used

to query the impact of the CSC (See Appendix 5, Section 9). Interviews also informed network-level analysis.

The coding process was aided by asking interviewees parallel questions and like responses were coded across interviews using codes based on the questions asked. Grouped responses were then read for themes. Interview transcripts were not just coded by question but also by theme based on theoretical interests. The initial thematic structure was developed from the first transcript analysed (Scott) and was continually assessed and modified in relation to subsequent transcripts. Lists of codes were generated, revised, deleted, merged and structured. Where possible, codes were grouped into a common theme such as “Activist” which was an umbrella heading for individual perspectives on the G8 (e.g. code: Activist Expectations for G8) and to group personal histories and information (e.g. codes: Activists past involvement; Activist media experience; Activist media habits) to generate profiles. One of the largest grouping of codes dealt with what I coded as “news filters” which were processes perceived by individuals to influence news content (e.g. codes: editors; profit motive; time/story constraints; lazy journalists). Related to this were codes grouped as “newsworthiness” which were factors suggested by interviewees that made the news newsworthy (e.g. codes: conflict; sensationalism + drama; good pictures; personal/local). Lastly were “news scripts” which were news headlines suggested by activists. Together these codes inform the analysis provided in Chapter 4 .

Thematic codes were also used to capture *group level* discourse and reflections on the CounterSpin Collective (Code: CSC) and a *network* level for Dissent! (e.g. codes: Dissent – Festival of Dissent; Dissent – Media interaction; Dissent – Media policy). The largest group of codes fell under the banner of “Repertoire” which was used as a catch-all to capture media-oriented practices suggested by interviewees.

The coding process resulted in more codes and coded data than could be analysed. For example, data coded but not used included a grouping of five codes on “the media debate”²⁹. Despite not using all the coded data, the process of coding, thinking about and interacting with the data provided a stronger understanding for themes in the research. Decisions had to be taken as to what to include and what to exclude. Aware of this, in analysing interview transcripts, field notes and movement documents, I made an effort to think consistently about the thematic interrelations across and between these texts. In so doing, my objective was to identify common themes and codes across the data and therefore increase the “internal validity” of my findings (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000, p. 340). As a result of this process and through the use of multiple research techniques, I am confident that, based on the theoretical and empirical research objectives, I have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the data collected, and my analysis of it, is robust enough to support my findings and claims made in this thesis.

²⁹ In fact, an entire empirical chapter was initially dedicated to this topic but was shelved. Nonetheless, this is seen as an important area of research into the media/movement dynamics and one I hope to return to.

3.4 Practical Issues in Fieldwork

Role of the Researcher: An Activist and an Academic?

While sympathetic with Dissent!, I have endeavoured to create and maintain a critical distance in my approach to, and analysis of, the data. As part of the inspiration for this research stems from personal activist experience, a discussion on how I view the relationship between my activism and my position as an academic is appropriate. Roseneil (1995) faced similar challenges in her research of Greenham Common, a protest site that she had previous personal experience at. Roseneil suggests that her involvement increased the validity of her research by easing access to interviewees as well as providing her a wealth of knowledge that would otherwise not be available to an outsider (1995, p. 8). While I did not have experience with Dissent! prior to starting my fieldwork, I had been active in similar networks outside of the UK. Accordingly, Roseneil's reflections are helpful in addressing the issue.

I believe that my past activist experience served as an *advantage* to my research for three reasons. First, it inspired and subsequently helped to refine my research question. Second, my past activism eased access to Dissent!. I believe I was seen as less of a threat to network members because I was not an "outsider" and had the credibility of being active in similar mobilisations. Third, my previous activist experience gave me a stronger contextual grounding to analyse my data.

While I have acknowledged the benefits of being an “activist”, the impact of my activism on my role as an academic has not yet been discussed. I believe the activist/academic dichotomy which often compels academics to defend and reconcile their activist backgrounds for fear of being labelled unobjective is a false dichotomy. Feminist methodologists Sprague and Zimmerman (2004) argue that the majority of past research both in and outside of feminist scholarship has relied upon the use of dualisms. The authors suggest that dichotomies such as quantitative/qualitative or subject/object force academics into dualistic thinking by favouring one category over another. In lieu of picking sides, Sprague and Zimmerman (2004) suggest that dichotomies are indicative of unresolved “tensions” that scholars must “struggle to integrate” (p. 50).

Similarly, the activist/academic dichotomy is not a case of being either an activist *or* an academic; personal experience has an inevitable impact on one’s perspective and can provide valuable insight. The critical sociologist C. Wright Mills argued passionately that “any philosophy that is not a personal escape involves taking a personal stand” (Mills, 1959, p. 299). Mills believed that it was the social responsibility of the intellectual to conduct grounded, politically challenging research (Mills, 1963). However, Mills did not support blatantly biased research. As Gitlin notes, “Mills thought the *questions* ought to come from values, but the *answers* should not be rigged” (Gitlin, n.d.). This position is supported. Consequently, there are a number of helpful efforts such as that of Bauer and Gaskell (2000, pp. 336-350) who outline normative “issues of good practice” and “public accountability” to strengthen social science research. An

important step in this direction is being aware of the need to maintain a critical eye and a reflexive awareness of the task at hand when conducting and analysing research. Roseneil (1995, p. 9) argues that this awareness can help reduce the danger of being too close to the object of study. Moreover, Roseneil also suggests that a further level of “critical distance” may be achieved once the researcher has completed fieldwork and has time to critically reflect, examine, and question his or her experiences. Efforts were made to enact each of these suggestions.

In conclusion, it is not necessary to dogmatically compartmentalise one’s identity as either an activist or an academic when engaging in politically sensitive research. At the same time, a critical awareness of and reflexive approach to one’s research is needed to increase public accountability. I have attempted this through a constant questioning and revisiting of assumptions throughout the fieldwork. Moreover, efforts to achieve a critical distance from my findings were also made by revisiting assumptions long after the completion of my fieldwork. Lastly, it is hoped that by openly acknowledging my interest and involvement in activist issues, a further level of transparency may be imbued upon the approach taken in this thesis.

Ethics

Ethical considerations and obligations are critical to adhere to in any social science research. This research was conducted both with an awareness and adherence to the Ethics Policy set out by the LSE. Informed consent was obtained from all interviewees through the use of a consent form. Steps have

been taken to protect the identity of everyone who participated in the research. Interviewees were aware of the nature of the research and permission was obtained to record the interview. Interview recordings are held by the researcher.

Fieldwork with social movements is particularly sensitive (Litcherman, 2002, p.125). The high turnover of members and large groups meant that it was not possible to gain informed consent from everyone in the network. This is an unavoidable consequence of studying a large and transient social network (Thorne, 2004, p. 159). However, as argued, efforts were made to obtain informed consent from network participants by conducting *overt participant observation*.

A last but important ethical consideration revolves around a recognition that I stand to gain from the work of Dissent! by collecting and using data in the personal pursuit of a doctorate. I realise that there is some spite towards researchers who study “the movement” for their own personal gain. However my academic interest stems from previous personal involvement and a continuing interest in the politics of autonomous networks and the issues that mobilise them. In this sense, I do not view myself as an “outsider” who is gleaning off the hard and unpaid work of network members. Instead, I view myself as an activist who has chosen academia as an outlet to pursue interests raised through activism.

Time and Access – On the Ground

Research fieldwork began in December 2003 and concluded in August 2005. My first point of entry into the Dissent! Network began by subscribing to the general Dissent! Network email listserv (ResistG82005) in December 2003. Up

until October 2004, fieldwork predominantly involved electronic participant observation. The first “real-life” Dissent! events I attended were held at the European Social Forum and the parallel “Beyond ESF” in London, October, 2004. From October forward, I then attended a number of local group and network wide meetings and a complete list is available in Appendix 2. As Dissent! meetings were spread out over time there were periods where fieldwork was not intense. The most intense period of fieldwork was the mobilisation which was carried out from June 29th to July 9th, 2005. While interviews were carried out during this time, I began conducting interviews in March 2005 and conducted my last interview in late August 2005.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview and justification of both the theoretical positioning and practical decisions taken in the design and implementation of my research. The chapter began by arguing how the mediation approach discussed in Chapter 2 could be operationalised through Burawoy’s (1991a, 1998) extended case method which was desirable for its use of ethnographic techniques in an effort to build theory. It was then argued a key and advantageous attribute of the extended case method was its endorsement of multi-sited research which, much like Marcus (1995), encouraged the researcher to “track” a phenomenon across both time and space. In the context of this thesis it was disclosed that what was being “tracked” was the discourse and actions related to mainstream media interaction across Dissent!. Research boundaries were drawn by taking a case study approach which focussed on a single event

(Gleneagles G8 Summit) and, within that, a single network (Dissent!). While the advantages of conducting a comparative study were noted, a decision was taken to focus on depth within one network as opposed to breadth across networks. Given my declared interest in “unprofessional” networks in order to study how they devise a plan to interact with media, I argued that Dissent! was the most appropriate choice.

It was physically impossible to attend all of the Dissent! meetings or participant in all of the groups. Consequently, I had to cut a path across the network, selecting some events over others. Priority was always given to where I believed media interaction was most likely to be discussed. This meant that I spent a lot of time with the CounterSpin Collective and their activities feature prominently in my thesis. A consequence of this decision is that, during the July 6th Day of Action in Scotland, I never attended any of the actual blockades (see: Chapter 7) instead remaining with CSC members at Hori-Zone which was the hub of media activity. Moreover, as this thesis argues, interacting with mainstream media has become an “action” in and of itself with one of the goals of this thesis being to document the repertoire of media-oriented practices used to interact with media.

To study the media-oriented practices two methodological techniques were used: interviews and participant observation. The combined use of these techniques is presented below in Table 2. The benefits and drawbacks of the interview technique were discussed and the sampling frame used to recruit interviewees was outlined. Efforts were made to compile a diverse ranges of

participants though the number of female interviewees was lower than anticipated. In addition, it would have been insightful to have had a larger number of interviewees who took a critical media perspective in order to better understand the opposition to mainstream media. However, interviewees who took this view point were difficult to come by. Nonetheless, the interview sample used in this thesis provides an illuminating cross section of views within Dissent!.

Table 2: Overview of research techniques and data sources

<u>Level</u>	Interviews	Participant Observation	
		Main Sources	Complimentary
Activists	Interview transcripts		
Group	Interview transcripts	Field notes, listserv emails, Dissent! website	Bulletin board posts, movement documents and mainstream media stories
Network	Interview transcripts	Field notes, listserv emails, Dissent! website	Field notes, Bulletin board posts, listserv emails, movement documents and mainstream media stories
Mobilisation			

Where the interviews may have fallen short, the use of theory-driven participant observation was able to compensate by offering a means of comparison and triangulation. Participant observation within radical social movements is not without its challenges in terms of gaining access to the network and the ethics of studying it. Moreover, given past personal involvement in similar networks and therefore being sympathetic to Dissent!, it was important to take a critically reflexive approach. I took steps to increase the interpretive validity of data through the use of multiple research techniques. With the passing of time, I also obtained a critical distance from Dissent! increasing the interpretive validity of the arguments presented herein.

In conclusion, while there are many different ways in which I could have studied the contention against the Gleneagles G8 Summit, given the theoretical interest of my thesis and my limited resources, I believe the research method and techniques selected were appropriate. Further, I maintain that my previous experience in similar networks and position as an academic *and* an activist is a benefit to this thesis as the network and event under study are analysed critically, and from a vantage point that can only be achieved from an insider perspective. While conducting fieldwork and interviews for this thesis I learnt a lot about conducting interviews and participant observation, refining and improving these research techniques as I went on. In hindsight, some areas could be improved. However, given the circumstances faced and the resources available, I am confident that the data and the way in which the data was captured presents an accurate and solid base of empirical data for analysis. Consequently, the next chapter – the first empirical chapter of this thesis – presents an analysis of the media-practices of Dissent! activists.

Chapter 4: Media-Oriented Practices in the Mediapolis

This chapter analyses how social actors use media both habitually and with specific reference to their position as social movement actors. This chapter is driven by sub-research question one, which asks: *How is the process of mediation articulated in activists' conceptualisations of the practices and routines of mainstream news media and more specifically in relation to political media events?* To answer this question, the analysis presented in this chapter draws primarily on transcripts produced from interviews conducted with Dissent! activists, however field notes generated over the course of participant observation also inform the analysis.

The chapter focuses on individuals involved with Dissent!. It argues that social movement actors treat the media as environmental and consciously employ specific media-oriented practices to navigate news media which include “lay theories” of news media used to both make sense of news as well as to reflexively inform their activities as social movement actors. The central concept of this analysis is that of *media-oriented practice*, defined as a routinised type of social action consisting of multiple overlapping components such as forms of bodily activities, the use of objects, background knowledge and lay-theories related to or centred around media consumption or interaction (Reckwitz, 2002). A further distinction is made between *direct* and *indirect* media-oriented practices. *Direct media-oriented practices* are defined as social actions that dealt immediately with, involved or were a reaction to media. *Indirect media-oriented practices* are conceptualised as social actions that may not have involved

immediate interaction with media but were “anchored” (Swidler, 2001, p. 83) by media.

The concept of direct media-oriented practices provides an entrance point to analyse how activists use news media, revealing two different news practices. First is *title-based use* which is the selection and use of a specific news media source (newspaper, television channel, website) because it compliments personal politics. Second is *issued-based use* which is the use of news across multiple, even ideologically conflicting news sources in order to follow a specific issue or event. The use of alternative news media and Indymedia specifically is not a core focus of this thesis (cf. Chapter 2). However, in the interviews I conducted, almost all of my interviewees reported using Indymedia as a source for news and for this reason its use is acknowledged and analysed in this chapter.

Chapter 2 argued that activists’ media-oriented practices involve *lay theories of media* defined as theories concerning how news media operate, what drives them and theories concerning how the logic of news influences the representation of reality. While media lay theories extend across multiple aspects of the media, the concept is used in this chapter to analyse how activists make sense of the motivations of news media. I argue that activists approached and attended the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit with existing knowledge, experience and assumptions about how news media function. To this end, activist lay theories of media are juxtaposed to academic or “expert” research on news media by way of three categories adapted from Tumber’s (1999) division of

literature: (1) economics of news, (2) production of news and (3) defining news which includes aspects of newsworthiness.

Tumber's work presents a comprehensive review of the sociology of journalism and therefore provides a helpful framework to contrast and understand lay theories of knowledge with academic thinking. The relevance of such lay theories rests in their ability to elucidate the ways in which social actors understand the power of media and how this understanding may influence the way social actors as *social movement actors* conceptualise and present their actions to the media. Taken collectively, lay theories also point towards a common activist knowledge that exists around mainstream media, its power and how it should and/or can be challenged.

Lay theories of media also act as the foundation for *perceived news scripts* which, I argue, are activists' lay theories in action. Perceived news scripts are defined as activists' perceptions of the social expectations news media have of them as demonstrators, manifest in the form of anticipated news stories, headlines and stereotypes. The concept is extended later in the chapter to analyse the G8 Summit as a scripted media event. In addition, two specific perceived news scripts are analysed: (1) anarchist violence vs. no show; and (2) good protestors vs. bad protestors. The chapter concludes by using the concept of "duty to protest" which analyses a perceived obligation to protest expressed by activists and provides an angle to analyse and argue how the power of media and the power of the media event specifically underwrites and orients the actions of social movements at such media-event style protests.

4.1 Self-Reported News Media Practices

Interviewees were asked to explain what they thought of as “the media.” Little variation was expressed. For many interviewees, “the media” or “mainstream media” – terms used interchangeably by interviewees and will be used in a similar manner in this chapter – was a catch-all concept encompassing both public and corporate media across radio, print, television and their online equivalents. This perspective is captured in one of my interviewee’s definitions of mainstream media, “When I talk about mainstream media... I mean television news, radio news, I mean the big national newspapers, the weekly you know, magazines, journals and stuff like that” (interview with Scott, 31/03/2005). The significance of Scott’s point rests in the identification of media in “environmental” terms (Silverstone, 2008, p. 5). Media is used as a macro concept to capture the vast and overlapping systems, networks and industries of production, distribution, use and practices associated with mass media including radio, television, the press and the Internet³⁰.

The interviewees were asked to name their preferred sources of news across print, radio, television and online to elucidate personal news media practices³¹. The following analysis offers an overview of news sources reported by interviewees and analyses patterns of interest. Interviewees were clearly aware of the political allegiances of media and consequently that *media use mirrored personal politics* engaging in what I describe as *title-based use*. The left-

³⁰ De Jong, Shaw and Stammers (2005, p. 6) offer a similar definition of “mainstream media” as “[comprising] the mass media of television, radio and the press that are corporately owned, controlled or governed (including by public corporations such as the BBC)”.

³¹ Based on question 7e of the interview schedule (see: Appendix 4).

of-centre *Guardian* was the most widely-read newspaper with the large majority of interviewees naming it. Many also mentioned reading the *Independent*, another left-leaning quality national newspaper. Regarding differences between news sources, Sophie, a dance teacher in her mid-twenties from northern England, felt distinctions between newspapers were rooted predominantly in identity politics:

So you've got all the sort of "money people" reading the *Times*, and the lawyers reading the *Times* and the *Independent*. And get me my copy of *The Guardian* and a latte [and] we will all sit here and congratulate ourselves on our superior moral stance and ethical position and go buy some fair trade. (Interview with Sophie, 29/03/2005)

Media use, from this perspective, is presented as both a life-style choice and as a way of reinforcing ("congratulating") this decision. Sophie did not try and place herself outside of this generalisation as she went on to admit:

I will read *The Guardian* because I don't think they are trying to brainwash me - to sound extreme. Or, if they are trying to brainwash me, it's a way that I already think and it probably gives me that feeling of belonging, that people share my ideas. (Interview with Sophie, 29/03/2005)

Sophie's comment captures the overall trend that the political allegiances of newspapers used by interviewees complimented, as opposed to challenged, their personal politics. Sophie's reflections also position her as a "critical viewer" (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994, p. 71) or, in this case, a critical reader who is able to reflexively scrutinise her decision to read one specific newspaper (*The Guardian*) over others. This decision is also rooted in an awareness of the differing political orientations available and a decision to select a paper that coincided with – as opposed to militated against – her political beliefs.

One exception was the "resistant" reading of the *Financial Times* (FT). A cluster of interviewees reported reading the influential business-oriented paper.

According to Gregory, it provided a chance to read news from the “perspective of a neoliberal orthodoxy dogma” (Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005). Meanwhile, Michael reported reading the paper “a lot” as he believed “it’s only one of the few newspapers that [are] honest about what it does” (interview with Michael, 17/05/2005) referring to the paper’s unapologetic embrace of news from the perspective of global capital. The FT is not drawn upon because it parallels personal politics, as in the case of *The Guardian*, but because it is antipodal to it. The newspaper is read in both a subversive and counter-hegemonic way as a means for understanding the power and perspective of global capital so that its power may be challenged.

None of the interviewees admitted to regularly reading the tabloid press but there was still a discernable awareness of tabloid press coverage of *Dissent!* in the build-up to and at the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit. It was not uncommon for interviewees to reference tabloid articles about *Dissent!*. Interviewees also displayed an awareness of the framing practices of the tabloid press. This was evident when interviewees were asked to articulate a headline they would “like to see” and one that they “anticipated seeing” in the news about the 2005 G8³². The majority of anticipated headlines followed a structure and employed language synonymous with tabloid press: “Mayhem as savages attack old lady’s car”; “Hooligans Attack G8 Summit”; “Anarchist Chaos Sweeps Across Scotland”. Therefore, while tabloids may not have served as regular news sources for

³² This is in part based on an analysis of answers related to questions under Section 7, “Media Awareness and Perception” of the interview schedule.

interviewees, their presence is acknowledged and, at times, drawn upon both for specific media coverage and, on a more general level, for media lay theories³³.

The use of tabloid news stories may also be explained by a shift in activists' media-oriented practices related to the G8 Summit. While newspapers such as *The Guardian* were reported as part of activists' *habitual news media practice* – that is the media they regularly use - with respect to the G8 (and possibly other topics) instead of *title-based use*, activists engaged in *issue-based use* defined as the use of news across multiple, even ideologically conflicting news sources in order to follow a specific issue or event. This is best demonstrated in the use of “Google Alerts” (see: Chapter 6), an online resource which captures news across outlets based on keyword and additional user-defined settings. Moreover, and also discussed in Chapter 6, news stories, particularly “sensational” tabloid news stories, were shared between *Dissent!* members via network listservs. The practice of issue-based media use shows that activists not only use media that compliments their politics (as with *The Guardian*), but also draw from wider media resources and particularly the Internet, to extend their interests. However, as the FT example demonstrates, while activists draw on news sources from outside of their personal political margins, these are read in a counter-hegemonic fashion and therefore reinterpreted to fit with their beliefs (though, they may also inform their beliefs, but such a claim requires additional research).

³³ It is appreciated that many “quality” newspapers and television news programmes now also resort to tabloid style headlines to compete for audiences. However, the point being made is that sensational headlines and stories have long been associated with the tabloid press and therefore while individuals may not admit to reading tabloids, they are well aware of their practices.

The interviewees offered a limited number of sources for television news with two of them (Barry and Sarah) watching little-to-no television. Despite the BBC's international reputation for excellence in journalism, a surprising trend in activists' viewing habits was the open preference of Channel 4 news. Interviewee Scott commented that, "Channel 4 news... is probably the nearest thing we've got to a balanced news channel" (interview with Scott, 31/03/2005). Scott, along with other interviewees, expressed a clear lack of trust of the Labour government which, in turn, was projected on to the BBC and its perceived inability to offer accurate – or at least neutral – news coverage. This critical view of the BBC's close relationship with Labour – a product, according to interviewees, of the BBC's coverage of the War on Iraq – captures activist lay theories of media at work by elucidating a political-economic perspective in the vein of Herman and Chomsky (1988) or McChesney (2000) that views social actors with a large amount of political and/or economic power and also wielding – or at least have a strong amount of influence over – symbolic power. Lay theories are returned to shortly.

Third, on a more general level, the preference of Channel 4 over the BBC is important because while trust varied *between* news sources, interviewees exhibited a general level of "ontological security" (Silverstone, 1994, pp. 5-8) in the representational role of television news. While the motives of individual media outlets were openly criticised, the position of television was not questioned. However, as argued below, the use of television was often supplemented by triangulating information from additional, often online, sources.

The *BBC News* webpage was mentioned explicitly by four interviewees (with all interviewees mentioning the BBC as a source for news more generally) however the most popular reported source for online news was Indymedia (www.indymedia.org.uk). The website is the online manifestation of the Independent Media Centre United Kollektives (IMC UK) a node in the global Independent Media Centre (IMC) network. Following an ethos of open-publishing and run by volunteers, Indymedia provides an open, online platform for anyone publishing text, audio, video and/or photographic material. The Indymedia UK website offers a running newswire as well as a series of “Topical” and “Major Reports” including a section on the 2005 G8 (Indymedia, 2005b).

Indymedia has become a regular fixture at large scale mobilisations and a key resource for activists to write and read about such actions. Indymedia, as discussed in Chapter 2, is one of the GJM’s most notorious forms of “alternative media” and has been the subject of much academic attention (see: Downing, 2003b; Mamadouh, 2004; Pickard, 2006; Pickerill, 2003). Given the declared focus on mainstream media, Indymedia does not feature prominently in this thesis. Yet, Indymedia was mentioned as a news source by all but one of the interviewees and, for this reason, it could not be overlooked as its use overlaps with the use of mainstream news media.

Given the notoriety of Indymedia among the activist community, it could be argued that the high level of self-reported use is due to activists feeling compelled to say they use it, seeing it as part of the expected practice of GJM activism. It is also possible activists use Indymedia but do so around specific

events such as the Gleneagles G8 Summit and not part of a daily media regime as reported. This is not to say that Indymedia is not as popular as interviewees suggested; fieldwork confirmed its reliance by network members related to the 2005 G8. However the limits of self-reporting are acknowledged and the use of Indymedia in combination with additional media is flagged as an avenue necessitating future research.

The responses of Sophie, Allan and Tom are of note as they reflect the appeal of Indymedia to activists (Sophie), its advantages and pitfalls (Allan), and its use in navigating the mediapolis (Tom). Sophie felt that Indymedia's comment function – which allows users to comment on a story and, in turn, read the remarks of others – was valuable as it increased the number of “angles” of a story. This, along with other aspects of Indymedia's open publishing strategy, are a direct challenge to the hierarchal power structure of traditional mass media by allowing anyone to participate either by publishing their own news or commenting on the stories (or comments) of others. This was also viewed as a limitation by Sophie who commented “you never know who you can trust” (Interview with Sophie, 29/03/2005)³⁴.

Allan was more explicit in the perceived advantages and pitfalls of Indymedia. For him, the potential drawbacks of Indymedia's open-publishing format do not outweigh its advantages:

I read Indymedia everyday, catch up on the headlines but a lot of it is crap. I mean obviously Indymedia, being, by its very nature enabling anyone to publish news, it does mean there is a lot of shit to wade through. A lot of things I don't agree with, occasional conspiracy theorists - all of that. But, frankly, it's *worth it* because what you get is a great

³⁴ The challenges and limitations of running open-publishing is recognised by the IMC community and acknowledged in academic studies of Indymedia. See: Pickerill (2003).

degree of untold news. And I get to hear stories from real people, living real lives around the world. (Interview with Allan, 02/04/2005)

Allan's emphasis on "untold news" and "real people" positions the use of Indymedia as a counter-hegemonic media-oriented practice that, while requiring vigilance, provides access to information that would not be covered in mainstream media. Tom's use of Indymedia is of note as it was one of two online resources – the other being BBC News Online – that he used to form his opinion about current events. Tom was the only interviewee to explicitly cite the practice of contrasting Indymedia with mainstream news. However, all of the interviewees who reported using Indymedia also reported using at least one mainstream media source indicating that this practice is in fact more prevalent.

The use of multiple news sources including Indymedia in order to try and understand news captures one of the ways in which the process of mediation is navigated. A lack of trust or cynicism towards mainstream media is compensated for by engaging with media that compliment personal politics and supplemented by additional news resources such as Indymedia. Conversely, the lack of trust held in alternative news sources as evidenced by the comments of Allan and Sophie, was compensated for by mainstream media use (who were also not fully trusted). News media practices, as the next section will argue, are also underwritten by activists' lay theories of media.

4.2 Lay Theories of News – Perceptions of how the media works

This section analyses activists' "lay theories" (Seiter, 1999, pp. 58-90) of media with a specific interest in how the pressures and processes involved in

news production are understood. The analysis is based on the premise outlined in Chapter 2 that a practice involves “background knowledge” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249) which includes lay theories of the media. It is argued that activists approached and attended the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit with existing knowledge, experience and assumptions about how news media function and it is these “lay theories” that this section analyses.

Lay theories of news media are not academic theories but can be informed by and resemble them. Instead, they are activists’ own understandings about news media. Lay theories of news media are significant because of the critical function of news in the mediapolis as a space for understanding the world as well as a site of struggle over the ways in which the world is presented and understood. It is activists’ lay theories of news media which underwrite how activists think about media, the news they receive through media, and the people or events they hear about through media. Moreover, it is activists’ lay theories of media which also underwrite how they, as social movement actors, conceptualise, justify and present their actions to the mainstream media. Lay theories are presented below in three overlapping categories based on Tumber’s (1999) division of the sociology of journalism: (1) Economics of news, (2) Production of news and (3) Defining news.

1) *Economics of News*

Theories about the influence of economics over the news and news processes have long been the focus of academic attention (see: Gans, 1979, 2003; Golding & Murdock, 2000; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McChesney, 2000;

Underwood, 2001). Academics writing within this tradition view the quest for financial and political gain as the twin fuels driving the news engine (Golding & Murdock, 2000). Gans (2003, p. 24) has argued that the continuous quest to increase profit has led to a merger of “church and state” between the editorial and business side of news. The political and economic motivations of media were the most frequently cited influence over the news by interviewees. When asked about the motivations behind news selection, Allan responded:

I suppose there's different reasons for different journalists but, I would say obviously how much money it is going to make them. I mean, we live under capitalism; every media institution is trying to make money. So, what's going to sell, that's the biggest thing. Which is why a newspaper might have, you know, have Michael Jackson kiddie fiddling on the newspaper as opposed to a poor person who just died in Argentina. (Interview with Allan, 02/04/2005)

While the juxtaposition offered by Allan was the strongest amongst the interviewees, there was a collective sense that news was selected and reported – particularly by the tabloid press – in such a way so as to maximise sales. Tom described tabloids as engaging in a “competition amongst themselves” in an effort to “outdo” each other (interview with Tom, 08/07/2005). These assertions parallel arguments from the critical political-economic perspective and also share common ground with academic work such as Gitlin (2001) and Kellner (2003).

Two interviewees suggested that the focus on profit also influenced the news process by way of advertising. It was suggested that media organisations may downplay, bury, ignore or even censor news stories which might jeopardise a large advertising account. A common interviewee perception was that media outlets would not publish stories in a manner which would run contrary to their own financial interests or the capitalist system within which it is embedded. It was felt that as anti-capitalists seek to challenge the prevailing economic order, they

pose a direct threat to capitalist media, their owners and “the system” at large. As a consequence of their political orientation, interviewees felt that anti-capitalists would not receive “fair representation” (Sarah) particularly in privately-owned news media who were believed to report the news to suit their own political and financial interests. This parallels academic arguments made by Bell (1991, p. 38) amongst others who views news as subservient to the business interests of news media. While the interviewees often implicated corporate media, many also suggested that government had a strong influence over both private and public media. Such arguments hold a strong resemblance to the critical and political economic perspectives expressed by popular public intellectuals within the Global Justice Movement such as Noam Chomsky (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), Naomi Klein (Klein, 2000) and Robert McChesney (McChesney, 2000), suggesting that variations of these views have permeated the common knowledge of GJM activism.

2) Production of News

Academic research into how news is produced and the impact this has on output may be traced back to the beginnings of the sociology of news paradigm (Gans, 1979; Golding & Elliot, 1979; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Schlesinger, 1978; Tuchman, 1977, 1978). Research in this area has theorised the impact of “gatekeepers” (Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986; Manning White, 1950; Shoemaker, 1991) and particularly editors on news output. Others have theorised the “licensed autonomy” of journalists (Curran, 1990; c.f. Hesmondhalgh, 2002, pp. 162-165) . Time constraints of the news making process have been theorised

(Schlesinger, 1978, p. 83-106) along with the cultural constraints embedded in the routines and practices of journalists (Gans, 1979; Golding & Elliot, 1979; Van Dijk, 1988).

From an activist perspective, lay theories about the production of news cover theories pertaining to how the news is created and what factors or actors are believed to influence the news process. There was a strong resonance between the economic theories discussed above and the influence on the news process. Editors and the process of editing were believed to have the biggest influence over both the content and shape of news. Many interviewees viewed editors as “gatekeepers” (Manning White, 1950) with two interviewees (Megan, Neil) suggesting that editors may withhold or “sit on” news stories at the request of media owners, the government and/or big business. In claims similar to Ericson, Baranek, and Chan (1987), editors were also viewed as cutting the news to fit in line with the editorial position of the organisation. This point is eloquently summed up by Barry who commented “... at the end of the day, the story becomes the story of the person who is the media, so to speak, not necessarily the story of the person who is telling it to the media” (interview with Barry, 08/07/2005). The lay theory of media power inherent in Barry’s remark is one which views the media and those who work for the media as wielding a significant amount of symbolic power over those whom they represent.

Many interviewees differentiated between “good” and “bad” journalists. Bad journalists were those who sought sensational stories at all costs or worked for the tabloid press. Good journalists were sympathetic to the movement and its

ideology and often, though not always, were from ideologically sympathetic outlets such as *The Guardian* or *The Independent*. While “good” journalists existed, interviewees believed that their actions were constrained both by editors who dictated the angle a story should take as well as the demands of the capitalist media “system”. This is captured in Scott’s comment, “I am sure you know, there are good journalists, there’s some very good journalists, even in the mainstream you know, I think there are decent you know, principled journalists who are working within a system that sets constraints on them themselves” (interview with Scott, 31/03/2005). The constraints Scott refers to include the financial and gatekeeping pressures already mentioned but also carry over into newsworthiness. The differentiation between good and bad journalists also reflects a more nuanced view towards mainstream media than is not often accredited to the Global Justice Movement (GJM). Snow (2003 p. 111) polemically argued that within the GJM it was “cool” to hate the mainstream media yet this perspective clearly shows that differentiation does take place. Even granted that the judgements about who are good and bad journalists are wed to the politics of the media outlet and of the activists themselves, it still militates against the blanket view that all corporate media are bad. It also provides insight into lay theories of media which appreciate the levels and hierarchies involved in news production and particularly the influence of editors over journalists (Bell, 1991; Gans, 1979; Schlesinger, 1978). As will be shown in Chapter 6, the good/bad divide was used as part of a tactic by the CounterSpin Collective to decide which journalists should be given privileged information.

Some interviewees believed the government influenced the news production process both directly and indirectly. The interviewee Allan argued that the government engages – though perhaps infrequently – in “direct censorship” of the news while Neil believed that the government was able to influence the priority a news item is given. Several interviewees commented on the use of “spin” by the government in an effort to manage its image in the news. Finally, many interviewees expressed a belief that government, media and business travelled in similar circles implying they were often in collusion with each other.

3) Defining news: Three elements

There is a large body of research predominantly within the sociology of news which has analysed newsworthiness and news values (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 2003; Golding & Elliot, 1979; Hartley, 1982; Murdock, 1981; Rock, 1981; Schlesinger, 1978; Tuchman, 1977, 1978). This section offers a sense of the attributes Dissent! activists felt that media looked for in their selection of news and focuses specifically on three news elements: violence, sensationalism and drama, and stories³⁵. As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, these attributes influence how interviewees make sense of media, how they view themselves, the actions of Dissent! and the G8 Summit more generally, as well as how they interact with media at the site of protest.

When asked what the media looked for in a news story, or what made a “good” news story, interviewees predominantly responded with a collection of adjectives. Newsworthy stories were seen as “exciting” (Miriam), “topical” (Adam)

³⁵ This section is based on responses to question 7f of the interview schedule. See: Appendix 4.

and offering either “new” information, or information in a “new” light (Megan, Miriam, Sarah). Items which were “exclusive” (Adam) or involved “sex” and “scandal” (Miriam) were also identified as being newsworthy.

Harry, an independent journalist, suggested that the news media looked for “Heroes and villains. Controversy. Violence. Disruption. Political suicide. Conflict” (interview with Harry, 29/08/2005). Guy proposed that media were interested three general types of news stories, “Conflict, human interest and animals...I am not sure that there are many other stories than that, that journalists tend to go for” (interview with Guy, 21/04/2005). A link between Harry and Guy’s positions rests in the emphasis placed on conflict. Conflict, and particularly violent conflict, was cited across interviewees as a theme which frequently attracted media attention and was seen to be particularly relevant to the newsworthiness of Dissent!.

Violence

Negativity and, by extension violence, is recognised as a key element of newsworthiness (Bell, 1991, p. 156). Moreover, “violence” (however loosely interpreted) or even the possibility of violence has been acknowledged by academics as a principal attribute of newsworthiness particularly in relation to the activities of social movements (Ericson et al., 1987; Ericson, Baranek, & Chan, 1989; Gans, 2003; Gitlin, 1980; McLeod & Detenber, 1999; McLeod & Hertog, 1999; Murdock, 1981; Philo, 1990). Gitlin (1980, p. 271) suggested that in such cases, “political news is treated as if it were crime news.” Philo (1990, p. 25) in his study of television news, demonstrated that lay people are familiar with and

able to reproduce the “language” of television news which included a strong emphasis on violence. Extending from this, the prominent position of violence acknowledged by academics was also suggested by activist interviewees. For example, Neil believed reporting on conflict (anticipated or actual) was always given high priority in covering anti-capitalist demonstrations, “If [the media] can report on anarchist violence in large numbers they will” (interview with Neil, 06/04/2005). Interviewees’ frequent reference to the media’s interest in violence may be linked to their interpretation of trends of media, particularly tabloid coverage. For some interviewees this is also supplemented by direct experience with media. Sarah’s account of an interview she gave in April 2005, two months before the G8 Summit, illustrates this. When asked how an interview with BBC Good Morning Scotland went Sarah commented :

Sarah: It was a *hard* interview.

Patrick: What was she talking about?

Sarah: Ahhh, violence. Do you condone the violence? Do you condone the violence? Do you condone the violence? Yes, what about the violence? We’re not here to talk about what the police do, we’re here to talk about the violence. And uhm, four times – four or five times she asked me. And also I’d had a... chat with the producer the night before and he had given me a list of questions they were going to ask and then they didn’t ask them. So I was, you know, I was a bit lost basically. I was really prepared and I’d had all this briefing about we don’t want to do stuff about that, we want to talk about the issues. We’re not from Dissent!, we’re not talking about protesting of course – they didn’t listen to that. And it was at half seven in the morning and I was sitting in the bloody field in a – in a car in a field freezing, stinking this poor man’s car up. (Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005)

The quote captures both the prominent perception that, in the context of Dissent!, media was primarily interested in issues of violence. The pinpointing of the news media’s interest in violence by my interviewees parallels Philo’s (1990) findings. Like Philo (1990, p. 7) and Couldry (2000), the quote from Sarah highlights the

role of interaction with media and how this direct experience may be (re)incorporated into activist lay theories of media.

Although the perceived preoccupation with violence was often seen as a negative, there was a realisation that, as Sarah noted, “Without the violence at past antiglobalisation summits I doubt very much that [demonstrators] would have got so much media coverage” (interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005). In this quote Sarah argues that the GJM’s past use of “coercive power” (Thompson, 1995, p. 17) during protests generated “symbolic power” (ibid) that has been carried forward to events including the Gleneagles G8 Summit. Despite this, there was a clear frustration expressed across interviewees with the perceived propensity of the media to magnify episodic pockets of property damage or altercations between police and demonstrators as large scale conflicts while skimming over the structural “violence” of G8 neoliberal policies. The GJM’s past use of coercive power and its labelling as “violence” by the media was viewed by interviewees as both a source of symbolic power for social movement activists allowing them to secure coverage on the legacy of past action but simultaneously as a symbolic Achilles by tethering the type of coverage that could be achieved to issues linked with violence. Interviewees also believed the media’s obsession with violence was fed by its use of sensationalism and drama.

Sensationalism & Drama

Gans (2003, p. 46) argues that in an age of commercialised media, the dramatisation of news is part of a deliberate strategy by media to attract and maintain audiences. In the context of reporting on social movement activity,

Smith, McCarthy, McPhail and Augustyn (2001) argue this practice creates a description bias about social movement activity. Activists interviewed for this thesis expressed similar views to such academic assertions. Twelve interviewees felt the drive for profit meant that media organisations emphasised “sensationalism” when selecting and reporting news. However, sensationalism was never fully defined by any of the interviewees. Instead, interviewees would often couple sensational with words such as “unusual” (Tom), employ it as adjective to describe a style of reporting, or offer an example of a sensational story or headline.

Sensationalism was seen by at least one interviewee as a characteristic the British press had become “notorious” for (Adam). Reflecting on his experiences at the 2005 G8, Harry commented, “This experience has taught me a valuable lesson about the media – they do not care about the truth, they care about the story. How sensational can it be, how controversial” (interview with Harry, 29/08/2005).

Discussions of sensationalism frequently referred to the press and specifically tabloids, but at least one interviewee associated sensationalism with radio. Speaking about *Newsbeat* on BBC Radio One, Sarah saw the delivery of news as hyper-dramatic:

The women who reads the news on [*Newsbeat*] reads it in the most hysterical way, “*Drugged And Beaten*” and you know it’s just the way they’re reading it and it’s like this drama that she puts in her voice is so unnecessary you know? I don’t see why they read the news like that or why they have come up with that formula for news reading. (Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005)

Sarah is critiquing what she perceived as an exaggerated performance of the news reader which can be folded into the larger theme of sensationalism. Equally

important is Sarah's assertion that a "formula for news reading" is being followed suggesting she views sensationalism as part of routine journalistic practice. The concept of a "formula" is returned to shortly in the analysis of news scripts.

Sensationalism was articulated by interviewees in two overlapping ways; first, as a property an event itself may – inherently or through its construction – possess; second, sensationalism was a journalist practice of reporting news events to maximise dramatic narrative. In both cases, sensationalism was viewed as part of a hegemony of journalistic practice that, much like academic claims, was seen to draw boundaries around the type of coverage social movement actors and particularly "radical" ones could achieve.

Stories

The "story" is a key unit of news (Bell, 1991, p. 8). The news is a selective portrayal of everyday events rendered into stories that are presented to the reader, listener or viewer (Hartley, 1982, p. 11). The story is the key narrative device used to tell the news. Despite this glaringly obvious yet incredibly significant function of the news story, only one interviewee explicitly suggested that the format of the news story influenced the news process. For Allan, the practice of telling "short stories" in a concentrated amount of time – particularly in the case of television – severely limited the breadth and depth of news:

I think the whole structure of [the news] and this applies as much to Indymedia as much as anything else but, the structure of it where by we tell things in short stories. Obviously newspapers are a bit better than TV media. The TV media the news is half an hour. You've got to tell *global* news in *half an hour*, *are you fucking having a joke?* Each segment is two or three minutes, five minutes maybe. You've got to tell a story in five minutes, you have *got* to leave things out. Not even necessarily because you are a bastard and you want to leave things out but you have to – *you can't tell a story in five minutes*. And, what you leave out might shape that entire story. And I think that the way the media is structured in terms of telling these short stories every day doesn't give

enough – *it can not* give an accurate picture of the word even if the journalist really wants to. (Interview with Allan, 02/04/2005)

Allan demonstrates a reflexive awareness of academically acknowledged (e.g. Bell, 1991) limitations to the news process which have become incorporated into his lay theory of media.

Although Allan was the only interviewee to explicitly discuss the impact of the story format on the news process, a number of interviewees appeared to have internalised the journalistic concept of a story. To illustrate this, the experiences of Megan and Scott are considered in turn.

Megan, an American activist with extensive media experience, suggests there is a clear divide between what does and does not constitute a news story:

Megan: ...Thirty people protesting at a [G8] Ministerial meeting is not going to get coverage unless they do something that like, you know, stops the meetings from happening [and] thirty people standing outside an office building with some signs is not going to get much coverage.

Patrick: Why do you think that?

Megan: Because who cares? What – what's the story? Thirty people? Wow. You get 30 people open up, like – at the ribbon cutting for like the new Sainsbury's or something, do you know what I'm saying? Thirty people is not a story; thirty people is not media coverage. Thirty people who you know chain themselves to the front of the office building covered in blood and oil that's a story, but thirty people with some signs is not a story. (Interview with Megan, 14/04/2005)

Megan presents a journalistic assessment of what is and is not news. She asserts that ordinary or everyday events which take a predictable form are not news; news requires something distinctive. From her perspective, protesting on its own is not sufficient to garner media attention. Instead, it must be supplemented with theatrics (blood and oil) and drama (chained to the door). This is significant as it is evidence of the internalisation of the journalist concept of a news story which demonstrates the hegemonic power of the news media to

not only define what issues become news, but to shape the way in which social actions think about what *can* constitute becoming news. A further implication is the way in which perceptions of what constitutes newsworthiness influences how activist actions are conceived and executed. There is a well documented turn towards symbolic protests whereby such news oriented tactics have become well heeled and honed in activists circles particularly by NGOs such as Greenpeace (Anderson, 1997; DeLuca, 1999; Scalmer, 2002). Moving beyond NGOs, this thesis analyses the degree to which activists within the GJM via its case study of Dissent! have also incorporated an awareness of the hegemonic rules of mainstream media into their practices.

A sensitivity towards journalistic approaches to stories is also evident in remarks made by Scott. While reflecting on the potential newsworthiness of the G8 Summit Scott commented:

I don't think for a moment for instance that CNN, Sky News, BBC News 24 or whoever would go up [to the 2005 G8] if they didn't expect there to be some lively, at the least, large scale demonstrations or some you know, direct actions which actually get in people's faces a bit. Or, blockade a bridge or a hotel. Or, have a party in the middle of Princess Street in Edinburgh you know?

I think that there is no way that if you were a commissioning news editor, you would say "Ya, you go away for a week or 10 days, and you know, go stay at a hotel in Edinburgh and I will authorise all the expenditures" if they don't think there is a story there. They don't want to see some very reasonable, nice people sitting down, having a vegan breakfast and then explaining patiently about climate change and the brutal injustices of capitalism and all the rest of it – they don't want to hear that, do they? They don't make good news – that's not going to be the lead item on the news. The lead item on the news, as far as the mainstream media is concerned, is all the windows going in, in the top hotel in Edinburgh or, one of the banks being burnt to the ground or something. (Interview with Scott, 31/03/2005)

From Scott's perspective, news organisations viewed the Gleneagles G8 Summit as a routinised media event; a large scale spectacle that was predestined to meet specific editorial conceptions of what it was supposed to be: "lively", "get in

people's faces". Scott also expressed a belief that news organisations have a vested interest in covering such events from a specific angle in order to make "good news". In the context of the Gleneagles G8 Summit, part of what is believed to make the item "good news" involved variations on the themes of violence and sensationalism discussed above. To be clear, Scott is not endorsing activist violence but arguing it is something the media actively seek at such events to make a story. The next section of this chapter examines in greater detail specific "perceived news scripts" that activists believed the media looked for at the G8 Summit.

4.3 G8 Summit – Perceived News Scripts and the Gleneagles G8 Summit

"The media has already written the story of what's going to happen at Gleneagles and that's based on their scripts." (Interview with Guy, 21/04/2005)

"At the end of the day, the story becomes the story of the person who is the media, so to speak, not necessarily the story of the person who is telling it to the media." (Interview with Barry, 08/07/2005)

This section moves from activists' general theories of how the media report news to study the specifics of how the media was perceived to cover both the Global Justice Movement and the Gleneagles G8 Summit. This is achieved through the analysis of activists' "perceived news scripts" (referred to also for brevity as "news scripts") as articulated across a collection of activist interviews. The section opens by defining perceived news scripts, its empirical characteristics and foundations. Next, an overview of activist views of the G8 Leaders Summit as a routinised and scripted news event is given followed by a

closer analysis of two perceived news scripts associated with coverage of demonstrations against the Gleneagles G8 Summit.

The interviewees were asked to suggest a news headline they expected to see, and one they preferred to see, coming out of media coverage of the 2005 G8 demonstrations.³⁶ These headlines, coupled with additional relevant anecdotes, provide an illustrative analysis into the typecast media coverage or *perceived news scripts* anticipated by activists. As argued in Chapter 2, the concept of perceived news scripts captures interviewees “playful awareness” (Liebes & Katz, 1990, p. 143) of the “seriality” (Liebes & Katz, 1990, p. 144) of news. Seriality, in the context of this thesis, refers to repetition of the themes, characters, story structure in the news media coverage of large scale anti-capitalist demonstrations in general, and the 2005 G8 demonstrations specifically. To be clear, *perceived news scripts are not “news frames”* (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; McLeod & Detenber, 1999; McLeod & Hertog, 1999) – this would require a separate analysis of media output – but are *interviewees’ perceptions of the expectations media have of them as demonstrators*. News scripts reflect the roles that interviewees suggest they are expected to act out by the media as Dissent! – affiliated activists protesting the Gleneagles G8 Summit.

The use of news scripts – that is repeating patterns of news coverage – by the media was seen by interviewees as an inevitable and predictable feature of contemporary news. When asked what the media look for in a news story Guy remarked:

³⁶ Based on interview schedule questions 7i and 7j (See: Appendix 4).

Usually they are writing the last story. They are not actually focussing on what's happening... they are writing about now as though it was four years ago... The journalist is rooted in an eternal present and has to keep on thinking what's interesting and has only a very limited knowledge of what's actually going on. So they are going to be looking for something that looks like what was a story – do you know what I mean? It's a self-referencing system. So they're – in the context of G8 protests – looking for what looks like Genoa [...] unfortunately, they have certain – they have certain basic stories that they keep on selling. It's like a script writer, a script writer will often write a script on the basis of conflict, you know? Conflict between main characters. (Interview with Guy 21/04/2005)

Guy's analogy of news production to a "script writer" served as the inspiration for discussion of the concept of news scripts. Sarah extended the idea of a news script by comparing the G8 Summit to a scripted performance, a theatre performance where all parties involved have their roles to play:

The G8 is a theatre performance, you know? Actors, we are all actors. And because of the way protests have been, we are all actors in this – in this theatre performance. You've got the G8 who are some actors and then you've also got the protestors. And I think, one of the things that I don't want to do, is I don't want to play the role that is expected of me in this performance. (Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005)

Both Guy and Sarah viewed the G8 Summit in theatrical terms; as a scripted "performance" that played out in the media. Links between performance and spectacle are analysed in Chapter 7. Focussing on the concept of a "news script", it captures the perceived limited range of representation that activists protesting against the Gleneagles G8 Summit believe themselves to have. Implicit in the articulation of such scripts is a view of the symbolic power of media to impose representational boundaries on demonstrations in the form of news scripts. Sarah exhibits a "playful awareness" (Liebes & Katz, 1990, p. 143) of these scripts and expresses a desire to counter or at least resist this hegemonic media-oriented practice. Resistance, as Chapters 5-7 shows, partially manifest itself in the creation of the CounterSpin Collective. Returning to the G8 Summit, the event was seen by interviewees as a predictable scripted media event – a *routinised media event* – that was the product of pre-determined and "tick box"

journalism of the sort studied and critiqued by “protest paradigm” scholars (c.f. Chapter 2). The next section of this chapter analyses specific “news scripts” activists believed to accompany the Gleneagles G8 Summit.

The G8 Summit: Perceived News Scripts of the Media Event

This thesis is premised on the theoretical proposition that the Gleneagles G8 Summit was a routinised media event. The combination of high powered international delegates discussing contentious and pressing global issues, against a background of varied and vibrant dissent, elevated the Gleneagles G8 Summit to media event status. Dayan and Katz (1992) offer a collection of characteristics that happenings must possess to meet their stringent definition, however the empirical analysis presented in this section does not offer an academic analysis of the Gleneagles G8 Summit as a media event. Instead, it analyses *activists understanding of the Gleneagles G8 Summit as a routinised media event* and specifically the perceived news scripts which accompany the Summit.

Dayan and Katz (1992) offer a number of characteristics that media events possess such as being interruptions of routine, monopolistic, organised outside of the media, live, pre-planned, celebratory and integrative. The definition of media event used in this thesis is modified from Dayan and Katz particularly because of their exclusion of news as media events.

At first glance, the term *routinised* militates against the notion of the media event as an interruption of routine. Routinised serves as an adjective of media event to recognise Summit demonstrations as reoccurring happenings that, since

Seattle, has meant both regular protests and regular news media coverage. Other media events such as the Olympics may also be thought of as routinised as they occur on a regular schedule and play out, according to Dayan and Katz (1992 , pp. 25-53), in the media following specific scripts. The cycle of protest differs from the scripted aspect of the Olympics as it is not something that was necessarily scheduled in advance every four years like the Olympics, but through the use of target protests accompanying a regularly scheduled event (the G8 Leaders Summit) evolved into a routinised protest and, this thesis argues, a routine media event consisting of both the meeting *and* the demonstrations. Routinised also refers to the type of news coverage gained which has followed a predictable pattern – at least from the perspective of activists – as will be shown in the analysis of G8 specific perceived news scripts. Both aspects were commented on by the interviewees. Media events, Dayan and Katz argue, have their own conventions of coverage depending on if it is a conquest, contest or coronation.

The Gleneagles G8 Summit was regularly described by interviewees as a well-scripted and predictable media event. A common assertion was that the G8 Leaders Summit was a “showpiece” Summit with the majority – though not all – of the work being previously accomplished at G8 Ministerial meetings (this tension is returned to in the next section). The Leaders Summit in Gleneagles was viewed as a “ritualistic” (Tom) photo opportunity which inevitably followed a prescribed pattern of media coverage. Scott described the G8 photo opportunity as follows: “It’s eight guys, preferably in an open-neck shirt and obviously a

bandana for Berlusconi, and a photo op on a beach at Sea Island or let's get the mountains in the background at Kananaskis" (interview with Scott, 31/03/2005). Megan offered a similar sketch describing the crescendo of the G8's "pomp and circumstance" as "...the photograph of the eight of them standing on the mountain and or wherever it is, whatever the picturesque spot that they have, it's going to run on the cover of newspapers all over the world the next day" (interview with Megan, 14/04/2005).

The narratives of Megan and Scott are rooted in an awareness of media coverage of previous G8 summits which are strung together to suggest a pattern of media coverage that is expected to unfold; a perceived news script. The articulation of such patterns by activists reflects an understanding – or at least lay theorisation – of the ways in which political actors attempt to devise, adapt and manipulate events for the media to generate news media events. This is most evident in my interviewees' reflection on the use of a stage-managed photo-opportunity as source of symbolic power and political currency by G8 leaders. Interviewees recognised that media events were not just the product of political leaders exploiting their position as high powered news sources, but that they were simultaneously the product of, and demanded by, the hegemonic logic of news. Therefore media events were viewed by interviewees as simultaneously created and manipulated both by the political actors involved in the event, the media actors involved in reporting it, and the media conventions of reporting it. Many also recognised their own role in the event.

As argued in Chapter 2, the news media's appetite for media events has long been recognised and acted upon by NGOs such as Greenpeace (Anderson, 2003; Cottle, 2006; DeLuca, 1999; Scalmer, 2002). What this research argues is that the political utility and logic of media events does not just reside in the professional knowledge of NGOs but has seeped into general activist knowledge; into the practice of activism. However, there is a key difference between many of the past "image events" (DeLuca, 1999) and the event under study and that is routinisation. Whereas the direct actions of NGOs were calculated to generate a media event, the Gleneagles G8 Summit was a routinised media event with a legacy of representation; the themes of the event, its seriality, were familiar to the media and audiences while the location was different.

The interviewees' articulations of the conventions of how the coverage of G8 leaders should unfold demonstrates an appreciation for both the seriality of the event and the representational boundaries of news coverage. These boundaries were not only seen in how the leaders were covered (which was often in a favourable light) but also related to the typecast coverage of opposition to the Summit and Dissent! particularly. The type of news script and the frequency with which it was mentioned varied across interviewees. The two news scripts discussed below were the most prominent across interviewees and also observed during fieldwork. The news scripts are both short and largely descriptive, and their theoretical significance is analysed after each is presented.

Anarchist Violence vs. No Show

“Riots provide two kinds of images. Police fighting with activists, or activists destroying private property.” (Interview with Darren, 07/08/2005)

Violence has previously been analysed as an element of activists’ lay theories of media. Extending from this, violence and especially “anarchist violence” was anticipated by activists to be a central theme framing media coverage of the 2005 G8 demonstrations. News scripts are activist lay theories in action. The “anarchist violence vs. no show” news script was articulated in the form of a Manichean dichotomy dependant on the demonstration. This sentiment is reflected in the following remark:

There’ll be the whole thing about “my god, destruction” or “my god, peaceful” or there’ll be a sort of “ha ha, anarchists’ crap after all” sort of article. The same sort of thing the *Daily Record* did, “It looks like people couldn’t be bothered to turn out” sort of article. Like the same sort thing they did in May Day in London [...] you had a huge police hype about thousands of anarchists will turn up, thousands of police will turn up, everyone is going to get shot -- oh look, nobody turned up. You know? (Interview with Guy, 21/04/2005)

Guy’s comment, which was a sentiment shared by other interviewees, relays a belief that negative media coverage was unavoidable. If not enough demonstrators showed up, the protestors were impotent. Too many, and they would be portrayed as violent and aggressive. The violence versus no show script was seen as a *Catch 22* whereby no matter what action was taken, activists felt media would portray them in a negative light. As with the G8 news script mentioned above, the script is rooted, at least partially, in an awareness of previous media coverage.

The notion of “anarchist violence” was also expressed in the form of “anarchist chaos” which was explicitly mentioned by two interviewees with Neil predicting the tabloid headline, “Anarchist Chaos Sweeps Scotland”. An

additional twelve interviewees specifically referenced the media's use of "anarchist" which was seen as a stereotypical label deployed to intentionally categorise demonstrators as "violent", "sinister", "trouble making" and "evil". From Matthew's perspective, "the word anarchist [was used] to mean highly sinister, quasi-terrorist sort of very organized." An example of the often implicit reference made to this news script may be seen in a comment made by Scott discussing local media coverage in advance of the 2005 G8:

...if you live in Scotland, I think that they will be reading there is a horde of black clad anarchists about to descend and you know, smash and rape and burn and pillage their way across Scotland. I mean say that with a bit of a heavy heart but, that's certainly what some of the press is saying. (Interview with Scott, 31/03/2005)

The inference of violence, allusion to property destruction and "black clad" demonstrators mentioned above captures the characteristics of "anarchist chaos" expressed by interviewees. The news script was viewed as a product of the hegemonic practices of news coverage – the routines of news reporting coupled with the "newsworthiness" of violence (see for example: Gans, 1979, p. 46; Schlesinger, 1978, pp. 205-239). From the perspective of my interviewees, news scripts were inescapable; if "anarchists" showed up at the Summit, the media would report trouble. If nobody showed up, the movement would be reported as weak. The news script reflects a concern with the power of mainstream news media and the ability of political opponents to make claims through the media that dichotomise the coverage of Dissent! as either hyper-violent which political opponents could use to decrease the legitimacy of Dissent!, or as a damp squib in which case their demands are no longer legitimate. In both cases the news

script is seen as restricting the representation of Dissent! and their demands and therefore possessing symbolic power over the network.

Good Protestors vs. Bad Protestors

It would be very odd if people came to protest against this G8, as we're focusing on poverty in Africa and climate change. I don't quite know what they'll be protesting against.
– Prime Minister Tony Blair, March 2005³⁷

Arguably the most powerful news script was the good protestor/bad protestor dichotomy where a clear distinction between the “good” and the “bad” protestors was believed to exist. As evidence by the above quote, the initial strategy of the British government was to isolate those demonstrating against the G8 as outsiders. However, once the massive Make Poverty History (MPH) campaign involving organisations and celebrities of international repute was launched, a new government strategy was needed. In the opinion of many interviewees, the revised strategy involved portraying MPH campaigners as “good protestors” and Dissent! as its antithesis; Dissent!’s membership was seen to be portrayed as “hardcore”(Guy) demonstrators and “crazy anarchists”(Megan).

Reflecting on the Gleneagles G8 Summit, Harry described the media’s coverage as a:

Divide and rule strategy, promoted by government and Make Poverty History to present potential demonstrations in two camps - good and bad protester. MPH [equals] good, middle class, family fun, day out, good natured; anything else, bad, dangerous, anarchists, extremists, violent. (Interview with Harry, 29/08/2005)

Two other interviewees also viewed the good/bad dichotomy as a strategic rebranding. Sarah’s reflections are of note:

³⁷ Cited in McGarvie (2005).

I do think it's an interesting PR strategy of Tony Blair's government this whole G8 Summit and how – the whole involvement with the Band Aid thing and all that – all that spinning it was really cleverly done you know? And, the fact that there really does exist in the media now, there really does exist good protestors and bad protestors. And good protestors go to July the 2nd [MPH Rally] and bad ones stay on afterwards. And why anybody else would want to stay afterwards because they are going to talk about poverty in the G8 Summit? Well you know, they must be bent on mayhem or whatever you want to call it – these other people. (Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005)

It is not relevant whether or not the good/bad divide suggested above was an actual media frame. What is important, is *activists' identification of the news script and the acknowledgement of the role they are expected and invited to fill.*

Also relevant is the assertion that the script is part of a conscious government strategy through and perhaps with the media to define what is a legitimate reason to protest, and what is not. Drawing on the comments of Guy, the perceived news script was viewed as an attempt to establish and define levels of “acceptable” (Guy) opposition and therefore “good” and “bad” protestors.

News Scripts: Implications for Action

I argue that news scripts are actualizations of activists' lay theories of media. They capture activists' understanding of the symbolic power of media and how this power is used both by mainstream media and more powerful political opponents. News scripts were seen as “prewritten” (Sarah); the media only needed to fill in the blanks as the following quote from Harry suggests, “the media coverage has already been decided by the press, the narrative already fixed, all that is left to do is cut and paste random images of violence, menacing-looking anarchists, crusties and angry socialists with flags” (interview with Harry, 29/08/2005). In Harry's quote and Sarah's assertion is a view of media power that sees news scripts as hegemonic practices that establish the boundaries for

the representation of dissent in order to maintain, as opposed to challenge power relations.

In the case of the “anarchist violence versus no-show script” activists felt they would either be portrayed as violent or impotent which, in both cases, positions protestors in a negative light as a threat which merits the use of coercive state power for the protection of the public. The “good protestors versus bad protestors” news script was seen by my interviewees first of all as a deliberate effort by the media and political leaders to define the representational boundaries of legitimate protest so that protest which challenged the G8, such as that carried out by Dissent!, was presented as illegitimate involving “bad” protestors while “good” protestors were involved in benign activities such as MPH which lobbied the G8 as opposed to questioned its underlying power structures. Second, the news scripts were also viewed by interviewees as the product of the conventions of news – the hegemonic logic – that dictates what is and what is not newsworthy. Therefore news scripts capture the dual challenge of media-oriented action in the news patterns of coverage (framing) employed by political opponents and news patterns obtained due to conventions of reporting.

News scripts both comprise part of the “background knowledge” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249) of media and show a reflexive application of media lay theories developed inductively based on observations of and interaction with media. From this perspective, news scripts may be linked to the perceived elements of newsworthiness underwriting activists’ lay theory of media: “anarchist violence vs. no show” with violence as well as sensationalism. The

“good protestor vs. bad protestor” draws on the familiar narrative, or good versus evil, order versus chaos, while also incorporating elements of violence (via “bad protestors”) and sensationalism (via epic battles and struggles).

In this research news scripts varied by interviewee; some were more articulate and offered greater detail than others. I argue that the prevalence of such news scripts indicates a level of common knowledge about and orientation towards media amongst activists and demonstrate how media texts are (re)integrated into the practice of activism. To make this claim is to recognise the dual role of news media in political activism whereby the media act as a direct “medium” to experience the world as well as a system of representations or perceived representations against which activists set themselves. Therefore, perceived news scripts are activists’ interpretations of how they were or will be represented in the media. Liebes and Katz (1990) suggest that the seriality of a drama, “often puts the viewer in a position of knowing more about a character than the character knows about himself, thus increasing the viewer’s sense of control over the proceedings” (1990, p. 43). In the case of activists, the seriality of news in the form of news scripts is used in an effort to calculate how political challenges are represented, in order to develop counter-practices in an effort to control, counter or at least influence how they are portrayed in the media through the use of specific activist practices which are analysed in Chapter 6.

4.4 G8 as a Media Event: Selecting the G8 Leaders Summit and a ‘Duty’ to Protest

The 2005 G8 Gleneagles Summit was a major episode on the international political and media landscape. The activists have already been shown to view the G8 Gleneagles Summit as a routinised media event that they believed was destined to follow pre-established news scripts. Despite the perceived inevitability of media coverage, activists still attended the Gleneagles G8 Summit. This section analyses their motivations for doing so beginning with the question: Why did activists within Dissent! direct their attention towards the Gleneagles G8 Summit?³⁸

The Gleneagles summit was viewed by all interviewees as connected to past actions against the G8 along with other International Finance Institution’s (IFI’s) with interviewees speaking of an established “tradition”(Darren, Boris) or “ritual”(Tom) of protest. The use of tradition suggests the existence of an established, inherited and often sacrosanct act; something which is not questioned but is just done as it always has been. This view is evident in Michael’s suggestion that “you don’t really get to sit down and think, ‘oh, do I want to go [to the G8 Summit]?’ Well, it’s just like, everyone goes, and you’re like, ‘Yeah, I’ll be there’” (interview with Michael, 17/05/2005). Moreover, within Dissent!, the decision to focus demonstrations on the Gleneagles G8 Summit (as

³⁸ The three ministerial meetings that had Dissent! related protests were: the International Energy/Environment Ministers Roundtable, March 15-16th, 2005 in London, England; the G8 Environment and Development Ministers Meeting, March 17-18th, 2005 in Derby, England; the G8 Justice and Interior Ministers Meeting, June 15th-17th, 2005 in Sheffield, England. For more information on these see: IMC (2005).

opposed to ministerial gatherings) was never formally taken. Instead, there was a natural, almost unquestioning gravitation towards the Leaders Summit.

For many activists within Dissent!, the G8 Gleneagles Summit was pegged as “the sexy date on the activist summer...action calendar” (interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005). This anticipation is further illustrated by the fact Dissent!’s preparations began in October, 2003, over seven months before Gleneagles was announced as the summit venue in June, 2004³⁹. The reverence and anticipation of the Gleneagles Leaders Summit expressed by interviewees is linked to the legacy of representation associated with both past G8 Leaders Summits and the related GJM protests. The Gleneagles summit was identified and anticipated as a media event within an international cycle of protest and therefore something that activists wanted and, as the next section argues, *felt compelled* to take part in.

A “Duty” to Protest

As a routinised media event, the G8 Summit has a representational legacy consecrated and perpetuated by a dialectic of protests and media coverage. One implication of this is the creation of a “duty of representation” defined as a perceived obligation to protest to maintain the presence of opposition in the media and is referred to as a *duty to protest*. The “sense of responsibility to protest” (interview with Claudia, 25/08/2005) as Claudia described it, moves beyond the recognition and seizure of a “political opportunity” (Tarrow, 1998, p.

³⁹ The Dissent! Network was formed prior to the venue being announced but it was known that the G8 Summit would be held in the UK because of the cycle of rotation. On a related note, on a field trip to Tuebingen, Germany in February 2005, plans were already well underway for protests against the 2007 G8 Summit in Germany.

118), towards an underlying compulsion for opposition to the G8 Summit to be registered in the mediapolis. Insight into the motivation behind the “duty to protest” can be gained from the following remark by Scott:

There is a history of demonstration, protest, opposition to this Summit. I think all of a sudden if we had one and nobody turned up, you know, they would just spin that around instantly. I mean, Blair's little -- it's not little is it? It's a great big, fucking huge spin team -- would just say “Look, you know, we are so right on, we're so connected with the people, our policies are so right, no one even opposes what we are doing.”
(Interview with Scott, 31/03/2005)

Scott argues that if the Summit is not opposed in the same manner as previous Summits have been, politicians would use the lack of protest as an opportunity in the media to suggest their agenda is unchallenged. Similar arguments were also noted during fieldwork. For example, at a November 2004 Dissent! gathering at the Anarchist Book Fair in London there was a very brief debate about the purpose of mobilising for Gleneagles⁴⁰. During the short discussion one individual argued, “If we don't show up [in Gleneagles] what sort of message would that send to people around the world? It will show that we don't have a strong movement” (Field notes, 27/11/2004).

The comments taken from Scott and the example from the field have slightly different focuses. Scott's emphasis is on how politicians would “spin” the lack of protest in the media while the field example stresses how audience members use the media would interpret the lack of protest. However, both arguments are concerned with media representation and, more precisely, the

⁴⁰ This was one of the only times that the “purpose” of protesting the Gleneagles G8 Summit was discussed in a meeting setting. While the “purpose” of protesting was the subject of debate and conversation between activists, this was mostly done outside of a “formal” meeting. Instead, the underlying assumption was that, by one's presence at the meeting, you were there to organise protest against the G8. This had the effect of creating a less than conducive environment for discussing the point of protest in the first place let alone managing mainstream media or the implications of media coverage.

political implications of a *lack* of representation. Thus, the “duty to protest” expressed by interviewees is driven both by a perceived need for visibility in the mediapolis and a view on the perceived dangers of *invisibility* in the mediapolis. If Silverstone (2007, pp. 25-55) is correct and the mediapolis is a “space of appearances”, absence may be interpreted (even if wrongly) to mean “the movement” no longer existed. Thus interviewees saw the symbolic power of the media and, by extension political actors who have influence in or over the media, as the ability to influence how something is presented and if something is even presented at all.

The ability for social actors to use their power (political, economic, coercive, symbolic) to overlook, ignore or exclude opponents from the mediapolis led some interviewees to argue that visibility in the media – the maintenance of a representation of resistance – was more important than the type of coverage received. In Guy’s words, “even bad publicity is still publicity... which I would say is better than ignoring us. Because, when they really want to crush us, they ignore us” (interview with Guy, 21/04/2005). The feeling expressed by Guy and indeed other interviewees that without media coverage the movement would not exist parallels academic assertions such as Gamson (1995) who argues for the validating role of mainstream media.

In conclusion, the “duty to protest” expressed by interviewees materialised itself as a need to be in Scotland for the Gleneagles G8 Summit. The desire and eventual mobilisation to Scotland was seen by interviewees as a responsibility – a duty – to carry forward the representational legacy of Summit protests. For

some activists, as Michael disclosed above, the decision whether or not to attend the 2005 G8 demonstrations was rarely questioned and instead appeared to be an unquestioned obligation. This reaction can, at least in part, be attributed to a “duty” for resistance to remain visible on the media field; the duty to perpetuate the cycle of “visible” protests shows quite clearly the underwriting role of mainstream media in the mobilisations. It is the symbolic power and hegemonic routine of the media event which attracts activists to the event and makes them feel compelled to attend.

4.5 Conclusions

This chapter has analysed activists’ media-oriented practices with the objective of understanding activists’ news media practices and, more importantly, the ways in which news media is thought about, informs, shapes and underwrites activist practice. I began by analysing how activists conceptualise media where I argued that activists conceptualised media in a very similar way to Silverstone’s (2007) mediapolis. The significance of this rests in the recognition of the media as an environment – a “media ecology” (Cottle, 2008, p. 854) – that activists are situated in and therefore must consciously and critically navigate.

Dissent! activists, in the context of G8 Summit-related news coverage, were shown to use media across platforms (radio, television, print, Internet) and titles. Instead of following a selection of media outlets chosen for their resonance with personal politics (*title-based use*), activists would follow the story. Defined as *issue-based use*, activists would draw on, compare and contrast multiple news resources across both traditional mass media and new media. *Title-based use*,

on the other hand, was theorised as a habitual news practice, rooted in routines of media use, and rooted in a level of trust in the selected outlets. With title-based use, activists accepted the hegemonic ideology of the news outlet. In fact, the political leaning (in the case of print) and perceived leaning (in the case of television) motivated the selection of news that reinforced personal politics.

Conversely, *issue-based use* extended across a range of news sources straying often outside of the title-based comfort zone. While multiple sources were drawn on, these were still read with an eye for personal politics. Although additional research is needed to analyse the use of multiple sources further, the practice of subversively reading the *Financial Times* suggests that news media which militates against personal politics was still used but done in an *counter-hegemonic* fashion in an effort to resist or challenge the power of such news outlets. It is likely that resistant readings of media – informed by media lay theories (see below) – occur when using *all* news media and, in fact, point towards new roles of activists in the mediapolis; I will return to this point shortly.

In trying to understand the ways in which social movement actors use media, the practice of issue-based use challenges the utility of the dichotomous and disconnected conceptualisation of “old” mass media versus “new” media, as well as “mainstream” versus “alternative” media. This is not to discount academic research analysing the ways in which, and to what ends, each of these broad categories of media are used. However, the theorisation and analysis of such media must be premised on the recognition that any type of media – mainstream, alternative, new or old – even if analysed in isolation, must be acknowledged as

existing in, contributing to, drawing from and even making reference to a wider media ecology. An emphasis on analysing media use as a practice that extends *across media* can capture the overlapping uses of old and new media and therefore offer a better understanding of how social movement actors, and perhaps social actors more generally, use media. Moreover, it also permits the analysis of the changing and shifting roles of social actors in the mediapolis.

A mediation approach which views media as a process is also able to theoretically account for shifts in conceptualising audiences. While audience-based scholars such as Livingstone (1998) have argued for the recognition of the critical faculties of audience members, this thesis offers further ammunition to understanding the critical skills of those who use media by providing a means to conceptualise and unpack the reflexive awareness of media that characterises life in the mediapolis. Further, as argued in subsequent chapters, lay theories also provide the foundation for how social actors – traditionally viewed as audience members – take up their role as producers.

Lay theories were presented with the aim of demonstrating that activists take a critically-reflexive approach to media whereby their understanding of how the media work (lay theories) reflexively inform and translate to media-oriented practices. The lay theories espoused by activists were shown to parallel academic arguments often made by public intellectuals associated with the Global Justice Movement as well as discourse in media theory.

Activists predominantly expressed variations of a political-economic perspective which viewed news media as primarily motivated by profit and

therefore adjusting its practices, particularly definitions of newsworthiness, to maximize profit. In the context of protests against the Gleneagles G8 Summit, issues of violence, sensationalism and stories were all seen by activists to negatively influence the reporting of Dissent! due to the political and economic agenda of news media. Arguments as to the influence of the profit motive over the selection of news, news production, and reporting have been the subject of academic analysis for over three decades (Bell, 1991; Gans, 1979; Schudson, 1995, 2000; Tuchman, 1976, 1977, 1978). From this perspective, activist claims are not necessarily new.

However, they are significant for *who* is making them; it is not academics or media “professionals” who have specialised training and/or conducted detailed research into the functioning of news media, but *unprofessionals*. This indicates that knowledge, or at least perceived knowledge about how (and why) the news media function has transcended beyond the specialist fields of media studies and become folded into common knowledge. While there are undoubtedly differences between individual lay theories, the salient point is the existence of such knowledge. Consequently, there is a need for media scholarship to analyse further how this knowledge impacts the actions of social actors not only in how they use media, but for their own purposes.

Lay theories constitute part of the background knowledge of various indirect and direct social practices. This has, I argue, theoretical implications as to how media scholars theorise the way in which social actors are understood to interact with and through media. Whereas Bennett’s (1975, p. 65) analysis of

“pseudo theories” covers the way in which social actors may try to make sense of politics and therefore the actions and messages of political actors (for example, what they said, what they meant to say, what they said really means, the use of spin etc.) The lay theorisation of media adds another layer of interpretation to “political consciousness” (ibid). On one level, social actors try to make sense of the message and related motives on behalf of the politician, and social actors recognise that such messages have been tailored by politicians, through using spin and other tactics involved in the “management of visibility” (Thompson, 1995, pp. 134-148) to not only suit the demands of media, but influence their presentation in media. In addition, this chapter has argued that social actors also try and theorise the way in which the media’s processing of events – the news gathering, production, representation – further influences outcomes and potential outcomes of the message and portrayal of politicians and political events. This knowledge about media, folded in with the political “pseudo theories” together forms part of the background knowledge of activists.

This “background knowledge” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249) influenced the way in which activists approached and attended the Gleneagles G8 Summit and therefore the practice of activism at the summit. The G8 Summit, in the tradition of “media events” (Dayan & Katz, 1992) was viewed by activists as scripted. The media’s framing of reality is acknowledged, challenged and no longer – if it ever was – taken as a given by activists. The articulation of “perceived news scripts” by interviewees, I argue, are media lay theories in action. Whether or not the news scripts “existed” in the media requires a separate study of news media

output. What is significant for my purposes is the way in which media texts are read by activists. The identification of common news scripts across a number of interviews demonstrates an awareness and attempt to theorise the practices of media (how media work) and integrate this into the field of activism. The integration of the understanding of media into activist practice will be analysed in two subsequent empirical chapters.

I argue that the G8 was recognised well in advance of the Summit as a media event, as evidenced by extracts from my interviewees. Moreover, many interviewees believed media coverage of the Summit and of the protests was destined to follow a certain script. Nonetheless, activists still attended and protested the G8 summit seeking to secure visual reaffirmation of the opposition to the G8 and its associated project of neoliberalism. Discussion about the Gleneagles G8 Summit thus far has located it within a “tradition” of media event-style coverage which activists believed needed to be maintained. The recognition of the pattern of media event style coverage of past G8 Summits, and the identification and anticipation of Gleneagles as a “political opportunity” (Tarrow, 1998, p. 118) for protest led many interviewees to feel a “duty to protest” in order to keep the resistance to the G8 visible in the mediapolis; the exhibition of a “duty to protest”, I argue, shows quite clearly the instigating and underwriting role of media on the practice of activism in the context of Gleneagles.

In conclusion, the media-oriented practices analysed revealed a strong scepticism about the news production process evident in both the uses and lay theories of media. This finding reaffirms Gamson and Wolfsfeld’s (1993, p. 119)

claim about social movement actors' sceptical view of media. Yet such "scepticism" must not be effortlessly dismissed but *unpacked*. In fact, I argue that the scepticism observed in the practice of news use, the lay theories of media, and seen in action in the form of news scripts, represents the evolution of a media-specific skill set – a collection of media-oriented practices – developed by activists to cope with, and conduct life, in the mediapolis. Consequently, scepticism may be understood as a rhetorical "defence mechanism" brought about by an excess of media "spectacle" (Kellner, 2003). Further, scepticism is also the product of an increase in the dissemination of knowledge through multiple channels – from common knowledge shared between activists to the publications of movement collectives and intellectuals – about how media work. The resulting "playful awareness" (Liebes & Katz, 1990, p. 143) about the ways in which news media work necessitates scepticism, a scepticism which is reinforced in academic literature.

However, this orientation is not just defensive; it is not only used to resist hegemonic powers in using media. It is also used offensively as a means to inform and guide political action as the remaining empirical chapters in this thesis argue. This chapter has shown how media is thought about and alluded to in the perceived implications media have on social action. The next chapter shifts from an activists level-view of media-oriented practice to a network-level analysis of the evolution of the ways in which mainstream media interaction was dealt with by Dissent!.

Chapter 5: Dissent!'s Media Policy and the Rise of the CounterSpin Collective

The issue of interacting with mainstream media is a contentious one within radical social movements (Anderson, 2003). At the same time, mass media have become an unavoidable and essential component of contemporary politics and counter-politics; a site for struggles over mediation in the mediapolis (Castells, 1997; RETORT, 2005; Thompson, 1995, 2000). Given the prevalent role of media, particularly in relation to media events, a key issue for social movements is the type of media strategy to develop. This chapter is driven by research question two: *Drawing on Rucht's (2004) "Quadruple A framework," within the context of a political media event, how can the way in which mainstream news media interaction is planned for, managed and responded to be understood?* It analyses how the radical social movement network Dissent! debated whether to interact with mainstream media, how these debates evolved over time and the ways in which Dissent! planned for, managed and responded to mainstream media interest. The Chapter reveals and analyses tensions within Dissent! that primarily occurred between the network-level norms of Dissent! which supported abstaining from media interaction and a group who formed from within Dissent! – the CounterSpin Collective (CSC) – that had the objective of facilitating mainstream media interaction. It argues that the horizontal and multilayered nature of radical social movement networks such as Dissent!, in tandem with its emphasis on autonomous politics, presents a significant obstacle in developing a consistent and unified media strategy because of the loose organisational

structure and competing ideologies within the network. Instead, Dissent! maintained a network-level strategy of abstention in line with the dominant ideology right up to and at the media event while a strategy of dual adaptation developed on a group-level from within Dissent! to work both within, around, and in tension with the dominant network strategy.

The Chapter draws on Dissent! movement documents including the Dissent! website, meeting minutes posted to an online discussion board, network publications, network listserv emails (particularly those from the media strategy listserv) and field notes gathered during the course of participant observation with Dissent!. To answer the research question the concept of “levels” (cf. Chapter 2) are used to analytically separate the policies and practices which relate to Dissent! as a whole which are referred to as the *network level*, and the *group-level* which is used to analyse the practices of the CounterSpin Collective, a group *within Dissent!*. While Dissent! was comprised of a number of groups (see: Chapter 1), attention in this Chapter is directed towards one group within Dissent! – the CounterSpin Collective (CSC) – as it was the CSC who emerged within Dissent! to take responsibility for managing mainstream media interaction.

This chapter primarily uses Rucht’s “Quadruple A” model to analyse and differentiate between different phases of media strategy development within Dissent! on a network and group level. Rucht’s model argues that social movements have four related and overlapping “reactions” to mainstream media interest: *abstention* where social movements withdraw from media interaction; *attack* where the media is heavily criticised; *adaptation* where steps are taken to

work mainstream media; and *alternatives* where social movement actors develop their own media (Rucht, 2004, p. 37). As disclosed in Chapter 2, although *alternatives* is a key component of Rucht's framework and important area of social movement research, the focus of this thesis is solely on the network's interactions with mainstream media and therefore *alternatives* are not analysed.

The majority of emphasis within this chapter is placed on the tensions between strategies of *abstention* and *adaptation* particularly between the network and group level so as to analyse the power dynamics *within* Dissent! as well as between the network and the media. The chapter shows how the CounterSpin Collective, a group within Dissent!, formed out of network-wide gatherings and developed a process of *dual adaptation* to navigate tensions between the network's normative orientation towards mainstream media and the desire of the CSC to manage media interaction. My analysis also contextualises the more detailed exploration of the media-oriented practices of the CounterSpin Collective (CSC) provided in Chapter 6, by tracing the group's evolution and educating the tensions it faced within Dissent!.

The chapter is structured chronologically beginning with the network's inaugural gathering through to its penultimate meeting just prior to the mobilisation. A list of dates and milestones is provided below in Table 3. The account herein is not exhaustive. Instead, it selectively draws upon and analyses key milestones within Dissent! – mostly network-wide gatherings – in order to analyse trends and transition within Dissent!. Moreover, what is being written about is something which did not evolve out of a single instance, but over time

and therefore the phases presented herein are analytical categories used to map the changes and tensions within Dissent!. With this caveat in mind, the process of establishing media strategies and the tensions this created between the various levels of Dissent! is viewed as a means to understand how mainstream media was planned for, managed and responded to by Dissent!.

Table 3: Dissent! Network convergences and media strategy phases

Dissent! Network Convergence & Media Strategy Phase	Dates	Group-level Strategy	Network-level Strategy
<u>PHASE 1: Network Abstention</u>		Abstention	Abstention
1st Network Convergence, Nottingham, England	29/11/2003 - 30/11/2003	Abstention	Abstention
2nd Network Convergence, Brighton, England	07/02/2004 - 08/02/2004	Abstention	Abstention
3rd Network Convergence, Manchester, England	24/05/2004 - 25/05/2004	Abstention	Abstention
4th Network Convergence, Bradford, England	03/07/2004 - 04/07/2004	Abstention	Abstention
5th Network Convergence, Edinburgh, Scotland	17/09/2004 - 19/09/2004	Abstention	Abstention
6th Network Convergence, Newcastle, England	04/12/2004 - 05/12/2004	Abstention	Abstention
<u>PHASE 2: Contemplating Adaptation</u>		Adaptation	Abstention
7th Network Convergence, Glasgow, Scotland	12/02/2005 - 13/02/2005	Adaptation	Abstention
<u>PHASE 3: Adaptation in Action</u>		Adaptation	Abstention
8th Network Convergence, Leeds, England	26/03/2005 - 27/03/2005	Adaptation	Abstention
9th Network Convergence, Festival of Dissent, Coalburn, Scotland	06/04/2005 - 10/04/2005	Adaptation	Abstention
<u>PHASE 4: Accommodating Adaptation</u>		Adaptation	Abstention
10th Network Convergence, Nottingham, England	21/05/2005 - 22/05/2005	Adaptation	Abstention
<u>PHASE 5: Abstention and Dual Adaptation</u>		Dual Adaptation	Abstention
11th Network Convergence, Glasgow, Scotland	04/06/2005 - 05/06/2005	Dual Adaptation	Abstention
Mobilisation in Scotland	28/06/2005-12/07/2005	Dual Adaptation	Abstention

5.1 Network Abstention: The Devolution of Media Strategy, From October 2003 to February 2004

Dissent! fits Anderson's characterisation of a "grassroots network" (a term used interchangeably and in the same spirit as autonomous or horizontal network) as a network which has no "fixed leadership; no recognisable hierarchical structure that characterises the more formally structured organisations...[and a tendency to] favour direct action" (Anderson, 2003, p. 125). Dissent! was a self-labelled anti-capitalist network whose politics was punctuated by an extreme sensitivity towards the "autonomy" of its members. Dissent! defined autonomy as follows:

Autonomy (autonomous, etc) is a political concept that suggests authority comes from below rather than above. It literally means self-legislation. Autonomy rejects the idea that leaders have power to decide what millions of individuals may or may not do. An autonomous community is one that makes its own decisions and creates its own laws (Dissent!, 2005c, p. 3).

The network's (theoretical) application of autonomy is an effort to actualise its "grassroots" politics by rejecting leadership and therefore a "hierarchical" structure. Despite this, a discernable organisation structure emerged facilitated by a series of Dissent! national meetings (discussed below) held over the course of the mobilisation. First, Dissent! was a national network largely containing its activities within UK borders. Second, the network adopted the PGA Hallmarks (Cf. Chapter 1) which framed the network as one that had an anti-capitalist orientation and embraced direct action to express this. Third, as discussed in Chapter 2, a number of working groups developed to field network-level specialised tasks. Lastly, while there were no formal leaders, some individuals were more connected than others and/or privy to more or sensitive information

creating an “informal leadership” (Trocchi, Redwolf, & Alamire, 2005, p. 66) based on breadth and/or depth of network knowledge as well as informal “friendship” networks.

Little documentation from Dissent!’s first meeting exists. However, a skeletal summary of the meeting minutes posted to an online discussion board reveals that the issue of a network “media policy” was discussed, if only briefly:

Our media policy until further discussion at the next meeting is:
ANYONE WHO CLAIMS TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THIS NETWORK IS LYING
(Enrager, 2003).

The fact the issue was flagged at the first meeting reflects the prominence and the degree to which network members, irrespective of their opinion about engagement with mainstream media, placed on the need to address the issue. A brief analysis of the media policy sheds light on the network’s normative orientation towards mainstream media. The policy is curtly worded and the use of “claim” coupled with the evocative verb “lying” implies a level of hostility towards media and suggests characteristics of an “attack” (Rucht, 2004, p. 37) orientation. This is reinforced by the fact that the media policy was one of only a few portions in the Nottingham summary text in capital letters and that the capitalisation of words online is often used for emphasis and can sometimes be taken as “yelling.”

By eliminating the possibility of media spokespeople, Dissent! can be seen as trying to “manage its visibility” (Thompson, 1995, pp. 134-140) by being unavailable; abstaining from interaction. Thus the hegemonic power of representation held by the media to represent Dissent! – its people and politics – is countered by refusing to comply with the standard and accepted practice of

providing spokespeople. As much as this move is an external reaction by Dissent! to the hegemonic power of media, it is also an *internal* reaction. Of course, Dissent!'s refusal to put forward spokespeople does not exclude it from representation but is an internal attempt to prevent the creation of activist celebrities or media leaders which would both disrupt and militate against the network's political desire for representational horizontality. This point will be returned to shortly.

The emphasis given to the media policy reflects the level of contention *within Dissent!* around the issue of interacting with mainstream media. Further evidence of this is presented in Section 5.5 as well as in Chapters 6 and 7 where CSC members are shown to feel apprehensive about their involvement with mainstream media due to the taboo nature of mainstream media interaction in Dissent! and radical social movement politics more generally. In her study of horizontal-style environmental networks – which were the predecessors of Dissent! – Anderson (2003, p. 126) acknowledged that media interaction is a contentious subject but fails to develop the point further.

The level of hostility shown towards interacting with mainstream media is significant as it reveals a hegemony of practice *within Dissent!* whereby there existed a network-level expectation that mainstream media interaction should be abstained from and, by extension seen as an enemy not to be fraternised with. This perspective of media had become part of the “common sense” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 323) of network politics and therefore incorporated into the way in which was expected to be practiced. With specific reference to the media strategy of

Dissent! and drawing on Rucht's "Quadruple A" framework, this orientation of the network is referred to as a *hegemony of abstention*. However, despite Dissent! being rooted in a hegemony of abstention, as this chapter argues, a group within Dissent! – the CounterSpin Collective – emerged to counter this internal network-level hegemonic practice.

The next Dissent! gathering was held between February 7th - 8th, 2004 in Brighton, England where the network had pledged to revisit its media policy⁴¹. The Brighton minutes state that "an important discussion about the issues of representation" took place guided by the question, "how can a decentralised network of autonomous groups represent itself in publicity and outreach tools (like the website or newsletter) and to the media?" (Enrager, 2004).

Unfortunately, meeting minutes only document items that the meeting reached consensus on. The media policy to emerge from Brighton read:

Anyone who claims to speak for the network is *still* lying. However, local groups are autonomous and therefore free to produce their own publicity, do media work or whatever. When talking about Dissent! it should be made clear that they cannot speak on behalf of the network (Enrager, 2004).

This agreement is grounded in the terse Nottingham media policy. Further, and in response to the issue of representing an autonomous and decentralised network, the meeting agreed on the following guideline:

Media/publicity: All presswork is done by local groups. Any network presswork is limited to statements agree [sic] on by a Dissent! gathering. The publicity group will try to write a text about Dissent! to be looked at by the next gathering. (Enrager, 2004)

⁴¹ While there was a higher level of documentation for the Dissent! gathering in Brighton than previous gatherings, the minutes only briefly survey issues raised and state positions where consensus was achieved. The minutes do not provide a detailed account of debates or discussion and instead mostly focus on outcomes.

This policy alludes to Dissent!'s response to a key network paradox: How can there be media representation of a decentralised autonomous network? Dissent!'s policy was described by CSC members as "self-imposed isolation" (CounterSpin Collective, 2005, p. 322) and can be categorised as a strategy of "abstention" (Rucht, 2004, p. 37); the avoidance of formal media interaction. However, a key feature of grassroots networks identified by Anderson (2003, p. 28) is a refusal to appoint media spokespeople. The founding media policy of Dissent! makes clear the network has no spokespeople, affirming Anderson's assertion. Initially Dissent!'s decision was linked, in part, to a view of Dissent! simply as a process – a mechanism to connect groups – and not the sum of its parts: a network. However, Dissent! developed into something more than a process and, as this chapter argues, despite maintaining a network-level policy of abstention, a group within Dissent! – the CSC – emerged to take responsibility for the network-wide management of mainstream media interaction.

As already argued, Dissent!'s rejection of spokespeople can be seen as part of deliberate *external* reaction to the power of media. Related and intimated above, the refusal to appoint spokespeople is linked to *internal tensions* between the network's interpretation of "autonomy" and its relation to the politics of media, power and representation. Dissent!, as discussed in Chapter 1, was founded on a principle of horizontality in an effort to prevent hierarchies of power within the network from forming. Spokespeople were seen as infringing on the "autonomy" of network members in two ways. First, spokespeople would have the symbolic power to represent the entire network without the explicit approval of all its

members therefore infringing on what can be termed as the *symbolic autonomy* of network members; their ability to represent themselves to the media.

Second, the move prohibiting network-level spokespeople sought to prevent individuals from becoming media celebrities as had happened with “Swampy” of the 1990s anti-roads movement (Caufield, 1997) and the student movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Gitlin, 1980). One interviewee described the Dissent! policy as a move, “to avoid the celebritisation [of activists and] to stop the creation of a division between leaders and led” (interview with Harry, 29/08/2005). In sum, the rejection of spokespeople was a political reaction towards the media’s power and its ability to generate hierarchies of representation and thus it can be read as a *counter-hegemonic media-oriented practice*, a tactic to try and prevent the media from manufacturing leaders. Even if this tactic was not successful in prohibiting the rise of activist celebrities, it can still be seen as attempting to adhere to Dissent!’s emphasis on horizontality and the desire to maintain equilibrium amongst members.

A number of interviewees commented on the media’s penchant for portraying individuals as leaders. This assertion was made by three interviewees based on first hand experience at previous political actions; the following quote from Megan is illustrative:

I would speak to the press, I would say ‘I’m not a spokesperson. I’m you know, I’m not a spokesperson for any group, for any website, for any organisation’ and then I’d open up the paper the next day and it’d be like “Megan, spokesperson for” and you’re like, ‘No I’m not.’ (Interview with Megan, 14/04/2005)

A frequent assertion made by interviewees, and also evident during fieldwork, was that mainstream media had a history of mislabelling activists who speak to

them as spokespeople or leaders. It was not uncommon to hear either first or second-hand accounts of this happening such as Megan's story. The perceived (and likely actual) propensity for media to mislabel activists reinforced a culture within Dissent! of prohibiting official spokespeople and was used, at least informally, to help justify its strategy of abstention.

It would be incorrect to classify Dissent!'s policy as one entirely of abstention. Paradoxically, the network afforded itself the latitude to issue press statements. However, statements could only be issued if agreed upon by consensus at a national gathering. The logic being that as national gatherings dealt with network-level issues such as organising a convergence space and planning actions, they also afforded an opportunity to craft and agree upon a network level statement by involving members across the network and therefore not imposing on members symbolic autonomy. That being said, given the geographically diverse nature of Dissent!, it was never possible or likely that all Dissent! members could attend a convergence and therefore have their views represented. This fact was acknowledged and accepted as an unavoidable limitation of the process.

In dismissing the idea of network-level spokespeople (though not statements), the mainstream media were positioned by Dissent! as something for geographically dispersed *local* groups to address and resolve as they pleased. This "abstention" (Rucht, 2004, p 37) from media engagement and its devolution to local groups was reaffirmed at the May 2004 Dissent! meeting in Manchester. The agreement differed little from the position taken in Brighton except for the

degree of detail provided. The policy was recorded in the “unofficial”⁴² minutes as:

Anyone who claims to speak on behalf of the Dissent! Network is lying. There is no press/media working group. Any network presswork is limited to written statements agreed on by a Dissent! gathering. The network is made up of many autonomous groups and individuals and, as such, no one can represent the views of the network as a whole.

However, local groups are autonomous and therefore free to produce their own publicity, do media work or whatever. When talking about Dissent! it should be made absolutely clear that they cannot speak on behalf of other groups in the network.

Remember, journalists can be (wilfully) very stupid about this. They will make people out to be spokespeople even if it is explicit that they are not. For this reason it was felt that it would be better if local groups did not chose to call themselves “Dissent!” (but of course there’s no copyright!!) because it could cause confusion about representation.
(ResistG8, 2004, emphasis in original)

The Manchester policy elaborates on the network’s previous position but keeps both the remit and implications the same. The network only communicates to the media via approved written statements endorsed by the network and published on its website. This policy offers insight on both Dissent!’s external relationship with mainstream media and the internal network dynamics around the issue of mainstream media interaction.

With respect to interacting with media, this move was a counter-hegemonic media-oriented practice by Dissent! to try and control its representation. Providing a limited, pre-approved text to the media was believed to make it harder, though not impossible, for the media to misrepresent what was printed. Moreover, if this did happen, the original document that statements were drawn from remained available for public view. Further, the written statement

⁴² Official minutes documenting the Manchester meeting were not distributed. However, someone did summarise the meeting and distributed those notes on the main Dissent! listserv.

replaces the spokesperson which attempts to counter the manufacturing of leaders.

To discuss the internal dynamics, it is helpful to return to the third paragraph from the minutes, the request – and it was *only* a request – for local groups not to publicly call themselves “Dissent!”. This is significant on two fronts. First, it illustrates an awareness of and sensitivity towards Dissent!’s media representation and the ability for the media to confuse (intentionally or not) a local group with the network. The call not to use the name “Dissent!” was an attempt to maintain a level of symbolic separation between the network – an aggregate of local groups – and the individuals and collectives who comprised Dissent!. This was rhetorically significant as Dissent! local groups across the United Kingdom remained “autonomous” and therefore able to interact with mainstream media as long as they only spoke on their own behalf.

Second, the bracketed comment which follows the request not to use the Dissent! name, “but of course there is no copyright!!” reflects an endemic network apprehension with infringing on the autonomy of network members. The statement could be crudely translated to read: “any group is free to do what they want” yet this is in immediate tension with the request not to use the Dissent! name. This contradiction captures an inherent network-wide apprehension within Dissent! where members did not want to be seen as trying to regulate – and therefore exercise power over – the actions of “autonomous” individuals. The tension generated around exerting political power internally over network members is at odds with an awareness of “media logic” (Altheide and Snow

1979) . That is, there is a realisation of the symbolic position and power wielded by media to misrepresent the network and therefore a desire to avoid or try and/or manage this, but to do so within Dissent!'s political boundaries.

Bradford hosted the next Dissent! network-wide gathering which was held between July 3rd - 4th, 2004. The meeting minutes log the following appeal: "local groups should consider... that the actions which they take will actually reflect on the network as a whole" (Dissent!, 2004b). This extract captures the awareness of Dissent! members to the process of mediation with the use of "actually reflect" illustrating a recognition of the symbolic power of media to draw upon the actions of individual Dissent! groups to construct a representation of the network. This concern echoes Fiske's (1994) assertion that the media's representation of an event or object can, for some, stand in for the real (unmediated) event or, in this case, object: Dissent!. The implication being that Dissent! could potentially acquire a collective media presence regardless of engaging in collective media work. Further, this (mis)representation, accurate or not, represents "the network as a whole" especially for those whose only contact with Dissent! is through mainstream media coverage. Finally, this assertion should also be recognised as an example of a "lay theory" of media – something which demonstrates a sensitivity towards the representation of Dissent! based on a perception of news routines and the implications of corporal action.

Despite these concerns, the Bradford meeting saw the continuation of a strategy of "abstention" (Rucht, 2004) on a network-level and displaced media responsibility to geographically dispersed and devolved local groups within it.

Further evidence of the policy of devolved and localised media interaction can be found by surveying the proposed network-wide logistics groups at the Bradford meeting. Of the twenty-two logistics groups (or tasks for existing logistic groups), the development of a mechanism for responding to/interacting with mainstream media was not listed (Dissent!, 2004b)⁴³. This omission is understandable as the media policy in Manchester empowered local groups to interact with media and explicitly stated that there is not a network-level working group. Further, the lack of media interest in Dissent! may have shelved the issue in favour of dealing with more “pragmatic” issues such as food, electricity and housing for the mobilisation.

The next convergence was held in Edinburgh, Scotland between September 17th -19th, 2004. However, the issue of mainstream media was not discussed formally in any of the sessions neither was it discussed at the subsequent meeting held in Newcastle from December 3rd - 5th, 2004⁴⁴. In fact, it would not be until seven months later, at Dissent!’s February 2005 gathering held in Glasgow, Scotland, that its media policy would be revisited.

⁴³ The following is the list of “suggested tasks for logistics groups” taken from the Bradford minutes. Items marked with a “*” denote “priority” items as identified in the minutes: Food; Transport; Accommodation/structures*; Meeting space*; Water; Entertainment; Information (logistical and action focussed); Communications; Trainings*; Kids - crèche, welfare and entertainment; Negotiators; Medical*; Convergence Centre; Power; Local convergences - stop off points; Translation systems; Legal support*; Access - disability and special needs; Borders monitoring; Cleaning up/recycling; ‘Berthas’- on site security; Fundraising (Dissent!, 2004b).

⁴⁴ The Newcastle gathering was the first national Dissent! meeting that I attended in person. However, I had attended previous Dissent! events such as the “Days of Dissent” activities run in parallel with the European Social Forum.

5.2 Contemplating Adaptation: From Local Geographies to Event-Oriented Logistics

The seventh Dissent! network-wide convergence was held between February 12th - 13th, 2005, in Glasgow, Scotland. Media-related discussions in Glasgow marked the beginning of a shift from viewing a media strategy as the primary responsibility of autonomous local groups to becoming a *logistical* issue impacting the whole network. In the two months between the Newcastle and Glasgow gatherings the Gleneagles G8 Summit had started to gain a presence in British media. A series of stories appeared – mainly in the Scottish press – speculating on the G8 Summit’s security protocols, protests and consequences (Gray, 2005; MacDonell & Gray, 2005; Macleod, 2005 ; Mcdougall, 2005).

Despite growing media attention, the issue of mainstream media was not on the original Glasgow agenda. However, at the request of a *local* group of Scottish activists who had been acting as an informal Scottish media collective and were inundated with media requests, a slot on the second day of the convergence was allocated to discuss creating the “Edinburgh and Glasgow Media Strategy Group.” This marked the first time in almost a year a formal discussion of mainstream media interaction occurred on a network level.

The founding of the media strategy group was grounded in Dissent!’s existing media policy prohibiting network spokespeople. To this end, the name given to the meeting, “Edinburgh and Glasgow Media Strategy Group”(EGMSG) deliberately emphasised the *local* focus of the group and the issue. Moreover, when the meeting was accepted as an amendment to the convergence agenda,

it was emphasised that the group should primarily involve local Scottish activists. This was an effort to continue the practice of devolved media responsibilities and maintain media as something of primary relevance to those in Scotland but could be assisted by interested Dissent! members. Moreover, this also alludes to power-dynamics *within* Dissent! and the internal hegemony of abstention by the emphasis placed on the *local* aspect of the EGMSG.

Officially, Dissent! maintained a network strategy of “abstention” (Rucht, 2004, p. 37) and the EGMSG, at least in name, attempted to position media as a local concern. The Edinburgh and Glasgow Media Strategy Group was initially established by a group of local activists to respond to negative news stories about Dissent!. Despite some network members’ feeling the media strategy group should consist primarily of Scottish activists, the meeting attracted approximately twenty people, the majority of whom resided outside of Scotland. The interest shown by individuals residing outside of Scotland but who wanted to be involved in media-related issues highlights a tension within the network between the hegemony of abstention and the beginnings of a strategy of adaptation. Thus, with the establishment of the EGMSG, the issue of mainstream media interaction went from being the responsibility of geographically stratified local collectives and became a network-wide *logistical* issue tackled by a territorialised media working group⁴⁵.

At the Glasgow meeting the EGMSG resolved to create a listserv for members – the media strategy listserv (MSL) – which facilitated the

⁴⁵The Dissent “Working, Task, Logistic and Action Group” defined working groups as, “groups of individuals working together on a specialised aspect of the organisational process” (Dissent!, 2006) and subsequently listed media as one of the network’s working groups.

deterritorialisation of the group by allowing members who lived outside of the geographic confines of Scotland to become involved in media issues. The listserv significantly altered the group dynamics and structure by allowing people who resided outside of Scotland to play an active role in managing mainstream media interaction (see: Chapter 6). The establishment of a EGMSG working group listserv reflects the beginning of a transition of media into a network-wide issue. Further evidence of this can be seen in the description of the MSL itself where its remit was described as follows:

This list aims to be a space for activists to exchange information, advice, ideas, contacts, etc with regards to dealing with the media (especially mainstream media) notably in the context of the anti G8 mobilisations. Use it to share your (good or bad) experience; what has worked or not when dealing with the media before; how to try and ensure we are not demonised/criminalised/exoticised[sic]; link to good and bad articles so that we can all keep a database of journalists to (maybe) trust and of those to (surely) ignore; etc. Please remember to use it well, i.e. let's keep it lively but don't spam each other! (media_strategy_against_g8, 2005)

The fact that the listserv encouraged activists to share their media experiences is significant as it positions the listserv as an outlet for sharing and a source for refining “lay theories of media” (C.f. Chapter 2). The text is also significant for its reference to the “demonization”, “criminalisation” and “exoticisation” of demonstrators which have a strong resonance with elements of newsworthiness as well as activist “perceived news scripts” both of which were discussed in Chapter 4.

The listserv is also clearly positioned as having an *event-orientation*; a space for all interested activists to discuss media related to the 2005 G8; geographic location is deprioritised. The ability for ICTs, and specifically listservs, to facilitate the coordination of social movement activities is well documented (Bennett, 2003a, 2003b; Cammaerts, 2005a, 2005b; Castells, 2000; Rheingold,

2002). Specific practices facilitated by the listserv will be analysed in Chapter 6. At present it is important recognise that the media group listserv allowed physically dispersed network members to collectively engage in the discussion about and monitoring and interacting with mainstream media regardless of geographic location. The Glasgow meeting signalled a turn towards adaptation at least on a group level; developing a system for managing the (unavoidable presence of) mass media – a strategy put into practice at the Festival of Dissent!.

5.3 Adaptation in Action: The Festival of Dissent

In the wake of the Glasgow meeting, Dissent! further developed – even if unwillingly – a media presence, especially in the Scottish press. Using the listserv born from the Glasgow gathering, the rise of both Dissent!'s media presence and that of the protests in general was monitored and discussed by listserv members. As with the Glasgow meeting, the Festival of Dissent (FoD) received media attention before, during and after the event. Coverage preceding the FoD was predominantly contained to Scottish tabloids where it was described by one journalist as a “boot camp for battle planning” (Caldwell, 2005). Following the Festival, *The Times* ran an exposé written by an undercover journalist under the headline “Inside the secret world of anarchists preparing for G8 summit” (Luck, 2005). The dramatic tone of the articles, likely intended to maximise newsworthiness at the expense of accuracy, illustrates the power of media to construct a representation of Dissent! that influences how the network and its political objectives are understood. The articles are just two examples of the “endless battle” (Castells, 1997, p. 360) Dissent! engaged externally with the

power of media and internally by trying to develop a media strategy against a network-level hegemony of abstention. The FoD marked a pivotal evolution in this struggle.

The FoD was held from April 6th-10th, in Coalburn, Scotland. The five day “festival” was a combination of workshops, training, working groups and network-wide meetings. An event specific working group – the “Media Response Team” (MRT) – was created to field mainstream media interest. Unlike the EGMSG founded in Glasgow which was, at least initially, conceived as geographically specific, the MRT was *event* specific. It was a specialised, delocalised group formed to manage media but *only during the Festival*. Its event-orientation meant that the “adaptive” group-level strategy did not compromise the network-level strategy of “abstention” but was in tension with it.

The decision to create the MRT came from a March Dissent! gathering held in Leeds (CounterSpin Collective, 2005). The MRT operated on a consensus basis (much like Dissent!), had a floating membership of between 10-15 people, and usually met once in the morning and once in the evening to assess the day’s media interest, coverage, and prepare individuals for interviews. The activities of the MRT also involved active media management. The Team set up a temporary FoD “media phone”(see: Chapter 6) publishing the telephone number on the Dissent! website and on the FoD press releases. They also organised a two hour window of “open hours” daily from April 7th to April 9th, whereby media could come to (but not on) the FoD site and expect to interview someone (offsite) about the Festival, Dissent!, and/or actions planed for

Gleneagles. In soliciting volunteers to speak with the media, there was a conscious effort by the MRT to limit the number of interviews each person did to conform to Dissent!'s network-level rejection of "spokespeople" and try and prevent the rise of activist celebrities.

The importance of the MRT at the Festival is evident in the FoD's paradoxical orientation towards media. While the FoD was presented as an activity open to anyone interested in G8 protests, it was explicitly closed to journalists. The barring of mainstream media on site was made clear in the initial Festival invitation sent to perspective participants:

In respect of the privacy of participants journalists are not welcome on site at this event. There is, however, a media response team who will try to respond to the press and arrange a space for people to meet with them outside of the festival site. (Dissent!, 2005f)

This position was reiterated in the "Festival Programme and Information" publication which stated unequivocally, "...journalists are not welcome on site" (Dissent! Festival Collective, 2005a, p. 3). This event policy was consistent with the dominant network-level orientation towards mainstream media which viewed it as both a threat and an enemy and therefore abstained from interaction. Incongruously, the no media-policy was also emphasised in the "notes to the editor" section of a *press release* announcing the Festival of Dissent:

The Festival of Dissent is not a media event, and in order to minimize disruption, we ask that journalists respect the privacy of those attending the festival. The Festival itself will not be open to the media. There will, however, be press reception available near to the site on Thurs-Sat, 7-9 April, 11am-1pm. (Dissent! Festival Collective, 2005b)

The press release was issued on behalf of Festival organisers and not Dissent! thus maintaining the network's veneer of "abstention" (Rucht, 2004, p. 37). There is a visible tension between the strategies of abstention and adaptation. On the one hand, there is a desire to avoid media by barring of journalists from the

Festival site yet this is juxtaposed by a strategy of adaptation by sending out a press release announcing the event and offering to provide media interviews. This contradiction captures internal tensions within Dissent! as to the position of mainstream media in the mobilisation.

The Festival of Dissent (FoD) represents a shift from abstention to adaptation punctuated by efforts to simultaneously attract yet counter media interest. The granting of interviews, albeit from a specialised collective and *not* the Dissent! network, also marks a shift away from abstention towards adaptation by interacting with journalists as opposed to simply issuing written statements. At the same time, the fact that interviews were held off-site illustrates that, on a network-level, Dissent! sought to remain closed to media.

Members of the MRT recognised that the prohibition of media on the Festival site presented an obstacle to media coverage. To remedy this, MRT members suggested a location where camera crews and photographers could get a view of the camp without entering it. The practice was believed by MRT members to have three advantages. First, it was seen as a way to physically contain the media by directing their attention away from the camp itself. Second, it was viewed as a way of trying to symbolically contain, or at least influence, the representation of the camp. Third, it was felt that journalists might interpret the recommendation as a gesture of goodwill which may positively influence network coverage. Combined, these efforts illustrate lay theories of how the media work in action and point towards the use of pseudo-professional skills in an effort to manage media.

Greater attention to the specific repertoire of media-oriented practices used by Dissent! is provided in Chapter 6. What is important to note at present is that at the Festival of Dissent! the network's media strategy continued to evolve, particularly in practice. While February's media strategy group discussed the need to solidify an approach to media, the MRT put a strategy of adaptation in action. Although the MRT was an event specific group, its members consisted largely of those already involved with the media strategy group and, as the next section will show, the activities carried out by the MRT were carried forward to the media group. Therefore, despite Dissent! maintaining a network level policy of abstention, the actions of the MRT together with the evolution of the media strategy group from a local to a network-level working group, is evidence of the emergence of network-wide adaptive media strategy in tension with an official policy of abstention. The next section illustrates the further enmeshing of an adaptive media strategy within Dissent!.

5.4 Accommodating Adaptation: The Rise of the CounterSpin Collective

The May Dissent! convergence was held in Nottingham from May 21st-22nd, 2005, where a decision was taken to establish a "rural convergence site" for activists to gather during the G8 Summit. Although a location had not yet been concretised, the network had committed to securing a site⁴⁶. Building on discussions at the FoD as well as the ongoing dialogue on the listserv, the Media

⁴⁶ According to some accounts, suitable camp sites had been located and a landlord had even agreed to provide the land, however police pressure led to various deals collapsing (see: Harvie et al. 2005).

Strategy Group met in Nottingham. In response to the commitment to a rural convergence site, consensus was reached by the media group to create a “media gazebo” to provide a designated space to manage media interest at the camp, the functioning of which is analysed in Chapter 7 as it focuses specifically on actions taken by the CSC in Scotland during the mobilisation.

The Nottingham meeting saw the renaming of the MSG – the name assumed at the Festival of Dissent – to the CounterSpin Collective (CSC). The name change is a significant occurrence in the evolution of a network-wide media strategy. The impetus for the name change emerged from discussions between group members on how to respond to media enquiries given that journalists often needed to affiliate an individual with a larger group. A challenge for the MSG was to prevent journalists from citing them as either network leaders or spokespeople to adhere to network policies. The proposed solution was for those who interacted with the media to explain their affiliation as being from “the CounterSpin Collective, part of the Dissent! Network.” The name was unanimously adopted. Group members felt it provided a descriptive name, yet a sufficiently subversive group identity, that would establish the Media Strategy Group as separate from but associated with Dissent!.

What's in a name? The CounterSpin Collective

Before analysing the shift in group practice marked by the group's rechristening, it is first worth discussing the name change. The “media strategy group” was a quite literal and functional name on par with other Dissent! working

groups such as “food” or “power” (see footnote 43, this chapter). CounterSpin Collective, on the other hand, was more playful and captures the group’s orientation to media and also reveals dual tensions faced by the group from outside and within Dissent!. First, the name CSC reflects a cynical view of media not dissimilar to those captured in Chapter 4, that there exists “spin” in the media both by the media themselves and by those who use the media (politicians, governments, corporations). The use of “counter” positions the group as engaging in a Gramscian counter-hegemonic practice. What is being challenged is the “spin” of both mainstream media, and “the system” (politicians, governments, corporations, the G8, etc.) for which spin was viewed as a central component. A similar critical perspective towards mainstream media may also be seen in the Indymedia slogan “Don’t hate the media, be the media” which encourages the uptake of a counter-hegemonic strategy to challenge the power of mainstream media through the use of different tactics.

The name CounterSpin Collective was also an effort to subvert, yet simultaneously appease, Dissent!’s internal hegemony of abstention by rhetorically positioning mainstream media as a hegemonic force that was being challenged (“countered”) as opposed to being worked with. For CSC members this had the advantage of blunting internal criticism of being media collaborators. Further, the name CounterSpin pits the media and other social actors who use the media as a common enemy of both the CSC and, by extension Dissent!. This has the effect of establishing the CSC as a group acting with mainstream media but only out of necessity and always in the best interests of Dissent!.

While the CSC name suggest an attempt to challenge the hegemony of mainstream media, it simultaneously captures an acceptance of the hegemonic logic of mainstream media and the logic of the way in which news is made (Altheide and Snow 1979; Gans, 1979, 2003; McChesney, 2000; Schudson, 1995). That is, the CSC did not just counter spin or counter the hegemonic practices of news media but, as Chapter 6 argues, they employed practices to spin their own actions to and through media. The name also accurately reflects the fact that the CSC deployed a predominantly reactive media strategy in responding to media coverage.

The Delocalisation and Formalisation of the CSC

The CSC name change marked a significant milestone in the evolution of Dissent!'s interaction with media⁴⁷. The implication of this is two fold. First, it illustrates the *delocalisation* of media management. Whereas the inaugural meeting of the media strategy group in Glasgow in February 2005 (and, in fact, the network's policy towards media before this) treated media as an issue to be left for local groups (but supported by network members), the CSC had evolved into a network *working group* of Dissent!. The concept of delocalisation is offered in juxtaposition to Dissent!'s emphasis on "local groups" which were primarily defined by geographic boundaries. Previously, as demonstrated by the Manchester policy, the media were viewed as a matter to be dealt with at the

⁴⁷ I am not suggesting there was an abrupt shift in the network's policy towards media at the Nottingham meeting. Instead, this evolution is viewed as a gradual process with the Nottingham meeting serving as a signpost for the changes taking place. Moreover, as decisions could only be taken at network gatherings, Nottingham was also a natural space for changes to surface.

discretion of the relevant local group. Dissent! working groups, on the other hand, were defined by the network as “groups of individuals working together on a specialised aspect of the organisational process” (Dissent!, 2006). By design, working groups were delocalised and consisted of geographically scattered individuals who worked together on a common project and stayed connected via ICTs and periodic face-to-face meetings. The rechristening of the “media strategy group” as the CounterSpin Collective marked the culmination of a process of delocalisation by establishing the CSC as a “specialised” network-level working group. The use of “specialisation” implies the development, refinement, and application of specialised practices which, in the case of the CSC, are analysed in Chapter 6.

Second, the renaming of the CSC also represents the *formalisation* of a network-level process for interacting with media. This claim is rooted in the argument that, as the CSC evolved, it developed into a dedicated and specialised group within Dissent! that took responsibility for managing mainstream media interactions. The description of the CounterSpin Collective as “formal” can, at first, appear counter intuitive. This is because the term was used in Chapter 2 to distinguish Dissent! from previous “formal” social movement organisations. Further, “formal” is often used to denote hierarchies of rules and structures while both the CSC and Dissent! claimed to operate in a non-hierarchical fashion. In the context of the current discussion, the use of formalisation reflects the evolution of a process which was initially the sole domain of local groups but developed into a network level issue with its own

framework (CSC) and protocols (both the Dissent! media policy and related practices of the CSC). However, a tension remained between the network's official policy of abstention and the CSC's strategy of adaptation.

The formalisation of the CSC as a network-level mechanism for fielding mainstream media is evident in two CSC resolutions adopted at the Nottingham Dissent! gathering. First, it was decided that the CSC would try and function as a media clearing house; collecting – *though not authoring* – press releases from Dissent! groups and distributing them to mainstream media. By positioning themselves in this manner the CSC was not impinging on the representational autonomy of groups within Dissent!, nor was it acting as spokespeople for Dissent!, and was therefore operating with network boundaries of abstention. Second, CSC members agreed that those who spoke to the media would not comment on actions they were not directly involved in. This policy sought to respect the representational autonomy of those conducting actions. There was an expectation within the network that this policy would not only be respected by CSC members but by everyone within Dissent!. Moreover, a more general expectation within Dissent! was that activists would not comment negatively to mainstream media on *any* activist actions.

This specific agreement and more general expectation elucidates internal power-dynamics within the network. In short, the agreement was a coded instruction for Dissent! members not to comment on the vandalism or property destruction caused by direct action as it is often picked up and described by the media as “violence.” Normative discourse with Dissent! dictated that to speak to

mainstream media condoning the violence would contribute towards a polarisation of “good protestors” and “bad protestors” within the media. Further, condoning the violence would cause a split in a fragile network. For this reason, the hegemony of practice was an expectation to restrict one’s representational autonomy within Dissent! – the ability to speak freely to the press – to portray solidarity externally.

This practice places its emphasis on the autonomy of individuals/groups to conduct physical actions over representational autonomy. A difficulty with the premise is a failure to consider that the physical actions of individuals/groups may have representational implications over others. This is particularly true given the dynamics of a media event where the physical is underwritten by the representational and becomes even more problematic when put in the context of McAdam’s (1996, p. 341) assertion that it is the actions taken by “insurgents”(radical activists) that make a “critically important contribution” to how the movement is framed. Yet, on a network-level, network norms dictated that prominence was given to the freedom to conduct acts of “physical” contention regardless of the representational consequences.

Spokesperson Avoidance – Dual Adaptation

Although a specialised process for fielding mainstream media interest developed from within Dissent!, the CSC did not (intentionally) seek to occupy a “spokesperson” role. Members of the CSC at the Nottingham meeting were cognisant of the limits imposed on them by the network’s ideological rejection of

“spokespeople” and sought to operate in such a fashion as to avoid being labelled – either by the media or individuals in the network – as spokespeople. At the same time, the group sought to adapt their activities to suit the demands of mainstream media. These tensions were navigated by a strategy or process of *dual adaptation*. This strategy is unpacked from the perspective of the CSC in Chapter 6 but is presented here to illustrate the tensions between the network’s hegemony of abstention and the CSC’s strategy of adaptation. This is best captured with an example.

At the Nottingham meeting in an initial effort to avoid the spokesperson conundrum, a CSC proposal was made for a hyper-consensus based system to field media queries. The suggested protocol asked CSC members to: 1) Collect the questions the enquiring journalist wished to have answered; 2) Author a short response to each; 3) Circulate the proposed responses on the CSC listserv for a time-sensitive discussion; 4) Upon consensus being reached or time running out, the individual would then contact the journalist with a reply.

The proposed scheme captures an extreme example of the strategy of dual adaptation suggested by the CSC by simultaneously trying to adapt their practice to fit within the political boundaries of Dissent! while simultaneously attempting to adopt practices that would allow them to manage media interest. The overcomplicated system was met with resistance. It was described as “unwieldy” by one participant while others felt that it might work prior to the mobilisation, but would not be feasible during the Summit due to time constraints and restricted computer access. In the end, the proposal was scrapped as it was

deemed to be incompatible with the media deadlines. Instead, the practice of forwarding individual media requests to the media listserv to be picked up by – preferably Scottish – listserv members continued. Despite dropping this over-complicated method, the CSC remained committed to acting as a hub – a media clearing house – for media. By taking this adaptive orientation towards media, the CSC further established itself as a specialised network resource for fielding media interest. Yet the CSC must be seen as not only trying to adapt its practices so as to best manage interest from mainstream media, but also adapting its actions so as to respect Dissent!'s prohibition of media “spokespeople” and network level media representatives. The specifics of just how this would be accomplished by the CSC and what exactly the network boundaries were that the CSC had to operate within were confirmed at the network’s penultimate meeting: the June 2005 Dissent! gathering in Glasgow.

5.5 Abstention and Dual Adaptation: The CounterSpin Collective and the “Final Media Policy”

The June Glasgow Dissent! gathering presented a final opportunity for network members to finalise details and differences in a face-to-face collective forum in advance of the mobilisation⁴⁸. The meeting served to clarify the role of the CSC within Dissent! and crystallise the network’s media policy. This section first outlines the agreed upon role of the CSC. Next, the network’s final media policy is presented and analysed.

⁴⁸ I was unable to attend the Glasgow meeting in person. Thus, the analysis of the meeting is taken from the minutes produced and corresponding media strategy listserv emails.

CSC, At Your Service

During the two weeks between the Nottingham and Glasgow gatherings, questions as to the remit of the CSC and “rules of engagement” were raised on the MSL. As a result, the issue of the CSC and media representation was flagged for discussion in Glasgow. The Glasgow minutes describe the CSC as serving two functions:

- 1) The group fields requests from the press for information. The group redirects questions from the press to an appropriate autonomous group or individual in the network. Press articles are posted to the (main?) email list so that affinity groups or individuals can respond if they wish.
- 2) Media group exists to facilitate the sharing of skills when it comes to dealing with the press. So that if and when autonomous groups or individuals wish to speak to the press they can contact the media group for advice.
(Dissent!, 2005d)

Dealing with the second point first, the CSC is positioned as a knowledge hub. A point for activist knowledge to converge and a hub from which it may be distributed to interested parties and therefore building on and spreading such knowledge. With respect to internal power dynamics, the CSC is presented as providing “advice” which can either be sought or not; accepted or rejected. The CSC is thus presented in a passive yet helpful manner that is not threatening to the representational autonomy of Dissent! or the groups within it.

The portrayal of the CSC in the first passage parallels the Nottingham vision of the CSC and projects the Collective as a conduit for information and a clearinghouse that facilitates interaction should activists wish to speak to media. A similar portrayal is given in an article reflecting on the 2005 G8 mobilisation where members of the CSC described the collective as “...a sort of ‘dating service’ for journalists and activists” (CounterSpin Collective, 2005, p. 324). Much

like offering “advice” is interpreted above as a passive, neutral act, the portrayal of the CSC as a “conduit” offers similar associations. This rhetorical move is a reaction to the hegemony of abstention within Dissent! and an attempt to adapt and operate within it.

Despite the portrayal of the CSC as a clearinghouse, prior to the Glasgow convergence the CSC was more active in media interaction than the above minutes suggest. The majority of media enquiries forwarded to the MSL were responded to by media strategy members. As a result, the CSC was not only working as a “dating service” to match up journalists with activists, but as the primary respondents to media enquiries; they were actually setting themselves up on “dates.” This did not violate the representational restrictions of Dissent! as those who contacted media did so on their volition as “autonomous individuals.” However, their connection with the CSC is clear and therefore these acts ascribe a much more active representational role to the CSC than is accredited to it. Further, it also brings into question the claim that media requests are redirected to an “appropriate” group as the practice of forwarding media requests to the listserv placed greater emphasis on *willingness* to speak to the media over appropriateness. This argument is reinforced by the obvious, though significant, point that the MSL was a self-selective collective that naturally excluded those with an aversion to interacting with media.

The claim of self-selectivity influencing group structure and membership could be made for participation in any working group. However, the functionality of the media group was also influenced by the policy-based representational

restrictions of the network (discussed below). Steps were taken in Nottingham and reaffirmed in Glasgow that sought to establish the Collective's role as a media hub – a conduit for information – in order to comply with Dissent!'s final media policy.

The Final Media Policy

Outlining the evolution of the CSC within Dissent! offers a significant contribution towards understanding the network's position towards media. However, Dissent!'s final media policy is also of interest. An exact date as to the concretisation of the network's media policy is not known. But, as Glasgow was the last meeting before the mobilisation, the media policy brought to the mobilisation is discussed at this point.

The network's media policy, published under the "Contact Us" section of the Dissent! website, was posted as follows:

Dissent! Media Policy

[1] Any network press releases are limited to written statements agreed on at the Dissent! gatherings. **[2]** However, local groups are autonomous and free to produce their own publicity and do media work, but only on behalf of themselves. **[3]** When talking about Dissent! it is to be made absolutely clear that we cannot speak on behalf of other groups and individuals in the network.

(Dissent!, 2005h, my numbering)

The first sentence establishes the boundaries of media work Dissent! was prepared to engage in on a network-level. This was limited to the production of "written statements", something carried forward from the February 2004 meeting in Brighton and brought with it the advantages of trying to control representation discussed earlier.

Autonomy and Abstention

Within the final media policy there is a clear tension between issues of autonomy and abstention. While the first component [1] of the network's media policy constricts the collective representations of the network, the second section [2] acknowledges the freedom of individuals and groups to both create their own media and interact with mainstream media. This is consistent with the network's view on the "autonomy" of individuals to decide on their own course of action. However, the third sentence [3] of the media policy anchors the latitude of interaction with media by offering a strong reminder of the limits of self-representation. The discursive footing of the third sentence and particularly the use of "we" in the following sentence is of note, "When talking about Dissent! it is to be made absolutely clear that we cannot speak on behalf of other groups and individuals in the network".

The aim of the third component of the media policy is to make clear – to those both in and outside of Dissent! – that network members can only speak to media on their own behalf. However, the use of "we" shifts the policy from an internal order to be followed by network members to an external proclamation of the representational constraints on network participants. This move prevents the policy from being directly viewed as encroaching on the autonomy of individuals by subjecting them to rules and therefore exercising power over members. By contrast, an alternative wording of the policy could have been: "When talking about Dissent! it is to be made absolutely clear that **[you]** cannot speak on behalf of other groups and individuals in the network." If the goal of this portion of the

media policy is to remind network members of their representational limits, the replacement of “we” with “you” achieves the same function in a more direct manner. However, instead of singling out members with “you,” the use of “we” presents the network as a unified whole whose members understand (and accept) their limits. Consequently, the strongly worded instruction, “it is to be made absolutely clear,” becomes less of a directive for internal regulation, and more of an outward statement targeted at an external public who may not be familiar with the concept of a “leaderless” and “spokespersonless” network.

Although the media policy does not, at first glance, appear to be a stern instruction issued to members, the statement does illuminate the hegemony of abstention within Dissent! and its resolute prohibition of network-level spokespeople. A number of interviewees, many of whom worked with the CSC, felt discussing working with mainstream media was a “sensitive” (interview with Claudia, 25/08/2005) issue within Dissent! due to the network’s roots in the radical environmental direct action movement. This was best captured by Darren who viewed the aversion to speaking to mainstream media as woven into the practice of radical politics of which Dissent! was a part:

In terms of the real direct action scene, there is this *savoir faire* of ‘you just don’t talk to the media. That is just the way it is.’... You don’t have to discuss it anymore, because everybody already knows it, because it has been discussed, presumably, a million times around... (Interview with Darren, 07/08/2005)

From this perspective, Dissent!’s media policy, which was effectively one of modified abstention, can be attributed to the network’s radical direct action roots. Moreover, it can also be seen as a powerful social norm which discouraged network-wide discussion and thus did not challenge the practice that had been

carried forward from past mobilisations. Consequently, the network-level position of abstention evident in Dissent!'s media policy, and arguably rooted in the network's 'savoir-faire' approach, set the boundaries for how media could be dealt with. However, as this chapter has shown and as the conclusion will reiterate, in tension with the official network policy the CSC, a group within Dissent!, deployed a double-barrelled strategy of *dual adaptation* that tried to adapt to the norms of both the network and the media in order to facilitate mainstream media interaction.

5.6 Chapter Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the evolution of the Dissent!'s network media strategy through the lens of Rucht's (2004) "Quadruple A framework". Although Rucht's framework proposes four overlapping, though related, media strategies, the two most prominent media strategies featured in this chapter were those of "abstention" and "adaptation" which were shown to be in tension throughout the network's evolution. "Alternatives", for reasons disclosed at the start of the chapter, was not discussed. Attack, on the other hand, can be seen as being folded into the strategies of abstention as the avoidance of media was shown to be premised on a critique of mainstream media, as was the strategy of adaptation. While both strategies held critiques of mainstream media, they differed in their orientation away from or towards the media.

Five phases in the evolution of Dissent!'s media strategy were analysed. While Dissent! was founded on and attempted to maintain an official strategy of "abstention", an 'informal' process of "adaptation" was shown to evolve leading to

the creation of the media strategy group and culminating in the CounterSpin Collective. As the Gleneagles G8 mobilisation drew nearer, media interest in Dissent! grew in tandem with local efforts to field media attention. This chapter argued that within Dissent! a hegemony of abstention existed which attempted to define the issue of media interaction as a local issue. Yet, as was shown, the “Edinburgh and Glasgow Media Strategy Group”, intended to be a local group, quickly became the “media strategy group” and eventually the CounterSpin Collective. This chapter then argued that this organic evolution of the CSC was significant on two fronts. First, it marked the transition of media interaction from a local group to a network-level working group, thus with this transformation came about the formalisation of a mechanism to field media interest. However this adaptive strategy of the CSC was in tension with the network-level policy of abstention. Second, and related, this tension was addressed by the CSC through a process of *dual adaptation* whereby it represented the emergence of a media strategy of “adaptation” that attempted to fit within the boundaries of Dissent!’s “horizontal” political model and the network-level hegemony of abstention.

The strategy employed by the CSC was clearly one of adaptation. The specific practices of the CSC are the focus of Chapter 6, but referring back to Rucht, more generally, the CSC can be seen as “a separate public relations unit that knows how to play the game with the established media” (Rucht, 2004, p. 37). This claim must not be overstated as the resources of the CSC were limited yet, as will be argued in Chapter 6, the CSC did devise and deploy a repertoire of media-oriented practices. While they may not have had all the resources or

strategies of a “professional” public relations unit, there was undoubtedly an effort to adapt to the media and “play the game” (Rucht, 2004, p. 37).

In discussing “adaptation”, Rucht’s emphasis is on how social movements adapt their practices to suit the mass media with an aim of positively influencing media output (Rucht, 2004, p. 37). What Rucht does not account for is how social movement groups or even networks may adapt their mainstream media practices to fall in line with their political ideology. This chapter has argued that within Dissent! there was a dual process of adaptation where not only did the group that became known as the CSC adapt its practices to suit the *external* needs of media as a means of countering its hegemonic power, it simultaneously modified its actions to adapt to internal hegemonies of power and the boundaries of political practice within Dissent!. To this end, the CSC projected itself as a “dating service” (CounterSpin Collective, 2005, p. 324) that matched media and activists so as not to impinge on the representational autonomy of network members. While this was achieved in theory, in practice a large number of CSC members did give interviews but did so as “individuals” thus technically within the political boundaries.

This chapter has analysed the network level politics of Dissent! and established the normative network-level boundaries of interacting with media. While the CounterSpin Collective has been discussed, this has primarily been done on a network-level to position the CSC within Dissent! and elucidate the tensions between the Collective and Dissent! and efforts within the CSC to resolve these. The next chapter continues the analysis of the CSC but moves

from a general overview of the evolution of a media strategy to a group-level analysis of the specific media-oriented practices devised and deployed before and at Gleneagles, as well as a critical reflection on the effectiveness and limitations of the process from the perspective of those involved.

Chapter 6: The CounterSpin Collective – Media-Oriented Practices and the Strategy of Dual Adaptation

This chapter is about media strategy and the specific media-oriented practices developed and deployed by Dissent! members in the build-up to and at, the media event that was the 2005 G8 Summit. This is achieved by unpacking the strategy of “adaptation” (Rucht, 2004) and of *dual adaptation* first analysed in Chapter 5, in order to discern the specific media-oriented practices developed and deployed by the CounterSpin Collective (CSC). The chapter is driven by sub-research question three which asks: *What are the media-oriented practices devised and deployed to manage mainstream news media interaction within Dissent! and specifically by the CounterSpin Collective in the lead up to and during a political media event and what are the implications of such practices?*

To answer this question this chapter analyses materials gathered during participant observation including field notes, website documents and listserv emails, particularly from the media strategy listserv. Transcripts produced from interviews conducted with Dissent! activists, and CSC members in particular, are used to analyse the activity of the Collective with an emphasis on interviewees’ reflections of the media-oriented practices debated, devised and deployed by the CSC. While drawing across individual interviews, the Chapter predominantly focuses on the *group-level* in order to analyse a group active within Dissent!: the CounterSpin Collective. Of interest are the CSC’s *direct media-oriented practices* which were defined in Chapter 2 as practices which dealt immediately with, involved, or were a reaction to media.

This chapter elucidates and reinforces an argument first made in Chapter 5 that, taken as a whole, the direct media-oriented practices of the CSC constitute a strategy of *dual adaptation*. It also analyses the ways in which such practices challenge, subvert and reinforce power dynamics *internally* within Dissent! as well as *externally* with relation to mainstream media and, by extension, formal political actors.

As argued in Chapter 2, the analysis of the CSC's media-oriented practices is based on an adaptation of Costanza-Chock (2003, p. 174-176) so as to develop three categories of direct media-oriented practice: 1) network facing, 2) research and 3) representation. *Network facing* practices were defined as practices, often facilitated by the use of ICTs, that engaged in communication between network members; *research* practices were those that involved the use of resources to gather information; *representation* were the panoply of practices that engaged in the construction, management and opposition of appearance in news media.

6.1 Media as a Site of Struggle? Understanding the CSC

Before analysing the media-oriented practices of the CSC, it is first important to consider why group members wanted to interact with mainstream media. The CSC members viewed media as a site of struggle on par and *in tandem* with more traditional, material, spaces of contention such as city streets. This perspective is captured well by Darren:

For me, mainstream media is just like any other social field, a field of struggle. The Summit protest actually is one of the crucial fields of struggle. We don't just want to leave it to that, so to speak, because the police talk to the media, you know. Bob Geldof

talks to the media, excessively so. If we don't, we lose a lot of the potential that is here in these global media spaces. (Interview with Darren, 07/08/2005)

Gregory offered a similar rationale commenting, "I just think it's kind of crazy not to engage with the mainstream media because they're going to say what they like about you and you should just at least try and have some kind of impact on it" (interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005). Interviewees affiliated with the CSC expressed the belief that a policy of non-interaction, such as Dissent!'s media policy (cf. Chapter 5), did not prevent media coverage but simply allowed others, particularly the authorities and political opponents, to dominate the media space, and represent Dissent! to forward their own agenda. This argument resonates with Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 125) who acknowledge the negative representational consequences of social movements refusing to speak to news media; silence speaks volumes. It also reflects academic assertions as to the central role of media, made by such academics as Castells (1997, p. 311) and Silverstone (2007, pp. 280-55), who view media representation as a contemporary field of struggle and conflict. While this is an established and accepted view amongst academics, its expression by "unprofessionals" (cf. Chapter 2) and particularly activists affiliated with a radical network that, as Chapter 5 argued, is premised on abstaining from mainstream media interaction, is significant. It indicates the beginnings of a shift in thinking by, at least some, radical social movement actors whereby mainstream media is no longer being seen only as an adversary to be avoided, but a field of struggle where adversaries still undoubtedly exist but must be engaged with.

The Gleneagles G8 Summit was seen by activists as a significant event on the media landscape and a “political opportunity” (Tarrow, 1998, p. 118). Tarrow (ibid) defines political opportunity as consisting of both a window for contention (an opportunity) as well as the recognition and seizure of the opportunity. In the words of one interviewee, the G8 was “too big of an opportunity not to [protest]” (interview with Scott, 22/09/2005). From Mary’s perspective the Gleneagles G8 Summit offered a “window of opportunity to get a message out to a much wider public” (interview with Mary, 08/07/2005). Implicit in Mary’s comment is a recognition of the G8 Summit as a news event; an opportunity with a capped media lifespan. The members of the CSC, like Dissent! more generally viewed the G8 Summit as an opportunity for contention and seized upon it. However it is the view of mainstream media as an opportunity, a site of struggle and therefore *something worth struggling over*, that differentiates the perspective of those in the CSC from the network-level orientation of Dissent!. With the media established as a site of struggle from the perspective of CSC members, attention now turns to the specific media-oriented practices used to engage in the struggle.

6.2 Digital Dissent!: CSC media-oriented practices in the build-up to the Gleneagles G8 Summit

A prominent theme characterising the media-oriented practices of the CounterSpin Collective prior to the mobilisation was a reliance upon information communication technologies (ICTs) which allowed CSC members to stay in contact, create online spaces for collaboration, and “extend” (Costanza-Chock,

2003, p. 174) offline activities. The single most important resource of the CSC prior to the mobilisation was the media strategy listserv for its ability to connect geographically dispersed group members therefore allowing media strategy to continue outside of bi-monthly face-to-face meetings.

Organising Online: A tale of two listservs

Although what became known as the CounterSpin Collective held a series of bi-monthly face-to-face meetings at Dissent! convergences, the majority of the work was done over the Internet and was facilitated by a listserv in particular which allowed the group to maintain their communications and activities (Cammaerts, 2007, p. 265). Whereas Chapter 5 presented a network-level analysis of the media group's primary listserv, this section presents a detailed analysis of how the listserv was used, what group activities were facilitated by and overlapped with it, and emphasises the vital link it played in keeping the group together in line with recent academic claims as to the impact of ICTs on social movement networks (Bennett, 2003a, 2003b; Cammaerts, 2005a, 2007; Castells, 2000, 2007; Fenton, 2008; Juris, 2005a).

The Media Strategy listserv (MSL) was created in mid-February 2005. From its inception, the MSL was envisioned as a space for dialogue as evident in its founding description⁴⁹:

This list aims to be space for activists to exchange information, advice, ideas, contacts, etc with regards to dealing with the media (especially mainstream media) notably in the context of the anti G8 mobilisations. Use it to share your (good or bad) experience; what has worked or not when dealing with the media before; how to try and ensure we are not

⁴⁹ The description could be found on the subscription page of the media strategy listserv and was published at the time of its creation in order to give potential members an understanding of the group and listserv's purpose.

demonised/criminalised/exoticised; link to good and bad articles so that we can all keep a database of journalists to (maybe) trust and of those to (surely) ignore; etc. Please remember to use it well, i.e. let's keep it lively but don't spam each other! (media_strategy_against_g8, 2005)

Although this paragraph avoids the word “discussion,” the text places a strong emphasis on creating a “space” to “exchange” and “share” information. This claim echoes past research into the use of electronic resources as “virtual extensions” (Diani, 2000, p. 392) of existing networks by offering the offline group an “online” area for dialogue. From this perspective, what is important is the way in which the listserv was used by CSC members for both online and offline activities.

Figure 10 provides an overview of the number of emails by month posted to the media strategy listserv. Initial uptake of the list was slow. However, from March 2005 until the mobilisation in Scotland at the end of June, the listserv had a high volume of traffic with a sharp drop after the mobilisation ended. The heavy traffic of the MSL stands in sharp contrast to the Media Response Listserv (discussed below) presented in Figure 11. Exact figures as to the number of subscribers on the media strategy list were not available, though membership is estimated at around 100 subscribers⁵⁰. Despite the large number of subscribers, a core group of about 20 people regularly contributed to the listserv. The April spike of activity on the media strategy listserv was due to planning for and reporting back from the Festival of Dissent!. Only two emails were sent to the

⁵⁰ The actual number of subscribers is something I neglected to track over time. As of September 2006 the listserv still had a total of 85 subscribers. However, the possibility exists that people may have more than one email address registered to the group. I, for one, had two emails subscribed to many listservs. Moreover, many people were in the habit of signing up for multiple listservs in order to keep current with working group activities but may not have actively contributed to the group itself.

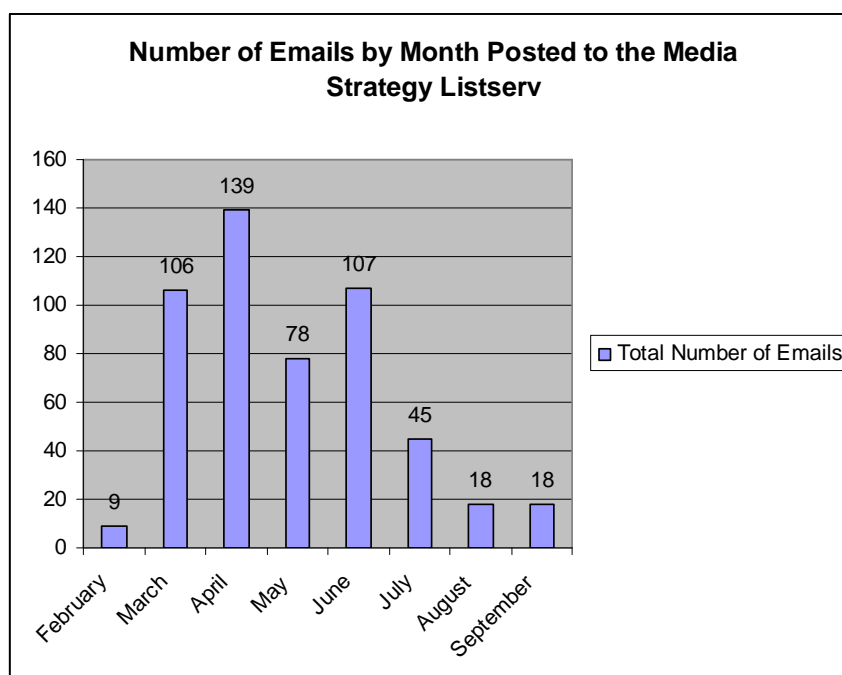


Figure 10: Graph of emails posted to the media strategy listserv

listserv during the Festival. During the April 2005 Festival of Dissent! concerns were expressed around the high number of emails sent to the MSL. Some members felt that the practice of distributing submitted letters to the editor (discussed below) on the media strategy list generated an unnecessary amount of email. A month later, a second listserv was created – the media response list – to provide a specific space for commenting on and posting letters to the editor.

The listserv was given the following mandate:

The g8 Media Response list is for a working group working on mainstream media coverage of autonomous g8 activity and getting positive messages in the media.

This is a high traffic list as we work collaboratively to a) respond to adverse media coverage and work on a response to this. b) proactively try to get our issues into the press, tv and radio. (g8 mediaresponse, 2005)

The media response list had a total of 63 subscribers; 25% fewer than the MSL⁵¹. Despite declarations of being a “high traffic list” and having a solid subscriber base, it was a complete failure. As shown in Figure 11, *a total of 12 emails were sent to the listserv over four months.*

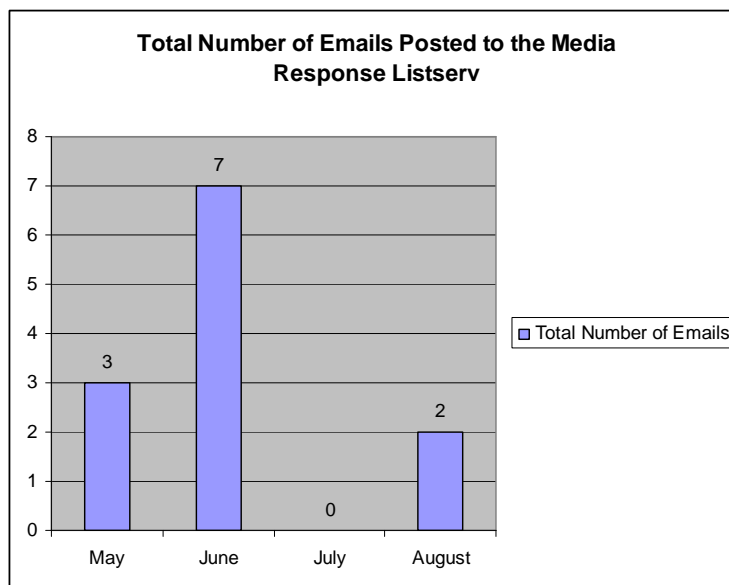


Figure 11: Graph of emails posted to the media response listserv

The media response listserv sought to offer a space associated with, but separate from, the MSL to conduct a specific activity: drafting, discussing and posting responses to media articles. This listserv failed. Its failure can, at least partially, be attributed to the dynamics of the CSC whereby no specific members were given the task of drafting media responses; it was something all group members were actively encouraged to do. This decision was taken as a result of

⁵¹ The number of subscribers was established in a similar way to the media strategy listserv. The individuals who posted on the media response listserv *were the same members who posted on the media strategy listserv.*

the internal power dynamics within Dissent! and the CSC in an effort to avoid the rise of spokespeople.

There are at least two possible explanations for the list's failure. First, and perhaps most simply, was listserv fatigue; members were already oversubscribed and media response was yet another listserv to monitor and reply to. Second, and more significant, if the primary "media strategy" email list is viewed as a collaborative virtual space for members to converge, the creation of a second "media strategy" listserv fragmented this space. While the goal of the second listserv was simply to reduce the flow of information, an unintended consequence was the fragmentation of the group's extended virtual space. Group members responded to this by practically ignoring the second listserv and continued the practice of drafting, discussing and disseminating media responses on the primary media strategy list in effect keeping a singular virtual space for the group.

The failure of the second listserv reaffirms past academic claims such as Castells (2000, 2007) and Bennett (2003a, 2003b) as to the important role of ICTs in facilitating group interaction by providing an online arena to do so. It also complements, and provides empirical evidence to reinforce a recent argument made by Fenton (2008) regarding the capacity of ICTs to "mediate" and maintain activist solidarity as the listserv provided a space for activists to stay in touch, focus on their task and undertake work as a collective. Attention will now turn towards the media-oriented practices facilitated, at least in part, by the listserv.

Unpacking Adaptation: Media-oriented Practices of the CSC

This section analyses the media-oriented practices of the CSC adapting Costanza-Chock's (2003, pp. 174-176) view of "conventional electronic contention" seen as tactics that strengthen and broaden conventional movement communications. Three umbrella categories are used: (1) Network-facing Communication, (2) Research, and (3) Representation. The practices within each are outlined below in Table 4.

Table 4: CSC media-oriented practices deployed prior to and at the G8 Gleneagles Summit

Thematic Grouping of Media Practices	Specific Practices Used By the CounterSpin Collective
1) Network-facing communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion• Announcement dissemination• Resource sharing• Request for information/support
2) Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Journalist background checks• Journalist contact list• Media monitoring
3) Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online presence (Website)• Contact email address• Letters to the Editor• Relaying press releases• Translating press releases• Media phone• Media skills training<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Press release writing-Role playing• Media open hour (Chapter 7)• Media gazebo (Chapter 7)• "Random" interview process• Accidental press conference• Activist action list

1) Network-facing communication

Network-facing communication practices were defined in Chapter 2 as practices, often facilitated by the use of ICTs, that engage in communication

between network members or affiliates, and while such communication could be intercepted by the media (or the authorities for that matter), it was not intended for them. The analysis of media strategy emails and fieldwork identified four specific network-facing practices: announcements, resource sharing, requests for information and/or support.

A large number of emails on the MSL were **announcements** which included information about demonstrations, public meetings and calls to action. These messages were not necessarily exclusive to the media group, but were disseminated across Dissent! working groups and wider activist networks. The list was also used to **share electronic resources** such as relevant websites or movement documents. The CSC distributed its meeting minutes through the listserv for validation (feedback, comments etc.), as a record of discussions and decisions, and to keep those unable to attend the meeting informed of group decisions and activities. Third, **requests for information and/or support** were sent to the listserv from both members of the CSC and from individuals and organisations affiliated with Dissent!. Requests varied from a search for volunteers to contact information for a group. Fourth, the MSL provided a platform for spatially-stratified CSC members to engage in *discussion*. The media strategy list was used to discuss and set meeting dates and locations for face-to-face CSC meetings as well as to propose and follow up items related to such meetings. In summary, the listserv helped maintain group focus, cohesiveness and solidarity.

2) Research

Research practices were those that involved the use of resources to gather information related to mainstream media in a systematic manner. Using the Internet to conduct research has become a standard practice in the conventional electronic repertoire of social movements (Costanza-Chock, 2003, p. 175). The CSC engaged in three media-specific research practices: A) Journalist background checks, B) Media contact list and C) Media monitoring.

A. Journalist background checks

This tactic was initially suggested at the Glasgow Dissent! Gathering in February 2005 and later reiterated on the media strategy list (this act itself an incidence of *resource sharing*). When a journalist would contact the CSC requesting an interview, CSC members would sometimes attempt to delve into the past of the journalist to assess if they were likely to be friend or foe (or “good journalists” versus “bad journalists” to invoke a dichotomy from Chapter 4). The background check was not complex; it simply involved using a search engine – often Google – to investigate the type of articles the journalist had previously written. Members were expected to share their findings.

In practice, the research process was simple and the feedback often not detailed. For example, in the case of a BBC Scotland journalist who contacted the media group, the feedback sent to the listserv consisted of an Internet link (via Google) to past articles along with the statement “all pretty standard stuff” (media_strategy_against_g8, 2005, p. 75). Meanwhile, a report-back from a different group member who researched a German journalist posted:

Just googled him: left-liberal, not a radical, but not terribly reactionary either: but definitely noone [sic] i'd trust too much. (media_strategy_against_g8, 2005, p. 369)

The tactic was used sparingly with only three recorded instances yet discussions of the tactic were noted during fieldwork. Nonetheless, it reflects a critical and reflexive orientation towards mainstream media that views media as a site of struggle and journalist background checks as a strategy for trying to control or at least manage the symbolic power of media. In the spirit of Sun Tzu (1910) and at the risk of cliché, it represents a strategy of “know your enemy” and “knowledge is power” via an attempt to prepare for symbolic battle by familiarising themselves with potential “enemies.”

B. Media contact list

Every journalist who contacted the CSC had their details recorded in a spreadsheet as part of a collective effort to generate a media contact list. Initially called the “anarchist press agency”, the initiative began in April 2005, when a CSC member forwarded the contact information of a collection of British newspapers gathered online to the listserv in order to create a base for a working “media list”. Group members then gathered similar lists from regional Dissent! groups and past mobilisations both within and outside of the United Kingdom including international language-specific lists from Spain, Italy and Germany. In short, CSC members tapped existing resources and networks in order to make the journalist list as robust as possible.

The task was carried out by multiple CSC members resulting in a number of scattered files and emails. In order to consolidate and systematise the information collected, a computerised spreadsheet was created and saved to a

password protected file stored on a web-based email account. The location of the file and the password were made available upon request to any CSC member or any group who wished to contact the media. However, as argued later in this chapter, the CSC also developed a specialised “friendly” journalist list who were afforded preferential information.

The practice of compiling and maintaining the media contact list is an exemplary instance of the use of ICTs for collaboration between group members and information sharing. Moreover, the fact that lists were acquired from Dissent! local groups, other international networks and from past mobilisations not only highlights the sharing of resources *between* social movement organisations and the ease with which this can be undertaken, but also that it *is a tactic that had been done in the past*. This is significant as it stands as further evidence of the incorporation of this “professional” strategy for interacting with media into a “lay theory of media” for managing media and the existence of such knowledge. By preparing a multi-lingual international media distribution in advance of the event, activists are displaying an awareness of the logic of media and of news production (Altheide and Snow 1979; Gans, 1979; Schlesinger 1978) and what steps are necessary to get their message in, or at least to, the media and a desire to conform to such demands. There is also a link with the staging of media events. Dayan and Katz (1992, p. 9) argue that media events are pre-planned with prior notice given by the organisers to the media. The preparation of a mechanism to distribute press releases to “advertise” Dissent! actions

reinforces my argument that social movement actors were sensitive to needs, demands and expectations of media.

C. Media monitoring

The primary motivation for creating the media strategy listserv was to provide a platform to assist group members in monitoring and responding to relevant mainstream media coverage. The gathering and reflexive monitoring of media demonstrates the CSC's orientation to the media both as an environment and as field of struggle as argued in Section 6.1. It also positions mainstream media as something to be monitored for both defensive and offensive purposes in order to elucidate and then try and influence the way in which the network, its political claims and planned actions were both represented *by* news media, and *through media* by competing social actors such as politicians and police. Media monitoring also allowed CSC members to assess, and therefore try and prepare for and even influence through representational activities (see below), the media environment (in terms of the receptivity of various outlets), the political environment (the receptivity of various politicians) and gauge the security environment (the response of authorities) activists faced in Scotland.

The task of media monitoring began without any formal structure; individuals simply forwarded relevant articles to the listserv. In early March 2005, efforts were made to formalise the process:

...[there is a] need to divide responsibility with monitoring mainstream media, for at least the 34 of us on the media e-mail list. [Member] will try in the next week to make a list of the top 15-20 print media outlets. We can try to get individuals or local groups to "adopt a paper." This has obvious advantages, I don't need to explain why, right? We were thinking that it might be best to have a web-page with this list of papers and those adopting them. The page could ask for volunteers to adopt papers not yet covered. This

would help with recruitment of needed volunteers for media work.
(media_strategy_against_g8, 2005, p. 26)

The move to “adopt a newspaper” was an attempt to formalise the online monitoring process to increase the reach and impact of the group. With more bodies, a wider net could be cast to monitor “top” media outlets.

The same day as the “adopt a paper” proposal, the following request for media monitoring support was distributed to a collection of international activist listservs within and outside of Dissent!;

We are actively working on responding to the media and keeping track of both shit articles and responses but we need more people ... If you see an article that is bias and generalizing all protestors as mindless people (for example), in any news paper, post it to this list with the author, name of the news agents, contact details (or link) of person or group to send replies to + reply to it yourself and send us a copy... This only takes 15 minutes of your time. (media_strategy_against_g8, 2005, p. 25)

This request demonstrates how electronic resources such as email listservs were used by the CSC (as well as other groups within Dissent!) as a means to recruit support which could be given irrespective of geographic location. The majority of media group members, with few exceptions, resided outside of Scotland in countries such as England, France, Germany, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales yet the majority of media monitored were Scottish. This was possible as the task of media monitoring relied almost exclusively on the Internet. This is significant as it illustrates, as Bennett (2003a) has argued, that ICTs can connect a group of geographically disparate people who wish to focus on a specific issue, and allow them to undertake a task that would not be possible without the Internet.

The objective of the “adopt a paper” tactic was to try and harness the vast amount of information available on the Internet while distributing work amongst

group members to monitor – in order to react to – mainstream media coverage.

Nonetheless, the proposed method was still labour-intensive requiring each member to manually monitor a newspaper. In February 2005, a month prior to the “adopt a newspaper” suggestion, an email was sent to the main Dissent! listserv (Resistg82005) sharing with members a new tactic to monitor news:

Google Alerts. Google Alerts is a free service offered by Google allowing users to receive automatic news updates via email based on user customised settings

(Google, n.d.). The original post to ResistG8 listserv was as follows:

Following an impromptu workshop on dealing with the media on sunday night we agreed that it is useful to have a way to monitor mainstream media's bullshit stories. thanks for the ones that are posted to this list. But the easiest way to do this is a service through google called news alert. you put in the words you want to search for and google sends you a digest once a day or whatever you choose. e.g. scotland g8 dissent or climate change or whatever. go to google, go to news, do a search and then you will have the option of receiving a media alert for all world media on that each day in one email. a good way to keep up with the mainstream media opinion without having to engage with it. brilliant. (Sweeney, 2005)

This email is an excellent example of using the Internet as a “vehicle of diffusion”

(Tarrow, 2005, pp. 51-52) meaning, a means to distribute and share knowledge

and/or information. Of note, soon after its dissemination on the listserv, the

Google Alert media monitoring tactic was also mentioned in the February 2005

edition of *SchNews*, a Brighton based activist paper and online zine (SchNews,

2005). The sharing of such information between activists and between movement

publications reinforces the role of new media and alternative media in diffusing

new forms of activist practice (Tarrow, 2005, pp. 51-52). It also provides

evidence of how a common knowledge around the practices of mainstream

media-oriented practice is built up, diffused and built upon through activist

networks.

The disjuncture and lag between posting the Google Alerts tactic on Dissent!'s main listserv and the media strategy listserv also highlights a disconnect in internal network communication as it was not initially forwarded to, or picked up by the media group. Instead, it was only *after* the awkward “adopt a paper” approach was discussed, that the Google Alerts tactic was proposed the following day. This demonstrates that the diffusion of a tactic over the Internet – in this case a listserv – does not guarantee its adoption, at least immediately. However, once suggested on the listserv, uptake was very quick and, from that point forward, Google Alerts became the primary if not sole mechanism used by the CSC to monitor media. This tactic also reduced the need for formal monitoring as group members let the search engine to do the work for them.

3) Representation

The category of “representation” was suggested by Costanza-Chock (2003, p. 175), however he uses the term in a very narrow fashion to essentially refer to websites (c.f. Chapter 2). Representation in the context of this thesis is theorised on a broader level to capture not only the creation and maintenance of an online presence (website) but is defined as the use of resources both online and offline to either directly or indirectly attempt to influence and/or manage interactions with and ultimately representation in news media. Representational practices are about power; how the symbolic power of mainstream media and competing political actors is understood, managed, countered, struggled with, over and through. Analysis of CSC media-oriented practices revealed a collection of seven representational-media practices, the majority of which were facilitated

by the media strategy listserv. However for two practices, the media phone and skills training workshop, the listserv played a more indirect role serving as a space to discuss the practice, in the case of the media phone, or announce and feedback from it in the case of skills training. What all the representational practices do share is the fact that they were all concerned with trying to influence the representation of Dissent! in the media in one way or another.

An Online Presence

The CSC did not have its own website. Instead, limited information about the group was provided on the primary Dissent! website in two separate locations. First, under the “Working Task and Action Groups” (Dissent!, 2005j) section a link was provided to subscribe to the MSL (media_strategy_against_g8, 2005). The CSC was also mentioned on Dissent!’s “media policy” (Dissent!, 2005h) webpage as a possible means for journalists to secure interviews with Dissent! members. To this end, a CSC-specific contact email address was provided (discussed below). All press releases relayed by the CSC were also made available on the Dissent! website.

CSC Contact Email Address

Information about the CSC on the Dissent! website was extremely limited yet sufficient to direct media to a contact email address. The email account, created using a free web-based email service (initially Riseup.net and later Care2.com), allowed news media to submit requests for interviews and

information. The email account was monitored by CSC members who would respond to incoming requests and, if necessary, forward the request to the listserv. The practice illustrates how free web-based resources may be capitalised on by a resource-weak collective to facilitate interaction with mainstream media. It also demonstrates a recognition by CSC members of media interest in the network and, more importantly, a desire to accommodate such interest. This move is consistent with the driving logic of the CSC that it was better to play by the logic of news media by opening a channel for communication than remaining closed to them.

A. Letters to the Editor

The submission of letters to the editor by CSC members was done in tandem with the practice of “media monitoring” (see above). In practice, letters to the editor were not sent by the CSC but by its individual members in order to respect Dissent!’s media policy prohibiting the use of spokespeople and, from this perspective, represents an early instance of “dual adaptation”(cf. Chapter 5) by trying to deal with a representational issue, but doing so within the political boundaries of Dissent!.

The practice was reactive. When a story was distributed on the media strategy listserv (MSL) that was deemed to be unbalanced, misleading, or derogatory, a call was made for letters to the editor to be sent. Conscious of the logic of news media, multiple responses were encouraged in order to amplify the level of visible displeasure in the hope of increasing the chances of something being published. In total, 14 separate letters were sent by eight members of the

CSC to the listserv and onto media outlets, the analysis of which is presented in Table 5.

Four members reported sending one letter each; two members sent a pair, and one member sent four letters. Given that the listserv had over 80 email addresses subscribed to it, only about 10% of subscribers reported sending a letter. While this number is extremely low, it highlights the fact that despite there being a large number of subscribers, the majority of the work was done by only a handful of members⁵². With respect to when the letters were sent, *all* but two were emailed in reaction to articles published *before* the 2005 G8 mobilisation and there were *no* letters to the editor distributed during or after the mobilisation.

Table 5: Overview of letters to the editor submitted by CSC members

Month (2005) Letter Submitted to Newspaper	Number of Letters Submitted by Month	Type of Letter Submitted by CSC to Newspaper		
		Request for Information	Issue Critique	Critique for Sexing- up Article
March	6	0	1	5
April	5	1	0	4
May	1	0	1	0
June	2	0	0	2
July	0	0	0	0
Total	14	1	2	11

Three types of letters were sent by CSC members. First was a request to publish Dissent!'s contact information when the network was written about.

⁵² This is not to suggest that people who did not send letters did not contribute to the group. However it does draw attention to the disparity between the large number of subscribers and those taking action. This observation was also confirmed during fieldwork both for the media group and Dissent! more generally. In both cases there was a clear core of individuals working towards the mobilisation.

Second were two issue-related critique letters, one which critiqued the neoliberal ideology of the World Bank, and the second lamenting the lack of critical analysis towards the MPH campaign.

The majority of letters (11) were reactions to the “sexing-up” of news stories by emphasising the potential of “violence”, “chaos” and “riots” to be conducted by the “extremist” organisation Dissent!, most of which appeared in the Scottish press between March and April, 2005. The headlines for some of the articles included: “Anarchy at the G8” (L. McDougall, 2005), “Protestors in city chaos pledge” (Walsh, 2005), “Anarchists mass for 'boot camp' battle planning” (Caldwell, 2005); “Inside the secret world of anarchists preparing for G8 summit” (Luck, 2005); “Extremists in 'war summit' to plot G8 protest violence” (Mooney, 2005); “Ready for a riot?” (McLeod, 2005).⁵³

Only two letters sent were published both of which were responses to articles which “sexed up” protest coverage. Despite the lack of success, the letters to the editor practice, through its discussion on the listserv, stands as an example of diffusion (Tarrow, 2005, pp. 51-2) and demonstrates how ICTs can inform social actors that a tactic is possible, instruct them how to do it and ultimately spread its use. Further, the fact the CSC undertook the task of letter writing, effectively as a collective activity, transformed the practice into a pseudo-professional lobbying tactic that used a processes provided by news media to try and influence the representation of the network.

⁵³ It is interesting to note the strong resemblance between the “activist news scripts” of “anarchist violence” discussed in Chapter 5 and these media headlines.

C. Press Releases: Relaying and Translating

The CounterSpin Collective did not write press releases but instead encouraged groups to create their own and provided the advice and resources to do so (see: Media Skills). They also offered to relay press releases to news media on behalf of Dissent! groups, a move which was part of its strategy of dual adaptation. Although the CSC was restrained by network politics from drafting and disseminating statements on behalf of Dissent!, they were able to assist groups within Dissent! who wished to get media access.

The initial strategy for dissemination was to use a broadcast listserv – one that allowed messages to be sent out, but not replied to – that journalists could sign-up to. This list was created but was not used. Instead, a web-based email account – the same account discussed above as the “CSC contact email address” – was used and press releases were emailed to journalists on the “media contact list” (see above). Press releases were also made available for public download on the Dissent! webpage. The bulk of the press releases (7) were distributed by the CSC in June 2005 at the cusp of the mobilisation and addressed events such as the opening of Hori-Zone (see Chapter 7) as well as the planned protest actions of groups connected to Dissent!.

Press releases were not only in English, but were often made available in more than one language thanks to a team of volunteer translators. In total there were around 20 people who translated press releases into seven languages: French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish and Russian. The process was ad hoc, but effective. A member within the CSC would volunteer to

spearhead a language and when an English press release was sent to the listserv, it would be his/her responsibility to forward the document to the translator, many of whom offered their services remotely as they were not at the physical mobilisation in Scotland. Once translated, the press release was emailed back to the coordinating CSC member, who would then post the completed text to the listserv, where it would then be picked up and sent to the appropriate language journalist list. The translation of press releases into multiple languages and subsequent distribution via multiple language lists captures the use of internal network resources (people and technology) in an effort to magnify its external symbolic power through increased visibility in the media by increasing the breadth of its message distribution.

Without the availability of ICTs, the gathering, relaying and translating of press releases would not have happened. Electronic resources were central to this media-oriented practice and facilitated the internal distribution of press releases between activist groups, between activist translators, as well as distribution to the media. Significant for this thesis is not just the facilitatory role of ICTs but also the fact that this process was part of a larger and calculated media strategy by CSC that militated against the hegemony of abstention within Dissent! while embracing and playing to the “media logic” (Altheide and Snow 1979) of news media.

C. Media Skills Workshop – Festival of Dissent!

A series of media skills workshops were arranged by an Irish collective associated with Dissent! who dealt with media during the 2004 May Day protests

in Dublin and had become involved in the CounterSpin Collective. The most prominent seminar was held during the Festival of Dissent (cf. Chapter 5) which was advertised in advance across multiple activist listservs. The session was described in the Festival guide as follows:

This workshop will go over all the basics needed to work with mainstream national, local and community media as part of an overall Communications Strategy for both the G8 and other campaigns. Issues discussed will include dealing with journalists, how to write a press release that will get replied to and how to do press conferences and publicise events. We will do role-plays of interviews with hostile journalists - "Why are you planning to destroy Edinburgh?". Together we'll work on the basic skills we need to take on the media empire, and much more! (Dissent!, 2005k)

Around 300 people attended the Festival but only 20 people attended the 90-minute workshop. One possible explanation for the low attendance is the limited appeal of mainstream media interaction and the contentious nature of the topic within Dissent!. A related explanation is that the parallel sessions competing with the Media Skills workshop all focussed on conducting protests in Scotland such as: Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) training, a Direct Action Workshop, Hill Walking as well as Scottish Law and Police Tactics. These sessions focussed on undertaking direct action in Scotland as opposed to speaking to the media about it.

The media skills workshop was divided into two components, the first of which discussed how to write a press release. The talk was accompanied by a two-page handout that had tips on writing a press release, including notes on the length, layout and format, as well as who, when and where to send it (see Appendix 7). The second half dealt with how to handle interviews in a hostile media environment and opened with the distribution of a sample "media briefing" document drafted for the Dublin May Day that contained a series of 33

hypothetical questions asked by the media and the proposed responses (see Appendix 7). The purpose of this was two-fold. First, to provide a framework for activists to think about how to respond to similar G8-related questions. Second, it was argued that the text could be modified into a Dissent! brief and given to media.

The group then conducted an exercise where workshop participants were divided into groups of three to role-play being: an observer, a journalist and a protestor. The goal was for the “journalist” to think up the hardest question possible while the activist tried to respond. The exercise sought to provide participants with practice responding to tough questions under pressure. The session closed with a review of interview tips such as staying on message and being prepared for journalists to drop tough questions at the end of an interview after they have already established a rapport.

There is a clear link between the training workshop and the activities of the FoD “media response team”, the group responsible for fielding media coverage at the FoD. As argued in Chapter 5, the media response team used role playing to prepare themselves for Festival-related interviews. This practice was also being perpetuated at the FoD media training workshop. Part of the explanation for this rests in the overlap between those running the training and working on the MRT. Nonetheless, it situates interview preparation by role-playing as something that was not just preached, but also practiced and therefore firmly in the group’s repertoire of media-oriented practices.

The placement of media skills along side other direct action workshops represents, I argue, a move toward viewing mainstream media as its own “action” that, like the “direct action” sessions, requires training in order to distribute the knowledge about (lay theories) and specific skills (practices) related to mainstream media in order to increase the effectiveness of the action. It also indicates that mainstream media interaction has become, or at least is becoming, folded into the general repertoire and common knowledge of activist practice. This common knowledge is a recognition – or at least a perceived understanding in the form of lay theories – of the hegemonic logic of news media and an acceptance of this logic as means to influence the representation of Dissent! (the network and its politics) in the media. Lastly, the training is significant as it was based on a desire to share skills and knowledge from past experience with media and therefore is a clear example of the diffusion of knowledge about the logics of mainstream media between both events and networks.

D. Media Phone

The concept behind the media phone was simple: to make a dedicated telephone number to the CSC available to the media. The initiative was undertaken by the “media response team” at the April 2005 Festival of Dissent! where a Pay As You Go mobile was donated by a team member as a means for media to make contact during the Festival. At the close of the Festival it was decided to keep the number active and, from this point forward, the media phone became one of the primary means (along with email) for journalists to contact Dissent!. This had two implications. First, the creation and maintenance of a line

of communication between the CSC and mainstream media is a recognition of logic of news media and the need to be available to the media. Second, as with any interaction with the media on the part of Dissent!, issues of representation needed to be treaded carefully to respect the network's hegemony of abstention.

While the phone number allowed journalists to contact a member of Dissent!, it did not reach a Dissent! spokesperson as the network had no spokespeople. To navigate the network's internal politics of representation but still be able to speak with the media, CSC members answered the phone as individuals who were speaking from their own perspective and not as network spokespeople. This move exploited the loophole in Dissent!'s media policy discussed in Chapter 5 that allowed "autonomous" groups and individuals to speak to the press. Conceptualising the media phone in this way places the media-oriented practice as part of the CSC's strategy of dual adaptation. It adapts to the hegemonic logic of news media by making some Dissent! members available to the media but does so in such a way as to adhere to the representational limits of the network implicit in its hegemony of abstention.

In theory, the responsibility of answering the Dissent! media phone was supposed to be shared amongst members on a rotating basis to distribute responsibility. In practice, the phone was shared primarily between two people from early-April until mid-June due to a lack of volunteers. Despite the lack of individuals willing to staff the phone, there was not a lack of media calling. One member described the experience of having the phone as all encompassing, stating "...I am 'on-call' every minute of the waking day and answering the

phone” (Kirkpatrick, 2005). The significance of the media phone rests in its status as one of the only ways someone from Dissent! could be contacted by media (at least prior to the mobilisation). The practice was one that wholeheartedly complied with, and was explicitly conceptualised to suit, the hegemonic logic of the 24-hour news cycle by effectively placing CSC members “on-call” to the news media. From the CSC’s perspective, the creation and maintenance of this channel of communication was a key practice for trying to influence their representation by making themselves available to the media as opposed to abstaining from interaction. The media phone was not just used prior to the mobilisation but also in Scotland as well, as the next section argues.

6.3 Offline and On the Ground: CSC Media-oriented Practices at Gleneagles and the Strategy of Dual Adaptation

Dissent! activities in Scotland began the last week of June, but the opening of the Hori-Zone Camp in Stirling, Scotland on July 1st, 2005 signalled the start of the major mobilisation⁵⁴. The Hori-Zone camp was the primary hub of CSC activity during the 2005 G8. It was also the primary location for fieldwork during the mobilisation and thus the media-oriented practices analysed in this section are those deployed from Hori-Zone. This section analyses four CSC direct media-oriented practices all of which dealt with representation – managing Dissent!’s appearance in the media – deployed as part of the CSC’s strategy of

⁵⁴ For a full list of activities in Scotland at the Gleneagles G8 Summit see Appendix 2.

dual adaptation. First, however, the work of the CSC at Hori-Zone will be contextualised by one of its defining features: the lack of Internet access.

Lack of Internet Access

As shown earlier, there was a dramatic drop in listserv activity once the mobilisation began. One reason for this was the difficulty of finding regular Internet access during the demonstrations. Internet access was provided at the Independent Media Centre (IMC) in Edinburgh and at the Hori-Zone camp but its resources were technically only to be used for writing IMC news⁵⁵. Moreover, it was made very clear to CSC members by other activists within Dissent!, and some individuals affiliated with the IMC, that IMC resources were in no way to be used to facilitate any kind of interaction with mainstream media. The explicit divide between Indymedia – which facilitated activists creating and publishing their own media representations – and the CSC – who facilitated the mainstream media’s representation of activists – reflects the hegemony of abstention within Dissent!. It also demonstrates a network-level view within Dissent! of the way in which the power held by and concentrated in mainstream media should be resisted and countered.

For the IMC, the fact that anyone could use Indymedia as a platform to publish their news challenged the symbolic power of mainstream media by

⁵⁵ While in Scotland, I visited both the Edinburgh and Hori-Zone Independent Media Centres. In both cases, it was clear that many people were treating the IMC as a free Internet café rather than a space to come and report news. Also at both centres IMC volunteers would patrol the centre to ensure that people were writing news for Indymedia and if they did not appear to be doing this, they would be reminded that the IMC was for news writing only. Despite stressing this point through monitoring PC use and the occasional announcement (particularly when there were queues for a computer), the prevailing attitude amongst many members I encountered was that it was ok to use the IMC to check one’s email as long as it was done quickly.

flattening the traditional hierarchy of representation bound in news production processes (Bell, 1991; Gans, 1979, 2003; Schudson, 1995; Tumber, 1999) through opening the possibility of creating and publishing news to anyone with the skills and interest (Atton, 2002; Downing, 1996, 2002, 2003a, 2003b; Downing et al., 2001; Pickerill, 2003). While the IMC was premised on an ideological rejection of the hegemonic logic of news media and therefore discouraged associating with mainstream media, the CSC, as argued at the start of this Chapter, was rooted in a premise of associating with mainstream media. CSC members felt that the symbolic power of mainstream media should not be ignored but engaged with which, as this chapter argues, required embracing the hegemonic logic of news media in order to attempt to resist it. Because Indymedia strongly discouraged CSC members from using the IMC's Internet access – the only source of Internet access at Hori-Zone – for CSC activities, CSC members used Indymedia's Internet both sparingly and covertly. Even with limited Internet access at Hori-Zone, events on the ground often unfolded quickly requiring immediate action and could not wait for CSC members to check their emails. This was as a result of the dynamics of being at and participating in a news “media event” (Dayan & Katz, 1992); what was referred to in Chapter 2 as “being inside the media frame.”

The focal point for CSC activities at Hori-Zone was the ‘media gazebo’, a small white marquee furnished with hay bales, a couple of plastic chairs and a large table with folding legs, which served as the base for the CSC. The gazebo was located outside the gated boundaries of the Hori-Zone camp but still

associated with the camp. Its positioning outside of the camp as opposed to immediately in front of the gate or even inside the camp, demonstrates the oppositional network-level view taken towards media as an adversary to be defended against. From this perspective, the media gazebo was a space that journalists could gravitate towards (as opposed to the camp's entrance) and members of the CSC could manage media from. The media gazebo is discussed in greater length along with the "open hour" strategy employed at the camp, in the next chapter.

Media Contacts – Friends and Foes

The shift from online practices before the mobilisation to offline on the ground is captured well in the transformation of the media contact list. The electronic "media contact list" compiled in the build-up to the mobilisation manifested itself in the form of a multi-page paper printout in Scotland. On paper, the media master list was no longer a collaborative virtual task but its own living document. The list was strung inside the media gazebo using lines of duct-tape. CSC members would add to the list by writing the contact details of journalists, who either called the media phone or visited the Hori-Zone, on the printout. In effect the paper copy, and not the electronic copy, became the master list. This was an inversion of the CSC's relationship with ICTs in the run up to the Summit. This is because it was not practical to maintain an electronic database during the mobilisation both because of limited access to the Internet and due to the nature of the mobilisation taking place at a media event in an intense and rapidly unfolding situation. Nonetheless, like the Media Contact List created prior to the

mobilisation, the carrying forward of the list to the mobilisation is the continuation of a “professional” direct media-oriented practice tailored to suit the logic of news production.

Activist Action List

Complementing the efforts to compile a media contact list was an attempt to create an “activist action list” (AAL) that would log the details of activists who intended to participate in the July 6th Day of Action and were willing to speak to the media. The activist action list was tailored to suit the *external* hegemonic logic of news production that favours ease of access to sources. CSC members recognised the desirability – from a news perspective – to be able to speak with activists out on actions without having to attend the protest themselves. The media-oriented practice was also adapted to suit the *internal* hegemony of abstention within Dissent! by positioning the CSC as a collective seeking to recruit interested individuals to speak to the media and not speaking (at least in theory) to the media themselves. Evidence of this strategy of *dual adaptation* is evident in the following email request (itself an example of network-facing communication) sent by the CSC on June 20th, 2005, to numerous groups associated with Dissent! which solicited volunteers to offer up their contact information to the media:

From the Media group/Counter Spin Collective:

We are looking for a media contact person and a mobile number that we can give to the press when they contact us about specific issues, or ask us about issues that may pertain to your group. This is really important so we can direct the press to the appropriate contacts. We don't want to speak on behalf of any Dissent group and our aim is just to point the press in the right direction.

If you have seen Scot TV/BBC TV yesterday, or the cover photo of *The Guardian* today, you can see that the media strategies developed so far are working extremely well when groups choose to use them.

Please call us or send us the information as soon as possible...
[email address and phone number]
(Mattar, 2005)

Despite the email, the majority of names on the activist action list were generated in Scotland and specifically at Hori-Zone. In line with its vision of facilitating media access – being a medium for the media – CSC members complied the contact information of activists willing to speak to the media on the Day of Action. Robyn explained the process as follows:

...one of the things we were trying to do was to collect a list of [activist] contacts, so that on the day of the various direct actions on the 6th, the journalists could be contacted and told what was happening and where they should go. Again, it was done through the individuals who were out on actions... these people... would phone the media team. The media team would then phone a journalist. So it was always with the consent of the people who actually were at the action. (Interview with Robyn, 21/07/2005)

From this perspective, the activist action list is presented as a direct media-oriented practice designed to suit the hegemonic logic of news media. However, this was done in such a way as to counter or at least manage the symbolic power of news media by having Dissent!, and not the media, select who would represent the network through the provision of 'ready-made' activists who were out on a protests and ready to speak to the media.

On July 6th, the *Day of Action* (see Chapter 7), communication channels between blockading activists and journalists were initially opened by a CSC member with an acquaintance out blockading. Once the person agreed to field media calls, the media phone was used to inform media outlets about the action and about someone willing to speak about it. When calling, conversations were straightforward, "I am calling from the media response team at the eco-village in

Stirling” would be the standard line⁵⁶. Journalists would sometimes attempt to have the person making the call comment on the issue at hand but the individual would refer the journalist to the appropriate contact number. The number of activists on the actions list was greatly exceeded by the number of journalists interested in interviewing them. The decision as to which journalists would be provided with names from the action list was made by the creation of a “friends and family” list.

Who to call? Friends and Family List

The “friends and family” short-list was collaboratively compiled during the mobilisation by CSC members based largely on an assessment of how “supportive” or “unsupportive” a journalist and/or media outlet had been in the past. In an article reflecting on the CSC process, members of the group described the list as follows:

Having followed most of the press coverage about Dissent! in the lead-up to the summit, we were able to build up a list of journalists that we regarded as ‘supportive’ or ‘unsupportive’, with degrees of cooperation offered accordingly. Consequently, journalists who had a good record of reporting favourably were granted interview opportunities, while others were asked to leave or were directly confronted about the nature of their journalism. This was a deliberate attempt to go beyond any false dichotomies in which all mainstream journalists are seen as necessarily having politically ‘bad’ intentions, or for that matter, all indy journalists as necessarily above criticism (CounterSpin Collective, 2005, p. 326).

The categories of “supportive” and “unsupportive” resemble the “good journalist/bad journalist” dichotomy analysed in Chapter 4. Good and “supportive” journalists were often from ideologically sympathetic media outlets such as *The Guardian*, while “bad” journalists were “unsupportive” and were often from tabloid newspapers. The quote also emphasises the rationale underwriting the CSC’s

⁵⁶ This was observed first hand as I spent all of July 6th in the media gazebo.

decision to engage with mainstream media via its criticism of the dominant network-level assumption that all mainstream journalists are “bad” and the validation of this claim through the identification of “supportive” journalists. More generally, the critique made by members of the CSC, I would argue, stands as further evidence of a shift in the way mainstream media is viewed by activists – from outright rejection (as evident in the hegemony of abstention) to a targeted acceptance.

Further evidence of the targeting of specific news media outlets is found in the targeting of news media using factors beyond “supportiveness” as Robyn discloses:

I think the list of journalists that was produced in the end was a short list. On the one hand, journalists from media outlets that were generally a bit more trustworthy, like the BBC, Channel 4 and things like that. And then also the Associated Press and Reuters, because they have such global coverage. And the other criteria is journalists who we’ve developed contact with and who we kind of like...There was a sort of human element to it as well. People who we’ve had conversations with in the past. (Interview with Robyn, 21/07/2005)

The decision to include media outlets the CSC “trusted” (read: supportive media) together with those that had “global coverage” on the friends and family list demonstrates a calculated sensitivity to the symbolic power of media by favouring outlets that could either potentially yield “supportive” coverage and/or mass coverage and ignoring those deemed as less helpful.

Those placed on the friends and family list were given preferential and advance information. The provision of exclusive information by sources – often those with political power – to selected journalists is long established in the sociology of news literature (Gans, 1979; Molotch & Lester, 1974). This tactic was deployed by CSC members who were aware that they were in a position to

provide desirable information to the media and did so strategically to try and influence, or at least manage, its representation in news.

“Random” Interviewees

From its opening on July 1st, 2005, onwards there was a large amount of media interest in the Hori-Zone camp and its occupants. Both were part of the “media event” (Dayan & Katz, 1992) that was the Gleneagles G8 Summit. The media event status of the Summit is reinforced by the fact that just over 3,000 journalists were accredited for the event (Malleon & Sunderland, 2006); this figure does not include journalists who were in Scotland but did not seek and/or require accreditation. The sheer volume of journalists meant that Dissent! received a significant amount of interest. What began as a trickle of journalists to Hori-Zone five days earlier culminated in a torrent of interest on July 6th; the first day of the Summit and Dissent!’s Day of Action.

To try and manage the multiple requests at Hori-Zone from the news media, the CSC developed the “random interviewee” media-oriented practice which sought to supply the news media with interviewees while still respecting the network’s hegemony of abstention. The politics and process of this direct media-oriented practice are explained below by Gregory:

So as to try and prevent a kind of informal hierarchy of over-representation amongst the few people of the CounterSpin Collective or the media response team, we always tried to find, where possible, other people for the press to interview and just-and that was literally going inside the camp, going around groups of people saying, “Look, do you want to do an interview now? Do you want to do an interview now?” and bringing people back. So it was really, it was really untagged and unorganised. We were just kind of trying to grab people at random and bring them back and speak to the press. And in doing-in doing that, that’s how we were trying to represent the principle of open access to the media. That there wasn’t this kind of clique of people doing all the interviews and kind of spinning it in a certain way. (Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005)

The practice was premised on a servitude towards mainstream media and a desire to comply with the hegemonic logic of news that demanded easy and immediate access to news sources. At the same time, as with all of the CSC's media-oriented practices, there was a desire to respect the internal political boundaries of Dissent!. This is evident in Gregory's concern about the potential creation of an "informal hierarchy of over-representation" where he demonstrates a mindfulness of the representational power of media. He also exhibits an awareness of the possible *internal* implications of such over-representation on the CSC and the potential for the CSC, who already occupied a precarious position in Dissent!, to be seen as breaching the prohibition on network-level media spokespeople.

In practice, the process was neither "open" nor "random" as CSC members often selected their "random" individuals in close proximity to the media gazebo, or spoke to the media themselves. Below, Gregory describes the challenges of putting into practice the random interviewee process:

Trying, genuinely trying to find random people and bring them to the press. In practice it didn't always quite work out like that because there would be some situations where there weren't enough people in the gazebo. And rather than leave the press on their own and going off to try and find someone, you would just end up kind of doing the interview yourself because you were underpersonned and you couldn't kind of contain the press and try and find someone else. But that was really kind of a last resort rather than a-the ideal situation of trying to find other people to do that. (Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005)

Gregory was not alone; a number of CSC members gave interviews to the news media. The logic of news production, particularly in an age of 24-hour news, favours immediacy – they expect to be able to speak to someone immediately. However, this characteristic clashed with the CSC's "random" interviewee

process as it took time to locate potential interviewees. Consequently, in cases where journalists were not willing or able to wait, CSC members acquiesced.

The decision to provide interviews was justified in two ways. First, as a means to try and *secure* the representation of Dissent! by being available for interviews; second, as a means to try and *control* the representation of Dissent!. Given that many CSC members had either previously been interviewed by the media and/or had been involved in some form of media skills training (see above), members regarded themselves as better prepared to engage with media. To this end, in certain instances satisfying the hegemonic logic of news media took precedence over the provision of “open” access to mainstream media.

The random interviewee process was used throughout the mobilisation. However, it was at its peak around noon on July 6th, just prior to the planned march past the G8 security fence in the small Scottish town of Auchterarder; the closest possible site to the Gleneagles Hotel. As the march in Auchterarder unfolded 20 miles away from Hori-Zone, media interest waned. Further interactions between the CSC and the media did take place on July 6th – the Day of Action – and July 7th – the day of the London bombings – but are analysed in Chapter 7 which deals exclusively with the activities of the Day of Action and the fall-out from the bombings.

The goal in analysing the CSC’s “random” interviewee practice has been to demonstrate how the multiple requests for interviews were handled by the CSC. I have argued that the process, which was viewed as “random” by CSC members was, in fact, not random. Instead, it was deliberate and calculated. The

practice was designed to adapt to both the demands of the news media who required people to speak to, and to the politics of Dissent! which mandated that no one could speak for the network. In this situation, *interactions with news media took precedence over internal network politics*. The final section moves from an analysis of individual practices to an analysis of the process of the CSC based on the reflections of its members.

6.4 Reflections on the CSC and its Repertoire of Media-oriented Practices

This final section of this chapter analyses the impact and effectiveness of the CounterSpin Collective from the perspective of those involved. Reflecting on the CSC, Robyn – who took an active role in the Collective – felt that the CSC managed to avoid being seen as network spokespeople, “I think we did manage to somehow get around this idea that you were talking for anybody else and that you were talking as individuals” (Interview with Robyn, 21/07/2005). Darren thought the CSC did well given the network’s policy:

I thought it actually worked quite well. I thought actually around the camp that this media gazebo there – I thought that was quite a nifty little move... Under the conditions of...this kind of near hegemonic discourse of “Don’t talk to the media”, I think the CounterSpin Collective did function quite well... (Interview with Darren, 07/08/2005)

In the case of both Robyn and Darren’s comments, a positive assessment of the CSC was made against a background of a network-level hegemony of abstention; an internal culture of hostility towards mainstream media which proved a powerful cultural regulator. Sensitive to this, CSC members attempted to use the ambiguity of the network’s media policy to their advantage. The

latitude gained through exploiting Dissent!'s media policy was seen as insufficient by some within the CSC with two members stating that the group's mandate severely limited the actions it could take. When asked to describe how the CSC functioned at Hori-Zone, Andre responded:

What usually happened with the CounterSpin Collective [is] we would go, "Yeah, yeah, let's do that"... and then we'd say, "Well the mandate we have doesn't allow us to do anything like that. (Interview with Andre, 18/08/2005)

Edward commented:

Basically, the CounterSpin Collective... did stuff... with a mandate of "you're not allowed to do anything"... it was given specifically a mandate that was the power to do almost nothing. In fact, you could say - if we were just a media collective, we'd have just [said] "fuck off" to Dissent! and been a media collective that talked... But because we are sort of connected with Dissent! in some way, then we [had] the power to say very little, and that was made even less. Various people in the Collective would disagree "Oh, I don't think we should say as much as that," ... So the emphasis on media was lower, but the emphasis on holding a movement or group of people together... [was much higher]. (Interview with Edward, 10/08/2005)

Both interviewees indicated that the functioning of the CSC was hindered by its use of a grey-area of network policy and the differing interpretations of CSC members as to the latitude this provided. The CSC viewed itself as affiliated with Dissent! as opposed to completely autonomous from it; it was, after all, a "network working group" of Dissent! (cf. Chapter 5). As Edward makes clear, and as reinforced by fieldwork, some CSC members who were quite involved in other aspects of the CSC were keen to avoid personal reprisal from non-CSC Dissent! members and, as a result, consciously restrained their actions in the lead-up to and during the mobilisation. The curtailing of CSC actions for fear of internal network reprisal captures the power of the hegemony of abstention within Dissent!. It also captures a paradox in the practice of network politics whereby a network that rooted itself in politics of autonomy, openness and the rejection of

power structures, upheld a taboo over mainstream media interaction which was a powerful cultural regulator.

While the tensions surrounding the issue of mainstream media interaction ran from the founding of the network to the mobilisation itself, upon reflection many members of the CSC were surprised at the positive reception the work of the Collective received. Gregory commented:

I also think we did very well in terms of... there was more positivity from within the Dissent network that I encountered and that was a surprise for me because I thought we were going to be kind of hated and reviled for what we were doing. (Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005)

While Gregory was surprised by the “positivity” shown towards the CSC, Boris felt that its success might help change the opinion of media sceptics within the network:

Some people who are very critical about any communication with media, looks like now they either changed their minds or think about, probably, being more flexible. Somebody mentioned that alongside with the trauma groups, there should be another group, media trauma group, to treat people who are afraid and paranoid about media. (Interview with Boris, 11/07/2005)

The comments of Gregory and Boris capture a disjuncture between what they interpreted as Dissent!’s network-level orientation towards mainstream media – a culture of hostility – compared to their interpretation of network members *at* the mobilisation which were more “positive.” Snow (2003, p. 111) has argued that within the GJM and networks like Dissent! it is fashionable “to hate mainstream media”; the analysis of the hegemony of abstention within Dissent! would support this claim. However, not only do the actions of the CSC analysed in this chapter challenge this blanket claim but so does the assessment offered by CSC members as to the receptiveness of the network towards interacting with mainstream media.

This indicates, I argue, a fissure between the assumed network-level norm which necessitates and perpetuates a hostile and dismissive attitude towards mainstream media, and the view held by the majority of members within the network, which could be seen more as one of critical adaptation. This is not to claim that the issue of media interaction was not contentious, it was, but it may not have been as contentious as network members, and CSC members specifically, assumed.

Given there was little to no dialogue about “the media debate” within Dissent!, this never came to light. The lack of dialogue is indicative of a potentially difficult but important conversation that must be had. Returning briefly to the CSC, the strategy they employed was a product of the lack of dialogue on the topic within the network. Consequently the strategy both before and at the G8 was largely reactive; reacting to negative media stories, reacting to the media's “concerns” of the potential of violence and reacting to acts of violence. The collective was consistently on its back foot with no formal network support in an attempt to manage an intense media situation. In the end, the tabloid media headlines remained the same but it could be retorted that any amount of media work would not have changed the hyper-sensational and phantasmagorical direction that tabloids were looking to report from.

So, did the CSC actually impact the way in which Dissent! was represented in mainstream media? This question can only be answered by an analysis of media output – something this thesis does not undertake. However, what is clear from the reflections of CSC participants is that many felt it was an

important personal and network learning experience. Yet, many also felt that there were still significant limits placed on the CSC, and the process of mainstream media interaction by network-level politics that could only be resolved through a larger, and necessary, dialogue on both the purpose and utility of interacting with news media as well as the purpose and objectives of undertaking political contention at such events in general.

6.5 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter has been to unpack and analyse the strategy of adaptation employed by the CounterSpin Collective. To this end, the media-oriented practices of the CSC were divided into two substantive sections, one focussing on practices *prior* to the Gleneagles G8 Summit and the other on actions *at* the Summit. Drawing on the theoretical discussion of Chapter 2, three general categories of media-oriented practices were proposed: network-facing communication, research and representation. Prior to the mobilisation the CSC were shown to engage in activities across all three areas however, once at the Summit, the actions of the CSC dealt exclusively with representation.

A key difference between the process prior to the Summit and activity on the ground was the role of ICTs. The media strategy listserv created by the CSC offered a critical, virtual space for geographically disperse activists to converge and coordinate their activities. The practices deployed by the group - such as monitoring media, researching journalists online and sending letters to the editor - took advantage of the information and communicative resources offered by the Internet; the listserv allowed for collaborative work to take place, and facilitated

the sharing of information as well as the construction and maintenance of a group solidarity (Fenton, 2008). At same time it also validates Cammaerts' (2007, p. 270) recent argument that research must not focus exclusively on the Internet to the extent where the overlap with other practices is lost. The findings presented in this chapter support both arguments. While the significant role of ICTs to social movements is acknowledged and reasserted by this thesis, research must connect the *use* of ICTs with, and recognise the overlap between, real life practices. Therefore what is important is not whether or not ICTs are used, but *how* they are (and are not) used in the practice of activism.

The use of the Internet to monitor mainstream media by activists has been neglected in research and has fallen into a fissure between approaches that traditionally study "mainstream" media outlets, and those which focus on Internet practices. The zenith of this activity is found by returning to the above call to establish an "adopt a paper" media monitoring system and the resulting course of action of relying on the web-based Google Alert service to respond to traditional media outlets (newspapers) that the majority of CSC members only ever accessed over the Internet. This chapter reaffirms the vital role the Internet can play but, as important, it illustrates the overlap in activist actions between the Internet and mainstream media, strengthening the case to theorising interaction with media as an activist practice.

While electronic resources played a vital role in keeping the CSC together prior to the mobilisation, the majority of work by CSC members at Hori-Zone was done on an rolling basis in an environment that lacked immediate computer

access. The media-oriented practices deployed on the ground dealt almost exclusively with the representation of Dissent! but very few relied on or used ICTs. The primary concern of the CSC was to manage media without being seen (by the media or the network) to be spokespeople of Dissent!. Aware of these tensions, the CSC engaged in a process of *dual adaptation* by adapting strategies such as the “random interviewee process” in an effort to manage new media interest while working within Dissent!’s internal political boundaries on representation with Dissent!’s internal politics taking precedence over media interaction.

In analysing the media-oriented practices of the CounterSpin Collective, the resemblance of the groups practices to the techniques and strategies employed by media professionals must be acknowledged. While these were not executed with a great deal of resources, what is significant is the way in which a “radical” protest network took steps to field media in a similar manner to a formal organisation as evidenced by tactics such as media training and the creation and dissemination of resources such as the journalist list.

The use of such tactics by grass roots organisations is not itself new. Over 17 years ago, Ryan (1991) published a DIY guide for activists to deal with the media and, since then similar handbooks have been published with many made freely available on the Internet. However, since the publication of Ryan’s guide, the use of, and interaction with, media has become an unavoidable part of everyday life and, as a result now finds itself incorporated into activist repertoires. Yet surprisingly, this fact is understudied and often unacknowledged by many

scholars studying the media/movement dynamic. But what is the significance of such an oversight?

This chapter has demonstrated that *developing practices to manage mainstream media has become incorporated into the practice of activism*. News media, at least in the context of a media event such as the Gleneagles G8 Summit, is viewed as a field of struggle, a struggle with social actors including the media itself, which necessitates its own specific collection of practices. As argued in Chapter 2, the media-oriented practices for formal organisations such as NGOs have previously been studied but the media-oriented practices of autonomous networks have been largely undocumented. Consequently, one of the objectives of this chapter has been to bring some “corrective balance” (Carroll & Ratner, 1999, p. 3) to the study of media-movement strategies through the following analysis.

The strategy deployed by the CSC was characterised by sensitivity towards media but also towards the politics of the network which placed restrictions on the remit of the CounterSpin Collective. Despite this (and in spite) the CSC developed a repertoire that, while it did not include the full panoply of tactics as there were few press releases, no press conferences or spokespeople, a “common knowledge” about how to deal with media was clearly visible. The significance of this rests in the internalisation of knowledge about media and the evidence that it is not just professionals who think strategically about media but lay people may also choose to organise themselves, make media a priority and deploy skills to this end.

The analysis of media-oriented practices in this chapter also offers a theoretical contribution towards the conceptualisation of practices. Couldry (2004) in his sketching-out of a media-oriented practice paradigm leaves the categories and specifics of practices open by posing questions and suggesting pathways for research, but not identifying or theorising specific practices. The articulation, grouping and analysis of Dissent!'s media-oriented practices (network-facing communication, research and representation) contributes to the emerging dialogue of media-oriented practices, particularly within the study of the media/movement dynamic, by offering three analytical practices backed up with empirical evidence in the form of specific techniques. This theorisation also provides a foundation for future enquiry into the media-oriented practices of social movement actors in order to analyse the ways in which social movement actors from different social, political, or geographic contexts or at different types of events interact with and through media and the similarities and differences between such practices.

Chapter 7: Inside the Media Frame

The analysis presented in this chapter revolves around a site of protest associated with the Gleneagles G8 Summit and actions which emanated from this site. The chapter is driven by sub-research question four: *How does the presence of mainstream media and, process of mediation more generally, impact on the practice of contention at the site of a political media event?* A central premise of this section is that to be part of the media event is to be located “inside the media event” (McCurdy, 2008, p. 300) or *inside the media frame*⁵⁷. As argued in Chapter 2, locations associated with the Gleneagles G8 Summit as “hybrid sites” (Routledge, 1997, p. 326) which were characterised by having both a physical (*immediate*) and a media (*representational*) presence.

The *immediate* aspect of a hybrid site is the physical location and the attributes there of, where the event takes place. For an event as large as the G8 Summit, there are multiple physical sites from luxury hotels and city streets, to the focus of this Chapter, a grazing pasture turned into the Hori-Zone eco-village. The immediate is the on the ground attributes, realities and activities as experienced first hand. In analysing Hori-Zone and the G8 Leaders Summit more generally as a hybrid site, the *representational* component is double-barrelled. First it resides in the legacy of media event-style coverage of past G8 Summits, and therefore the recognition and anticipation of the current incarnation – the

⁵⁷ Parts of the argument made in this chapter have previously been published in an article for the peer-reviewed journal *Communications – The European Journal of Communication Research* (McCurdy, 2008). The publication complies with LSE PhD regulations and is available in Appendix 7.

2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit – by all involved (politicians, protesters and news media) as a media event. Second, it exists in the coverage of the actual event – the 2005 G8 Summit – and the associated sites and actions. A distinctive feature of the Gleneagles G8 Summit as a hybrid site is that *the representational underwrites the immediate*. That is, the event is anticipated as a media event in advance and therefore the underlying logic of the media frame – rules of access, action and sourcing – influences and underwrites the actions and interactions of social actors at the event; *to be at the G8 Summit is to be part of the media event*.

This chapter argues that the presence of media at the 2005 G8 Summit impacted both the site of, and practice of political contention. At the *site* of protest (Hori-Zone) the presence of media, and underwriting presence of the media frame, created tensions in competing activist uses and conceptualisations for the site. This chapter also argues the underwriting presence of the media transformed the political contention conducted at the media event from direct action into spectacular action.

These arguments are made using analysis primarily conducted using interview transcripts from interviews with Dissent! Activists but is also informed by experiences from participant observation. The position of Hori-Zone inside the media frame generated tensions with respect to its purpose, and the way it was used. To analyse these tensions, the “front stage/back stage” (Benford & Hunt, 1992; Goffman, 1959) dialectic introduced in Chapter 2, is used to theorise the tensions between the camp’s front stage use as a symbolic base from which to

showcase activist lifestyles, and its back stage position as a physical base from which to plan and execute political contention. It is argued that whereas the former (a place to show) necessitates an audience and is therefore premised on media access, the latter is premised on preventing media access; what I refer to as the *management of invisibility*.

The way in which the tensions were handled by Dissent! is explored through the analysis of Hori-Zone's banning of media inside the camp, the Hori-Zone "open hour" which provided a one-off one hour window for media to access Hori-Zone, and the CSC's media gazebo which was a base to manage media interaction from and perpetuated the front stage/back stage divide.

The second major focus of this chapter shifts from an emphasis on space, to one on action. In order to argue that Dissent!'s actions are a form of spectacular action, the network's actions are first analysed against two theorisations of direct action offered by Wall (1999). The first definition of direct action is "radical-flank direct action" which is defined as action undertaken by radicals to make the demands of moderates seem more appealing. Second is "non-mediated" direct action which involves disruptive and militant direct action to bring about an immediate effect. I argue that neither concept is sufficient for understanding the actions of Dissent!. In lieu of this, I argue that the actions are better understood as spectacular action, defined here as protest activities intended to create the temporal appearance of physical resistance (no-mediated direct action) while in fact placing an emphasis on symbolic over physical disruption. The section begins with a general overview of the Day of Action and

specific details are given of four specific blockade-style actions: black block, brat block, hill walking and beacons of dissent. This is followed by an analysis of the actions as direct action and then spectacular action.

The final section of this chapter analyses the impact of the July 7th London bombings as a spectacle which quashed the G8 Summit as a media event, immediately directed news attention away from Scotland and towards London. This section argues for the temporality of spectacular action as the London bombings brought about an abrupt end to the planned protests in Scotland by cutting the media event short thereby firmly shutting the window frame of media opportunity.

7.1 Hori-Zone: A Space Inside the Media Frame

As argued in Chapter 2, as a political media event, G8 Summits are also symbolic contests which take place between multiple social actors each of whom have differing resources that can influence how they fare in the contest. A great number of activists interviewed for this research had previously attended demonstrations of a similar nature in cities such as Prague, Seattle and/or Gothenburg. However, physical distances between Summits and the cost of travel meant that for many, even those with past experience, the Gleneagles G8 Summit was regarded as an opportunity to experience *in person* an event that they had often witnessed and lived vicariously through the representations of mainstream and alternative media (cf. Chapter 5). With the announcement of Gleneagles as the venue in June of 2004, the event gained an immediate presence and location. Physical, geographic coordinates identified a location

where social actors – from delegates and dignitaries to activists and authorities – could and would converge. Important for my argument that the social actors at the G8 Summit were inside the media frame, and therefore worth repeating, is that the reputation and representation of the G8 Summit as a media event preceded the announcement of Gleneagles as the location.

I argue that the entire G8 Summit is underwritten by the media frame and is therefore a performance, even if unintentionally, for the media. The sense that my interviewees, the social movement actors themselves, were inside a media frame was expressed by Sarah who saw the G8 – the Summit and its opposition – as theatre:

...the G8 is a theatre performance you know? Actors, we are all actors. And because of the way protests have been, we are all actors in this-in this theatre performance. You've got the G8 who are some actors and then you've also got the protestors... I think the media is directing this theatre performance and we're all inadvertently fairly sucked up into it. (Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005)

The quote from Sarah reinforces academic arguments around protest as performance and viewed the sites of protest as “performative terrains” (Juris, 2008b, p. 64). While the analogy to theatre was not common, as argued in Chapter 4, many interviewees believed media had news scripts for them to play out; scripts for the performance of protest. This view opens up tensions between the dual aspects of the hybrid site I conceptualised earlier as the immediate and the representational. It also raises questions about the relationship between physical and symbolic actions carried out inside the media frame. Before analysing actions from the site of protest, I will first analyse the transformative impact of the media frame on the site of protest.

In Chapter 2, I argued that the Gleneagles G8 Summit was a “hybrid site” (Routledge, 1997, p. 367) where the media event status of the Summit precedes and subsequently underwrites the event itself. Hybrid site captures the transformation of locations associated with the Summit from everyday places to “places of mediation” (Martin-Barbero, 1993, p. 215) which are situated *inside the media frame*. This section analyses one such location, the Dissent! Hori-Zone rural convergence space. It investigates the tensions brought about by the G8 Summit, and therefore Hori-Zone’s positioning inside the media frame and how these were managed by Dissent!.

To prevent confusion, it is important to clarify and differentiate my reference to Hori-Zone on the one hand, as a hybrid site, and on the other hand as convergence space. I use hybrid site as a theoretical concept to acknowledge and analytically differentiate the dual (immediate and representational) aspects of Hori-Zone. However, Hori-Zone was also a *convergence space* or protest camp (see Figure 12). Convergence spaces, a term commonly used by activists are “immediate” or physical locations that offer a common focal point for activists to assemble, discuss, strategise and share skills, knowledge and experience. They also offer strategic locations from which activists can plan and execute protest actions which also led them to be referred to as “protest camps.” Convergence spaces have become a regular and arguably requisite feature of summit-style protests (Juris, 2008a, pp. 172-173; Routledge, 2003). Thus, where as convergence space or protest camp is used to refer to Hori-Zone as a base for



Figure 12: Inside Hori-Zone camping area

and site of protest, Hori-Zone is also referred to as a hybrid site in order to elucidate the tensions brought about due to its location inside the media frame. Protest camps are significant on at least three fronts. First, they can provide a base from which to conduct protest. Second, they can also be protests themselves either directly obstructing a site or drawing attention to one. Third, they can provide a site for activists to converge, engage in symbolic action and share skills. The use of protest camps in the UK can be traced back to at least the 1980s with one of the most infamous British instances being Greenham Common, an all-female protest camp established in opposition to the housing of nuclear missiles at a British military base (see: Roseneil, 1995). A key attribute of Greenham Common and indeed other protest camps was their permanence. Greenham Common existed for almost twenty years; from 1981-2000. The use of protest camps can also be placed in the context of Earth First! (EF!) and the environmental movement of the 1990s who organised camps as a form of direct action (see: Doherty et al., 2000; Doherty, Plows, & Wall, 2003; Wall, 1999). EF! camp sites sought to hinder projects they viewed as objectionable, such as a road-building project, by embedding and encamping themselves in the contested terrain. Thus the protest camp was a tactic used in *direct defence* of a site perceived to be under threat. The permanence of the camp, often in tandem with an evolving battery of tactics, was key to the effectiveness of the action (Seel, Patterson & Doherty, 2000, p. 2).

Two key differences can be drawn between the protest camps of the peace and environment movements and the activist convergence spaces such

as Dissent!'s Hori-Zone. First, whereas the former camps were characterised by their permanence, convergence spaces are distinguished by their temporality. The G8 Summit as a meeting is a finite event with a limited window of opportunity often not more than two to three days. Linked with this is the fact the Summit is tied into international news cycles which themselves have quick turnovers and short attention spans. Consequently, activist convergence spaces are not conceptualised as permanent sites but as provisional locations for activists to gather⁵⁸.

A second difference between peace and environmental camps and Hori-Zone can be seen in the how they were established. Peace and environmental camps were often built at contested physical areas such as a military base or the site for building a new road. Risking over-simplification, a camp was created which in turn directed public attention towards the site as a contested area. In the case of the Gleneagles G8 Summit and the Hori-Zone convergence space the situation is different. The representational legacy of the G8 summit and the “duty to protest” (cf. Chapter 5) preceded the announcement of a location. The G8 Summit was recognised as a contested event and thus the planning for demonstrations and the implicit presence of a convergence space was under way even before it had a place to happen (cf. Chapter 5). The planning of a site was initiated by the media event.

⁵⁸ At no point during Dissent! deliberations about the camp was there a serious discussion to have a permanent site. Further evidence as to the intended temporality of the convergence space can be found in the discussion over the wording of a press release sent out from the Dissent! International Networking Meeting held in Tübingen, Germany in February, 2005.

Once Gleneagles was announced as the venue, Dissent! began exploring options for convergence spaces. Both urban and rural locations were scouted in Glasgow, Edinburgh and surrounding vicinities. A preference was expressed to secure an urban convergence site in Edinburgh as Dissent! was aware that a number of activities were planned to taking place in the city. However, because of financial, and other logistical constraints, an urban convergence space could not be established in Edinburgh (Edinburgh Convergence Group, 2005)⁵⁹.

An urban convergence space was, however, established by Dissent! in Glasgow by legally renting an old warehouse. This space served as a convergence point in Glasgow and also offered accommodation for 300 people (Anonymous, 2005b). Aware that the Glasgow space was not sufficient to accommodate the anticipated number of demonstrators, Dissent! also established a larger, a rural convergence space in Stirling, Scotland.

Efforts to secure a site in Scotland began in 2004⁶⁰. However a site was not officially confirmed until June 24, 2005. In the lead-up to the summit multiple unsuccessful attempts were made. On two occasions an agreement was almost reached, however in both cases the deal collapsed after "...landowners were persuaded against releasing [the] site" (Stirling Council, 2005b). The

⁵⁹ While Dissent! did not establish an urban convergence space in Edinburgh, the City of Edinburgh did open up parkland surrounding a civic sports arena, the Jack Kane Centre, on the outskirts of the city. The fenced in parkland was open for camping between July 1st and 9th, 2005, and had a capacity of 15,000 (City of Edinburgh Council, 2005). While a noble gesture on the part of the city, the site was criticised by activists both within and outside of Dissent! for excessive security, CCTV and a proposed nominal fee to use the camping space of £5 for the week. Negotiations were had with the city where security was reduced and the site charge was dropped. Despite these concessions, criticisms about the site were still made. See: Edinburgh Convergence Group (2005).

⁶⁰ For accounts on trying to secure a convergence space see Harvie et al (2005), especially Chapters 6 and 8.

“persuasion” mentioned by Stirling Council was said to be from police pressure (Harvie et al., 2005)⁶¹. By the middle of June, 2005, under a month away from the G8, Dissent! still did not have a rural convergence site. On June 14th an application was submitted to Stirling Council for a temporary “eco-village” to accommodate 5,000 people. Ten days later, the green light for the eco-village was given (Stirling Council, 2005a). The camp was to be held on council owned land from July 1st to 9th, 2005.

The site was a poor strategic choice (although it is recognised there were no other “legal” options). The camp, which bordered the site of a 20 year old filled-in rubbish tip, was on land ordinarily used as a grazing pasture for cattle (Starhawk, 2005)⁶². The site was all but bound by the River Forth with only one entrance and exit making it very easy to police (see Figure 13)⁶³. The “controlled access” (Stirling Council, 2005b) of the site was apparently acknowledged by camp organisers, but dismissed in their relief to secure a location just days before people were due to arrive. The ease of containing the camp would come back to sting Dissent!.

⁶¹ The assertion that police ran active interference scuttling potential Dissent! camp sites was also confirmed through fieldwork.

⁶² In fact, some parts of Hori-Zone had to be roped off because of high methane levels (Starhawk, 2005).

⁶³ The seclusion and the ability to enclose the camp was not lost on the city council. In the “news section” of the Stirling Council website, the council noted, “the site, owned by the Council, has been selected as it poses the least possible disruption to residents, business and visitors to Stirling. It is bounded on two sides by the river and has a main road running alongside giving good road links to and from the campsite to the motorway network” (Stirling Council, 2005a). The council also acknowledged the “controlled access” (Stirling Council, 2005b) to the camp in a July 7th news posting after some property damage near the campsite on July 6th, 2005.

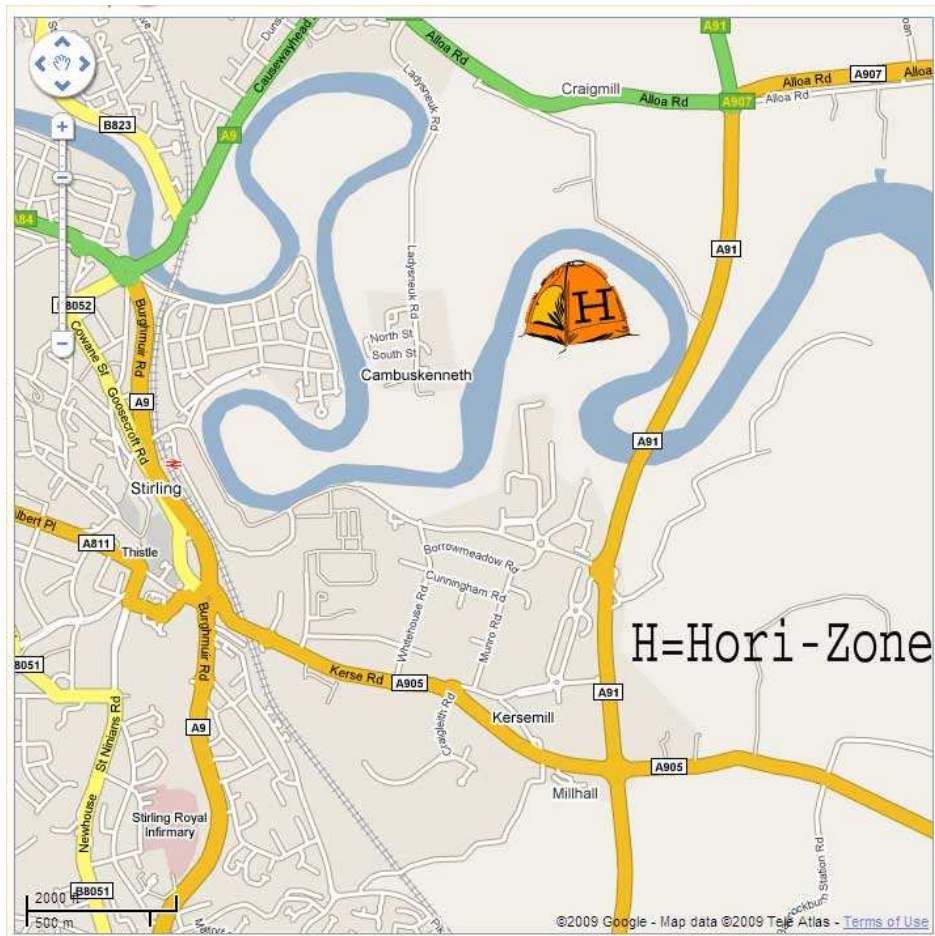


Figure 13: Map of the location of Hori-Zone, Stirling, Scotland.

A place to “show”

The objective of Hori-Zone was not simply to be a protest camp – a physical base from which to plan and execute protests – though that was its primary function. Hori-Zone was also a symbolic base from which to plan, execute and exhibit examples of sustainable living; ammunition in the “endless battle” to win “people’s minds” (Castells, 1997, p. 360). To this end, efforts were made to use alternative energy sources, install grey water and rain water

collection systems as well as compost toilets⁶⁴. In a news bulletin confirming the camp, Stirling Council noted, “The campsite will include an exhibition of alternatives to current energy sources and will be powered by solar panels, wind generators and portable generators which run on bio-diesel – a vegetable oil based fuel” (Stirling Council, 2005a). The camp was intended to represent or “show” and showcase alternative forms of living. The desire to “show” was also evident in the Dissent! press release sent to announce the camp where it was described as:

an example of sustainable ways of living and non-hierarchical methods of organizing in direct response to the G8s poverty making, undemocratic and ecologically devastating policies... The activists will show that people are more than capable of making the decisions that affect their lives (G8 Convergence 2005, 2005).

This point was further stressed in the press release by quotations from four “attributable” activists which highlighted and reinforced the demonstrative element of the camp⁶⁵; performances of the possible. Hori-Zone was a symbolic arena where the political power and practices of the G8 were challenged through the symbolic power embedded and interwoven into the practices put on show at the camp.

Site Tensions

As argued above, Hori-Zone had two purposes. First, to act as a convergence space for activists during the 2005 G8 mobilisation. Second, to function as a working example to showcase low impact, environmentally-friendly,

⁶⁴ For more on the eco-village aspect of the camp see: Starhawk (2005).

⁶⁵ I have placed “attributable” in quotation marks as there is no means to confirm that the individuals named in the press release actually existed. A common tactic employed by such networks has been to use a false name when dealing with the media in order to protect one’s identity. This may or may not have been the case in this instance.

sustainable living. There is an inherent tension in the dual use of the camp as a site to “plan action” and a site to “show action”. Tensions can be seen in the “front stage” (Goffman, 1959, 1974) desire to use Hori-Zone as an arena to “show” the wider world that alternatives are possible which lends itself to display, and observation. This also necessitates an audience present and co-present and therefore includes, if not demands the presence of news media. This militates against the “back stage” (Goffman, 1959, 1974) need to have a space for activists to plan and coordinate their actions which favours seclusion and privacy.

Tensions are further complicated by the fact that the camp, as part of a larger media event – the Gleneagles G8 Summit – was a hybrid site. The implication being that the eco-village was itself a site of media interest and therefore “inside the media frame” which arguably erodes, or at least complicates efforts to control the site’s “back stage” aspects. Conscious of the camp’s status as a hybrid site, Dissent! attempted to control the space in three ways each of which is analysed below: 1) in the creation of a “no mainstream media on site” policy 2) the use of an “open house” at the camp, and 3) the creation of the CounterSpin Collective’s “Media Gazebo.”

1) Creation of a “No Mainstream Media On Site” policy

Within Dissent! the issue of mainstream media interaction was contentious as previous chapters have argued. In light of this, and consistent with Dissent!’s network strategy of abstention, a “no media on site” policy was drafted barring mainstream media from entering Hori-Zone. Thus, in theory, no journalists were allowed past the camp’s fortified and guarded entrance gate (with the exception

of the “open hour” discussed below). The no journalists on site policy was reinforced through a culture of hyper-media vigilance within Dissent!. This was evident and manifest in a hand painted sign positioned just inside the gated entrance/exit of the camp warning individuals that journalists were about. Yet, like the network’s media policy, while it officially held a position of “abstention” (Rucht, 2004), as Chapter 6 argued, the CSC undertook a strategy of “adaptation” (Rucht, 2004).

As journalists were (technically) prohibited from entering the camp, the camp’s entrance and exit became a media focal point with journalists filming and photographing the site entrance to acquire their requisite visuals (see Figure 14). In response, some individuals used a megaphone to publicly announce the presence of journalists whenever this took place such as, “The BBC is filming. If you don’t want to be filmed go away from the Welcome Tent.” The movements of journalists (along with police) were also closely tracked on Hori-Zone’s two-way radio network. Journalists who showed up at the campsite with a camera, notepad or mini-disk in hand and their G8 passes around their neck were quickly spotted and intercepted by the CounterSpin Collective. The media ‘banning order’ at the camp and the various efforts to enforce it can be seen as an attempt to create and sustain a boundary between “activist space” and “media space.” It was an effort to fence out the media at a media event. Thompson (1995, pp. 134-140) has written about the “management of visibility” by which he meant the use of specialists and special practices such as spinning and public relations to control and adjust how things appear in the media. Managing visibility is about

strategic framing to the media; it is about control. Conversely, the “no media” policy of Dissent and Hori-Zone is an effort to *manage invisibility*. It too is about control. But, where the former is about controlling something that is purposefully presented to the media, the latter is about controlling representation by purposefully avoiding media. Dissent!’s desire for Hori-Zone was to create an activist space devoid of representation by the mainstream media; an area open to the public, but not to the mainstream media⁶⁶; a public space outside of the media frame. It also was viewed as a defensive move, protecting the “back stage” of the camp from the adversarial, intrusive and sensational “news scripts” which often accompanied mainstream media which were seen as detrimental to the network.

Dissent! activists recognised they often had little control over how the media represented them as evidence by the analysis of “new scripts” presented in Chapter 4. But, by banning media from accessing Hori-Zone, Dissent! was able to, at least briefly, invert its “asymmetrical “ (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 125) relationship with news media allowing Dissent! to exert a degree, albeit both temporal and limited, of power over news media. By denying the media access to coverage from inside Hori-Zone, they were denied something they desired. This was an empowering act, as usually Dissent! was subject to the representation of media that was outside of their control. News coverage from inside the camp was

⁶⁶ Dissent had made a similar attempts to create public spaces without the media. The most notable is the weekend activist workshop called the Festival of Dissent where press releases were sent out to the media inviting the public to attend the event, but asking media to stay away (cf. Chapter 4).



Figure 14: Entrance of Hori-Zone, Stirling, Scotland.

something they could control. However, the lack of access to Hori-Zone meant that some journalists went undercover, as was observed during fieldwork and media coverage after the summit, while others simply reported from the camp's entrance.

While *mainstream* media were excluded, *alternative* media were permitted inside Hori-Zone. An Indymedia centre was established inside Hori-Zone. The presence of Indymedia, which allowed camp patrons to publish their own accounts of events at Gleneagles, was another effort to differentiate between activist and media space. It was also an attempt to challenge the symbolic power of mainstream news media as the sole purveyors of information. The “no media on site” policy shrouded the internal workings of the camp from mainstream media. Indymedia, on the other hand, was viewed on a network-level as a source

of symbolic power for activists as its open access policy allowed activists to represent themselves as opposed to be represented by the media.

Dissent! faced two challenges in their attempt to manage the spatial dynamics of Hori-Zone. First, as argued in Chapter 2 and at the start of this Chapter, Hori-Zone was a site of media interest via its association with the G8. Thus the physical embodiment of the camp – the very fact that it existed – is embedded in the representational legacy of previous G8 protests and related media coverage. Therefore the camp itself was a site of interest and activity; part of an unfolding media event. Second, and related, the desire for a mainstream media blackout militates against the idea of the eco-village and using the camp as a place to “show” alternative living, particularly to the larger public via mainstream media. In recognition of this tension and in an effort to navigate it, a decision was made to send out press releases announcing the camp and inviting media to view the site in a media “Open Hour” (CounterSpin Collective, 2005, p. 324).

2) Hori-Zone Media “Open Hour”

To bridge the tensions between the camp as an activist space and a media space, a series of press releases were sent announcing a media “Open Hour” (CounterSpin Collective, 2005, p. 324) at the camp. The open hour sought to offer a behind the scenes look at the camp but strictly on Dissent!’s “own terms” in an effort to “manage its visibility” (Thompson, 1995, pp. 134-148). The open hour was a compromise between competing ideologies in Dissent! where some members opposed *any* contact or interaction with media, while others

wanted to show the camp's alternative features to the public via mainstream news.

The camp's first press release was sent out on June 17th, 2005 and provided an overview of the site's objectives, and on June 24th, Stirling Council officially confirmed plans to host the eco-village. On June 29th, 2005, at 11am, media were invited to take a one hour, escorted tour of the Hori-Zone site. The one-off "open hour" event was intentionally designed by Dissent! to offer a timed and restricted media window "...out of respect for those who did not want to be subjected to any coverage, and in order to control mainstream media access to the site on our own terms" (CounterSpin Collective, 2005, p. 324).

Media coverage from the open hour was generally viewed as positive by CSC and other Dissent! members⁶⁷. In a story filed from the open day, Scottish Television News, before discussing the potential of violence at Gleneagles, reported "...protesters are constructing an environmentally friendly eco-village – an example they say of how the world should be run" (Scottish TV, 2005). But while some coverage was garnered, it was predominantly contained within Scottish borders and almost certainly within the United Kingdom. Local news media were interested in Hori-Zone due to the geographic proximity of the G8 Summit which magnified its newsworthiness. Nation and international interest in the camp, its occupants (of which at the time there were a reported "60" (Scottish TV, 2005), far under its capacity of 5,000) and their actions – remained subdued.

The lack of media interest – as evident during fieldwork – is attributed to two factors. First, the G8 – the demonstrations or the meetings – had not yet

⁶⁷ This assertion is based on field notes and analysis of relevant Dissent! email lists.

begun; viewing Hori-Zone was like viewing an empty theatre. Extending the dramaturgical analogy, while media could see the stage – and were arguably allowed *on* the stage – there were no performers present as the performance had not yet begun. Second, while the event was on the media radar, due to the nature of international news-cycles, significant interest was not generated until six days after the “open-hour” on July 5th, 2005, just one day prior to the start of the G8 Leaders Summit; the start of the media event. But, by the time interest had flourished in the camp, its patrons and their planned actions, journalists were met with the “no media policy” creating a clear, though paradoxical boundary between front stage and back stage.

The decision to hold the “open hour” well before (at least in ‘media time’) the start of the G8 Summit raises the question as to why the date was selected.

Below Gregory, a CSC member, explains what happened:

Initially the plan was there was an open day and then maybe later on when there was more people on the campsite there would be another open day when journalists were allowed to kind of come on and would then kind of like be chaperoned and kind of shown around. But then almost immediately when more people arrived at the uhmmm, at the rural convergence space there were people who kind of like blocked that in meetings and so there was a very strict, kind of no press allowed at any stage, under any circumstances on the site. (Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005)

In short, internal Dissent! politics prevented further media coverage from inside the camp. Yet as Hamish makes clear, there was a desire amongst some CSC members for additional media coverage but Hori-Zone’s political climate prevented it:

So some of us felt it could be useful to have some sort of say, filming on site. And/or journalists on site, so they could actually see and talk about what it is that’s going on here, but no consensus was reached on that...[so the] compromise was that we would deal with the media outside the camp itself, just at the main entrance to the camp...

I would have loved to have had some coverage from the inside of the campsite on a personal level, because of as much positive stuff there was here. But at the same time, I

don't think the potential cost of that would have been worth it... (Interview with Hamish 09/07/2005)

The tension between the desire to allow more media access to Hori-Zone, and the inability to do so due to political tensions, highlights the paradox in the dual use of the camp as a “front stage” area for showcasing activist practice and a “back stage” area for organising activist practice. The “open hour” compromise also stands as a further example of “dual adaptation” (cf. Chapter 5) whereby the CSC adapted its practices to both the needs of the media and to Dissent! politics. Yet given the timing of the “open hour” which was slightly out of sync with the international (though not local) news cycle, it is clear that adapting to the politics of Dissent! provided the framework for adapting to the needs of the media. The creation of the media gazebo is also an example of dual adaptation.

3) *The CounterSpin Collective and the “Media Gazebo”*

Although many in Dissent! were sceptical of mainstream media, they were not oblivious to it. As argued in Chapter 4, activists held a common view of the G8 as a media event and, as a result, activists were aware that there was going to be a large amount of media interest. As argued in Chapters 5 and 6, the CounterSpin Collective (CSC) formed to facilitate media enquiries. In tandem with the opening of Hori-Zone, members of the CSC established a “media gazebo” which served as a base to coordinate media efforts. The media gazebo was a small white marquee that could fit about eight people. Inside the tent were three or four chairs and a couple of hay-bales to sit on. The tent had a dinner-sized table with a constantly refreshed selection of newspapers, mostly tabloids,

covering the G8 protest activities. Out front of the gazebo was a hand-painted sign which read: “Journalists report here.”

The media gazebo was a satellite space; intentionally distanced and differentiated from the camp itself. Initially it was located approximately fifteen yards from Hori-Zone’s gated entrance. However on July 5th the gazebo was moved a further 15 yards away due to an incident where a camp patron threw a projectile towards a visiting journalist who was talking with a member of the CSC⁶⁸. The increase in distance did little to dilute feelings of tension felt by CSC members.

The purpose of the media gazebo was three fold. First, it provided a base from which the CSC could employ their various media strategies (see Chapter 6). From this perspective, the creation of the gazebo was also a *direct media-oriented practice*; a deliberate tactic devised and deployed to respond to the dynamics of Hori-Zone as a site of media interest, and to cope with that interest. Second, focusing on the spatial aspect of the site, the gazebo served as an outpost to try and *control* news media – a vantage point from which journalists could be tracked and approached before nearing the entrance gate in order to maintain the boundary between front stage and back stage, between media space and activist space. Third, and related, the gazebo acted as a “honey trap”, a site to attract journalists in an effort to contain and control news. The gazebo,

⁶⁸ I witnessed this event first hand and also interviewed the CSC member who was talking to the journalist. The projectile, a large plastic bottle that still had liquid in it, missed its target but still made an impact. Members of the CSC apologised to the journalist for the unprovoked attack who, in turn, accepted the apology. Nonetheless, and perhaps predictably, the incident appeared in print the following day “Inside the camp there was a confrontational air. *The Scotsman*’s attempt to interview camp members was refused and bottles were thrown at a journalist and photographer as they departed” (Chamberlain & Black, 2005).

staffed with people willing to engage with media deflected journalists from the camp's entrance helping to enforce site boundaries. Gregory, a member of the CSC, described his time at Hori-Zone media gazebo as follows:

Hanging out in the media response gazebo and intercepting press people when they arrived, and trying to find people for them to interview and keep them away from taking any photos and going into the camp at all... On a kind of very practical level basically what we tried to do was ahh intercept people at the media response gazebo, keep them safely there and then where possible, going off and trying to find other people for them to interview. (Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005)

Gregory highlights the role of the media gazebo as a satellite space, an area intentionally separated from Hori-Zone to distance media from the actual campsite, and the role of the CSC as outriders – keeping watch for journalists, intercepting and then guiding them to the gazebo in an attempt to enforce the no media on site policy.

In both instances, the position of the gazebo and role of the CSC outriders was about control; trying to control, in a defensive manner, the mainstream media. These practices also sought to maintain the division between front stage and back stage, between media space (out front of the camp) and activist space (inside the camp), by acting as symbolic security guards trying to prevent journalists from sneaking into Hori-Zone. However, despite the CSC's efforts to manage media and ban them from Hori-Zone, there was resistance by some, mostly tabloid journalists who infiltrated Dissent! and subsequently published sensationalised and sometimes outright inaccurate accounts of network meetings (Luck, 2005; McDougall, 2005; Rogers & Graham, 2005) and Hori-Zone activity (Jackson, 2005). If anything, the fact that journalists were barred from the site further sensationalised the story. The presence of police infiltrators was taken as a given amongst Dissent! activists; it was just assumed they were present.

Conversely, activists were warned about journalists and it was suggested during public meetings that activists not make jokes or use sarcasm as journalists may deliberately take this out of context (Field notes, 01/07/2005).

Due to the volume of activists coming in and out of Hori-Zone it was impossible to control undercover journalists. Nonetheless, as shown above, the media ban was an extension of Dissent!'s strategy of abstention. The CSC on the other hand undertook a strategy of dual adaptation which, during the mobilisation, as analysed in Chapter 6, predominantly emanated from the media gazebo.

It must be made clear that both Hori-Zone and the media gazebo were "inside the media frame" as they were part of the G8 media event. The positioning of the media gazebo outside of the camp must be read as an effort to establish Hori-Zone as an activist space despite its location inside the media frame. The no media policy was also an attempt to control representational space by making Hori-Zone an area, in theory, open to the public *excluding* journalists. While the public were allowed back stage, journalists were not. Of course, the open hour provided an opportunity for media to see inside the camp – to go back stage – but did so on the network's own terms and at a time where the majority of media were not interested.

The media gazebo has provided the central focus of the chapter thus far both for the actions which stemmed from it but also for its position as a site inside the media frame. The focus of the remainder of this chapter shifts from direct media-oriented practices – those that dealt directly with media – to an analysis of

indirect direct practices; protest actions undertaken by Dissent! that may not have involved direct interaction with media, were still inside the media frame.

7.2 A Day of “Spectacular” Action: Mass Blockades Inside the Media Frame

This section analyses the protest activities emanating from Hori-Zone. Of specific interest are the blockades and related direct actions associated with the Day of Action held on July 6th, 2005. While previous anti-G8 protests had taken place around Scotland in the days prior, July 6th was the first scheduled day of the G8 Leaders Summit and as such, was long seen as the main day for action. Consequently, the Day of Action was the apex and defining action of the network both internally, in terms of how network members regarded Dissent!, and externally, in terms of how the public, police and media viewed the network.

From Dissent!’s inception, its rhetorical aim was to “resist the G8 summit” which developed into an appeal to “shut down the G8” (Dissent!, 2005g). In February 2005, after months of discussing protest strategy and tactics, Dissent! issued a callout for “mass public blockades” to take place on the first day of the G8. The declared objective was to “isolate the G8” by jamming major and minor motorways to and from the Gleneagles Hotel in an effort to prevent delegates, media and support staff from attending the Summit⁶⁹. Quoting the newspaper produced by Dissent! for the mobilisation in Scotland, “the co-ordinated

⁶⁹ The call to “isolate the G8” was initially made on the Dissent! related blockade webpage: <http://www.g8blockades.org.uk>. However, in an act of “hackitivism” (Jordan, 2002; Jordan & Taylor, 2004) the domain has been taken over by a non-Dissent! related source and the original work on the site is no longer archived.

participation of thousands will allow us to shut down the G8 and isolate our so-called leaders from everything they need to exercise power” (Dissent!, 2005e)⁷⁰.

Despite a general callout, a key feature of the blockades was the emphasis on “autonomous” and “decentralised” actions (Dissent! Blockades Group, 2005). This is important for two reasons. First, it followed Dissent!’s (anarchist) ideological emphasis on “autonomy.” The blockade appeal provided a loose structure that allowed groups to decide themselves if, how, where and at what time they participated in the day of action⁷¹. Second, the emphasis on autonomy meant that there were no centralised leaders coordinating blockades who could be detained by police nor was there a centralised pool of information which could be skimmed by authorities in advance⁷². Both of these factors made the blockades harder to proactively police and effectively increased the physical disruption caused by the action.

The mass blockades that characterised July 6th were the result of the combined efforts of several affinity groups and collectives many of whom used Hori-Zone as a base camp. As a direct result of the decentralised strategy, there were multiple overlapping and “rolling” blockades which varied greatly in size, number and tactics. For analytical purposes, the blockades will be discussed as a single action though differentiation between tactics will be made where necessary. The rationale is two fold. First, the research strategy for this project

⁷⁰ Also see Harvie et al., (2005), especially Chapter 2.

⁷¹ With respect to how blockades were done, the Blockade group noted, “Actions will be many and varied and will range from confrontational and uncompromising to imaginative and humorous; so all groups and individuals should feel able to participate in a manner appropriate to their ideology” (Dissent! Blockades Group, 2005).

⁷² That being said, upon enacting the blockades, there was a central telephone number Dissent! members were encouraged to call so that the blockades could be “mapped” allowing the network to chart its successes and celebrate their victories afterwards.

was not to follow the blockades but to adapt Marcus' (1995) approach and chart Dissent!'s media strategies. Second, if the blockades are seen on a general level, the underlying purpose and effect were the same: to "resist" and "shut down" the G8 Summit (Dissent!, 2005e). The form and degree of "resistance" will be considered below where it will be argued that the blockades should be viewed not as direct action, but as *spectacular action*. Before this, a brief overview of the actions is needed.

It is recognised that a great number of individual and group actions took place on July 6th, 2005. Whereas many affinity groups tended to keep their strategy to themselves, plans for "public blockades" leaving Hori-Zone were common knowledge and were openly discussed and announced within the camp. The analysis does not pretend to be inclusive of all the strategies or tactics employed by those affiliated with Dissent!. However it does provide a sense of the range of blockading tactics via an analysis of four "public" blockade styles: Black Block, Brat Block, Hill Walking and the Beacons of Dissent. The below accounts are largely based on Indymedia reports, discussions with activists, media reports, articles from Harvie et al. (2005), and what could be observed from Hori-Zone.

Black Block-ades

Throughout the afternoon of July 5th, 2005, the day before the Gleneagles G8 Summit, a constant stream of people could be seen leaving Hori-Zone. By early evening, there was a visible dip in the number of people on site. The drop in numbers was due to various collectives having left the camp early in order to

travel to their blockade location. Despite the flood of people from Hori-Zone, many stayed behind to participate in the “public” blockades.

Those wishing to participate agreed to assemble just inside the entrance of the camp at three in the morning and would then head out towards the M9, a critical artery in Scotland’s motorway system. By 3am on July 6th, amidst pouring rain and in pitch black darkness, a crowd of about 500 people had assembled⁷³. A large portion of the group were dressed in the anarchist “black block” tradition wearing black hooded jumpers, black or dark gloves and using scarves or bandanas in an attempt to anonymise themselves. Some also wore crash helmets, home made armour and carried inflatable inner tubes inspired by the Italian Tute Bianche and carried forward by the British collective, WOMBLES - White Overalls Movement Building Libertarian Effective Struggles (Jordan, 2002)⁷⁴. Many also carried black flags which had been tacked to impromptu flagpoles made of large planks of timber. A brief qualification is needed to contextualise the “black block”. A common misconception, often perpetuated by media, is that the “black block” is a specific group of individuals, a collective, who turn-up at anti-capitalist demonstrations. The black block is not a specific group, but a tactic employed by activists (Juris, 2005b, p. 68). Thus even within what appears to be a large mass of black block activists such as at Hori-Zone, common dress consciously helps perpetuate this appearance yet simultaneously

⁷³ Police were quoted by BBC Scotland as estimating the crowd to be 300 people however based on my own observations, I think 400-500 people is more realistic (BBC News, 2005b).

⁷⁴ Inspired by Ya Basta!, the WOMBLES, rooted in anti-capitalist ideologies and founded in 2000, seek to make a direct challenge to the use of “repressive police tactics” by wearing home-made protective clothing and using non-violent tactics at anti-capitalist protests (WOMBLES, 2001a, 2001b).

anonymise those taking part, the group is likely to be comprised of many smaller affinity groups.

Returning to Hori-Zone, while the crowd at the gate was generally quiet, perhaps due to the poor weather, a vociferous male chorus would break into sporadic chants of “Oh Anti-anti-anti-capitalista”. Just after 3am, the first wave set out. This was followed by a second and third wave of blockaders in relatively quick succession with each wave smaller than the last. In total up to one thousand people set out from Hori-Zone on the public blockade.

The first wave of blockaders caught the police by surprise and the second wave also left Hori-Zone unimpeded. But, by the time the third wave left the camp, I could see flashing police lights and hear sirens in the distance⁷⁵. Shortly after departing, the group was confronted by police in an industrial estate. Not wanting to be contained (or detained) the group physically challenged and broke through police lines⁷⁶. At the same time as the confrontation, a small number of “black block” damaged property within the industrial estate. A branch of the international fast food restaurant Burger King had a number of its windows broken while another international fast-food chain, Pizza Hut, received similar treatment and also had anti-G8 slogans such as “G8 Not Welcome Here” spray painted on its walls⁷⁷.

⁷⁵ I was up at 3am to watch activists leave Hori-Zone but stayed behind as my interest was in the CSC whose actions were based out of the camp (cf. Chapter 3).

⁷⁶ For individual accounts of the events at the industrial estate see Harvie et al. (2005).

⁷⁷ Footage of the incident was posted on Indymedia under the title, “Morning 06.07.05 Black Block tactics in Stirling” (Anonymous, 2005c). The incidents of property damage and vandalism in the industrial estate can be seen at approximately half-way into the Indymedia video. The video also shows the “interactions” and direct challenges to police lines by “black block” activists as well as the restrained police responses.

After vandalising the industrial estate and having broken free from police, the large mass split into smaller clusters of between 40 to 60 people to continue on to blockades (BBC News, 2005b). Interactions between various “black blocks”, the groups who challenged the police in the industrial estate and police continued throughout the morning⁷⁸. The number of individuals who engaged with police in this manner was, in the words of the police, “a significant minority” (BBC News, 2005b). That is, they were by no means the majority of Hori-Zone related activists who participated in direct action (though they did solicit the majority of media attention). Nonetheless, as a result the police sought to seriously restrict movement in and out of Hori-Zone but only did so well after the majority of activists had left the camp. However, this was not the case for all groups and the “brat block” had to negotiate with police to conduct their action.

Brat Block-ades

What became known as the “brat block” (De Angelis & Diesner, 2005) was a blockade conducted by a group of parents and their children. The purpose of the “brat block” or “baby block” was to provide a safe outlet for children and their parents at Hori-Zone to participate in the blockade actions. The action was deliberately devised to have a “fluffy carnival” feel in a similar spirit to past “pink and silver” protests (Chesters & Welsh, 2004; Welsh, 2002; Welsh & Chesters, 2001). with children wearing bright coloured outfits and having their faces painted. Further accentuating the carnival style performance (Chesters & Welsh,

⁷⁸ The assertion is based both on second hand accounts heard during fieldwork, as well as the Indymedia “Black Block” video (Anonymous, 2005c). The incidents were also reported in the media, for example: BBC News (2005b).

2004, Juris, 2005; 2008a, 2008b) was the presence of a samba band, a staple “pink tactic”⁷⁹ as well as members of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA)⁸⁰.

The blockade, which initially took the form of a vehicle convoy led by a red double-decker bus with a “Make Charity History” banner strapped to its side, set out from the Hori-Zone eco-village the morning of July 6th (Eugenia and Sarah, 2005; Maquinavaja, 2005). The departure of the blockade was briefly delayed by police who, after the property damage in the industrial estate (see above), severely restricted movement to and from the camp. After gaining permission to leave, initially with a police escort, the “brat block” eventually positioned themselves on a bridge crossing the A9 motorway in close proximity to Gleneagles (Maquinavaja, 2005). Once in position on the A823 bridge, the carnival-style blockade opened with a kids picnic “by the feet of riot police” (Eugenia and Sarah, 2005) and continued for about three hours until participants dispersed to either take part in new actions or return to Hori-Zone⁸¹.

Adopting a carnival style was a deliberate tactic. First, for the benefit of the children by keeping them amused, and keeping the aura of the action light. Second, the use of a “pink frame” (Chesters & Welsh, 2004, p. 328) or “fluffy”

⁷⁹ The term “pink and silver” is often associated with the S26 demonstrations against the IMF/WB in Prague 2000. Pink and silver tactics emphasise “playful, ludic and carnivalesque forms of protest” (Chesters & Welsh, 2004, p. 328) with the aim of creating a carnival-style atmosphere to both engage and juxtapose the power of the state. For an insightful review of S26 as well as “pink and silver” tactics see: Chesters and Welsh (2004).

⁸⁰ CIRCA was a “pink” tactic where activists dressed up and acted like clowns in order to visually and physically juxtapose, ridicule and subvert the power of the state as channelled through the police. For more information on CIRCA see: Kolonel Klepto (2005); Harvie et al. (2005) ; CIRCA (2005).

⁸¹ For images and accounts from the Kid’s Block that were posted to Indymedia see: Eugenia and Sarah (2005); Maquinavaja (2005).

approach to the blockade presented a symbolic challenge to the coercive power of the state (via the police) through juxtaposing the “fluffy” and colourful action against the dark and ominous hues and intonations of police in riot gear. The use of children to blockade the road must also be seen as calculated. Activists appreciated that the presence of children restricted the actions of police and ultimately increased the impact of the blockade, “[the police] knew and we knew there was no way they could advance their line through the toddlers” (Evans, 2005, p. 204). Although the use of children to blockade the road gave the brat-block a clear tactical advantage, the blockade itself was more symbolic than strategic. That is, parents did not seek to put their children in harm’s way and the blockade itself, despite stopping traffic, had little potential to stop the G8 Summit from happening. Therefore while the tactic was a direct action in its physical blocking of traffic, this chapter will argue that the tactic is better conceptualised as spectacular action.

Hill Walking and Beacons of Dissent

Rambling the highlands is a well-known Scottish tradition. Given the positioning of Gleneagles Hotel in the Scottish Highlands, a group of activists associated with Dissent! declared their intention to gain entry to the hotel complex by adapting this Scottish pastime to their political purposes. Due to the distance between Hori-Zone and Gleneagles, hill walkers left the campsite on the evening of July 5th with a plan to “travel through the night and descend upon the G8 gang of vultures and drive them from Gleneagles” (Dissent!, 2005e). As with blockades, a number of affinity groups planned their own hill walking activities.

However, a “public” meeting was also held at Stirling University to discuss the action. Although the hill walking would not necessarily stop traffic, it would stretch security forces as part of a wider repertoire of actions deployed on the Day of Action. Thus the action, even if only symbolic, was intended as a challenge to, or at least to try and strain the coercive power of the state.

Related to the hill walking was the “Beacons of Dissent.” The action began on May 1st, 2005 where “warning beacons” were lit in the Scottish Ochil Hills by members of Dissent!. The event’s initial press release pronounced:

For years, when a community has seen danger approach, they have used fire to call for the aid of their peers as they prepare to resist the enemy. When a beacon was lit on a hilltop, the message travelled far and fast and aid would soon follow. Now, as the G8 leaders approach Gleneagles, the people of Scotland are preparing to light Beacons of Dissent...

We light the beacons to send a message around the world that those "leaders" are not welcome here and that we intend to resist their schemes to our utmost. We ask our friends in the world to hear our call and to respond to it. Those who can, light a Beacon announcing you will come and stand alongside us as we resist with our bodies. Those who can only be there in spirit, light a Beacon to say that we stand together in solidarity. Dissent (2005i)⁸².

The choice of May 1st for the inaugural action has symbolic significance as it is recognised as a holiday initially established to commemorate the struggles of the nineteenth century international labour movement⁸³. Within the UK, the holiday has since been adapted by social movements as a more general occasion to mark struggles against capitalism and is perhaps most evident in the London May Day riots of 2000⁸⁴. The selection of “May Day” to light warning beacons is

⁸² To view a video of the first Beacon of Dissent lit on the evening of April 30th, 2005 visit: http://scotland.indymedia.org/media/all/display/1500/index.php?limit_start=2760

⁸³ The recognition of May 1st as a holiday dates back to pagan times. The view of May 1st as a labour-related holiday may be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century and union struggles for the eight-hour work day.

⁸⁴ The May Day riots of 2000 are also of note given that a number of the organisations involved in the May Day protests were also associated with the Dissent! network. Perhaps most notably was the London-based Wombles collective whose members were transformed into “folk devils”

also interesting given the perhaps unintentional coincidence that “mayday” is recognised as an international distress signal.

The evening of July 5th marked the culmination of the Beacons of Dissent action. The most prominent beacon was lit at midnight on Blairdenon Hill, a 600 meter hill close to Gleneagles in the Ochil Hills of Scotland⁸⁵. The midnight lighting of the beacon was meant to signal the start of the Day of Action and Resistance on July 6th, 2005. The act of lighting beacons of the eve of the Summit can be loosely compared to the ritualistic lighting of the Olympic Flame to mark the start of the Olympic Games. However, the analogy is limited. While the Olympic opening ceremony is a carefully choreographed and stage managed media event broadcast live to a global audience, the Beacons of Dissent, on the other hand, was an event, while occurring inside the media frame, that transpired without the media’s presence. Moreover, the beacon could not even be seen from the Hori-Zone camp. The only coverage that did surface was a retrospective representation via activist media (Indymedia, 2005a). While the lack of media coverage does not diminish the symbolism of the action, it severely reduced, if not all together drained, the “symbolic power” from the action. With a lack of media witnesses, the beacons were what Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 116)

(Donson et al., 2004) by the British press. Folklore surrounding the Wombles was continued by the British in a series of newspaper articles, the most brazen of which was a full page spread “undercover” exposé of the Festival of Dissent as a “military “style gathering and offering a lengthy profile of a Wombles member implying that the individual was present at the camp even though this was *not* the case (Luck, 2005). The article by the journalist Adam Luck was a prime example of both irresponsible, inaccurate, and sensational media coverage placing an emphasis on emotion and spectacle over responsible reporting. For more on media coverage of the Gleneagles G8 Summit see: Rosie and Gorringer (2007).

⁸⁵ For additional coverage of the Blairdenon Hill beacon see: Indymedia (2005a).

labelled a “nonevent”; an action with no constructive impact on the network’s representation.

7.3 Blockades as Direct Action

The blockades were the apex and defining action of Dissent!. Taken at face value, the use of blockades can be seen as the use of coercive power; a physical act: direct action. The physicality of blockades was consistent with the network’s roots in the Earth First! (EF!) and the British environmental direct action (EDA) movement more generally (c.f. Chapter 1). The use of “direct action”⁸⁶ by the EDA is well documented (Anderson, 2004; Doherty et al., 2003; Wall, 1999). As discussed in Chapter 2, Wall’s (1999) analysis of EarthFirst! and the British anti-roads movement presents two activist perspectives on direct action “radical-flank” and “non-mediated” direct action. Drawing from McAdam (1996, p. 14), Wall’s first conceptualisation saw direct action as part of a “radical flank process” whereby the direct action and demands of the “extremists” are deliberately enacted to make the views of the moderates seem more palatable (Wall, 1999, p. 155). These actions, which often took the form of large scale non-violent direct action (NVDA), were “... largely symbolic, acting to legitimise the existing demands of environmental pressure groups” (Wall, 1999, p. 155). Although this view was held by some within the EDA, Seel and Plows (2000, pp. 116-119) argue that from the early 1990s onward EF! moved away from the “radical flank” perspective and became less concerned with how their actions

⁸⁶ For more on the history of direct action see: Mellor (1920) or Hauser (2003).

could push forward the agendas of more moderate organisations, instead focussing on their own movement, politics and actions.

Given Dissent!'s roots in EF!, it is not surprising that Dissent! tended to reject associations with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and in particular with Make Poverty History (MPH) who it was felt had co-opted G8 protests in order to lobby the G8, instead of question its legitimacy. A key difference many Dissent! members saw between themselves and MPH was the type of action being taken. That is, the Day of Action and blockaders were not deliberately designed to increase the appeal of MPH; quite the opposite⁸⁷. Instead it was intended to make a direct challenge to MPH *and* the G8 and therefore has greater resonance with the subsequent “non-mediated” conceptualisation of direct action rather than the radical flank perspective just discussed.

Wall's second approach, “non-mediatory direct action”, viewed direct action as “militant”, believing it “...should be applied with disruptive intent” (1999, p. 156). Further, it was often employed without either the cooperation of related activists groups or interaction with media. Emphasis was on the physical over the symbolic valuing “non-mediatory” experience. Thus, activists sought “to act rather than to represent their demands to mediating institutions, such as the media or a pressure group” (p. 156). This view of direct action is grounded in a philosophy that immediate and often confrontational measures need to be taken in order to bring about immediate change (Doherty et al., 2000; Jordan & Taylor, 2004). In

⁸⁷ Whether or not it had this effect is a different question altogether and is beyond the scope of this research. What can be said however is that, based on a review of media coverage and general survey of the atmosphere at the MPH march itself, it seemed that there was overwhelming and perhaps unquestioning support for the MPH objectives by many on the march with the exception of Dissent! members (and perhaps others as well) .

the context of the EDA this meant using various techniques to occupy contested sites or sabotaging equipment to stop work at such sites. In both cases, the explicit intention was to cause an immediate (if only temporary) halt to the project while simultaneously increasing financial costs of doing business (see: Jordan, 2002; Plows, 2002; Routledge, 1997; Seel et al., 2000; Wall, 1999).

Dissent!, having developed out of the EFI, carried forward this perspective of direct action. In fact, the network was founded on an endorsement of direct action through its ratification of the PGA Hallmarks which called for a “confrontational attitude” and the use of “direct action and civil disobedience” (People's Global Action, 2001). The G8 Leaders Summit also has a history of direct action associated with it. At previous international gatherings and most notably the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle, Washington, direct interventions successfully shut down the conference. Since then various movements and networks have carried forward the sceptre in the hopes of achieving a similar end (Jordan, 2002, p. 64).

Although the tactic was successful in Seattle, on the heels of mass urban protests in Quebec City at the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Summit in April, 2001, and the G8 Summit in Genoa, Italy in July, 2001, international summits began to seek out more secluded and secure locations increasing the distance and physical barricades between delegates and dissenters. For example, the 2002 G8 Summit was held at hotel nestled in the bosom of the Canadian Rockies, in 2003 in the French Alps, in 2004 on a private resort island

off the Atlantic coast and in 2005 in a luxury hotel complex surrounded by the Scottish Highlands, razor wire, security fences and riot police.

The move from urban conference centres to fortified rural locations has severely restricted the effectiveness of direct action and the ability to “shut down” a summit. But, while the landscape of international summits has changed, the rhetoric has remained the same. From this perspective, Dissent! can be seen as attempting to carry forward the tradition of “non-mediatory” direct action started in Seattle via its efforts to blockade and in so doing, stop the G8 Summit. Yet, to argue that the actions of the network should be seen as “non-mediatory” (Wall, 1999, p. 156) overlooks the prevalent, though perhaps unspoken, role of symbolism that has seeped into this form of protest. Recognising this, the next section will argue that while Dissent! espoused a discourse of resistance to the G8 Summit, the intention was never to “shut down” the G8 Summit and therefore engage in “non-mediatory” direct action, but to only be *seen as trying to do so* and therefore engage in spectacular direct action. The blockades initiated by Dissent! were physical actions with symbolic consequences; *spectacular action* inside the media frame.

7.4 Blockades as Spectacular Action

The binary of direct action presented above failed to adequately capture the actions of Dissent!. In lieu of these shortcomings and the previously discussed challenges of conceptualising direct action, I propose *spectacular action* which is defined as the ritualised performance of resistance which places emphasis on symbolic over physical disruption. The concept, while evident

during fieldwork also emerged during interviews when participants were asked to discuss what they believed was the objective of the protests. Guy, an activist with roots in the EDA, explicitly saw Dissent! as undertaking “spectacular action” giving rise to the concept’s name. Guy defined spectacular action in his own terms as follows:

Spectacular action is action that you take... in order to make people think that there is action being taken. So you are doing it more to put on a show. So a media stunt, for example, is the ultimate version. This is the sort of thing that groups like Greenpeace who, you know, lobbying. So even when you are doing a direct action you are doing it as essentially as a form of lobbying. A spectacular [action] is not for the – you are not trying to get a particular thing done within the limits of the action...you are trying do something because of effects it will have on other people whether it is the general public or some elite who will then take action. So, indirect action. (Interview with Guy, 21/04/2005)

Key to the above view of spectacular action is the argument that protest actions are undertaken *not to achieve their declared aim* such as shutting down the G8, *but to create the appearance of attempting to do so*. Along similar lines Andre, reflecting on the purpose of the protests, suggested “... the whole point is not shutting down the Summit – it’s being *seen* to be shutting down the Summit” (Interview with Andre, 18/08/2005, my emphasis). Therefore, the objective of spectacular action is to create the perception and provide the appearance of resistance. In sum, it is a ritualised performance of resistance which places emphasis on symbolic over physical disruption.

Returning to Guy, “...actual disruption of the G8 Summit is a sort of minor impetus... there’s certainly other ways to disrupt the Summit through tactical targeting of certain companies and you know, doing all sorts of things” (Interview with Guy, 21/04/2005). Guy asserts “actual” or physical disruption of the G8 Summit was of slight importance as activists were instead focussed on its symbolic disruption. This is not to argue that physical confrontation does not take

place. Nor does it undermine the effects of such actions. Traffic delays, police harassment, criminal records and vandalised shop fronts all have tangible or “real world” consequences. Further, as argued above, the process of organising protests via the application of pre-configurative politics is also important for identity construction and reaffirmation. Having said this, the point being made is that despite Dissent!’s rhetoric, the network never intended to shut the G8 Summit down. Instead, and as Hamish neatly sums up, the G8 Summit was seen as a media event that needed to be met by media-oriented – spectacular – resistance:

[The] G8...[is] meant to be spectacular... it seems to be about more of a media opportunity, to be seeming to be doing things, rather than doing things. And I think the response to that is spectacular as well. It's a spectacle in and of itself... (Interview with Hamish, 09/07/2005).

The connection that resistance, despite emulating the form of traditional “non-mediated direct action”, was primarily symbolic and can be seen in Chapter 4’s discussion of a “duty to protest”; the need for resistance to be registered by the media. The connection is also brought out by Gregory who, when asked what he believed the significance of protesting the G8 Summit was, responded:

I think it’s largely of symbolic importance. I think the, most of the decisions get made and I think the kind of G8 itself is largely kind of symbolic. Ahhh, you know, press opportunity for shaking hands and inking the paper and so forth. So I think... what Dissent! was trying to do was direct in terms of trying to blockade it and stop it from happening and so forth but I also think at the same time it’s a kind of you know, *symbolic show of resistance* against a kind of symbolic meeting of power. And I think it’s just trying to articulate a very kind of forceful resistance to what’s going on with the G8... (Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005, my emphasis)

Above, Gregory describes both the G8 Summit and its opposition as forms of symbolic action. The quote also hints at an unresolved, or at least often unacknowledged network-wide tension between non-mediated direct action in

terms of “blocking” and “stopping” the G8 Summit and spectacle, the “symbolic show of resistance.”

From the network’s inception Dissent! members eagerly planned a repertoire of blockades and similar direct-action tactics to resist the G8 Summit. However, throughout the process of planning the blockades there was little, if any acknowledgement let alone discussion as to the (im)possibility of stopping the G8, considering that it was known that G8 leaders would likely be flown to Gleneagles by helicopter, and physically delaying support staff or entourages would not stop the meeting. Further, the implications of conducting “direct action” inside the media frame – despite many implicitly recognising the G8 as a media event (cf. Chapter 4) – were never discussed.

While interviewees would concede and reflect upon the role of symbolism (and media for that matter) in their actions, the network practice and process of organising protest treated the blockades as if they were a form of non-mediated direct action. In short, it seemed as if many in Dissent! wanted to see their actions as outside of the media frame. Support for this argument resides in a comment piece published in *The Guardian* newspaper two weeks prior to the Gleneagles G8 Summit. The article, written by a collective of Dissent! members though *not* an official publication of the network, argued that the British government was supporting Live 8 and MPH in a bid to control opposition to the G8 Summit thereby “creating the world’s first ‘embedded’ mass protest” (Summer & Jones, 2005). The article concludes:

If on July 6, when the summit opens, the multitude who converge on Edinburgh decide not to play their allocated role in power’s spectacle but to join together with those from around the world taking direct action by blockading the summit, while demonstrating real

alternatives to the way in which we currently live, then perhaps history will have made one of those leaps that happen only a few times in a generation – a leap that restores our faith in our own power to change things (Summer & Jones, 2005).

The passage implicitly presents both MPH and Live 8 as playing their “allocated roles” in an “embedded protest” while suggesting that the actions of Dissent! are outside of this. Along with deeper ideological disparities, many within Dissent! critiqued MPH and Live 8 for placing too strong an emphasis on symbolism which was seen to be ineffective. MPH participants literally marched in a circle in order to achieve the effect of Edinburgh being encompassed in a white band (cf. Chapter 1) while one could participate in Live 8 by watching television. Moreover, a number of interviewees also pointed to the anti-war movement and in particular the world-wide demonstrations held on February 15, 2003 as further evidence of the ineffectiveness of symbolic action.

Paradoxically, as argued in Chapter 4, the G8 Summit was seen by activists as a media event – a symbolic happening – and interviewees acknowledged that the network’s response to the Summit was largely symbolic (just as Live 8 and MPH were) a view which was consistent amongst my interviewees before and after the mobilisation. Yet this assertion contradicts the perception given in *The Guardian* article where Dissent! is presented as outside of “power’s spectacle.” The authors’ claim is rooted in an interpretation of Situationism and specifically the work of Debord (1977) cited in Chapter 2 who believed that the spectacular could not be challenged by participating in the spectacle – which is what MPH and Live 8 were seen to do – but only by creating a “non-spectacular rupture” (Anonymous, 2008) a “situation” outside of the spectacle. In light of this, the above expressed desire to conduct “direct action”

at the G8 Summit can be interpreted as an effort to bypass and therefore confront the spectacle (in the Situationist sense of the word) through the use of non-mediated direct action.

This application of direct action overlooks three crucial points. First, the direct actions are conducted inside the media frame and therefore underwritten by the spectacle of the media event. Second, the intent of the actions, as evidenced through the comments of interviewees though not necessarily network discourse, was symbolic. The goal of what *The Guardian* article refers to as “direct action” is to be seen resisting the G8 and *is therefore participating in and not rejecting the spectacle*. Third, and related, the actions of Dissent! activists are themselves embedded in a larger movement-level ritual of protest as evidenced by the history of GJM protests and the “perceived news scripts” analysed in Chapter 4. Thus just as the authors of *The Guardian* article suggested that participants within MPH and Live 8 were fulfilling their “allocated role” in the spectacle, so too, I argue, was Dissent!. The difference being there was a disjuncture in network discourse where there was a failure to admit, on a network-level, that it too was part of the media event and while the discourse may have denied this, their actions confirm it.

The bulk of this chapter has focussed on the blockades and the Day of Action on July 6th. Yet the summit was scheduled to run for three days between July 6th – 8th, 2005. Further evidence to conceptualise the activities of Dissent! as spectacular action can be drawn from the fact that the network had very few activities planned beyond the first day of the Summit (for a full list of actions see

Appendix 2). Yet, the lack of activities by the camp were soon eclipsed by a much larger media event: the July 7th bombings of London's transportation infrastructure. The final section of this chapter analyses the impact of the bombings on the G8 protests and highlights the temporality of spectacular action.

7.5 The July 7th London Bombings – “We had our 15 minutes”

This thesis is premised on the argument that the 2005 G8 can be seen as a routinised political media event, and actions at such events can be seen as spectacular action. The majority of Dissent!'s energy was poured into the July 6th Day of Action although the Summit was a three-day affair. The lack of any major protest activities for July 7th or 8th highlights the emphasis on spectacular action; the idea that resistance had to be seen to juxtapose the opening of the Summit to coincide with media coverage marking the start of the media event⁸⁸. If, however, the network had planned actions on a similar scale for July 7th or 8th, they would have undoubtedly faced a heavy challenge executing them.

Soon after blockaders set out from Hori-Zone on July 6th, security repercussions began to be felt at the camp. From about 8am that morning police used their powers to declare a Section 60 under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, giving the police the powers of stop and search⁸⁹. Originally, Section 60 was intended to allow police to search for offensive weapons in an effort to stem football hooliganism. However, the power also has a history of

⁸⁸ This pattern of focusing protest activities on the opening day of the summit also parallels personal experience organising and undertaking demonstrations against the 2002 G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta where the majority of energy was put into the first day of the Summit.

⁸⁹ For more on the policing of the Gleneagles G8 Summit, see the statement from the G8 Legal Support Group (2005).

being used against anti-capitalist demonstrations particularly at the London “May Day Riots” of 2001. At Hori-Zone, the police capitalised on this power to severely restrict the mobility of people coming in and out of the camp. Also, despite police not having the power under Section 60 to officially photograph those whom they searched, the presence of the Forward Intelligence Team as well as other officers armed with handheld cameras ensured activists were caught on camera. The Section 60 remained in effect throughout the 6th and onto July 7th. Around 2:30am on July 7th, the police strengthened their presence at Hori-Zone by deploying approximately 26 vans of riot police in order to establish a “safety cordon” around the camp sealing the camp’s entrance. Nobody was allowed in or out “for the safety of the public.”⁹⁰

Hori-Zone’s heightened security captured the attention of many international media and, from 7am on July 7th, journalists began hovering around the site but were unable to cross the police “safety cordon.” Around 9:20am rumours of a “power surge” on the London Underground circled the camp⁹¹. Soon after it became clear that the “power surge” was, in fact, a coordinated series of bombs.

At Hori-Zone it was difficult to obtain information about the unfolding events in London. On site there was one small television inside a trailer beside the gated entrance that some individuals gravitated towards. However capacity

⁹⁰ Hori-Zone was intended to have its own security system to alert people to security breaches in an emergency situation. While this system was not used, people in the Stirling camp were woken by a number of individuals, who were most likely inebriated, shouting “Wake up, wake up, the police are raiding the camp.” Understandably, this caused an initial commotion in the camp.

⁹¹ In fact, I was one of the first people to relay this information to those at the camp as my wife had called me from a London tube station informing me of the suspension of the entire Underground due to what was initially referred to as a “power surge”. She then called back to relay further information, and the fact that the power surge had in fact been a series of bombs.

was capped to about 40 people standing three deep with others flowing outside of the trailer simply to listen to the news. People also began assembling around automobiles in the camp parking lot that had their car stereos turned up and tuned to BBC *Radio 4*.

By 10am, a little over an hour after the bomb blasts, the scale of the events in London was clear to everyone at Hori-Zone: police, activist, and media alike. The London bombings had at least two clear impacts on the activity at Hori-Zone. First, it marked the end of media attention on Hori-Zone and effectively signalled the end of the media event, from the protest side at least. Media events have limited life-cycles. However this G8 Summit as a media event was cut short on its second day by a more spectacular interruption of routine. Second, it caused activists to critically reflect on any future actions in light of the bombings, and simultaneously deflated the spirits of activists at Hori-Zone.

The Media Frame Closes, the Camp Stays Open

"I think there was an immediate and total closure of political discussion space."
(Interview with Darren, 07/08/2005)

The London bombings of July 7th brought an abrupt end to media coverage of the protests against the Gleneagles G8 Summit. The spectacle was superseded by an even bigger spectacle, and media attention quickly shifted. While there were approximately twenty journalists milling about at the camp at 10am, this number was halved by 11am. Moreover, of those who remained, almost all of them were local journalists. As with the "Open Hour" the geographic proximity kept local journalists at the site. National and international news

however moved on, almost immediately. Claudia described the scene at the camp after the news of the bombings as follows:

There was a lot of media hanging around outside the camp in the days following 07/07. They were literally lying on the grass, having a kind of break, and feeling lucky that they weren't in London, probably. They weren't interested at all, because they knew that there was no-one actually asking them for a story. So that was the direction they were getting... The focus had just gone, basically, and you could see it, visibly. At one minute they were kind of like vying at the gates for interviews and trying to get in, and the next minute they were all just lying around having a picnic. So, we'd say "we're not really the story any more, are we?" "No, we've got to be here just in case anything happens" but they knew that....that was it, really. (Interview with Claudia, 25/08/2005)

On the heels of the London bombings both activists and journalists recognised that the window of opportunity that had been opened around the G8 Summit had shut. The threat of "performed violence" (Juris, 2005b) and spectacular action in Scotland had been eclipsed by a vicious act of visceral violence in London that had been executed to have both real and symbolic reverberations. The London bombings displaced Dissent! by offering the media not only a more spectacular event but also a more "extreme" group to focus on:

It seemed this G8 had everything from the pop stars to the Islamic fundamentalists and in a way, it was like once that happened we lost our role in the media's eyes as the kind of extremist and so we somehow didn't have a role anymore. (Interview with Claudia, 25/08/2005)

A tension may be drawn between Claudia's reference to "having a role" and the concept of "perceived news scripts" suggested earlier in this thesis. In Chapter 4, news scripts were defined as interviewees' perceptions of the social expectations media have of them as demonstrators. As shown in Chapter 4, perceived news scripts were believed to place representational limitations on the possibility of media coverage. While the news scripts were largely seen by activists as negative, Claudia's comment elucidates a potential perceived value as the news

scripts, while limiting the representation of Dissent! at least afforded them status in the media; a status which was lost in the wake of the bombings.

Related to Claudia's observation, the deprioritisation of Dissent! meant that news stories that had been arranged by the CSC were dropped. Gregory offered the following example:

There was... a fantastic piece that was all lined-up with a journalist from the Observer who wanted to speak to someone who had breached the perimeter fence and...do a piece with them taking a kind of blow-by-blow account of what happened on the day combined with a kind of more in-depth political analysis of why we were doing it and what was going on... [but] then because of the... bombings it was totally shunted off and didn't happen. And I think there was kind of lots of little things like this that we had lined up and we were kind of arranging that kind of just all got kind of pushed off to the side because of that. (Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005)

Activists interviewed for this research were unanimous in their view that, especially in terms of media attention, the London bombings eclipsed their own activities. Reflecting on the events, Robyn commented:

I think that in terms of the media, as soon as London happened, it was over. The G8 protests from that moment on were over. There was going to be no interest whatsoever. (Interview with Robyn, 21/07/2005)

Below, Hamish presents a similar analysis and exhibits both an understanding of news cycles and newsworthiness as well as a reflexivity as to his own position – as someone demonstrating against the G8 – in the cycle:

In the grand scheme of things, I don't think, and also the nature of news reporting and stuff, it's the hot issue of the day as well. And I don't mean to sort of belittle in any way what went on in London, because it was fucking bad and disgusting and totally deserved to get as much coverage as possible. And that's where people's interest is going to lie. So yeah, I wasn't surprised that media sort of didn't have as much interest or time or resources to put to what it is that we were doing. We were the story of the day for awhile. We had our 15 minutes. (Interview with Hamish, 09/07/2005)

Similar to Hamish, Guy felt that the abrupt way in which the protests were ended by the London bombings illustrated instability and temporality of the contemporary media environment:

It was sort of an indication really that you can do your groundwork for a million years and talk to friendly journalists all you like but, when another bigger story with more bleeding comes on the scene they will drop you. Because you are only there - because you are sort of shiny and you are the thing of the month. And it shows how suddenly we can just you know, spend years and years preparing [and] can just sort of disappear off the media. (Interview with Guy, 15/08/2005)

Guy, nor any of the other interviewees, expressed comments which questioned the significance of the London bombings. This was taken as a given by all. What is interesting about his comment is a recognition of the utility of Dissent! to the media as temporal, dramatic copy but only to the extent until something more spectacular happens. In short, activists exhibited a reflexive awareness as to Dissent!'s precarious, temporal and vulnerable position in a representational arena that is dictated by sensationalism and news cycles along with external events – in this case the bombings – beyond their control. Moreover the comments of Claudia, Guy, Hamish and other interviewees also exhibited a sensitivity to news values and lay theories of media similar to those already analysed in Chapter 4.

Scott offered a slightly different take which both encompasses an awareness of media cycles and an appraisal of the overall mood in the camp:

I think everybody realised that whatever happened, that was going to be the media, the news cycle, not for the next day, but for the next seven days. It was going to be nothing but the bombings and I think as soon as people realised that it was confirmed that it really was a series of terrorist attacks, it didn't really matter what happened in Scotland. (Interview with Scott, 22/09/2005)

Based on fieldwork, Scott's sentiments accurately capture the mood of activists at Hori-Zone. The London bombings not only meant the closure of the media frame but also had a deflating impact on the spirits of activists and caused many to think reflexively about any possible further actions during the G8.

Closure – Activist Action, Reflection and Representation

In the wake of the London bombings many activists felt there was a need to rethink and curtail potential demonstrations so as not to be portrayed by media as being unsympathetic. The following three interview extracts illustrate this point:

I think definitely there was a real kind of sense that people didn't want to do anything that might associate them with what happened in London. Even people's motivations for going out on action was definitely...people were less sure about what they would do, I think. I think for me, it is very surreal. I don't think I can understand it, because I am living in this kind of other world and London doesn't seem very real at the moment. I hadn't seen any pictures until I saw this paper and just, oh...it's horrible. (Interview with Miriam, 08/07/2005)

When the bombings actually happened, it meant – I guess it changed the whole atmosphere of the camp. Like, our actions – we didn't want to be disrespectful to what happened or to be given the opportunity to be taken completely out of context, you know? Like "violent protestors celebrate as London burns." Whatever trashy headline they want. (Interview with Chris, 20/07/2005)

They took the little wind they had completely out of the sails. I remember getting the phone calls on the Thursday morning and immediately ringing friends at Stirling to beg them not to demonstrate as they had the day before – some sort of presence yes, but they would be hammered by the media and politicians if they engaged in any civil disobedience and they would also be physically hammered by the cops. It didn't matter in the end because the police completely surrounded the camp. I know that most people felt the same – *we can't protest while people have just been bombed because it looks bad and how we are portrayed is very important* – we were already being hammered but to go out the next day as if we didn't care would have been a disaster. (Interview with Harry, 28/08/2005, my emphasis)

The comments from all three interviewees capture an emotion and line of thought that was clearly visible across the camp. The extracts also reveal a level of reflexivity and sensitivity towards the practices of media. There is a mindfulness expressed of how the media can interpret an action – irrespective of its intentions – and the implications this could have on the portrayal of the activists. The potential (mis)interpretation of media became a limiting factor of any potential actions lending further credence to the argument that activists were very much

aware of their position and the embeddedness of the protests inside the media frame.

Despite the need felt by many activists to keep their actions in check, the reality was that there was little protest planned for July 7th. Moreover, the policing of the camp was such that any actions that would have been planned for July 7th or beyond would, more than likely, have been severely hindered by the police. One action that did go ahead on July 7th was the rather spontaneous creation of a memorial in solidarity with, and in memory of victims of the London bombings (see Figure 15). The following quote from Sarah reflects both the mood of the camp and the memorial:

I think it was huge, because the atmosphere went from being fairly defiant and celebratory to a kind of...I mean, the way I remember it, it's the kind of sort of silence descended on the camp and some sort of weird perspective came into peoples heads...the weird thing was the whole camp calmed down. Like, the police calmed down. You know, the campers calmed down. Like, there was a general feeling of calm because nobody quite knew where to go with it. What had happened. It was really strange. Then there was that vigil where... police and protesters all lit candles at the camp... and all of a sudden there was this weird unification of the fact that something wider had happened that no one had expected. And people were shocked by it. (Interview with Sarah, 21/07/2007)

The London bombings evoked an emotional response from many activists, a state of disbelief and silence. Moreover, it saw a paradoxical and certainly fleeting merger between activists and authorities, two groups who had previously been engaged in both a physical and symbolic struggle, both lighting candles at the memorial in an act of remembrance and tribute to the victims of the London bombings. The symbolic contest that had previously played out on the ground and in the media had ended. The media frame had shut and the media event was eclipsed. Dissent!'s fifteen minutes were over.



Figure 15: London bombing memorial created at Hori-Zone.

By the afternoon of July 7th attention had turned away from protest and towards returning home. July 8th and 9th saw a steady stream of activists leaving Hori-Zone. Over these two days police maintained their presence at the camp and continued their searches, but movement to and from the camp was much more open in a bid to encourage activists to leave. Moreover, on July 8th police organised a free train from Stirling to London in a further effort to reduce activist numbers. By the time I left the camp, on the afternoon of July 9th the last official day of Hori-Zone, it was all but deserted, and only the camp take down crew

remained⁹². Although the G8 Summit had only officially concluded a day prior, activists and particularly the media had moved well beyond the protests of the Gleneagles G8 Summit.

7.6 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been on a site of protest at the Gleneagles G8 Summit – Hori-Zone – and a collection of actions launched by Dissent! from the camp. The chapter began by arguing that due to the camp's position inside the media frame there were two differences between Hori-Zone and past direct action camps. First it was argued that whereas past protest camps were characterised by their permanence, Hori-Zone was exemplified by its temporality. This attribute, I argue, is intimately linked to the camp's association with, and position inside the media event, whereby the camp's longevity was tethered to the life-cycle of the media event. Second, media influenced the very creation of the camp and, by extension, the protests. That is, Hori-Zone was created to provide a convergence space for activists to engage in political contention at a media event.

The position of Hori-Zone inside the media frame was shown to create tensions between competing uses for the space captured in a front stage/ back stage dialectic (Benford & Hunt, 1992, p. 40; Goffman, 1959). The two uses of the camp, while conflicting, were different sides of the same coin. On the one hand, the presence of mainstream media and the awareness thereof by Dissent!

⁹² A timeline of events from July 6-8th at Hori-Zone was published in a series of articles on Indymedia. The sources for the timelines are as follows: July 6, Anonymous (2005d); July 7, Anonymous (2005e); July 8, Anonymous (2005a).

activists, led to the positioning of Hori-Zone as a space on the “Hollywood set” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 17) of a media event where symbolic actions were advertised in advance to, and a show was put on for audiences, and particularly the media. This use and conceptualisation was shown to be in tension with activists’ simultaneous view of Hori-Zone as an “activist space” and, as such, one that was free from the representations of news media. These competing conceptualisations of Hori-Zone – one oriented to news media to manage its visibility and the other away from media to *manage its invisibility* – led to the deployment of three network media-oriented practices to manage the spatial dynamics of Hori-Zone and the presence of news media.

This chapter argued that the banning of news media from inside Hori-Zone was an effort to exert symbolic power over mainstream media. Meanwhile, the “open hour” strategy, while a concession to mainstream media demands, given the limited window in which this occurred – one literal hour during the *entire mobilisation* – I argued that this practice places primacy on Hori-Zone as an activist space over a media space. The creation of the media gazebo reinforced this divide by intercepting and managing journalists in order to maintain camp boundaries. In conclusion, Hori-Zone was a “site of mediation” (Martin-Barbero, 1993) and its status as such led to competing and conflicting conceptualisations as to the camp’s function as a symbolic versus a physical space. In the end, the network’s policy of abstention was given precedence but its position inside the media frame, and activists awareness of this, led to the development and

deployment of specific direct media-oriented practices to manage the front stage in tandem with the back stage elements of Hori-Zone.

The second half of the chapter shifted from a focus on space, to a study of action. Of specific interest was Dissent!'s *Day of Action* which called on activists to blockade the G8 Summit on its opening day. Although a diverse range of tactics were deployed to enact the *Day of Action*, four specific actions were analysed (the black block protests, the kids block and the beacons/hill walking) as a form of direct action. Drawing on Wall (1999, p. 156), two definitions of direct action were given: radical flank and non-mediated. However I argue that because Dissent!'s actions were deployed at a media event, neither theorisation of direct action is appropriate. In lieu of this, Dissent!'s actions, I argue, are better understood as spectacular action.

The idea of spectacular action was put forward to analyse the activities of Dissent! in order to account for, or at least draw attention to, how the media event dynamics influenced direct action. Drawing on fieldwork and interviews, the purpose of Dissent!'s demonstrations and actions were purposefully designed to create the appearance of physical resistance while in fact placing emphasis on symbolic over physical disruption. Dissent! activists, when interviewed on an individual level viewed their actions as largely symbolic. Paradoxically, on a network-level Dissent! differentiated itself from networks such as the NGO collation Make Poverty History through a critique on its emphasis on symbolic action. While Dissent! was shown to live its beliefs through the use of pre-configurative politics, despite some claims to the contrary such as *The Guardian*

article, *the network was firmly embedded in – as opposed to separate from – the media event*. Part of, and not separate from the spectacle.

Dissent! placed the majority of its resources into protests on the first day of the Summit, with little attention given to the remaining two days. This allocation of resources, I argue, stands as further evidence of the use of spectacular action. From a media perspective, the timing of the protests is understandable as the *Day of Action* coincided with the beginning of the media event. Challenging the political spectacle of the G8 Leaders Summit requires a visible presence of resistance at the Summit's opening.

As Chapter 1 argued and reasserted in this Chapter, the ability to effectively deploy non-mediated direct action at G8 summits has become severely hampered. Yet Dissent!, as evident in their discourse, still expressed a desire to do so. The media event dynamics, coupled with the increase in distance between delegates and dissenters, alters the execution of direct action. Direct action conducted at a media event, I argue, becomes the simulation of direct action. Underwritten by the media frame, the execution of direct action becomes a performance. The transformation of direct action into spectacular action reflects a contemporary challenge of political contention in the mediapolis.

The fact that little action had been planned beyond July 6th by Dissent! was swiftly swept aside with news of the July 7th bombings in London. The bombings marked an abrupt closure to the media window of opportunity opened around the event. The London bombings also highlighted the temporality and fragility of spectacular action, something some activists also commented on.

Although the media quickly moved on from the G8 protests, Dissent!'s actions open up questions around the relationship between politics, direct action and spectacular action. Routledge (2003, p. 343) has hinted at a perpetuating cycle of summit-style protests arguing that the symbolic force of previous mobilisations serves to inspire subsequent mobilisations of dissent. Evidence of this can be seen in the cycle of protest surrounding the G8 with demonstrations both before the 2005 G8 (Italy, 2001, Canada 2002, USA 2003, France 2004), and after (Russia 2006 and Germany 2007). Moreover the “symbolic force” of these mobilisations is also evident in the “duty to protest” analysed in Chapter 4. What this chapter has shown is that what activists participated in, largely by their own admission, was a media event. Moreover, I argue that the presence of mainstream media at the Summit impacted both the site and act of political contention. At the *site* of protest – Hori-Zone – the underwriting function of the media frame created tensions between the front stage and back stage use of the space requiring activists to develop specific practices to manage this, whereas the acts of political contention were transformed into spectacular action.

Paradoxically, my interviewees clearly recognised the Gleneagles G8 Summit as a media event and they also placed its resistance in this context. However, on a network level Dissent! failed and arguably refused to acknowledge the underwriting role media play in the enactment of contention at such summits. This refusal can be linked to the politics of the network and a general rejection by the anti-capitalist movement of corporate media which has come to manifest itself in a practice of dismissing the value of mainstream media.

Yet media played a critical and inescapable role at such events and have pushed performance and political spectacle to the centre of contemporary politics. As the Retort Collective have noted, “control over the image is now key to social power” (RETORT, 2005, p. 28). This fact did not go unacknowledged by all activists as the discussion on the CSC made clear. But media was also shown to be an extremely controversial and divisive issue.

There are obvious tactical reasons not to have allowed media into Hori-Zone, just as there are valid arguments affirming the merits of radical political networks like Dissent!. Present concern centres on the implications of the simultaneous rejection and acceptance of media. For instance, while summit activism has a legacy of direct action at a media event, it becomes both spectacular, and at the same time re-positioned, within an “allocated role” by dominant producers and mainstream audiences. It could be rebutted, as was intimated by some interviewees, that spectacular action is an evolved means of political challenge; maintaining visibility in the mediapolis. Even if true, such a claim leaves unexplored the implications of this reorientation. The shift from direct to spectacular action illustrates how the practice of radical politics at a media event is underwritten by media. Activist practices and objectives are recalibrated to function within the boundaries of a media event. Moreover, there is no escaping the stage that is the media event; activist practices, be it simply the barring of media from Hori-Zone, become mediatised and integrated into the unfolding narrative of the event.

A dialogue around the role of media at the site of protest and the impact of this on activist actions must be entered in to. Interestingly, RETORT place much hope in the rise of the “movement of movements”, of which Dissent! can be considered a part of because, they argue, their politics “depend so little on the new apparatus of spectacle” (2005, p. 192). While the authors root this claim in the idea behind the various large scale protests are multiple indigenous movements, especially in the south; in the north, the “movement of movements” is largely driven by spectacle. Thus, if the media event that was the 2005 G8 is regarded as a media spectacle and, if the Retort Collective is correct in their assertion that the “spectacle is hollow” at its centre, what are the implications for the effectiveness of social action conducted at the site of a media event? Is radical action at the site of media event any more than a spectacular performance? More generally, what does this say about the position that media occupy in society and the potential for social change? This line of questioning will now be considered in the final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 8. Conclusions

The goal of this thesis has been to understand the ways in which media as a process has become embedded in the practices of social movement actors particularly at Summit-style demonstrations. Past approaches to the media/movement dynamic have often focussed on the media's framing of protest, overlooking the actions and interactions at the sites of protest.

Responding to this gap, this thesis employed the concept of mediation to view the interaction with and through media as a process – something we live in, with and through – to study interactions with media at the site of protest. This resulted in the central research question: *How is the process of mediation articulated in the practices of Global Justice Movement activists towards mainstream media in the preparation for and enactment of acts of contention at a political media event?* Above, the process of mediation is positioned as a central concept and while it played an important role, as argued in Chapter 2, its analytical utility rests in how it orients my research. The process of mediation is studied through analysing media-oriented practices. Drawing on Couldry (2004, p. 117), media-oriented practices were defined as the ways in which social actors think about, react to and use media as well as how media influences related social activities.

My central research question expressed a general interest in the Global Justice Movement. However, this manifested itself through the contextually grounded empirical analysis of a single event – the Gleneagles G8 Summit – and through the lens of a specific network: Dissent!. As argued in Chapter 2, the

concept of the Global Justice Movement is opaque as the movement is the product of overlapping, fluid and multilayered relations.

Consequently, I argued that analytical concepts were necessary to separate out what is otherwise a messy reality. To this end, direction towards the theorisation of social movements was taken from Diani (2000, p. 387) who presented a definition which drew strengths from the American resource mobilization school and European new social movement research.

To analyse media-oriented practices across multiple components of the network, citing the shortcomings of Gerhards and Rucht (1992, p. 588), I theorised four separate analytical levels to study social movements: (1) activists, (2) group, (3) network and (4) movement. I argued that this theorisation of social movement levels was appropriate as it provided a means to differentiate aspects of Dissent!. Although Dissent! is clearly situated within the Global Justice Movement, my thesis does not explicitly analyse the movement level. This position was taken due to the challenge of extending any general claims from a network level to a movement level given the diverse composition of organisations affiliated with the Global Justice Movement and the crucial role that context (social, political and cultural) plays in the trajectory of political contention.

My conceptualisation of social movement levels also directed the focus of my sub-research questions. Four sub-research questions were extracted from my central research question. Sub-research question one focussed predominantly on the *activists level* and how the process of mediation was articulated in activist practices. The emphasis was on the individuals who

comprised Dissent!. Sub-research question two dealt predominantly with the *network level* (Dissent!) investigating how Dissent! as a whole planned for and interacted with media. While moving from the activist to the group level might, at first, appear counterintuitive, having established who was in the network, it was then important to analyse the politics of Dissent! as the network-level politics served to contextualise the type of direct and indirect media-oriented practices. Sub-research question three was interested in the *group level*, analysing the specific media-oriented practices developed and deployed by the CounterSpin Collective. Sub-research question four was interested in the site of protest and actions which emanated from it; actions inside the media frame (McCurdy, 2008, p. 300).

An empirical chapter was dedicated to each sub-research question in order to elucidate the ways in which media are incorporated into the practice of activism across three levels in Dissent! (Chapter 4: activists level; Chapter 5: network level; Chapter 6: group level) and at the site of protest (Chapter 7). This concluding Chapter presents the main empirical findings of my thesis and emphasises their theoretical contributions and the new paths opened up for future research.

This Chapter is divided into four sections. First, reflections on my choices in terms of research design, method and theory are presented. Next, key empirical findings are reviewed across the activist, group and network level along with the space of protest and, where relevant, contributions to knowledge are stated. The third section discusses the contribution of my empirical findings to theory first in the field of media and communication followed by social movement

studies. The final section considers the wider implications of the (re)orienting social actors towards media and suggests avenues for future research in light of these conclusions.

8.1 Reflections on Research Design and Method

In the design and implementation of this research a number of decisions were taken which inevitably influenced the shape and the findings of my thesis. The research design was defined by the decision to focus on a single case study: Dissent!. Had more resources been available, a comparative approach along the lines of Carroll and Ratner (1999) could have been conducted. This would have allowed me to contrast Dissent!'s media-oriented practices with one or two other networks mobilising against the Gleneagles G8 Summit. Similarly, a comparative analysis of Dissent! within similar actions such as the German mobilisation against the 2007 Rostock G8 Summit would have been interesting to compare the media-oriented practices used in different temporal, social, political and economic contexts. However, a single case study was selected sacrificing breadth across events, and across multiple networks within one event, to focus in-depth on a single network. Given the time and resources available, this was the most appropriate strategy.

The approach to Dissent! was qualitative, drawing on the techniques of interviews and participant observation. The ethnographic study of Dissent! posed a challenge due to its scale; attending one event or meeting meant missing out on a number of others. This experience is no different from activists in Dissent! who had to decide what meetings or protests to attend. Decisions as to what

meetings to attend were made in an effort to “track” (Marcus, 1995, p. 95) media discourse which led to me paying particular attention to the CounterSpin Collective (CSC). I acknowledge that my emphasis on the CSC came at the expense of enquiring into the more subtle influences media may have over other network practices. However, given the interest in media strategies, the CSC was the most appropriate working group within Dissent!. In addition, my analysis of direct action provided in Chapter 7 extends beyond the direct media-oriented practices of the CSC to analyse acts of political contention.

As argued in Chapter 2, within media and social movement research, there is a long and established tradition of analysis of media output. However, in my thesis such an analysis is absent. Due to the large amount of data collected, I decided not to analyse media output. Instead, I selectively drew upon media headlines to contextualise the media environment surrounding the Gleneagles G8 Summit. Incorporating a more formal media analysis in my thesis may have been useful to juxtapose activists’ news scripts against media framing, but not necessary. My interest has been on how media as a process is embedded in activism. Therefore, I argue it was more appropriate to concentrate on activists’ reaction to and interactions with news media, as opposed to undertaking an analysis of media content.

The complexities of studying a rhizome-like network such as Dissent! were acknowledged from the beginning. In response to this, and in order to analyse the process of media, I employed a “level” approach to analytically separate the activist (individual), group (CounterSpin Collective) and network (Dissent!) levels.

These divisions provided a framework to analyse individuals within Dissent!, the media group within Dissent! and the network itself. It also provided a way to structure the thesis. Although care was taken to always position the levels as analytical devices and never as absolutes, in hindsight the use of levels may have created some confusion. Consequently, for future work, I would like to experiment with different approaches to capture and present the messy and multi-layered reality of a contemporary protest network such as Dissent!.

One area not covered by my analysis was Dissent!'s use of "alternative" media. In Chapter 2, I used alternative in a double-barrelled manner to refer to both the use of ICTs and the production of "radical media" (Downing, Villarreal Ford, Gil, & Stein, 2001). The use of ICTs by social movement actors was a constant theme throughout the empirical analysis. However, the focus was never exclusively on ICTs nor was it intended to be. Something which rarely featured in this thesis was Dissent!'s creation of its own media. Documents produced by Dissent! were collected and reviewed as part of the analysis but the network's "alternative" versus "mainstream" strategies were not compared. Further, Indymedia, which has been the focus of past academic research, factored little into the analysis. Two exceptions were Chapter 4's analysis of activists' media-oriented practices, and the acknowledged rift between Indymedia and the CSC in Chapter 6. In one sense, the absence of Indymedia indicates the divide in Dissent!; there was no crosspollination between the CSC and Indymedia. In hindsight, this thesis may have benefited from some interviews with key Indymedia participants to gather their opinions as to the role and utility of the

CSC in order compare and contrast the two perspectives. This could be undertaken in future research.

A reflection is also needed on the generalisability of this research. Social movements are, as Tarrow (1998, p. 3) argues, the product of their political, social, cultural and temporal context. However, by employing the “extended method” (Burawoy, 1998) I sought to not only *extend* my analysis beyond a single event, but to build on and extend theory to advance our understanding of the centrality of media to contemporary activism. What is presented are not “ironclad” (Downing, 2006, p. 6) concepts. I am conscious of the dangers of grand claims and the cultural relativity of my research. My research is very much Western-Centric and my analysis and claims have been couched in a sensitivity to the particularities of the United Kingdom. This thesis offers a set of analytical tools that can be used both within media and social movement studies towards furthering the study of how media is embedded into contemporary activism. Yet the tools provided may only be of use if used in such a way as to account for the social, political and cultural context of what is under study. I believe, as Alasuutari (1995, p. 156) argues, that generalisability is linked to the persuasiveness of theory presented and trust the arguments presented are convincing and will be of use for academic research.

8.2 Key Empirical Findings

This section discusses the main empirical findings in four sections mirroring the order of the empirical chapters. First the activists level is discussed (Chapter 4), followed by the network level (Chapter 5) and then the group level

(Chapter 6). The fourth section presents empirical findings from Chapter 7 which analysed the site of protest and actions conducted from it.

1) Activists

The findings presented in Chapter 4 demonstrate that activists have a reflexive awareness of media which is incorporated into their practice of media use and activism. Activists were shown to view the media as an environment – similar to Silverstone's (2007, p. 25) mediapolis – that needed to be consciously and critically navigated. Activists distinguished between media outlets across platforms and preferred to use media which mirrored, as opposed to militated against, their personal politics which I labelled *title-based use*.

In tandem with title-based use, interviewees also engaged in what I called *issue-based use*. Instead of following a paper or television channel, activists followed a story or issue. They would draw on, compare and contrast multiple news resources across traditional mass media and new media, as well as mainstream and alternative sources, often straying outside of the title-based comfort zone. While multiple sources were read, this was done with an eye for personal politics as demonstrated in some interviewee's counter-hegemonic reading of *The Financial Times*. The practice of issue-based use demonstrates that activists are conscious of the discrepancies – due to format restrictions and/or political affiliation – of media and, at times, try to compensate for this by triangulating their news use.

One of the most important empirical findings concerns the “background knowledge” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249) activists possess around news media and

specifically activists' "lay theories" of the news media which inform the practice of news use and activism. Although there was variation in the lay theories expressed, the interviewees were sensitive to the actors, hierarchies and processes involved in news production particularly the role of editors and the influence of the profit motive over the selection and presentation of news. Moreover, while interviewees did not admit to reading the tabloid press, the majority were aware of tabloid framing practices. The lay theories expressed by many of my interviewees held a strong resemblance to academic work and also resonated with the critical and political economic perspectives of public intellectuals within the Global Justice Movement.

Aware of past G8 Summits and the media legacy thereof, my interviewees drew on lay theories of media to anticipate how mainstream news media would in all likelihood cover the G8 Summit and Dissent! specifically. Activists were shown to be aware of the journalistic conventions of staging a "media event" (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 10) – from the posturing of the politicians, to the perspective of the media – and the type of coverage this was likely to elicit. Interviewees articulated a collection of *perceived news scripts* which were activists' interpretations of the limited range of representational possibilities – framing – that they could achieve in mainstream news media. In Chapter 4, it was argued that these news scripts captured activists lay theories in action as they were based on a (perceived) understanding of the economics of news, news production and definitions of newsworthiness. Lay theories of media were drawn upon to use media and

develop counter-practices in an effort to control, counter or at least influence activists' representation in the news media.

The argument for viewing lay theories of media as something which informs the practice of activism should not be interpreted as an evaluation on their accuracy. Lay theories are not necessarily correct; they may be based on mistruths and/or misconceptions. Regardless, they still guide action. The theoretical significance of this is addressed in the next section.

A final empirical finding concerns activists' internalisation of the hegemonic logic of news media. In Chapter 4, it was argued that a number of interviewees based their belief regarding what is and is not newsworthy on criteria put forward by news media. As a consequence, activists conceptualised their field of possible actions against a background of the media's requirements of newsworthiness. The argument that activists conceptualise and orient their actions to suit news media is not new. There is a well documented turn towards symbolic protests whereby such news-oriented tactics are now well heeled and honed in activists circles (e.g. Routledge, 1997) and particularly by NGOs such as Greenpeace (Anderson, 1997; DeLuca, 1999; Scalmer, 2002). However, what is new, is the extent to which the hegemonic logic of news has permeated and now underwrites radical direct action. This was evident in the existence of a *duty to protest* which, in Chapter 4, was theorised as a compulsion, prompted by media, to carry forward the representational legacy of visible resistance in the media. This is also at the core of spectacular action, discussed later.

In conclusion, the findings indicate the existence, at least amongst activists interviewed, of a corpus of lay knowledge concerning the way in which media work; knowledge which is circulated amongst, shared between and built upon by activists within the Global Justice Movement. Thus, activists approached and attended the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit with existing knowledge, experience and assumptions about how news media function in the context of the event which was incorporated into the practice of activism.

2) Network – Dissent!

Drawing on Rucht's (2004) "Quadruple A" framework, the analysis showed that Dissent! initially adopted a strategy of abstention; a desire to avoid media interaction, consistent with earlier practices. This finding was significant as it shed light on the network's internal power dynamics identifying a hegemony of abstention as the networks' "common sense". There was a network-level expectation that mainstream media interaction should be abstained from and seen as an enemy not to be trusted. This orientation was shown to be a powerful regulator within Dissent! and influencing activist practices. Snow (2003, p. 111) has argued that within GJM movements like Dissent!, it is "en vogue to hate mainstream media." While my thesis shows that this logic still exists, the rise and actions of the CounterSpin Collective *within* Dissent! demonstrate a challenge to this blanket assumption. In conclusion, my thesis has detected a growing acceptance by radical activists of the logic of media – the media frame – and of the intrinsic characteristics of media events. This is evidenced by their selective engagement with, as opposed to blanket dismissal of, mainstream media.

3) Group – CounterSpin Collective

Group-level empirical research focussed on a specific group *within* Dissent!: the CounterSpin Collective (CSC). The analysis of CSC media-oriented practices, presented in Chapters 5-7, was used to answer sub-research question three which focussed on the media-oriented practices deployed to manage mainstream media interaction. In studying the CSC, it is recognised that media-oriented practices are the product of a specific group of individuals who converged to collectively manage media interaction.

The Establishment and Structure of the CSC

The establishment of the CSC is itself an important empirical finding as it represents a decision by activists to engage with, instead of avoid, news media. The significance of this is deepened given the history of contention around mainstream media interaction that was shown to exist both within Dissent! and in a wider legacy of past networks that Dissent! was built upon such as EarthFirst!. Given this background, it is worth commenting on the CSC's internal structure. The rise of the CSC may be attributed to a relatively small group of individuals. While there were over 80 email addresses subscribed to the media strategy listserv, CSC meetings were attended by no more than 20 people. For example, 15 people attended the CSC meeting at the May 2005, Dissent! gathering in Nottingham while 18 people attended the June 30th CSC meeting held *during* the mobilisation in Scotland. Even within this small group of people, there was a core of about 10 people who took on the bulk of the work.

In the lead up to the 2005 G8 Summit – from the creation of the media strategy listserv up until the mobilisation in Scotland – the CSC attempted to maintain a horizontal structure. There were no official leaders and all individuals were encouraged to contribute as they saw fit. However, there were some individuals who took on more work than others which put them in a greater position of knowledge, and therefore power, within the group. The dynamics, and therefore structure, of the CSC changed during the mobilisation. While prior to the G8 Summit much emphasis was placed on horizontality, process and openness (meaning anyone could join the group), during the Summit, and therefore during the operation of the media gazebo at Hori-Zone, they were all but closed to new members. This was done for matters of efficiency and while there were no leaders within the CSC, it was the core of CSC members who took on the bulk of responsibility and activities. Existing group members knew and trusted each other and also understood the objective and boundaries of the CSC which, from their perspective allowed the CSC to function more efficiently.

With a baseline of solidarity and common knowledge, the CSC was able to have a much stronger task-oriented focus which meant that the task of interacting with media took precedence over group processes. Despite essentially closing the CSC process to outsiders, within the CSC there remained efforts to maintain a consensus-based decision making process which was used and respected by group members. Upon reflection, in many senses the CSC functioned like any other affinity group who had been planning an action: they had recruited their members, done their preparation and were now conducting

their action. The implication of this is that interacting with mainstream media – just like the blockades the CSC were talking to the media about – had become an action and the CSC were responsible for it. In conclusion, the CSC's creation indicates that, at least for some radical activists and in the context of media-event style mobilisation, the creation of a strategy and mechanism to manage mainstream media is not only something that radical activists know how to do, but *something they see as necessary to do*.

As argued in Chapter 2, one of the objectives of this thesis has been to unpack and document the media-oriented practices of Dissent! due to a dearth of research in the area. While Anderson (2003, p. 125) acknowledged that the issue of responding to mainstream media is contentious within autonomous networks like Dissent!, she neglected to examine the issue in any detail, leaving the media strategies of “autonomous” movements unstudied. In fact, there exists scant analysis into the mainstream media repertoires of social movements and, what does exist, focuses almost exclusively on formal organisations with dedicated staff, who undertake long-term media campaigns (Carroll & Ratner, 1999; Gaber & Willson Wynne, 2005; Scalmer, 2002) . Given this gap, my thesis brings some “corrective balance” (Carroll & Ratner, 1999, p. 3) through its analysis of the media-oriented practices of a type of network and event that has been largely overlooked by academic research.

The Use of ICTs

The analysis also revealed a sharp contrast in the utility of ICTs to the CSC's media-oriented practices before as opposed to during the mobilisation. Prior to the mobilisation, almost all group practices were facilitated by the media strategy listserv which was also shown to help maintain a "mediated solidarity" (Fenton, 2008, p. 48) amongst members. Meanwhile, during the mobilisation ICTs, with the exception of mobile phones, were not used by the CSC. While ICTs unquestionably played a crucial role prior to the Summit allowing the CSC to undertake activities that would not have been available otherwise (Bennett, 2003a, p. 127), the use of ICTs severely diminished during the mobilisation. Although part of the reason for this was the lack of Internet access, I argued in Chapter 6 that it had more to do with the practices of the CSC conducted during the mobilisation. Whereas practices prior to the summit could largely be done remotely with the help of ICTs at a time that suited the CSC member, media-oriented practices conducted at the summit such as fielding journalist questions, sourcing willing interviewees and monitoring the Hori-Zone entrance to ensure it was not breached by journalists, all required immediate face-to-face interaction. I argue the disjuncture between practices used prior to and at the G8, in tandem with the role of ICTs, reinforces the need to conceptualise the use of ICTs as part of a *larger practice of activism* and situated within a larger media environment. I return to this claim in the next section which discusses the theoretical contributions of my thesis.

A final group-level contribution, which is also relevant on the network-level, is the CSC's strategy of *dual adaptation*. In Chapters 6 and 7, I demonstrated how the CSC modified its media-oriented practices to meet the demands of mainstream media while still complying with Dissent! policies prohibiting network-level media interaction. I address the theoretical contribution and implications of dual adaptation on Rucht's (2004) "Quadruple A" framework in Section 8.3. Important at present is my argument that the development of a strategy of dual adaptation is an example of "internal innovation" (Tarrow, 1998, p. 132) on two fronts. First, through the appropriation of what, in the past, were predominantly professional tactics for thinking about and interacting with media, into the practice of activism. Second, the practices are innovative as they were purposefully modified by members of the CSC to function within the constraints placed upon them by internal Dissent! politics.

In conclusion, the empirical contribution of the group-level analysis rests in both the documentation and analysis of a collection of media-oriented practices devised and deployed by radical activists specifically to manage mainstream media. This finding fills an academic under-emphasis in research. It also supports a main argument of my thesis that the political utility and logic of media and, by extension, media events, does not just reside in the professional knowledge of NGOs but has seeped into general activist knowledge; into the practice of activism.

4) Site of protest

Sub-research question 4 analysed the impact of media at the *site* of protest; at a media event. The question was answered using empirical evidence presented in Chapter 7 from a specific site of protest: the Hori-Zone eco-village. It was argued that the process of mediation impacted the site of protest and therefore the actions which emanated from it; the logic of media at such events permeated the spaces and actions of protest. In Chapter 2, building on Routledge (1997), I argued that Hori-Zone was a “hybrid site” which was part of an unfolding media event and must therefore be conceptualised as *inside the media frame*. Hori-Zone was differentiated from past protest camps as its creation was instigated both by the announcement of a media event, and its existence was tethered to the temporal cycle of a news event. Dissent!, as a network, was aware of the camp’s position inside the media event and reacted to this by deploying a panoply of media-oriented practices in order to manage the front stage and back stage aspects of the site. This was evident in the network-level policy prohibiting media from accessing the camp site. On a group-level the CSC organised a media “open-hour” tour of Hori-Zone long before the mobilisation started. Moreover, the CSC’s media gazebo also assisted in the control of front stage and back stage space.

The analysis of the blockade protest actions of Dissent! exposed the transformation of the direct action of Dissent! into spectacular action. This transformation was brought about by the increase in distance between delegates and dissenters making traditional direct action ineffective. While Dissent!

maintained a network level discourse of non-mediated direct action, its execution was the simulation of non-mediated direct action. The theoretical implications of this are discussed below.

8.3 Contribution of Empirical Findings to Theory

This section discusses the contribution of the empirical findings to theory beginning with media and communication and how this research builds on the emerging field of practice research. Next, the significance of lay theories of media is discussed and future avenues for research opened up by this concept are considered. Reflecting on Castells (2007), an argument is made for the need to reconceptualise the power of media within the context of political struggle. Attention then shifts to the contribution to social movement research which first offers reflections on a general level followed by an argument for amending two aspects of Rucht's (2004) "Quadruple A" framework for the future study of the media strategies of social movements.

Mediation, Practice and Lay Theories of the Media

The concept of mediation played a central and orienting role to the arguments made in this thesis. The theorisation of mediation was undertaken in the shadow of a growing body of research (Couldry, 2000, 2004; Martin-Barbero, 1993; Silverstone, 1994, 1999, 2005, 2007; Thompson, 1995; Thumim, 2007). Informed by Silverstone (2005, p. 189), mediation is seen as an uneven and often contested process that involves multiple social actors – individuals, collectives, institutions, networks – in the (re)construction, (re)circulation and

(re)consumption of symbolic forms. Moreover, it is a process that institutions and individuals simultaneously engage in. The process itself is multi-layered, context sensitive and doubly articulated in our everyday lives. Media are both the site of information and of representation. Silverstone offers the concept as a way of thinking about the media; a starting point for enquiry. I referred to this as a *mediation approach*; a way of analysing interaction with media – its content, producers, users, technologies, culture and rituals – as an ongoing and reflexive process.

In Chapter 2, I argued that the emphasis on mediation – the mediation approach – could be operationalised through the study of media-oriented practices. The need to reorient the field of media research to study “media-oriented practices” was first made by Couldry (2004, p. 115) who suggested a turn towards studying media-oriented practices as a way to analyse the influence of media on everyday life in a “media saturated culture”. Although Couldry had previously considered similar themes (Couldry, 1999, 2000, 2003b) his call for a media practice paradigm was exploratory; a call for further enquiry.

The objective of studying practices from Couldry’s perspective was to analyse “What range of practices are oriented to media and what is the role of media-oriented practices in ordering other practices?” (Couldry, 2004, p. 129). My thesis contributes to the study of media-oriented practices by elaborating upon the initial conceptual framework within media and communications and extending this to the study of social movements by developing three broad categories of direct media: 1) *network-facing* practices or internal communication;

2) *research* practices; and 3) *representation* practices. My analysis of these direct media-oriented practices offers insight into the media-oriented practices of social movement actors within the context of a specific type of media event.

Media Lay Theories: Reconceptualising “the Audience”

A key component of any practice is the “background knowledge” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249) which informs how social actors conduct practices. In Chapter 2, I argued that lay theories of media formed part of the background knowledge of activists. Early academic thinking about media lay theories was traced to Bennett’s (1975, p. 65) discussion of “pseudo-theories” which was expanded upon by Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 118) to push forward their cognitive concept of “frame” as “...a central organizing idea, to suggesting what is at issue”⁹³. Neither Bennett nor Gamson analysed or developed “lay theories” as its own concept. Recognising this gap, this thesis has rekindled ideas surrounding “media lay theories” but in the context of media-oriented practices. As argued in Chapter 4, the lay theories analysed in this thesis are not exhaustive. Moreover, there is an inevitable variation between social actors with respect to how they understand the way in which media operate. At the same time, this thesis has shown that common ground does exist as evidenced by activists’ tendency to take a critically-reflexive and sceptical approach to media based on their own understanding of how media work. This strong scepticism conveyed by interviewees in Chapter 4 towards the news production process

⁹³ Gamson’s use of Bennett’s concept of “political scenario” may be seen in a number of his works including: Gamson and Stuart (1992b), Gamson, Croteau et al. (1992) and Gamson (1992b).

reaffirms claims by Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 119) about social movement actors' sceptical view of media. It also indicates, I argue, an increasing awareness (or at least perceived understanding) of how the media work.

The (perceived) awareness of the news production process by social actors, and the fact that this knowledge informs both media use and activist practice, challenges the utility of a binary conceptualisation of audiences and producers as mutually exclusive categories (Livingstone, 1998, p. 251). What is more important, I argue, is recognising the position of “audience member” and “producer” as different roles or practices that social actors may navigate between in “linked but distinctive moments” (Hall, 1980, p. 128). Thumim (2007, p. 41) has argued for a shift away from using the terms “producers” and “audiences” as distinct categories because, in the context of her research, “...this division becomes confusing when the focus is on one among several ways in which members of the audience have begun to participate in production.”

This research exposes similar challenges. Dissent! activists were both audiences members – drawing on media for personal use and network related activities (e.g. media monitoring, Chapter 6) – and were involved in the production process of media content through sending letters to the editor, press releases, giving interviews to the media (see Chapter 6), and producing alternative content and becoming a media spectacle. Social movement actors are more than audience members. They produce, interact with and react to media reflexively with different levels of attention across multiple contexts yet, media studies does not appear to have a sufficient category to capture this. By

shifting the emphasis from audiences (or producers for that matter) to social actors and in turn focussing on their *practices*, activities such as media consumption (being an audience member) or media production may be contextualised and understood within or as part of a larger set of social actions; social movement actors may be seen as engaging in media-related practices and not simply as audiences of media and/or producers of media.

Finally, lay theories of the media are also an avenue for further enquiry. It would be interesting to pursue, in a similar fashion to Seiter (1999), the degree to which personal interaction with media informs lay theories of the media and outline, in greater details, similarities with academic work. The findings would also likely be relevant to media literacy as it would point towards a base of knowledge that social actors have and offer insight into what areas future media literacy programmes should concentrate on. It might also be interesting to extend the study of “lay theories” of media professionals and strategists in order to understand how professionals who deal with the media in a strategic fashion perceive the media to work. Juxtaposing this to academic literature may shed light on the disjuncture between theory and practice.

Political Struggle in the Mediapolis

This thesis is a study of contemporary political contention in an age of media saturation. My argument was premised on academic claims as to the central role of media as a field of struggle and conflict (Castells, 2000, 2007; Couldry, 2000; Silverstone, 2007; Thompson, 1995). My thesis supports and

reinforces this position but argues that current theory must be recalibrated to reconceptualise the power of media in political struggle.

At the heart of politics are issues of power. In Chapter 2, it was argued that contemporary political contention increasingly takes place with and through the media. In each of the empirical chapters different ways in which social movement actors attempt to navigate and engage with media in the context of a media event were analysed. A central argument through each of the empirical chapters is the way in which social actors have both directly and indirectly adapted their practices to compensate and control for the presence of mainstream media. The practices analysed are linked to the “media event” dynamics of the G8 Summit which are addressed shortly. The argument at present concerns how media power is theorised, particularly by Castells. In Chapter 2, I quoted Castells as arguing, “the media are not the holders of power, but they constitute by and large the space where power is decided” (Castells, 2007, p. 242). Castells positions the media as institutions who do not possess power but create arenas for struggles over power. This view of media, I argue, is incorrect.

Over a decade ago, as cited in Chapter 2, Castells (1997, p. 359) argued that power in the “network society” has become diffused, no longer concentrated in institutions; a perspective used to justify the argument that media do not possess power. Power was defined by Castells as “the structural capacity of a social actor to impose its will over other social actors” (2007, p. 239). Castells recognises that the media have the ability to create “rules” for access to the

media space but he does equate this to holding power. In Chapter 2, I drew on Giddens' (1984, p. 374) "duality of structure" to critique Castells' position arguing that space created by media was both the "medium and the outcome" of the process of mediation; a product of power relations which, itself exerts power, and a site of power struggles. Castells' failure to attribute greater weight to the "rules" of media access and the logic of newsworthiness as sources and instruments of power captures a shortcoming in his theorisation of the power of media in contemporary politics. A shortcoming which this thesis has also empirically shown.

The dependence of contemporary politics on media is neither natural or neutral (Couldry, 2000, p. 3-22). The hunger for spectacle by the news media skews how the political struggle is presented as Kellner (2003, p. 1-33) has shown. Moreover, as argued in Chapter 4, activists have internalised and accepted the hegemonic logic of news – the rules of media access – as a natural precondition for access to the political media arena. In the case of radical political action, the logic of news media was shown to influence the conceptualisation of activism directly and indirectly. This is particularly evident for mobilisations at media events where there is no escaping the media.

In conclusion, this thesis has analysed the ways in which social actors have reoriented their actions to suit the logic of news media and demonstrated how this logic has permeated the practice of activism. If power is still defined as "the structural capacity of a social actor to impose its will over other social actors" (Castells, 2007, p. 239), yet expanded to include the nuanced and ever present

social relationships as it is in Giddens, then media must not only be seen as creating an environment for social actors to engage in their own struggles over and for political power, but *also as holders of symbolic power*. The media both hold symbolic power in their infrastructural role in maintaining a space for politics, shaping rules of access and representing reality but also through the ways in which social actors have accepted, internalised and (re)oriented their action on the basis of these rules. This articulation dovetails with and builds upon Thompson's (1995, p. 16) view of the *symbolic power* the implications of this demand further enquiry.

Media and Social Movement Literature

Downing (2006, p. 5) has argued that the issue of media remains a severely under-theorised aspect of social movement literature. Research that does exist tends to treat media as "technological message channels" as opposed to "complex socio-technical institutions" (ibid). Responding to this, this research contributes to an emerging dialogue within social movement research that acknowledges and endeavours to tease out the ways in which the complexities of media underwrite and influence how contemporary political contention is undertaken.

In a similar spirit, Cottle (2008) posed a collection of research questions to scholars within the domain of media/movement scholarship to consider. Among them included, "How is media awareness and reflexivity built into the tactics deployed by demonstrators and their subsequent interactions with the news media?" (Cottle, 2008, p. 864). Cottle's question is premised on an assumption

that media awareness and reflexivity *is* built into the theorisation of activism. As argued in Chapter 1, my research was inspired by the failure of media and social movement research to recognise the reflexive awareness social movement actors have of media. This thesis offers both empirical evidence and theoretical concepts towards filling this gap; towards acknowledging the reflexive awareness social movement actors have of media.

The ‘Quadruple A’ framework: Amending Adaptation and Abstention

Rucht’s (2004) “Quadruple A” framework provided the conceptual scaffolding for understanding Dissent!’s media strategy. Rucht proposed four different – but not mutually exclusive – strategies social movement organisations may deploy when reacting to media coverage: abstention, attack, adaptation, and alternatives. However, my analysis reveals two areas in which Rucht’s model can be strengthened. First, the concept of “adaptation” must be amended to account for the role of internal social movement politics in shaping a movement’s media strategy. Second, “abstention” must be reinstated as a media strategy that remains relevant even in an age of media saturation.

Amending Adaptation – Accounting for Network Dynamics

To preface this discussion, it is useful to revisit Rucht’s definition of “adaptation” which was, “...the acceptance/exploitation of the mass media’s rules and criteria to influence coverage positively” (2004, p. 37). The emphasis in Rucht’s definition is on how groups modify their actions to accommodate for media. However, the phenomenon of *dual adaptation* analysed in Chapters 5 to 7

showed the CounterSpin Collective adapting their practices not just to suit the needs of media (thus satisfying Rucht's use of adaptation) but also to fit their practices within the political boundaries of Dissent!. In the context of my thesis, the process of dual adaptation illuminates the constraints that network politics and polices placed upon the selection and deployment of a media strategy within Dissent!.

Rucht's framework presents adaptation as a one way process; social movement actors change their behaviour to suit the demands of media. Yet, as this thesis demonstrates, the process of adaptation is double-barrelled. Practices are adapted not just to suit the media, but are done in such a way as to adhere to the internal movement norms and politics which influence the field and scope of possible action. In light of this, the internal dynamics of social movement networks or organisations must be flagged as a potential variable in any future analysis of media strategies.

Amending Abstention

In Chapter 4, I argued that Rucht's framework failed to recognise "abstention" as a potential media strategy of contemporary "movements against neoliberalism" (Rucht, 2004, p. 54). In short, Rucht does not present abstention as an option for the Global Justice Movement. This omission may be due to a view that the G8 and similar summit-style mobilisations are media events and therefore any mobilising around them nullifies the option of abstention. However even if the mobilisation for a media event is taken as a starting point – as it is in this thesis – the category of abstention remains relevant.

Rucht defined abstention as “the withdrawal from an attempt to influence the mass media and retreat to inward-directed group communication” (2004, p. 36). Admittedly, Dissent!’s stance was not one of pure abstention; it did permit – but rarely issued – network-level press releases. However, the network upheld its prohibition of spokespeople as a conscious reaction to the media’s power of representation rooted in a belief that abstaining from interacting with media will sustain the network’s “horizontality”.

Whereas Rucht drops abstention, the findings show that the category of “abstention” must be recognised as a contemporary and relevant media strategy. Moreover, in a context where politics is characterised by struggles over representation and efforts to “manage visibility” (Thompson, 1995, 2000, p. 134), the *management of invisibility* (cf. Chapter 7), the desire to abstain from media interaction and coverage is significant because it is an ideological response to – a reaction against – the symbolic power of media. Viewing abstention from this perspective moves beyond the strategies (of adaptation) used to manage media (and therefore manage visibility) to acknowledge the conscious actions of social actors to withdraw or abstain from media as a conscious reaction to the symbolic and concentrated power of media. Thus, at a time when media are unavoidable, the effort to avoid or abstain from media interaction becomes even more interesting. Repositioning abstention in this way opens up new lines of questioning around how social movement actors try and resolve tensions between adaptation and abstention; between visibility and invisibility. When is one strategy preferred over another? What are the perceived advantages and

disadvantages of each? These are questions which can be considered in future research.

8.4 Discussion and Ways Forward

This final section discusses the way in which the process of mediation is articulated into the practice of social movement actors, considers the wider implications of the (re)orienting of social actors towards media, and suggests avenues for future research in light of these conclusions.

Contemporary society has become dominated by “media spectacle” (Kellner, 2003, p. 2) and spectacle itself has become routinised. Political media events such as the G8 Summit have become familiar media events drawing predictable aesthetics and unfolding in a scripted pattern within a culture saturated by, and accustomed to, media spectacle. The spectacle of past protests contextualises and perpetuates more spectacle, contributing to the continual torrent of routinised media events. Kellner (2003, p. 2) has argued that media spectacles, “embody contemporary society’s basic values, serve to initiate individuals into its way of life, and dramatise its controversies and struggles, as well as its modes of conflict resolution.” So what does the rise and deployment of spectacular action reveal about the contemporary values of radical social actors and how they make sense of and initiate social struggle? More generally, what assertions may be extended to social actors more generally?

This thesis supports the findings of past research into the Global Justice Movement (and new social movement research before it) which has documented the growing reliance on symbolic action by social movement actors as means to

conduct or supplement struggle on the ground and through the media (Chesters & Welsh, 2004; DeLuca, 1999; DeLuca & Peeples, 2002; Juris, 2005, 2008a; Scalmer, 2002; Welsh, 2002). Yet, as discussed in Chapter 2, two differences characterised this thesis from past research; the type of event studied, and the type of network. Creating “image events” (DeLuca, 1999, p. 14) has become a common strategy for many SMOs but the Gleneagles G8 Summit was not created by a single or even group of SMOs but, as already discussed, was a routinised media event. Second, the media strategies of NGOs are well studied yet those of horizontal-style networks such as Dissent! are not.

This thesis has shown that like the more “professional” social movement organisations, social movement actors within Dissent! were aware of the significance and implications of media to the extent that a distinct repertoire of media-oriented practices was developed. This thesis has also demonstrated that the presence of media and social actors’ position inside the media frame and their awareness of this also impacted the indirect actions of Dissent! as evidenced by the transformation of direct action into spectacular action. Taken together, these two findings reinforce the embeddedness of protest at a media event inside the media frame and, crucially, social actors’ awareness of this position. This suggests that even “radical” activists are now oriented towards the media and, in fact, all social actors associated with the G8 can be seen, in at least some capacity, as posturing for media. As argued in Chapter 7, while Dissent! differentiated itself from related mobilisations, partially based on a

rejection of symbolic action, the network was part of, and not separate from, the spectacle.

All Dissent! activists interviewed for this thesis were aware of the symbolic function *and* objective of the demonstrations. They acknowledged that the goal of their actions was to be seen trying to (symbolically) shut down the G8 Summit as opposed to actually shutting it down. From this perspective, there is little difference between participating in a circular march around Edinburgh city centre, as Make Poverty History did in an effort to surround the city in a white band, and participating in a road blockade. Both were actions undertaken conscious of, and in reaction to, the representational power of media.

Of course participating in direct action is empowering for participants and the argument presented here is not intended to diminish or dispute the importance of such an experience. At issue is the disjuncture between how Dissent! on a network-level largely rejected and abstained from mainstream media interaction and rhetorically projected itself as being outside of the spectacle. Yet, on an activist-level, individuals acknowledged the vital role and function of media to the protests and the event at large. Meanwhile, on a group level, a collective evolved within the network to manage media interaction. This tension between the contradictory reactions of abstention and adaptation (of which the CSC as well as spectacular action both fall under) indicates a paradox of contemporary radical social struggle with, in and through the media.

Dissent! was founded on the unquestioned premise that the G8 Leaders Summit would be protested. Consequently, the starting point for discussions

revolved around the shape protests would take, and not whether demonstrations should take place or what their objective was. The action repertoire Dissent! drew from was a familiar pastiche of strategies adapted from past GJM actions and EDA tactics most notably the use of blockades. As documented in Chapter 1, in response to previous physical challenges and successes of GJM actions, Summits including the Gleneagles G8 Summit retreated behind lines of razor wire and riot police effectively blunting any physical challenge. This move may have quashed the impact of physical challenges but symbolic challenges – requiring physical force – remained possible. In the context of Summit protests, the direct action conducted was not “non-mediatory” direct action as it could not have the type of immediate effect it had in the past when was used to blockade sites under threat (e.g. Routledge, 1997) or to even shut down the WTO meeting in Seattle (e.g. Barlow & Clarke, 2001). Instead, it was *spectacular action* where the goal was not to shut down the Gleneagles G8 Summit – this was essentially a physical impossibility given the repertoire of tactics used by Dissent! – but to only be seen as trying to do so.

The shift to the “performance” (Juris, 2008b, p. 64) of direct action and emphasis on symbolism is commensurate with the role that media and mediated experience now occupy in contemporary political life (Castells, 1997; Silverstone, 2007; Thompson, 1995). The transformation of direct action to spectacular action reflects the central position media now occupy in radical action. It also reinforces Melucci’s (1996, p. 183-186) arguments on the centrality of symbolism to contemporary social movements. A consequence of this reorientation towards

media is the reaffirmation the “myth of the mediated centre” (Couldry, 2003a, p. 45); the idea that media, particularly mainstream media, function as a natural and “obligatory passing point” (Couldry, 2003a, p. 47) to reach the “centre” of society. Yet what if Couldry’s (2003a, p. 45) claim that media does not lead to society’s centre, as such a centre does not exist, is correct? What if, as RETORT (2005, p. 182) suggest, the “spectacle is hollow” at the centre? Therefore what if the function of spectacular action serves to further “naturalise” (Couldry, 2003a, p. 47) the power and position of media rather than challenge it?

If the assertions by both Couldry and RETORT are accurate then from this perspective spectacular action may appear to collide with, rather than confront power. It may be “expressive” (Melucci, 1996, p. 379) and not “instrumental” (ibid) and therefore disconnected from a strategic or calculated impact on the political system. Although this collusion may be unintentional, it can be observed in the way spectacular action conforms as opposed to challenges the demands of spectacle. It is based on an acceptance of the hegemonic logic of the media event. It is part of the media event; part of the spectacle. The “duty to protest”(Chapter 5) reflects a perceived need to maintain the appearance of resistance and the media spectacle of Summit mobilisations. A more overt example of the acceptance of the logic of media is evident in the repertoire of direct media-oriented practices devised and deployed by the CounterSpin Collective. What must be questioned is the orientation towards the media and what the purpose behind the actions is. To show resistance, but to what end? And what is the alternative?

The effectiveness of large-scale Summit style mobilisations has recently been questioned (Juris, 2008a, pp. 287-302). Juris (2008a) makes an important distinction with his critique, and it is one worth emphasising again, that Summit mobilisations are important experiences for the individuals who participate in them. This assertion resonates with previous claims (and critiques) of the GJM and NSM before it as being identity oriented (Melucci, 1996, pp. 186-190). Yet there is a need for radical activists to critically assess what the *external utility*, purpose and objectives are, if anything at all, to such performances.

In the context of the Gleneagles G8 Summit, the desire to create and replicate spectacle was even more apparent in the actions of the Live 8 concert and the actions of the MPH collation. For reasons discussed in Chapter 3, this thesis deliberately chose to focus only on Dissent! but a brief critical reflection on MPH is warranted due to the scale of the spectacle generated by these two other events. Moreover, on a scale of collusion – if such an exercise was possible – Live 8 and MPH would represent its total embodiment. Vast financial and professional resources were used by both Live 8 and MPH to construct large-scale actions, true media events. They were campaigns conducted through the media (Nash, 2008, p. 167). They sought to open up media space and use the space as a means to place pressure on G8 leaders. Media spectacle was deployed as a means to influence policy.

Though not academic, perhaps one of the most accurate and indeed blunt critiques of these campaigns was offered by Noel Gallagher, the lead singer of

British pop band Oasis who, when asked by a journalists about his opinion of

Live 8 said:

Correct me if I'm wrong, but are they hoping that one of these guys from the G8 is on a quick 15-minute break at Gleneagles and sees Annie Lennox singing Sweet Dreams and thinks, "Fuck me, she might have a point there, you know?" And Keane doing Somewhere Only We Know and some Japanese businessman going, "Aw, look at him...we should really fucking drop that debt, you know." It's not going to happen, is it?' (Contactmusic.com, 2005)

Gallagher's comments, while cynical, allude to a danger of spectacular action which, as this has argued, also applied to Dissent!; a danger that planning, conducting and participating in spectacular action is not seen for more than what it is, a performance for the media in an effort to achieve visibility in the mediapolis; lobbying by spectacle. Yet to be effective, spectacular action must be linked to material change and/or offer an agenda for what people can do. In the context of Live 8, citizens participated by consuming the spectacle – by watching a rock concert. For Make Poverty History, the role of the citizen was to wear, as instructed, white clothing and march in a circle in order to support demands devised by Make Poverty History to lobby the G8. In both cases the agency and political involvement of individuals was limited and the space for discussing the political aims and purpose was closed.

So too was the space to design and implement a media strategy. Dissent!, on the other hand, did not have a media strategy. In fact, the network, as has been demonstrated, was based on a rejection of mainstream media. Yet there was the latitude for one to develop. Dissent!'s commitment to horizontality also carried forward with it a legacy and commitment to direct action and with that preconceived identities about the values of the network and, within this, how media interaction should (not) be undertaken. However, despite the ideological

and political differences between Dissent! and the other networks in the *means* of organising protest (see Chapter 1), the *end* was the same: the deployment of spectacular action.

The growing reliance of spectacular action, certainly in the context of the media event-style protests, points towards a crisis or at least a paradox in social action. On the one hand the effort to manage media such as the actions of the CSC discussed in Chapter 6 illustrates an effort by radical activists to *adapt* their practices to account for the fundamental role of mediation and representation. Direct action tactics have also shifted to place a larger emphasis, if not being totally underwritten by symbolism in order to compete in “symbolic contests” (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 118). However when the Gleneagles G8 Summit is viewed on an event level, Dissent!’s actions may be seen as part of the spectacle and, even if unintentionally, colluding with media thereby reasserting and further “naturalising” (Couldry, 2003a, p. 47) the power and position of mainstream media.

The dilemma facing social movement actors is a tension between a perceived duty to maintain the representation of opposition driven by the dominant logic that if resistance is not visible, it may be (falsely) assumed not to exist, *versus* a danger of reinforcing the very power structures they seek to change by colluding with media to sustain a culture of media spectacle. This claim touches on a much broader issue that extends far beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, it is flagged as an issue of critical importance requiring further dialogue and scrutiny. The routine reliance upon spectacle as a form of

social action by radical activists or SMOs serves the danger of naturalising the authority of media. The perceived need to use spectacle and to what end must be questioned.

As important, if not more important, is the “natural authority” (Couldry, 2003a, p. 109) and configuration of a media system which maintains the parameters of spectacle as acceptable and indeed necessary must be challenged. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 122) previously argued that “those who dress up in costume to be admitted to the media’s party will not be allowed to change before being photographed”. This statement remains true and is reinforced by an anecdotal review of media coverage of Dissent!, not to mention the large number of text-centred studies referenced in Chapter 2. However, just because these are the “rules” of newsworthiness, it does not make them absolutes. They are constructs reinforced each time spectacular actions are devised and deployed for the media but they need to be questioned and extending from this, so does the imbalance of symbolic power that is concentrated in undemocratic media institutions. Again these are broad claims for the end of a thesis and point towards an emerging discourse on the ethics of representation which was a key theme in Silverstone’s (2007, pp. 5-8) analysis of the mediapolis. What is clear is that a wider dialogue concerning democratic engagement with media is necessary. Questions must be asked about how the function and role of media is understood and how its current configuration does or does not support this. While this thesis deliberately chose not to focus on

alternative media, the findings lend support to the importance of alternative media and of creating additional (independent) spaces for representation.

Lastly, the rise and prevalence of spectacular action requires further academic attention. This thesis only focussed on the actions of Dissent! but, as noted in Chapter 1, the actions of Make Poverty History and Live 8 were even more phantasmagorical. The impact and objective of spectacular action needs to be questioned. While this thesis has intimated that for networks like Dissent!, spectacular action may be linked to identity expression (though this requires further research), the use of spectacle by NGOs needs to be critically examined. As shown in Chapter 1, the mobilisations of Make Poverty History and Live 8 were the publicly acceptable face of G8 “protest” embraced by pop stars and politicians. Participation as citizens in these events was limited to marching in a circle or watching a concert. Dissent!’s protests too were a spectacular performance. The idea that spectacular action is sufficient on its own to bring about social change must be steadfastly challenged. While it is difficult to belittle the feelings of compassion and passion felt by those involved in G8-related actions, the objectives, implications, and impact of such action must be questioned including the excessive use of celebrity-capital and how this is linked to and can bring about social change. However such a project requires further academic study.

This thesis has inevitably raised more questions than it has answered. The calls for future research presented in this chapter present a lengthy and ambitious research agenda. It is hoped that some of these questions may be

asked by future scholars and that the empirical and theoretical contributions of this research can assist towards such efforts.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviewee Profiles

The following appendix provides a brief demographic overview of individuals interviewed for this research. Names and some minor personal details have been changed to protect the identity of those who participated. Interviewees are listed in alphabetical order:

1. Adam was in his mid-20s and lived on the south coast of England where he was undertaking a post-graduate degree. He was involved with the CounterSpin Collective along with other aspects of the Dissent! mobilisation. Prior to Dissent!, he had attended a number of past Global Justice Movement actions including the 1998 mobilisation against the G8 in Birmingham, the anti-WTO actions in Geneva and the 2003 G8 in Evian. The interview with Adam was conducted face-to-face in London on 28/08/2005.
2. Allan was in his early-20s and lived and worked in Reading doing general office employment. Allan had been involved in protests against 2003 G8 in Evian. He took an active role in Dissent! though was not involved with the CounterSpin Collective. The first interview with Allan was conducted face-to-face in Glasgow on 02/04/2005. The second interview was also a face-to-face interview conducted in London on 30/07/2005.
3. Andre was from Portugal, was in his late-20s and was a post-graduate student studying in England. He had been previously involved in various community activism projects and also attended the World Social Forum in 2004. He was active in the CounterSpin Collective despite only becoming involved in immediately prior to the G8 Summit after being asked by a fellow CSC member. The interview with Andrew was conducted face-to-face in London on 18/08/2005.
4. Barry was in his mid-20s and lived in London working in the hospitality industry but was originally from South Africa. He did not take an active role in Dissent! during the planning process and only became involved in the network through camping at Hori-Zone. He was not involved in the CounterSpin Collective. The interview with Barry was conducted face-to-face at Hori-Zone on 08/07/2005.
5. Brian was in his mid-40s, from Scotland and was employed by private enterprise. He was not involved with Dissent! but was present at Hori-Zone. Brian was interested in the issue of law and its relationship to nature and the environment and every question asked off of the interview schedule resulted in a response along these lines. Consequently, as disclosed in Chapter 3, a decision was taken to exclude this interview from analysis. The interview with Barry was conducted face-to-face at Hori-Zone on 08/07/2005.
6. Boris was in his late-20s and was originally from eastern Europe where he was a practicing journalist. Boris had previously been involved in student activism in his home country as well as Indymedia and attended the Prague demonstrations in 2000. He moved to the United Kingdom for post-graduate studies and took an active role in the CounterSpin Collective though was only marginally involved in the rest of

the Dissent! network. The interview with Boris was conducted face-to-face in London on 11/07/2005.

7. Chris was in his early-20s and was from Australia but was doing a working holiday in London. He had been involved in activism in Australia since 2000 beginning with 2000 S11 World Economic Forum protests in Melbourne. Chris he took an active interest in Dissent! and was involved in direct action activities during the Gleneagles Summit. The interview with Chris had to be conducted twice. The first interview was conducted on 08/07/2008 at Hori-Zone but was lost due to MiniDisk failure. The second interview, used for this analysis, was conducted face-to-face in London on 20/07/2005.
8. Claudia was in her mid-20s and while she was English, she lived outside of the UK in another European country. Claudia had been active in a number of past Global Justice Movement actions and took an active role in multiple aspects of Dissent! including the CounterSpin Collective. The interview with Claudia was conducted face-to-face in London on 25/08/2005.
9. Darren was in his mid-20s and from Scandinavia but undertaking post-graduate studies in England. Darren had a history of global justice activism and was in Seattle, Washington for the 1999 WTO demonstrations and attended a number of other actions since then. Within Dissent!, he was most active with the CounterSpin Collective as he had undertaken similar media-activism roles at the 2001 EU Summit in Gothenburg, Sweden. The interview with Darren was conducted face-to-face at Hori-Zone on 07/08/2005.
10. Julie was in her early-40s and lived in Scotland. She was active in the CounterSpin Collective although her interview was excluded from analysis due to its repetitive nature as disclosed in Chapter 3. The interview with Julie was conducted over the telephone on 29/08/2005.
11. Edward was an American post-graduate student in his late-20s studying in Ireland. He been involved in environmental issues in the US and became interested in media-related activism through the Dublin May Day protests of 2004. The interview with Edward was conducted over the telephone on 10/08/2005.
12. Gregory was in his early-30s and lived in London working in an office job. He had been involved in the environmental direct action movement since the 1990s and became involved in global justice activism via the 2000 demonstrations in Prague against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Since then, he attended various actions including the 2003 G8 Summit in Evian. Gregory took an active role in the CounterSpin Collective but was not involved in Dissent! otherwise. The interview with Gregory was conducted face-to-face in London on 26/07/2005.
13. Guy was in his late-20s and worked at a not for profit in Oxford and had been involved in anti-capitalist activism in the UK since the late 1990s. Guy took an active role in Dissent! though was not involved with the CounterSpin Collective. The first interview with Guy was conducted face-to-face in Oxford on 21/04/2005. The second interview was conducted over the telephone on 15/08/2005.
14. Hamish was in his early-30s and was from Dublin, Ireland. He took an active role in the CounterSpin Collective which was the main focus of his involvement with

Dissent!. The Gleneagles G8 Summit was his first G8 Summit. He became involved in activism and particularly media-related activism through the Dublin May Day protests of 2004. The interview with Hamish was conducted face-to-face at Hori-Zone on 09/07/2005.

15. Harry was in his mid-20s and lived and worked in London as a journalist. He has a history of activism and was previously involved in anti-Iraq war activities and attended previous G8 Summit demonstrations. Harry was only marginally involved with Dissent! and with the CounterSpin Collective though he did have contacts involved in both and attended the demonstrations in Scotland. Harry's interview was conducted over email with his responses being sent to me on 29/08/2005.
16. Jeff was in his early-30s and had a long history of being involved with the animal rights movement in the UK. He was not involved with the CounterSpin Collective though was active in legal support for Dissent! activists. The interview with Jeff was conducted face-to-face in Oxford on 21/04/2005 though was not recorded.
17. Mary was in her early-30s, worked in community radio and was born and living in Ireland. She took an active role in the CounterSpin Collective and came to be involved in media-related activism through the Dublin May Day protests of 2004. Prior to this, she was involved in the anti-Iraq war protests while travelling through the US in 2003. The interview with Mary was conducted face-to-face at Hori-Zone on 08/07/2005.
18. Matthew was a university student in his early-20s who became involved in activism through social justice campaigns at university. He took an active role in the Dissent! network across multiple aspects of the planning process but was not involved with the CounterSpin Collective. The interview with Matthew was conducted face-to-face at the Hori-Zone camp in Scotland on 09/07/2005.
19. Megan was an American post-graduate student in her mid-20s studying in London. Prior to moving to London, Megan had been employed at an NGO and was involved in community-level campaigning in the US. She was also involved and helping facilitate mainstream media aspects of protests against the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York City. Megan took a limited role in Dissent! and did not participate in the CounterSpin Collective. The interview with Megan was conducted face-to-face in London on 14/04/2005.
20. Michael was a Greek post-graduate student in his mid-20s studying in London. Michael was not involved in the CounterSpin Collective but was active within Dissent! particularly in the direct action components. In the past he had been involved with Indymedia in Greece and attended the 2001 G8 Summit in Genoa and related activities since then. The interview with Michael was conducted face-to-face in London on 17/05/2005.
21. Miriam was in her early-20s and was a university art student. She had little previous activist involvement prior to Dissent! and was involved in the network predominantly through her faith-based affinity group. The interview with Miriam was conducted face-to-face at the Hori-Zone camp in Scotland on 08/07/2005.
22. Neil was in his mid-30s and while originally from the US, he lived in Ireland and was employed as a community worker. Neil had a long history of activism being involved

in multiple environmental, social justice and anti-war activities since the mid 1990s and held a specific interest in media activism. Neil played an active role in Dissent! but particularly concentrated his efforts on the CounterSpin Collective. The first interview with Neil was conducted face-to-face at the Festival of Dissent! on 06/04/2005. The second interview was done via telephone on 27/08/2005.

23. Robyn was in her mid-20s and was originally from Austria but moved to England at a young age. She was working in the leisure industry but was to start post-graduate studies the September following the G8 Summit. She became involved with Dissent! through the Peoples Global Action network in 2004 and dedicated the majority of her energy to the CounterSpin Collective. The interview with Robyn was conducted face-to-face in London on 29/03/2005.
24. Sarah was in her late-20s and while from England, she also spent a lot of time in southern Europe. Sarah became involved in global justice activism via the 2000 demonstrations in Prague against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank meeting where she was involved in media activism and worked in alternative media. Since then she attended various global justice demonstrations including the G8 Summits in Genoa (2001) and Evian (2003). Sarah played an active role in Dissent! though she particularly concentrated her efforts on the CounterSpin Collective. The first interview with Sarah was conducted face-to-face in London on 27/04/2005 and the second interview, also face-to-face, was done on 21/07/2005 in London.
25. Scott was in his late-30s and worked in IT in London. He was previously involved with the anti-war movement and had attended some related Global Justice Movement events. Scott took an active role in Dissent! and a very marginal role in the CounterSpin Collective. Scott was interviewed twice for this research. The first interview was conducted face-to-face in London on 31/03/2005. The second interview was also a face-to-face interview in London on 22/09/2005.
26. Sophie was in her mid-20s and is an arts teacher from Birmingham. She had been involved in the anti-war movement in the UK in 2003 but had little activist experience before that and was minimally involved with Dissent!. The interview with Sophie was conducted face-to-face in London on 29/03/2005.
27. Tom was a post-graduate student in his mid-20s from Brighton. He had been involved in activism since 1999 with the J18 anti-capitalism protests in London. Since then he has been involved with organising and attending various global justice demonstrations including the G8 Summits in Genoa (2001) and Evian (2003). The interview with Tom was conducted face-to-face at Hori-Zone 08/07/2005.

Appendix 2: Dissent! Network Timeline and Events Attended During Fieldwork

This Appendix provides a chronological overview of significant events and milestones associated with the Dissent! Network from its founding in 2003 right up to and including events at the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit and includes network meetings, significant events along with information as to the Dissent!-related events I attended during my fieldwork.

Dates (dd/mm/year)	Event or Milestone	Additional Information
27/10/2003	23 rd Annual Anarchist Bookfair. London, England.	A decision was taken at this event to form Dissent!. I did not attend this meeting.
7/11/2003	ResistG82005 email listserv founded and first email sent out.	This was the primary listserv for Dissent!.
29/11/2003 - 30/11/2003	1 st Dissent! Network-wide Meeting, Nottingham, England.	I did not attend this meeting and instead relied upon meeting minutes.
1/12/2003	Enrager.net 2005 G8 Summit Internet forum founded.	I began reading Enrager after its creation but did read all backdated posts.
07/02/2004 - 08/02/2004	2 nd Dissent! Network Convergence, Brighton, England.	I did not attend this meeting and instead relied upon meeting minutes.
24/05/2004 - 25/05/2004	3 rd Dissent! Network Convergence, Manchester, England.	I did not attend this meeting and instead relied upon meeting minutes.
10/06/2004	Gleneagles, Scotland announced as location of G8 Leaders Summit.	
03/07/2004 - 04/07/2004	4 th Dissent! Network Convergence, Bradford, England.	I did not attend this meeting and instead relied upon meeting minutes.
17/09/2004 - 19/09/2004	5 th Dissent! Network Convergence, Edinburgh, Scotland.	I did not attend this meeting and instead relied upon meeting minutes.
13/10/2004 - 17/10/2004	Beyond ESF, Middlesex University, London, England.	The event featured multiple workshops but Dissent! activities were of interest including educational workshops, action strategy discussions and an international network meeting all of which I attended.
14/10/2004	Radical Theory Forum, Leytonstone, London, England.	Attended and participated in the event.
15/10/2004 - 17/10/2004	European Social Forum, Alexandra Palace, London, England.	Attended a G8 related debate and volunteered at the Dissent! Table.
17/10/2004	RAMPART, London, England.	Attended and participated in the event which included actions in central London.
27/11/2004	24 th Annual Anarchist Bookfair, London, England.	Attended Dissent! Discussion, "G8 In UK: Mobilising without leaders" and volunteered at Dissent! table.
04/12/2004 -	6 th Dissent! Network Convergence,	Attended and participated in the

05/12/2004	Newcastle, England.	meeting.
22/01/2005 - 23/01/2005	1 st Resist G8 South East Regional Assembly, London, England.	Attended and participated in the meeting.
12/02/2005 - 13/02/2005	7 th Dissent! Network Convergence, Glasgow, Scotland.	Attended and participated in the meeting.
14/02/2005	Media_strategy_agasint_g8 listserv founded and first email sent out.	I subscribed to this listserv immediately.
24/02/2005	2 nd Resist G8 South East Regional Assembly, London, England.	I did not attend and relied upon meeting minutes instead.
25/02/2005 - 28/02/2005	International Dissent Networking Meeting, Tübingen, Germany.	Attended and participated in the meeting.
15/03/2005 - 16/03/2005	G8 International Energy/Environment Ministers Roundtable, London, England.	Attended and participated in demonstrations related to the meeting. Demonstrations were limited and very small.
17/03/2005 - 18/03/2005	G8 Environment and Development Ministers Meeting, Derby, England.	I did not attend demonstrations. Instead, I relied upon network documents, interviewee accounts and news reports of the event. Demonstrations were limited and very small.
26/03/2005 - 27/03/2005	8 th Dissent! Network Convergence, Leeds, England.	I did not attend this meeting and instead relied upon meeting minutes.
03/04/2005	3 rd Resist G8 South East Regional Assembly, Reading, England.	Attended and participated in the meeting.
06/04/2005 - 10/04/2005	<i>Festival of Dissent</i> and 9 th Dissent! Network Convergence, Coalburn, Scotland.	Attended and participated in Festival including network meetings and workshops.
05/05/2008	4 th Resist G8 South East Regional Assembly, London, England.	Attended and participated in the meeting.
11/05/2005	G8-mediaresponse listserv founded	I subscribed immediately.
21/05/2005 - 22/05/2005	10 th Dissent! Network Convergence, Nottingham, England.	Attended and participated in the meeting.
28/05/2005	5 th Resist G8 South East Regional Assembly, London, England.	Attended and participated in the meeting.
04/06/2005 - 05/06/2005	11th Network Convergence, Glasgow, Scotland.	I did not attend this meeting and instead relied upon meeting minutes.
11/06/2005	6 th Resist G8 South East Regional Assembly, London, England.	Attended and participated in the meeting.
12/06/2005 – 17/06/2005	Cre8 Summit, Glasgow.	This was a guerrilla gardening activity that sought to involve the local community. I did not attend the event.
15/06/2005 - 17/06/2005	G8 Justice and Interior Ministers Meeting, Sheffield, England.	I did not attend demonstrations. Instead, I relied upon network documents, interviewee accounts and news reports of the event. Demonstrations were limited and very small.
18/06/2005	Radical Theory Forum, London.	Attended and participated.
Attended the G8 Summit Mobilisation – see below		

3) The G8 Summit

The actual G8 Leaders Summit ran from July 6th to 8th, 2005 however the mobilisation against the summit started before this. I arrived in Scotland on June 29th and stayed until July 10th, 2005. During this time I travelled between Edinburgh and Perthshire (Hori-Zone) to attend various actions all outlined below. An account of activity is also available on Indymedia (<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2005/07/317711.html>) and on the PGA site (<https://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/resistg8/timeline.htm>).

Dates (dd/mm/year)	Event or Milestone	Additional Information
29/06/2005	I arrived in Edinburgh, Scotland from London.	The day was spent securing accommodation to stay at in Edinburgh and then exploring the city.
30/06/2005	Dissent! Days of Resistance opens at the University of Edinburgh. Includes the first meeting of the Counter Spin Collective (CSC) in Scotland.	I spent the day in Edinburgh and attended a series of Days of Dissent! meetings including the CounterSpin Collective meeting.
01/07/2005	Hori-Zone camp opens in Stirling, Scotland.	I did not arrive at Hori-Zone until July 3, 2005.
01/07/2005	Dissent! Days of Resistance continues at the University of Edinburgh. The Counter Spin Collective (CSC) has its second meeting. CIRCA Press Conference, "Operation Brown Nose" 12:30pm Outside of Teviot Building, Edinburgh.	I spent the day in Edinburgh and attended a series of Days of Dissent! Meetings throughout the day including the second CounterSpin Collective meeting and the CIRCA press release event.
02/07/2005	Make Poverty History March, Edinburgh, Scotland.	I attended and participated in the march, following around the Dissent! block.
03/07/2005	Dissent! Days of Resistance continues at the University of Edinburgh. The Counter Spin Collective (CSC) has its third meeting.	I spent the day in Edinburgh and attended a series of Days of Dissent! meetings including the third CounterSpin Collective meeting. Mid-afternoon, I travelled up to the Hori-Zone camp and spent the remainder of the mobilisation using Hori-Zone as my base.
03/07/2005	G8 Alternatives Counter-Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland.	I did not attend this event.
04/07/2005	Faslane Blockade, HNMB Clyde, Scotland.	This event was organised by CND and Trident Ploughshares. I did not attend the activity and relied on activist and media reports.
04/07/2005	Carnival For Full Enjoyment, Edinburgh, Scotland.	The Carnival was announced through the Dissent! network, the event took place in the city centre without any form of police permit or approval. I travelled from the Hori-Zone camp in Stirling to Edinburgh to attend this event.
05/07/2005	Dissent! Hori-Zone preparations and CounterSpin Collective meeting.	I spent the day at the Hori-Zone camp predominantly engaged in CounterSpin Collective activities and meetings as this was the day before the planned Day of Action. Throughout the day many people left the camp to prepare for actions on the 6 th .

06/07/2005	First day of the Gleneagles G8 Summit, Gleneagles, Scotland.	
06/07/2005	<i>Dissent! Day of Action:</i> Beacons of Dissent! Blockades Brat Blockade Hill Walking	Beacons of Dissent! were lit at midnight in the Scottish highlands, I did not attend this action. Those at Hori-Zone wishing to participate in the mass blockades gathered at 3am. I was awake for the departure of the blockaders but stayed at the camp to work with the CounterSpin Collective. From 5am onwards I was at the CounterSpin Collective media gazebo. The first journalist arrived at the gazebo at 7:20am. Media interest continued throughout the day, there was a site wide meeting at 8pm that evening which I attended. The police presence remained constant at the camp from just after the blockades (4am) through to the closure of Hori-Zone.
07/07/2005	Hori-Zone	Little formal activities were planned, particularly mass actions. The People's Golfing Association did have an event on the calendar but it was cancelled due to tight policing. Following the Day of Action, in the early hours of July 7 th , the police declared a Section 60 and effectively contained activists to Hori-Zone. I remained at the camp.
07/07/2005	London bombings and the creation of London bombings Memorial at Hori-Zone.	News of the London bombings began to spread around the camp around 9am. By 11am the scale of the events was clear to activists, police and media on site. This effectively marked the end of the media event and while activists remained on site, attentions in the camp shifted away from the demonstrations. A memorial in solidarity with victims of the London bombings was created.
08/07/2005	Hori-Zone	Many people began leaving Hori-Zone. The camp remained heavily controlled by police. I remained at the camp.
08/07/2005	Dissent! Boogie on the Bridge, Glasgow Scotland	The event was attended by 300 activists as part of a climate change action. Very few activists from Hori-Zone travelled to the action due to police control of the camp. I stayed at Hori-Zone.
01/07/2005	Last official day of the Gleneagles, G8 Summit	
09/07/2005	Hori-Zone camp closes. I return back to London.	This was the final day of the Hori-Zone camp, I packed up my tent and returned to London.

Appendix 3: G8 Alternatives - Membership and Activities

G8A Membership

The membership of G8 Alternatives was listed on its website however the website is no longer active though it has been archived (G8 Alternatives, 2004). The organisations that were published included: Centre for Human Ecology; Dundee Trades Union Council; Edinburgh CND; Edinburgh Stop the War Coalition; Freeequal (conscious clubbers); Ethical Company Organisation; Friends of the Earth Scotland; Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees; Globalise Resistance Scotland; GOOSHING; Iraq Occupation Focus; Justice Not Vengeance; Muslim Association of Britain; NUJ Glasgow; Scotland Against Criminalising Communities; Scottish CND; Scottish Human Rights Centre; Scottish Socialist Party; Scottish Socialist Youth; Spinwatch; Stirling University Anti-War Group; TGWU 7/151 Branch; TGWU Glasgow District; WDM Scotland; YWCA Scotland; *Individuals in Support Include:* Aamer Anwar - Scottish human rights lawyer; Noam Chomsky; Rose Gentle (mother of soldier killed in Iraq); Lindsey German, Convenor Stop the War Coalition; Colin Leys, editor Social Register; Ken Macleod, science fiction author Leo Panitch, editor Social Register; Mark Thomas, comedian and activist.

G8 Alternatives activities programme

The following list of activities is reproduced from the *G8 Alternatives Press Pack* (G8 Alternatives, 2005a)

Saturday 2 July Make Poverty History rally

Edinburgh

More info www.makepovertyhistory.org.uk

What's it all about? It's about raising awareness of global poverty and voicing the need to end world poverty immediately by providing trade justice, dropping third world debts, and providing more and better aid.

Sunday 3 July G8 Alternatives Summit

Usher Hall, Queen's Hall and Edinburgh University, Edinburgh

More info from www.g8alternatives.org.uk

What's it all about? It's about considering the issues which G8 consider and some other global issues and trying to suggest some viable alternatives. It's about creating a space for civic dialogue to consider local responses to global issues.

Monday 4 July Faslane Blockade

Faslane Nuclear Base, Helensburgh

More info www.faslaneg8.com

What's it all about? It's about being unable to end poverty unless you end war. It's about shutting down Faslane base for a day to highlight the G8's use of massive military power, war and occupation to pursue profit and power. It's about rejecting nuclear weapons and making war history.

Tuesday 5 July CLOSE DUNGAVAL Voices Across Barriers

Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre, Ayrshire

What's it all about? It's about highlighting the illegality of detaining hundreds of asylum seekers, including families and children, in prison conditions and for prolonged periods of time when they have committed no crime but are fleeing persecution and poverty. It's also about highlighting the need for reform of the asylum and immigration system to make it fairer and the needs of migrants as opposed to global business.

Wednesday 6 July Gleneagles Demo

Gleneagles hotel, Auchterarder, Perthshire

What's it all about? It's about letting the leaders from G8 countries know another world is possible, that alternatives exist. It's about 6 million voices rejecting G8 and expressing their concerns about the actions of G8. It's about reminding G8 that they're elected representatives, elected to follow the will of the people, not their own agendas - reminding them that they don't rule the world.

Appendix 4: Interview Schedule Pre-G8

OPENING | Consent Form, stress anonymity

1) Interview Profile

- a. Past activist involvement?
- b. Past Summit experiences?
- c. Why did you get involved?
- d. Current level and area of involvement?

2) Significance of the G8 Summit (political and mediated opportunity)

- a. Planning to go to Scotland for the G8? Why?
- b. What is the G8? What its draw? What is the difference between the meeting in Scotland to the smaller (ministerial) meetings?
- c. Expectations for 2005 G8 Summit?
 - What is the importance of being there?
 - What will it be like?
 - What do you expect to happen?
 - What do you hope to achieve?

3) View of the AGM

- a. What is the “antiglobalisation movement”?
- b. Do you use the term? Why or why not?
(If it is brought up as a media endorsed term, WHY does the media use it?)
- c. If not the antiglobalisation movement, are the activities around the G8 linked to a larger unified social movement? What is it?

4) Significance/Objectives & Strategies of Activities Against the G8 Summit

- a. Current project/affinity group what is it and its objective (its point)?
- b. What is the message of event?
- c. Who is the message for?
- d. How getting message out (Internet, email, posters, talks etc.)?
- e. What will make the event and (demonstrations in general) a success?

5) Impact of Media on Objectives/Strategies Against the G8 Summit

- a. Do you expect media coverage of event?
- b. Is it important to get media coverage, does it matter? If so, how are you trying to get media coverage?
- c. What if you are contacted by media?(You group have a media policy/ spokesperson?)? Has this happened already [tell me about it]
 - Is this a priority?
- d. What will happen if you don't respond to media request for interviews?
- e. Can you control how you are portrayed by mainstream media? How?

6) Media and Movement Politics

- a. In thinking about this movement, what do you understand as “the media debate” within the movement to be about?
- b. How would you describe your own views about the debate?

- c. You or someone you know ever been contacted/interviewed by media (describe)?
(Flesh out what is understood as “the media” but don’t ask directly – is there distinction between various outlets?)
- d. Working experience with media formal or otherwise?
- e. In thinking more generally about media, mainstream media, does media coverage matter to the movement?

7) Media Awareness and Perception

- a. Are you aware of any media coverage of potential demonstrations leading up G8? What has it been like? How did you come across the news pieces?
- b. Media monitoring for G8 stories? Reaction to news stories? Any action taken? Why?
- c. Will the media cover Summit demonstrations? In what way? How much?
- d. For those who will only learn about the G8 via media coverage, what will they read in the papers or see on television?
- e. Personal media consumption (range of sources, preferences of sources)
- f. What does media look for in a news story? What makes good news?
- g. What is the result of media coverage? Different for TV/Radio/Print?
- h. Opinion of past media coverage of protest –examples? Why?
- i. Give me an example of What you see as a media story or headline coming out from G8?
- j. Give me an example of what you would like to see as a media story or headline coming out from G8?

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule Post-G8

OPENING | Consent Form, stress anonymity

1) Interview Profile

- a. Past activist involvement?
- b. Past Summit experiences?
- c. Why did you get involved?
- d. Current level and area of involvement?

2) Significance of the G8 Summit (political and mediated opportunity)

- a. Why did you go to Scotland for the G8?
- b. What is the G8? What is its draw? What is the difference between the meeting in Scotland to the smaller (Ministerial) meetings?
- c. What did you Expect to happen at the 2005 G8 Summit?
What was the importance of being there?
What was it like?
What do you expect to happen?
What do you hope to achieve? What was achieved?

3) Dissent, Media & Counter Spin Collective

- a. What was Dissent's media policy? At the camp?
- b. How did the Counter Spin Collective work? What was its mandate?
- c. Why did you work on the CSC?
- d. How were media requests handled?
- e. Were any press statements put out by the camp? How were those handled?
What about the statement from the London bombings statement?

4) Significance/Objectives & Strategies of Activities Against the G8 Summit

- a. Current project/affinity group what is it and its objective (its point)?
- b. What was the message of event?
- c. Who was the message for?
- d. How getting message out (Internet, email, posters, talks etc.)?
- e. What made the event and (demonstrations in general) a success?

5) Impact of Media on Objectives/Strategies Against the G8 Summit

- a. Did you expect media coverage of event?
- b. Is it important to get media coverage, does it matter? If so, how are you trying to get media coverage?
- c. What will happen if you don't respond to media request for interviews?
- d. Can you control how you are portrayed by mainstream media? How?

6) Media and Movement Politics

- a. In thinking about this movement, what do you understand as "the media debate" within the movement to be about?
- b. How would you describe your own views about the debate?

- c. You or someone you know ever been contacted/interviewed by media (describe)?
(Flesh out what is understood as “the media” but don’t ask directly – is there distinction between various outlets?)
- d. Working experience with media formal or otherwise?
- e. In thinking more generally about media, mainstream media, does media coverage matter to the movement?

7) **Media Awareness and Perception**

- a. What was the media coverage of potential demonstrations like in the lead up to the G8?
- b. Did you engage in Media monitoring for G8 stories? Reaction to news stories? Any action taken? Why?
- c. How did the media cover the Summit demonstrations? In what way? How much?
- d. What impact did the London bombings have?
- e. For those who will only learn about the G8 via media coverage, what will they read in the papers or see on television?
- f. Personal media consumption (range of sources, preferences of sources)
- g. What does media look for in a news story? What makes good news?
- h. What is the result of media coverage? Different for TV/Radio/Print?
- i. Opinion of past media coverage of protest –examples? Why?
- j. Give me an example of What you see as a media story or headline coming out from G8?
- k. Give me an example of what you would like to see as a media story or headline coming out from G8?

8) **View of the AGM**

- a. What is the “antiglobalisation movement”?
- b. Do you use the term? Why or why not?
(If it is brought up as a media endorsed term, WHY does the media use it?)
- c. If not the antiglobalisation movement, are the activities around the G8 linked to a larger unified social movement? What is it?

OPTIONAL IF INVOLVED IN Counter Spin Collective

9) **Dissent, Media & Counter Spin Collective**

- a. What was Dissent’s media policy? What was the camp’s media policy?
- b. What was the reaction to the C.S.C. (media gazebo)?
- c. How did the Counter Spin Collective work? What was its mandate?
- d. Why did you work on the C.S.C.?
- e. How were media requests handled?
- f. Were any press statements put out by the camp? How were those handled?
- g. What about the statement from the London bombings statement?

Appendix 6: Interview Consent Form

Research Consent Form

This consent form outlines my rights as a participant in the research project, *"Media Contention and the 'Antiglobalisation Movement': An Analysis of Opposition to the 2005 Perthshire G8 Summit"* conducted by Patrick McCurdy, a PhD student in the Department of Media and Communication, London School of Economics and Political Science. The specific focus of this study is on activist views and interactions with traditional (print and broadcast) media in the lead up to and at the 2005 G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland from the perspective of activists.

You have been asked to do an interview because of your association with the Dissent! network which is serving as the case study for this research project. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will be recorded and transcribed. However, transcripts may not be verbatim nor may the contents of the full interview be transcribed. Selective quotations from the transcripts may be used in the thesis.

I, the interviewee, understand that:

1. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary.
2. It is the right of the interviewee to decline to answer any question that she/he is asked.
3. The interviewee is free to end the interview at any time.
4. The interviewee may request that the interview not be taped.
5. The name and identity of the interviewee will remain confidential. If necessary, some of details such as gender and location of the interviewee may be altered in order to protect the identity and maintain the anonymity of the interviewee.
6. The name of the interviewee will not appear on any tapes or transcripts resulting from the interview.

I HAVE READ THIS CONSENT FORM. I HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO ASK QUESTIONS CONCERNING ANY AREAS THAT I DID NOT UNDERSTAND.

(Signature of Interviewee) _____

(Printed name of Interviewee) _____

(Date) _____

You may decline to participate in this study. You may end your participation in this study at any time. Maintaining your anonymity is a priority and every practical precaution will be taken to disguise your identity. There will not be any identifying information on audiotapes or transcripts of this interview. I will not allow anyone other than the research advisor to hear any audiotape of your voice or review a transcript of this interview. All materials generated from your interview (e.g., audiotapes and transcripts) will remain in my direct physical possession. If you require any information about the study or have any further questions, I may be contacted via email: p.m.mccurdy@lse.ac.uk or via phone at 079-635-84872. Should you wish to confirm that I am a research student at LSE and that LSE is aware I am conducting this research, feel free to contact Media@LSE at 020 7955 6490. My thesis advisor is Dr. Nick Couldry.

(Signature of Interviewer and Date) _____

Appendix 7: Data Disk

The CD attached to this thesis contains the following addition information:

- Inside Media Event article
- Outline of Days of Action Programme - MS Word File
- Press Release Pointers from the Festival of Dissent - MS Word File
- Archived Enrager
- Archived Agitprop