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Transnational Protests and the Media

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Mediating and Embodying Transnational Protest

Internal and External Effects of Mass Global Justice Actions

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In order to achieve their goals, whether concrete policy change or longer-term cultural transformation, social movements have to make their struggles visible, while communicating their demands and aspirations.* On the hand, movements have to reach out to activists who are already mobilized, which they often do through their own alternative media sources (cf. Juris, 2005a). On the other hand, movements have to speak to a broader public of potential supporters and sympathizers, for which they rely on the mass media. One important mechanism for eliciting coverage in the mainstream press is to organize spectacular mass direct actions. Ever since the protest against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, the anti-corporate globalization or global justice movement has made particularly high profile use of this strategy, engaging in mass counter-summit actions against the major institutional symbols of neoliberal capitalism: the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, WTO, and G8 (now the G20). Beyond their external media impact, however, mass direct actions also produce an important internal effect: generating the emotions needed to facilitate lasting commitments among activists, particularly within more diffuse, informal networks and collectives. Scholars have explored the media-related aspects of social movements (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Juris, 2005b), and have recently begun to examine the emotional side of activism (Goodwin et al., 2001), but there has been scant attention to the way these domains interact (but see Routledge, 1997). This chapter considers the

relation between the mediated and affective dimensions of social movement practice through an analysis of protest performance.

Counter-summit actions are critical networking tools that allow activists to communicate political messages to an audience, while eliciting deeply felt emotions and identities. Given their highly unpredictable, confrontational nature, mass direct actions produce powerful images and affective ties. However, their effects may be contradictory. On the one hand, counter-summits generate high levels of affective solidarity, but their emotional and media impact diminish over time. On the other hand, the most unpredictable, free-form actions, which may be emotionally satisfying for core activists, often result in media frames that stigmatize or trivialize protesters. In contrast, traditional protests may be ignored, but when they *are* covered they tend to receive sympathetic treatment. Based on ethnographic accounts of global justice protests in Prague and Barcelona as a participant in the Barcelona-based Movement for Global Resistance, as well as analysis of subsequent media representations in the Spanish and Catalan press,[1] I argue that mass counter-summit actions reflect a tension between the emotional and media dimensions of protest, involving a contradiction between what Jennifer Earl (2000) calls "intra-" and "extra-movement" outcomes.[2] Given the recent global justice actions against the G20 in Pittsburgh and the Climate Summit in Copenhagen, this analysis remains relevant to both academic and activist concerns.

Protest, media, and performance

Counter-summit protests are complex ritual performances that generate a dual effect. Externally, they are powerful "image events" (DeLuca, 1999), where diverse activist networks communicate their messages to an audience by "hijacking" the global media space afforded by multilateral summits (Peterson, 2001). Internally, they produce terrains where identities are expressed through distinct bodily techniques, and emotions are generated through ritual conflict and the lived experience of prefigured utopias. Mass counter-summits thus involve what Paul Routledge (1997) calls "imagineered resistance": struggles that are mediated *and* embodied.

In terms of image, counter-summits are performative "terrains of resistance" (Routledge, 1994) where social movements struggle for visibility. Spectacular protests conform to prevailing media logics, a way of seeing and interpreting the world through the production formats and modes of transmission of mass media as entertainment (Altheide & Snow, 1991). The growing influence of "infotainment" means unusual, spontaneous, dramatic, or emotionally satisfying events often garner significant media attention, while less visually and emotionally compelling incidents go unnoticed (Altheide & Snow, 1991: 17; Castells, 1996). By staging

spectacular image events, global justice activists thus attempt to make power visible and challenge dominant symbolic codes.

Image is linked to emotion through embodied performance. Performances communicate verbal and non-verbal messages to an audience (Bauman, 1977), while allowing participants to experience symbolic meanings through ritual interaction (Schieffelin, 1985). Performances are constitutive, as Debra Kapchan suggests, "To perform is to carry something into effect" (1995: 479). Counter-summit protests provide multiple theatrical spaces where oppositional politics are communicated and new subjectivities are forged (Hetherington, 1998). Tactics such as militant confrontation, symbolic conflict, and carnivalesque revelry involve distinct activist "techniques of the body" (Mauss, 1973), which generate alternative meanings and identities.

As performative rituals, mass direct actions operate by transforming affect: amplifying an initiating emotion, such as anger or rage, and transferring it into feelings of solidarity (Collins, 2001). Randall Collins (2001) has called such Durkheimian collective effervescence "emotional energy," which I refer to in less mystical terms as "affective solidarity." Organizers use emotion strategically to generate the commitment necessary to maintain participation (Gould, 2001). In this sense, protests provide arenas not only for eliciting images and identities but also for living moments of freedom, liberation, and joy (Gould, 2001; Calhoun, 2001). At the same time, distinct kinds of protest produce contrasting emotional effects. Compared to institutionalized marches and rallies, for example, free-form actions are more emotively potent, in part, because they introduce elements of danger, uncertainty, and play. The intense feelings, egalitarian sentiments, and oppositional identities associated with mass protests provide a store of emotional resources activists can draw upon to facilitate ongoing movement building. As Collins (2001) suggests, however, peak emotional mobilizations are time-bound, while the ebbs and flows of protest are tied to emotional shifts. In this sense, core activists eventually tire while public interest may wane, particularly as protests become routine. In terms of extra-movement outcomes the most unpredictable confrontational actions often elicit significant media attention, but protesters are more likely to be stigmatized or trivialized. Traditional protests are thus less exhilarating and less newsworthy, but, as we shall see, when they *are* covered they generate more positive images.

Anti-world bank/IMF protest in Prague

Nearly 50,000 people took to the streets to protest corporate globalization at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings in Seattle on 30 November 1999. A diverse coalition of environmental, labor, and economic justice activists succeeded in disrupting the meetings and helping to prevent another round of trade liberalization talks. Media images of giant puppets, tear gas, and street clashes between protesters and police were broadcast worldwide, bringing the WTO and a novel form of collective action into view. The "Battle of Seattle" was a prime-time image event, cascading through global mediascapes (Appadurai, 1996) and capturing the imagination of long-time activists and would-be postmodern revolutionaries alike. Although Seattle was a key moment of visibility, social movements had been organizing against corporate globalization for years (cf. Juris, 2008b). However, Seattle sparked a proliferation of global justice organizing and mass counter-summit protests around the world, including the protests against the World Bank and IMF in Prague in September 2000.

My own experience in Prague began with a bus caravan from Barcelona along with my new affinity group, the Open Veins.[3] On the evening of the day of our arrival, we went down to the convergence center, a teeming beehive of activity on the edge of town where activists were preparing for the action. We got there just in time for a coordinating meeting with 350 activists from dozens of countries. Organizers went over the battle plan, explaining that the march would begin at the *Námestí Míru Square* before splitting into three blocs: Blue for militant action, Pink for non-violent protest, Yellow for an intermediate level of conflict. This "swarming" (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 2001) strategy would involve blockading the primary access road to the Congress Center and then entirely surrounding the Summit. Two additional blocs were formed later: a Pink & Silver march led by a UK-based samba band and autonomous blockades in the South. My affinity group decided to join the Pink March, which desperately needed more bodies.

On the morning of September 26, the main day of the action, *Námestí Míru Square* was bustling with thousands of activists holding colorful puppets, signs, and props. We lined up in the street along with the Pink March early that afternoon, and, after sending out a scout to make sure the route was clear, we moved out, chanting "Hey hey, ho, ho, the World Bank has got to go!" Dozens of Czech and international journalists began snapping pictures and recording video footage. Sandra, Miguel, and I exchanged glances, as our moral outrage was transformed into a feeling of collective power. As Nuria recalled, "There are times when something surges up from inside, as if your body were saying, 'now you are living something truly important.'"

Yellow March

After a few minutes people began shouting at us to slow down. Most of the Pink March had followed the Ya Basta! sound system toward the bridge. The Blue March navigated their way along the western side of the congress center, but the

Pink Bloc was in disarray. Rather than continue with depleted numbers, we decided to turn around and walk back toward the bridge, where thousands of activists from the Pink and Yellow Blocs were standing around a grassy plaza. I made my way through the crowd to get a closer look, and sure enough, two tanks were blocking the bridge flanked by an impressive battalion of soldiers and riot cops. Several hundred Italian, Spanish, and Finnish activists dressed from head to toe in white overalls and protective padding were pushing up against police lines with huge plastic shields and inner tubes.

The white overalls tactic was designed to create evocative images of resistance while generating powerful feelings of affective solidarity. As I looked on from a safe distance, row after row of similarly outfitted, yet uniquely adorned bodies, with elbows linked, were pushing up against multiple lines of riot police protecting the entrance to the bridge. Behind them were the two armored vehicles, as the coercive power of the Czech state was on display. Across the battle line, the multitude of bodies was at once a collective yet individualized force. In addition to white overalls, activists wore multiply-colored head gear, including black, silver, white, yellow, blue, and orange helmets. Some also carried shields made from black inner tubes, clear plastic panels, and detached seat cushions. The mass of assembled bodies continued to push against the police barricade for several hours, communicating resistance, while creating an emotionally and visually compelling conflict. Indeed, the action had practical *and* performative dimensions. The bizarre, padded outfits, inner tubes, helmets, and foam padding protected activists from baton blows, but they also provided ready-made images for the mass media, while expressing messages about the importance of frivolity, laughter, and unity through difference.

Pink March

After observing the *Tute Bianche* for several minutes, I rejoined my affinity group, and together with several others from Britain, Sweden, and Norway, we began to reorganize the Pink March using our giant flags to lead people down the narrow streets along the eastern flank of the congress center. As we guided hundreds of protesters around the corner, Jorge looked up at me and observed, "This is great; I've never felt so alive!" Indeed, using our bodies to direct such a large and determined crowd generated powerful feelings of agency and solidarity. Eager to begin the blockade, we became more purposeful and serious. By the time we approached the access highway, our ranks numbered several thousand. A contingent of Swedes and Norwegians marched directly up the ramp, while the rest of us wound our way around the side streets, where we took up blockades, using our bodies to occupy the space in front of the police lines.

The other Pink Bloc group soon joined us. Men in business suits would occasionally try to break through, at which point we would stand up and lock arms to prevent them from passing. The police stood by, some looking fearful, others mildly amused. Beyond the practical impact of the action, protesters were communicating messages of determined, yet non-violent opposition, reproducing archetypical scenes of civil disobedience. Non-violent performances symbolically contrasted the vulnerable, morally righteous bodies of the protesters with the menacing bodies of the police, while creating an emotional tone of serene, determined resistance.

After maintaining the blockade for several hours, rumors began circulating that most of the delegates had been whisked away through an escape route before the Summit had concluded. Our initial euphoria had given way to malaise, but our spirits picked up when we realized we were having an impact. With stories of violent clashes circulating, we began to sense the nervous excitement preceding a "discharging" crowd (Canetti, 1962). Shortly after dinner, dozens of masked and hooded anarchists appeared, hurling stones and empty bottles at the police lines surrounding us. When the melee ended, I went around the corner to join my affinity group, which had initiated another blockade. An armored police vehicle approached, and we maintained our position. After a brief, but intense standoff, the vehicle backed away, as a small group of hooded Czech anarchists banged on the windows. The police soon reinforced their lines, and we feared another attack. Our fear transformed into elation, however, when the riot cops backed off again. "They're retreating!" exclaimed Gerard. We had successfully held the space. Miguel, Gerard, and I cheered and hugged, and then the entire group began celebrating our momentary victory through playful mockery and dancing in front of the stoic, heavily armed riot cops. We had entered a riveting space of carnivalesque revelry, inducing feelings of power and solidarity.

Many of us had experienced shifting emotions throughout the day, as Gerard recalled, "There was a pre-Prague and a post-Prague in my life. I met so many people there and had such an incredible experience. There were moments of happiness, then times when your morale sunk through the floor. There was fear, panic, but also festivity; it was incredible!" It was precisely the flexible, constantly changing, spontaneous, and open-ended nature of the Pink March, and the overall Prague action that generated such high levels of affective solidarity.

Pink & Silver March

As we patiently held our Pink March blockades, the Pink & Silver Bloc danced in and out behind the UK-based samba band. Several dozen dancers wearing pink skirts, tights, pants, and leotards, and the occasional silver jump suit, frolicked to the beat of the drums along with their brightly colored masks and flags. Drumming,

dance, and music help create what Elias Canetti (1962) calls the "rhythmic" crowd. Activist bands, including samba troupes or the Infernal Noise Brigade from Seattle, provide focal points during mass actions and elicit widespread feelings of embodied agency. In Prague, samba dancers not only helped generate affective solidarity, their festive and playful performances also represented a stark contrast to both militant protesters and the Czech police. Meanwhile, Radical Cheerleaders and Pink Fairies occasionally broke away from the group, performing ironic cheers and taunting the police. As we held our intersection, a Pink Fairy approached a nearby police vehicle and began "cleaning" it with her feather duster, much to the delight of the crowd. When the police failed to respond, she was emboldened, and started to approach individual officers, brushing their shoes as they nervously looked on. Such playful provocation represents a form of ritual opposition, a symbolic overturning of hierarchy much like a medieval carnival (Bakhtin, 1984).

Pink & Silver used burlesque activist bodies to symbolically contrast a world of utopian creativity, color, and play to the dark, oppressive forces of law and order. Such performances are "emergent" in that they make social structure visible and amenable to change (Bauman, 1977). Play, in particular, reveals the possibility of radically reorganizing current social arrangements. It exists in the subjunctive mood: "the domain of the 'as-if' (Turner, 1986: 169)." Pink & Silver thus involved the strategic appropriation of carnivalesque performance and aesthetics, including playful mockery, ritualized inversion, gender bending, drumming, dance, outlandish costumes, and wild masks. Unlike the other blocs, Pink & Silver succeeded in penetrating the congress center, using their creative, mobile blend of tactics to confound the police. Pink & Silver, like the larger action, created a performative terrain that was oppositional *and* subjunctive, a platform for critiquing prevailing social, political, and economic orders, enacting new forms of sociality, and generating affective solidarity through mobile and free form virtuoso performance.

Blue March

Meanwhile, as we held our blockades, the Blue March battle raged in the west. Raul and Paco, from MRG-Zaragoza, had offered to navigate; assuming the march would be non violent. When they attempted to direct the crowd away from a battalion of riot cops, militants screamed, "police!" and charged at them up a hill pushing a huge plastic blue ball from *Náměstí Míru*. Activists were repelled but regrouped at the bottom of the hill and continued to charge again and again. They were able to move police lines back until riot cops responded with tear gas and water cannons. Militants then began to dig up cobblestones, hurling them along with Molotov cocktails. The street battle raged for hours, as Paco, from MRG-Zaragoza, later recalled, "I had never seen such a violent confrontation, before or after. Genoa was a battlefield, but there wasn't as much body-to-body contact. There was fire everywhere; cops were burning."

Militant tactics involve the ritual enactment of violent performances via distinct bodily techniques, political symbols, and protest styles, including black pants and jumpers, combat boots, and bandanas to cover the face, which serve to express solidarity while simultaneously portraying archetypical images of rebellion. As Peterson (2001: 55) suggests, militant activists generate identities through emotionally powerful embodied ritual performances that construct the militant body as the ground of agency and produce an "embattled" activist subjectivity. The typical image of the Black Bloc activist reflects a masculine ideal of aggressive confrontation. Violent performances constitute militant networks by physically expressing a radical rejection of the dominant order, including the major symbols of capitalism and the state. They also allow activists to express powerful feelings of anger and rage. However, mass mediated images of violence are often used to stigmatize protesters (Juris, 2005b). Militant violence thus constitutes a clear expression of the tension between the emotional and external impact of direct action protest with respect to a wider public.

The next morning I attended a press conference at the media center for the mobilization. Despite the focus on violence, the action had elicited significant press coverage. Correspondents from Spanish, Catalan, and other international news and television outlets covered the protests, creating an anti-corporate globalization media boom in the Spanish State. Indeed, Prague was an emotionally and visibly compelling free-form action. Activists generated affective solidarity and oppositional identities through diverse bodily movements and techniques, each involving distinct emotional tones and intensities. At the same time, Prague was a potent image event, as diverse networks communicated alternative political messages, rendering conflicts visible.

Mobilization against the EU in Barcelona

The spring 2002 mobilization against the EU in Barcelona provides a clear contrast with Prague, illustrating how different forms of protest generate distinct emotional and visual effects. Rather than free-form direct action, a highly scripted "unity march" took center stage, in part, because organizers were concerned about police repression due to the increasing violence at recent global justice protests. There *were* highly charged moments during the protest, but many core activists experienced the unity march as less emotionally intense than previous actions.

In the early evening of March 16, I arrived at the *Plaça de Catalunya* to meet up with my affinity group before the march began. We waited anxiously for the

masses to appear, and after what felt like an eternity, thousands of people started pouring in, seemingly from nowhere. Suddenly, the large banners and floats separating the blocks moved into place, and before we could figure out who was supposed to go where, a huge crowd swept us along. As the march began, we danced alongside a samba band, chanting "Another World Is Possible, Another World Is Possible." Other protesters carried colorful banners denouncing the Europe of Capital, depicting greedy businessman clenching euros and dollar bills, or portraying Presidents Aznar and Bush as war criminals. Meanwhile, packs of Euro-Fighters began darting in and out, while further along, we passed a drumming troupe dressed as red devils and giants. As we neared the port, I glanced back and saw hundreds of thousands of protesters. Ecstatic organizers claimed that this was the largest demonstration they had seen, more than a half million people. The next morning's headline in *La Vanguardia*, a popular pro-business daily, exclaimed: "Victory in the Streets!" The press hailed protesters as paragons of "civic virtue."

Although the unity march mobilized masses of people it was far less confrontational than past actions and failed to communicate a message of radical dissent. Many activists expressed a sense of frustration, even defeat, suggesting the movement had been contained and neutralized. Rather than an open-ended, confrontational event of representation, the march felt overly formal and routine. Compared to past actions, many radicals felt the protest lacked risk and excitement and was thus less emotionally empowering as Paula pointed out, "We were afraid to organize confrontational actions, which really make conflicts visible. The actions were great in terms of content—extremely transparent and public. But making sure people weren't afraid to bring their young kids to the actions was excessive." Despite occasional moments of community, there were few outbursts of freedom, excitement and uncertainty, as Joan pointed out:

> The mobilization was a success, but not an epic experience. There were epic moments, but not like in Prague, Genoa, or last year in Barcelona. . . . The demonstration was a numerical success, and it produced an image that makes our critiques acceptable, but it wasn't a life-changing experience where you radically confront the system and live through dangerous situations full of adrenaline, at least not for me.

Given Joan's thirst for "epic" moments of transformation, a traditional protest was bound to disappoint. The unity march failed to generate the same degree of affective solidarity as past counter-summit actions. For many radicals, the anti-EU mobilization felt controlled, staged, and predictable, as if the open crowd had been caged. Mass direct actions were beginning to lose their confrontational edge. Their emotional impact was waning, they were becoming routine. Nonetheless, the large number of participants, traditional format, and peaceful tone of the march generated sympathetic media images, facilitating wider movement building and recruitment.

Contrasting media coverage of prague and barcelona

Confrontational, free-form actions such as the anti-World Bank/IMF protest in Prague generate high levels of affective solidarity, but they may be difficult to reproduce over time. In contrast, traditional protests, including the anti-EU march in Barcelona, are more sustainable but are often experienced as less emotionally transformative. The media impact of protest tends to work in the opposite direction. Spectacular actions draw more media attention, but the coverage is likely to be disparaging. For their part, traditional marches and rallies are less likely to elicit media interest, but when they do, they generally receive more sympathetic treatment.

One way to assess the latter is to examine the impact of protest on political discourse and public opinion through the mass media. Protesters stage spectacular image events, in part, to gain visibility. At the same time, however, reporters tend to focus on violence and intrigue rather than underlying political issues. By employing widespread "media frames" (Gitlin, 1980), journalists select, exclude, emphasize, and interpret verbal and visual cues in particular ways. As Gamson and Modigliani (1989) suggest, individual frames composed of metaphors, images, catchphrases, and other devices are grouped together as "media packages," which continually incorporate new events into their interpretive schemes.

With respect to protest, the mass media are more sympathetic to discourses and practices that reflect dominant values, such as the sanctity of private property and the state, and can be easily incorporated into hegemonic frameworks. On the other hand, dominant media packages employ various techniques such as trivialization, marginalization, disparagement, and a focus on violence and internal division, to deflect and contain radical dissent (Gitlin, 1980). Consequently, global justice movements receive more favorable press coverage to the extent they engage in peaceful protest, emphasize reforms, and include institutional actors. Ironically, perhaps, these conditions produce less emotionally compelling events. In order to demonstrate the contradiction between internal and external impacts of mass actions, this section contrasts the mass media coverage of protests in Prague and Barcelona in the Spanish and Catalan press.[4]

Prague—September 2000

Large numbers of Spanish and Catalan activists took part in the September 2000 anti-World Bank and IMF protests in Prague, eliciting significant media interest

back home. Among the dominant media packages was the division between "good" and "bad" protesters. Radical youths were disparaged and criminalized, while more moderate non-governmental organizations received favorable treatment, including coverage of their political demands. The headlines on 25 September portrayed massive street battles from the day before with photos depicting the Black Bloc and white overall militants hurling stones, breaking windows, and confronting police lines. A story in *El País* characterized the action in this way, "Protesters numbered 9,000 by morning, with nighttime reinforcements from Italy, Greece, and Spain. They ripped up cobblestones, made Molotov cocktails, gathered sharp objects, and set off for the Convention Center singing fight songs" (27 September: 74). When protesters closed delegates inside, reporters attributed to them a victory, "Thousands of demonstrators scored a success in their battle against globalization after surrounding the international capitalist elite in Prague" (*El País*, 27 September: 74).

There was a significant discrepancy, however, between media representations of radicals and moderates. A story in *El País* thus characterized militants as, "rioters with colored hair and gas masks, radicals for the sake of being radical, with no more ideological foundation than trashing windows and luxury cars, and punks with *pierced penises* urinating all over the streets" (28 September: 70). Other reports echoed specious assertions that Spanish detainees were "associated with radical Basque movements" (*El País*, 29 September: 102). Militants were specifically contrasted to Reformists, as an *El País* article explained, "Wolfensohn met with 350 moderate NGOs requesting dialogue. . .but radicals are not interested in building bridges and will play revolution in the streets" (23 September: 73). Another article asserted that, "Various NGOs, who have struggled for years to force the IMF and World Bank to forgive the debt of the world's poorest countries, separated themselves from the rioters" (*El País*, 28 September: 70).

The anti-World Bank and IMF protests in Prague elicited significant media attention in the Spanish and Catalan press. However, much of the coverage portrayed protesters in a negative light, stigmatizing them as violent criminals or trivializing them as marginal squatters and punks committed more to their subcultural lifestyles than political change. In contrast, moderates were depicted as legitimate political actors engaging in peaceful protest and offering a reasonable challenge to World Bank and IMF policies. Overall, the media impact was mixed. On one level, radicals and moderates worked well together, the former stimulating media interest through militant protest, the latter providing legitimacy and a focused message. On another level, the dominant frames stigmatized and trivialized radicals, making it more difficult for organizers to reach beyond a committed core of activists. In this sense, the same factors that generate affective solidarity among militants may complicate efforts to recruit more broadly.

Barcelona—March 2002

By the time of the March 2002 protests against the EU in Barcelona, institutional actors, including the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) and the Catalan Socialist Party (PSC) had aligned themselves with moderates inside the Barcelona Social Forum (BSF). Before the mobilization, protesters and officials from the conservative Popular Party (PP), which controlled the central government, promoted contrasting media packages. In particular, the PP stepped up its attempts to link protesters with Basque street fighters. As an *El País* headline exclaimed, "Barcelona arms itself for protests against globalization, Aznar [the Spanish President from the PP party] warns demonstrators of the risk of joining Batasuna" (10 March). A story in *El Mundo* called, "More than a thousand Basque radicals will go to Barcelona," portrayed a city poised for an epic battle between militants and police (14 March: 3). Another headline in *La Vanguardia* read, "Spain impedes entrance of 118 anti-globalization activists," and was accompanied by an image of sequestered bats, sticks, and guns (15 March: 23), setting the stage for police repression.

Activists and leftist parties promoted an alternative media package stressing non-violence and blaming the tension on the central government. A story in *El Periodico* thus reported that the Campaign "accuses police of 'provocation,'" and asks officials to "'let us demonstrate in peace'" (12 March: 17). *El Mundo* ran headlines declaring that the, "PSC criticizes 'obsession' with security" (12 March: 17), and that the "Barcelona Social Forum advocates massive, 'peaceful' demonstration" (12 March: 19). At the same time, beyond violence and tension, several stories focused on political content, as an article in *El Periodico* explained, activists denounced the Spanish EU Presidency for being "guided by . . . deregulation, flexibilization, and privatization," and thus, "imposing the 'law of the market above all else'" (12 March: 16).

Following the massive non-violent demonstration on 16 March, the "peaceful protester" package won out. A headline in *El País* thus exclaimed, "300,000 people peacefully demand another globalization" (17 March: 1). A *La Vanguardia* headline similarly announced, "Huge anti-globalization march, hundreds of thousands march peacefully in Barcelona." For its part, a headline in *El Periodico* triumphantly declared "300,000 people demonstrate peacefully in the largest anti-globalization march in Europe" (17 March: 1). A story in *El País* praised the new "Barcelona model" (17 March: 4), while its editorial page lauded the "maturity" of protesters and the city's "civic display." The prevailing sentiment was perhaps best summarized in this way: "Anti-globalization forces are seen as more legitimate" (*La Vanguardia*, 18 March: 6).

The press coverage during the anti-EU mobilization in Barcelona began by emphasizing familiar media packages, including protest as a battle, the threat of mil-

itant violence, and internal divisions. For their part, activists and leftist parties promoted an alternative "peaceful protester" package, which carried the day following the massive unity march. However, for radicals, the media impact, once again, was mixed. On the one hand, the dominant media frames emphasized reformist critiques while extolling the virtue of cooperation. On the other hand, the sympathetic coverage made it more likely that potential adherents would be willing to take part in future protests. Whereas the action in Prague was emotionally potent but resulted in media packages that stigmatized and trivialized radicals, the march in Barcelona was experienced as routine by many core activists but led to triumphant headlines that helped legitimize the wider movement.

Conclusion

Counter-summit protests are important mobilizing tools that allow activists to perform their networks and make their struggles visible while generating affective solidarity through ritual catharsis. On the one hand, mass direct actions, in particular, constitute high-profile image events where activist networks represent themselves through diverse embodied spatial practices. Spectacular actions involving Pink Bloc, white overall, and Black Bloc tactics are thus meant, in part, to capture media attention, while communicating political messages to an audience. In this sense, the action in Prague and the anti-EU march in Barcelona made headlines in Spain and Catalonia and throughout Europe. However, as the novelty of counter-summits wears off, more and more spectacular actions may be needed to break into busy media cycles (Routledge, 1997).

Mass counter-summit protests also generate affective solidarity. Activists perform their networks through diverse bodily movements, techniques, and styles, generating distinct identities and emotions. This was evident in Prague, where organizers divided the urban terrain into color-coded zones, each reserved for specific forms of embodied action. At the same time, different kinds of protest generate varying degrees of emotional intensity. Prague was a classic free-form action, producing powerful emotions through heated conflict between protesters and police and the lived experience of prefigured utopias. The march against the EU in Barcelona, on the other hand, created a significant impact through sheer numbers, but for many activists, it felt scripted and routine. In this sense, counter-summit protests are key networking tools, but they generate diminishing returns with respect to visibility and affective solidarity.

Moreover, as I have argued, mass counter-summit actions are often contradictory with respect to intra- and extra-movement outcomes. The most spectacular, confrontational free form actions, which are particularly potent in emotional terms,

tend to elicit media frames that stigmatize or belittle protesters. As we have seen, many activists experienced the anti-World Bank and IMF action in Prague as emotionally transformative, but the press coverage portrayed radicals in a disparaging light. Conversely, although peaceful protests are often ignored, when they are covered, because of large numbers, the participation of institutional forces, or *threat* of violence, they are more likely to elicit sympathetic treatment. For many core activists, however, they tend to generate lower levels of affective solidarity, as we saw with the anti-EU protest in Barcelona. Organizers thus have to balance affective solidarity with sustainability, while also managing the tension between the emotional and mass media impacts of political protest.

Global justice activists have devised multiple strategies for dealing with these dilemmas, including a long-term shift toward more local, everyday struggles and the turn toward regional and world social forums as periodic moments for broader movement convergence. At the same time, mass counter-summit actions continue to have a role in generating emotions and visibility, even if less central and more intermittent. In this sense, global justice activists have organized mass direct actions every two or three years, particularly against the G8/G20, but also targeting Democratic and Republican National Conventions in the U.S., the European Union in Europe, and most recently the Global Climate Summit in Copenhagen. Organizers still have to confront the strategic tension between the affective and media dimensions of mass actions. This was made particularly evident during the summer 2007 action against the G8 in Heiligendamm, Germany, when a militant Black Bloc set police cars ablaze during a march in the town of Rostock prior to the Summit, and this past September at the anti-G20 protest in Pittsburgh, when masked protesters took to the streets and confronted police. These emotively and visually compelling actions elicited significant press coverage, but they led to stories and images that stigmatized activists as senseless and violent. Ultimately, the success of the global justice and other movements depends on the ability of organizers to creatively negotiate such strategic tensions.

Notes

*(Portions of this chapter have previously appeared in modified form in *Ethnography* 9(1): 61–97)

1. Barcelona-based research was supported by a Dissertation Field Research Grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc., and a Dissertation Field Research Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council (with Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funding).
2. Intra-movement outcomes include factors such as emotion, biographical impact, and collective identity. Extra-movement outcomes include institutional/policy change, cultural

transformation, and media impact, which mediates between cultural and institutional/policy spheres.

3. An "affinity group" is a collection of ten to fifteen activists that coordinates with other groups to form larger clusters and blocs, constituting the basic building bloc of direct action protests. The name "Open Veins" was taken from a book of the same name by Eduardo Galeano about the destructive effects of foreign intervention in Latin America.
4. My sources include two of the top-selling national dailies in Spain—*El País* and *El Mundo*, and the two most popular Catalan regional papers—*El Periodico de Catalunya* and *La Vanguardia*. *El País* is center-left, *El Mundo* is center-right, while *El Periodico* is left leaning and provides the most sympathetic coverage of protesters. For its part, *La Vanguardia* promotes a pro-business, Catalanist line. It is important to recognize such differences, but a finely-tuned analysis of the contrasting coverage within these sources is beyond the scope of this article.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Protest and Public Relations

A new era for non-institutional sources?

ADAM BOWERS

Introduction

The increasingly sophisticated communication strategies of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), pressure groups and protest movements have led to some success in securing coverage for non-institutional[1] views in the news media. Davis suggests that the "1990s might be seen as a period in which alternative interest group PR began to break into the established elite discourse networks and use the media to bring policy debates into the public sphere" (Davis, 2003: 41). Schudson observed that by 1999 "some of the Blair government's most difficult communication struggles were with consumer groups, the environmental lobby, the countryside alliance and the campaign for freedom of information" (Schudson, 2005: 107). By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, NGO tactics had moved to reflect the increasingly transnational nature of political decision-making. The international composition and focus of anti-globalization protest events in the late 1990s in Genoa, Seattle, Davos and London increasingly became the norm for protests targeting international meetings on global issues, including the environment, human rights, trade and the economy. Della Porta and Tarrow describe the emergence of "transnational collective action" at the turn of the century, "coordinated international campaigns on the part of networks of activists against international actors, other states, or international institutions" (della Porta & Tarrow, 2005: 3).