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# From Print to Pixel: Visual Media and The Fate of Nonviolent Social Movement Activism

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# From Print to Pixel: Visual Media and The Fate of Nonviolent Social Movement Activism

## **Abstract**

In order to be heard or seen, nonviolent social movements (NVSMs) require an audience. News images of nonviolent protests become the means through which awareness of social movements is created. Comparative historical and semiotic analysis of journalistic images demonstrates that violence is a prominent theme within news coverage of nonviolent struggles. Four types of violence within nonviolence are identified: state violence, third-party violence, self-inflicted violence and symbolic violence. The examination of news images of these four types of violence showed the different ways in which challengers and the state contest power in the public domain through the media, in both text and images. Various actors (the state, social movements, journalists, the audience) use news images to historicize and construct their narratives of unfolding events, as well as make transhistorical claims. In this process, they deliberately employ news images to advocate for their causes, align themselves with previous heroes of civil disobedience and play on the popular understandings of good and evil. While this project focuses on different types of media, they have affected their audiences in similar ways, providing the space not only to the state within which they emerged, but also to those who seek to reform the state, like all of the movements in this study did. The media are the environment within which images circulate and as such they influence who images reach and, to a lesser extent, what effect they may have on the viewers. The power of images lies in both their universality that connects them with their genealogical predecessors and their singularity that underscores the specific conditions in which they emerge, making the ultimate outcome of the protests uncertain. The dissertation contributes to the research on social movements, mass communication, conflict and social change. It also raises the question of how images can be analyzed and incorporated into sociological research.

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FROM PRINT TO PIXEL: VISUAL MEDIA AND THE FATE OF NONVIOLENT SOCIAL

MOVEMENT ACTIVISM

Ksenia O. Gorbenko

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FROM PRINT TO PIXEL: VISUAL MEDIA AND THE FATE OF NONVIOLENT SOCIAL  
MOVEMENT ACTIVISM

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**ABSTRACT****FROM PRINT TO PIXEL: VISUAL MEDIA AND THE FATE OF NONVIOLENT SOCIAL  
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Ksenia O. Gorbenko

Tukufu Zuberi

In order to be heard or seen, nonviolent social movements (NVSMs) require an audience. News images of nonviolent protests become the means through which awareness of social movements is created. Comparative historical and semiotic analysis of journalistic images demonstrates that violence is a prominent theme within news coverage of nonviolent struggles. Four types of violence within nonviolence are identified: state violence, third-party violence, self-inflicted violence and symbolic violence. The examination of news images of these four types of violence showed the different ways in which challengers and the state contest power in the public domain through the media, in both text and images. Various actors (the state, social movements, journalists, the audience) use news images to historicize and construct their narratives of unfolding events, as well as make transhistorical claims. In this process, they deliberately employ news images to advocate for their causes, align themselves with previous heroes of civil disobedience and play on the popular understandings of good and evil. While this project focuses on different types of media, they have affected their audiences in similar ways, providing the space not only to the state within which they emerged, but also to those who seek to reform the state, like all of the movements in this study did. The media are the environment within which images circulate and as such they influence who images reach and, to a lesser extent, what effect they may have on the viewers. The power of

images lies in both their universality that connects them with their genealogical predecessors and their singularity that underscores the specific conditions in which they emerge, making the ultimate outcome of the protests uncertain. The dissertation contributes to the research on social movements, mass communication, conflict and social change. It also raises the question of how images can be analyzed and incorporated into sociological research.

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## CHAPTER 1. COVERING PROTEST: NONVIOLENT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND MASS MEDIA

### Introduction

In societies governed through participatory representation, defects in law are ideally addressed at the ballot box, where the electorate expresses its dissatisfaction with the existing order. However, disenfranchised groups - such as religious, national, racial, sexual minorities and women - present a problem to the functioning of this democratic process. Unable to participate in politics, whether *de jure* or *de facto*,<sup>1</sup> they are forced to express their grievances by employing methods outside of the normal political behavior. In sociology of collective behavior, some of these methods are referred to as nonviolent resistance (Sharp 2005; Zunes, Kurtz and Asher 1999).

Usually, the role of giving voice to the oppressed under participatory government is delegated to mass media, which should make citizens' grievances public with the help of information and communication technologies (ICTs). As the foregoing analysis shows, nonviolent tactics depend on mass media to bring public attention to their campaigns and highlight the structural injustice by focusing (somewhat paradoxically) on vivid moments of violence against the challengers by the state. While my dissertation studies nonviolent social movements (NVSMs), that is, those that explicitly eschew using violence against their opponents, violence is the crucial principle for understanding the dynamic of NVSMs. Nonviolent resisters use what they term "direct action" to disrupt social routines and attract attention to their cause, while putting the onus of committing violence on the

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<sup>1</sup> While disenfranchisement can take *de facto* and *de jure* forms, each is effective in preventing electoral participation.

state.

Such moments are especially convincing when they can take a visual form -- whether as a graphic description of what happened that creates a mental image, an actual photograph, or documentary video footage. These visual depictions become the turning points that hold events together and give them a certain direction, becoming “points of rest” (Wagner-Pacifici 2010), through which events are later narrated. Therefore, they are productive entry points to understanding the process of social change. My dissertation studies **how news images of nonviolent activism reflect and create social structure at times when this structure is undergoing change**. In raising this question, I follow Molotch and Lester (1975) who argued that one should approach the news “as a social accomplishment of people who have good reasons for making the news they do. The goal is thus to use media to see in the news the social organization that produced it” (Molotch and Lester 1975).

Research on social movements has become increasingly media-centered as publicity opportunities made possible through mass communication enhance the power and reach of social movement activism (Andrews and Karen 2010; Bob 2005; Chwe 1998; Earl et al. 2004; Halfmann and Young 2010; Herbst 2003; Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986; Koopmans 2004; Lee, Kim and Wainwright 2010; Martin and Varney 2003; Steinberg 1998; Tarrow 1998; Tilly 2004). Although successful outcomes of multiple movements in history have been attributed to mass media (Branch 2006; Gitlin 1980; Morris 1986; Sharp 2005; Smithey and Kurtz 1999), it is clear that not all social movements are able to win publicity (Bob 2005). Public attention space, it has been established, is a limited and bounded resource, and only a handful of organized protests

make it to the front pages (Bob 2005; Hilgartner and Bosk 1988; Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986; Koopmans 2004).

Scholars have long cautioned against an overly sanguine attitude toward communication technology (Bob 2005; Correira 2010; Higgins 1999; Gladwell 2010; Molotch and Lester 1975; Morozov 2011). The structural characteristics of journalism often prevent disadvantaged groups from being heard. In writing about journalistic ideals, C. Edwin Baker, the legal scholar of free speech and mass media, argues that newspapers (though this argument can be extended to other types of mass media) attempt to attract the largest possible audiences so that they can charge the most for advertising. The ways of attracting a large audience often include covering provocative or other audience-pleasing stories that may preempt sustained coverage of protests organized by the oppressed. In the light of this economic incentive, journalists want to appear objective and non-partisan (Baker 2002:161). In doing so, they may fail to cover or cover negatively the issues of concern to minorities and underprivileged groups whose effect on the market share is small enough to be ignored.

While claiming objectivity and fairness in representing social problems, journalists are also aware of what penalties partisanship might entail for their career. As a result, they may end up participating in “legitimizing the existing order without challenging major injustice or structures of domination” (Baker 2002:162). Ultimately, monopolistic daily newspapers in today’s world, Baker writes, “are unlikely to allow any journalist [to] threaten their extraordinary profitability” (Ben H. Bagdikian 1992, *The Media Monopoly*, 119, 265-66, cited in Baker 2002:161). Political scientist Clifford Bob critiques scholarship that attributes too much importance to the media’s “all-seeing eyes,



pinpointing places in gravest distress” because the media, too, are slaves to structural routines (Bob 2005:2). Indeed, due to their structural advantage, governments tend to be better equipped to harness media attention and control how the conflict is covered than are the challengers (Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986). The structural bias is particularly strong in news in its linguistic form. I argue that visual news may open up opportunities to social movements that may not be deliberate, yet are advantageous to their cause.

Studies that address the questions of “newsworthiness” and “careers of social problems” (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988) use the language of images such as “portrayal” and “visibility” (Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986; Koopmans 2004; Mercer 2005), “drama” (Burke 1972; Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986; Zillmann 2005) and ‘spectacle’ (Edelman 1988; Green 1993; Kelly 2004; Sontag 2004; Tickner 1988) to identify selection processes in mass communication. They consider the visual one of the key elements of “newsworthiness.” A bystander audience has the capacity to change the balance of forces in a conflict: a weaker opponent may benefit from publicity as more individuals join, while the stronger one may want to keep the conflict quiet to preserve her advantage (Collins 2008; Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Schattschneider 1960). Therefore, mass mobilization depends on the activists’ ability to garner media attention and to win “distant publics” (Boltanski 1999) sympathizers amongst the general population (Radley and Bell 2007; Schattschneider 1960; Small and Loewenstein 2003; Fernandez et al. 2011). Despite the breadth of such studies, however, researchers have overwhelmingly privileged textual data while overlooking the awesome power of images as a protest tool (Herbst 2003; Lee et al. 2010; McCarthy et al. 1999; Mendes 2011; Oliver and Maney 2000; Steinberg 1998; Vicari 2010).

With the digital revolution that put a proliferation of contemporary and historical images at researchers' fingertips, there is a growing interest in reintegrating photography in mainstream sociology (Halfmann and Young 2010; Harper 1988, 2002; Kowalchuk 2009; Lumsden 2000; Myers and Caniglia 2004; Mateju and Lingart 1990; McCarthy et al. 1996; Perlmutter 2007; Sobieraj 2010; Stummer 1986). Social movement research is poised to benefit from the analysis of this long-overlooked data since the mass media of today have become increasingly visual. This dissertation addresses this gap in literature by analyzing news photographs of nonviolent social movement activism.

The finding that news images open doors for social change and become its markers is not new (Perlmutter 2007; Zelizer 1992). My dissertation analyzes how and when it happens. I propose that while new image-capturing and image-reproducing technology provides opportunities for social movements to publicize their cause and gain momentum, ultimately the outcome of each movement is contingent. Actors (social movement activists, government officials, journalists, audience) use news images of protest deliberately to construct their understanding of unfolding events with a most ideal outcome in mind. In my analysis, I move between the systemic level and the individual movement/ technology level. To develop this account, I examined several cases of nonviolent social movements to identify patterns of their presentation in the news. While these patterns are always context-specific and culturally determined, their political power lies in their ability to connect with other cultural artifacts across historical and geographical spaces. In the end, I will outline the key contingencies determinative of interactional effects.

I do not view news images as a reflection or illustration of "hard news" that are

somehow more authentically expressed in words. Nor do I see them as a more or less “true” representation of reality. Instead, I view news images as social constructs that get embedded into narratives of power, authority, and social change. By examining the iconography of nonviolence, we can understand how the struggle for the expansion of rights to new groups in the past helps structure contemporary conflict, if only because images and narratives of past struggles impact the choices actors make and the directions in which social movements unfold today. As historian Joan Landes writes in her study of visual culture of the French revolution, “visual imaginings may be part of the process by which a citizen learns to love an abstract object with something like the individual lover’s intimacy and passion” (Landes 2001:2). Similarly, through historical images of nonviolence, a citizen learns what sacrifices have been made to achieve the full rights that she or he now happens to enjoy, which in itself is an exercise in social construction of the idea of citizenship. Even more importantly, a citizen learns what kind of sacrifices are required of her in order to bring about social change she desires.

In urging that news images be taken seriously as a topic in their own right, I do not deny the power of words because all media include both, and the boundary between words and images shifts with context (Groys 2011). Rather, I examine visual news as the primary material and view text as another medium capable of transmitting mental images across contexts, as Chapter 4 will show (Belting 2005). In contrast to text, news images are not bound by linguistic constraints, which enables them to travel more easily across political and cultural borders. The ease of transmission, in its turn, affects the way news images create and sustain “imagined communities” of viewers (Anderson [1983] 2006). Audiences of news images are always larger than news as text, and their lack of linguistic

markers makes them available as proxies for universalistic communities coterminous with the whole of humanity, thus making them particularly suited for the use by social movements with universalistic agendas (see Chapter 3 for a fuller discussion).

To explain the interaction between movements and news media, one needs to understand the organizational constraints and occupational norms of news making that shape regularities in movement coverage. Therefore, visual sociology and research on social movements need to be in dialogue with the sociology of organizations and occupations (Abbott 1988; Burg 2011; Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986). Following Andrew Abbott's work on professions, I want to lay bare some assumptions about the interaction between (nonviolent) social movements and mass media that direct this research before delving into the specifics of the cases (Abbott 1988:18-20).

First, although there is a genealogical borrowing of tactics from one movement to the next, there is no single unidirectional evolution of nonviolent resistance. Some nonviolent movements succeed and others fail, always as a result of a unique combination of social, cultural and political conditions in a particular time and place. Second, social movements do not exist in a vacuum, but rather interact with counter-movements and other actors (audiences, state actors, journalistic community) making alternative claims. Third, protest reporting is embedded in the professional structure and culture of journalism at each particular time. Yet the type of reporting has some common characteristics across contexts, as my dissertation shows. Fourth, even though I limit each empirical example to an interaction between one type of mass media and one movement, protest reporting is never homogenous, but varies with individual journalists, outlets, and time. I reflect on this variation in discussing my cases. Fifth, such processes as the fading

of boundaries between broadcast and peer-to-peer media in the recent years have affected the profession of journalism in general and protest reporting in particular. Although this recent development is not the focus of my dissertation, I come back to these differences in Chapter Three.

This chapter serves as an introduction to the dissertation. It raises questions dealt with in more depth in the following chapters. The rest of this chapter is organized around different groups of actors. I begin with movement tactics (types of nonviolence), move to opponents (understanding violence in nonviolence), and finish with the audience (what is an image of nonviolence and who are its core witnesses?) Next, I discuss the organizational structure of the dissertation and finish the chapter with a discussion of its contribution to sociological research.

### Types of Nonviolence

The literary theorist Kenneth Burke wrote about two types of persuasion tactics that helps to win a sympathetic audience while advocating for a cause: one is to appeal to the tragic and sacrificial, and the other one is to use the pragmatic and utilitarian reasons (Burke 1972:21). In the theory of nonviolence, these two types of persuasion are represented by principled and pragmatic nonviolence (Martin and Varney 2003). These are ideal types that are useful for understanding the provenance of nonviolence as a belief system. The adherents of principled nonviolence advocate its use based on religious and spiritual ideas (Thoreau 1968; Sofri 1999; Rustin 2003; Thurman 1998), while those representing pragmatic approach argue that nonviolence works as a tactic against oppression irrespective of individual challengers' beliefs (Sharp 2005; Zunes, Kurtz and

Asher 1999). Any successful mobilization campaign depends on both of these types, as most nonviolent resisters exhibit an approach that comprises both the ethical and the tactical components. Because all subsequent nonviolent movements borrow extensively from the ones that come before them, in application, methods, and representation the two types are similar, too, as Chapters 4 will show.

### *Principled Nonviolence*

To understand how appealing to the tragic works, it is useful to turn to Aristotle's discussion of tragedy in his *Poetics*. According to Aristotle, three conditions to be avoided in the construction of the plot of tragedy are the following: "(1) A good man must not be seen passing from happiness to misery, or (2) a bad man from misery to happiness"; "[n]or... should (3) an extremely bad man be seen falling from happiness into misery. Such a story may arouse the human feeling in us, but it will not move us to either pity or fear; pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves"(Aristotle 1997).<sup>2</sup>

The ideal tragic plot then, according to Aristotle, is the one that shows a personage the audience can relate to, "a man (sic) not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgement" (Aristotle 1997). In other words, the protagonist's fate is more likely to engage the viewers' emotions (which may or may not lead to action), if they are able to

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<sup>2</sup> The wide-spread celebrations following President Obama's announcement that Osama bin Laden had been killed, which quickly turned into discussions of the moral issues surrounding celebrations of someone's death, would be an example of such an emotional response to the suffering of extremely negative characters.

identify with the protagonist. This means that in order to win their audience's sympathy, social movements need to present themselves as ordinary people whose fate has turned to misery by no fault of their own. Understandably, movement opponents (counter movements, state actors) strive to present activists in a negative light to prevent such identification.

In writing about the yellow press of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the sociologist Helen MacGill Hughes similarly wrote, "...the commonest object of spontaneous interest is man himself (sic)" (Hughes [1937] 2004). Foreign or exotic stories, translated into the street talk and shaped into familiar forms, allow the viewer to identify with the protagonists of news. While the human interest story became the token of yellow press, the photographs that accompanied it became its most salient and recurrent feature (Hughes [1937] 2004).

A number of famous advocates of nonviolence have drawn their inspiration from religious sources. Jainist, radical Christian and Quaker ideas, to name but a few, found their way into the works of prominent practitioners of nonviolence. For example, Count Leo Tolstoy delineated his radical Christian philosophy of "nonresistance to evil with violence" in *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1894), a book that enraged the Russian clergy and led to his excommunication from the Russian Orthodox Church a few years later. At the end of Tolstoy's life, he shared his ideas on the use of nonviolence in his correspondence with a young Hindu barrister, who undertook to promote them further in his work in South Africa (Sofri 1999:68). Years later, of course, the Indian lawyer would return to his native India and lead the independence movement in his country against the British, that would earn him the name Mahatma - an honorific meaning "Great Soul" -

Gandhi.

Gandhi himself cited philosophy of Jainism as a source of inspiration for his thinking (Chadha 1997; Sofri 1999). The principles of absolute nonviolence essential to Jainism (Jainist monks, for example, sweep the road in front of them to avoid killing some small animal and wear a cloth over their mouth to avoid inhaling microorganisms), had a profound impact on Gandhi's politics. The Indian leader is said to have closely heeded advice of a Jainist poet and thinker from Bombay Shrimad Rajchandra (Sofri 1999:67).

Gandhi's sharp critique of the official Christian church led African American minister Howard Thurman to integrate the principles of love for one's neighbor and nonviolence in his own Christian pacifism and mysticism (Fluker and Tumber, 1998:6). Additionally, Thurman was influenced by the Quaker ideas through his mentor at Haverford College Rufus Jones (Fluker and Tumber 1998:4-5).

Thurman's sermons found their way to his classmate and friend at Morehouse college, future Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Political advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr. and organizer of the 1963 March on Washington Bayard Rustin got his inspiration from his Quaker grandmother who brought him up. "My activism," he admitted later, "did not spring from being black. Rather, it is rooted fundamentally in my Quaker upbringing and the values instilled in me by [my] grandparents.... It is very likely that I would have been involved [in civil rights agitation] had I been a white person" (Carbado and Weise 2003:XI).

The American abolitionist Henry David Thoreau, whose essay "On Civil



Disobedience” (1849) has since become a classic and a “nonviolence manifesto,” was associated with the Transcendentalist movement, an American intellectual movement with roots in theological Unitarianism, Vedic thought, German idealism and various religions (Wills 1992). Thoreau argued for the moral imperative of refusing cooperation with a government of whose actions one disapproves. “A minority is powerless while it conforms to majority,” he writes. “If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood” (Thoreau 1974, 353).

Thoreau’s oft quoted words that “Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison” have become a slogan of all activists engaged in civil disobedience, and are very much part of the popular culture. The idea was famously replayed in Norman Mailer’s novel *The Armies of the Night* (1968), and cited in the closing statement by Nadezhda Tolokonnikova during the Pussy Riot trial in Moscow in 2012.

Nonviolence is not synonymous with pacifism, even though the goals of advocates of nonviolence and pacifism may at times overlap. Pacifism is an extension of a moral position into a political philosophy that rejects war and violence of any kind. Advocates of nonviolence, on the other hand, organize deliberate disruptions that are likely to lead to violence against the activists. The goal of pacifism is to stop war; the goal of nonviolence is to enact social change. To understand the difference between pacifism and nonviolence, it is necessary to take a closer look at pragmatic nonviolence.

### *Pragmatic Nonviolence*

In contrast with Gandhi and other famous practitioners of nonviolence, the contemporary theorist of nonviolence Gene Sharp, author of bestsellers used as instructional textbooks by youth organizers during the uprisings in Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the last decade, writes: “[n]onviolent struggle is identified by what people do, not by what they believe. In order to use nonviolent action effectively, people do not have to be pacifists or saints. Nonviolent action has been predominantly and successfully practiced by ‘ordinary’ people” (Sharp 2005:19-21).

Sharp distinguishes between three types of tactics: nonviolent protest and persuasion (petitions, peaceful demonstrations permitted by the state, pamphlets and negotiations); non-cooperation (sit-ins, blocking roads, picketing without permits, getting themselves arrested, going on strike, etc.) and intervention (hunger strike, self-immolation). Non-cooperation and intervention, most dramatized by the media for the violent outcome, has attracted attention of a number of scholars, and came to represent the popular understanding of nonviolent action (Biggs 2008; Gitlin 1980; Gladwell 2010; Smithey and Kurtz 1999; Marvin and Ingle 1996; Morris 1986; Zunes, Kurtz and Asher 1999).

A nonviolent approach seeks to counter-balance the political advantage of the state over disadvantaged groups. Challengers use “direct action” to interfere with normal social routines. Practitioners of nonviolence choose aspects of everyday interactions that exclude the members of the group they represent, denying them, in essence, (*de facto* or *de jure*) citizenship rights. A situation in which a group of nonviolent activists refuse to cooperate with the government creates a no-win situation for the authorities. Such acts in themselves are, as a rule, mundane; their potency, however, lies in primarily in their

replication across contexts, their connections with other similar acts that came before them, and their ability to stop and disrupt normal social routines. In short, these acts transform challengers into de facto citizens, and dare state actors to stop them. The state's two options are to reestablish power through repression, or launch a counter-attack on the movement and displace it from view. Ignoring performative acts by protesters is hardly a possibility: in that case, the state runs the risk of social reforms taking shape on their own. Such reforms are likely to change the structure of power and displace the current state actors from their position. For that reason, governments often choose to enforce the current laws and repress dissenters. This translates into punishment and arrests of nonviolent resisters, opening up a possibility of a society-wide rebellion.

#### Understanding Violence in Nonviolence

Nonviolence – civil disobedience, positive action, nonviolent conflict, political defiance, passive resistance, “people power” – does not imply absence of violence. On the contrary, the resisters have to be psychologically prepared for the violent repression their opponents may use against them and are undeterred by the possibility. In this sense, nonviolent tactics comprise the staging of a stalemate or a standoff that the state can only bring to an end by using force (Wagner-Pacifici 2000). The use of force, however, dramatizes how morally bankrupt the state has become.

In his micro-sociological account of violence, the sociologist Randall Collins (2008) argues that most conflicts do not end up in violence (Collins 2008:92-4). When they do, they usually have a look of atrocity. After a detectable build-up of

“confrontational tension and fear” between the opponents, he argues, stronger opponents lose control of themselves due to the sudden release of adrenalin and “pile on” the weaker party in what Collins terms “forward panic” (2008:89-94). This type of asymmetrical violence against nonviolent resisters makes the state's violence have the look of atrocity and is morally problematic in the public eye (Sharp 2005:23).

Widely disseminated news images of atrocity against peaceful challengers are very compelling in mobilizing people for action (Boltanski 1999; Sontag 2004; Zillmann 2005; Fernandez et al. 2011). Thus nonviolent challengers do use violence, but put the onus of committing it on the movement's opponents (Marvin and Ingle, 1996). In fact, challengers seek to provoke the state into a spectacular violent interaction (Bob 2005; Morris 1986), using its strength against itself in what Sharp refers to as “political jiu-jitsu” (Sharp 2005), a term from martial arts that describes a manipulation of the attacker's energy to neutralize him, instead of directly confronting him with force.

On the other hand, images of violent repression may intimidate people to avoid demonstrations for fear of their own safety. Scholars of social movements have long grappled with the question of the interaction between state violence and contentious politics (Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Sharp 2005; Smithey and Kurtz 1999; Smith 2008; Sontag 2004). Goldstone and Tilly (2001), for example, asked what is the “correct” amount of violence that would help the movement, because too much violence may intimidate the challengers into going home, while too little threat makes the movement

look less newsworthy and fails to inspire new recruits.<sup>3</sup>

Bob similarly concludes that sometimes peaceful resistance may leave the movement internationally isolated (Bob 2005:36, 38), while violence, though leading to overwhelming attention from the media, may “disgust the public” (Bob 2005:26). To strike the balance, the movement leaders should be able to “goad” their opponents into “a single bloody and clearly unjust” violent incident (Bob 2005:51). Examples of the American civil rights leaders who made a point to protest in cities where violence was most likely to erupt and of the Tiananmen Square student protesters provoking police repression to draw international attention illustrate this point (Bob 2005; Morris 1986; Smithey and Kurtz 1999; Goldberg 1993).

The incident that gets media attention needs to be not only violent, but also “clearly unjust” (Bob 2005:51). Social movement activists and their opponents engage in “meaning work” - mediated by the journalistic community - to create alternative framings for the movement and win their audience (Benford and Hunt 2003; Benford and Snow 2000; Hewitt and McCammon 2004; Hilgartner and Bosk 1988). Social movements strive to present themselves as what Tilly referred to as WUNC (worthy, united, numerous and committed) (Tilly 2004), and state actors - as the opposite of those characteristics.

News images that show the state as the aggressor may inspire sympathy for the protesters and lead to more people joining the challengers (engaging the sympathy of the

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<sup>3</sup> A brutal oppression of the student uprising in Beijing in 1989, for example, had resounding echoes across the world, possibly preventing Gorbachev from using force against peaceful protesters in the next two years (Smithey and Kurtz 1999:118). In short, each individual movement’s progress and outcome has impact on challengers in other contexts at other times, but these effects are hard to predict.

audience by appeals to the tragic and sacrificial, Boltanski 1999; Burke 1972). “Visible transgressions can publicize incongruities in private sentiments and embolden some in the audience, even among the authorities, to flout the norm,” the sociologist of culture Ari Adut writes. “A publicized transgression can hence transmute into the litmus test of the vigor of the violated norm—a discomfiting and even dangerous ordeal for the authorities” (Adut 2005).

When an image of asymmetrical violence is broadcast to outside audiences, it has the capacity to change the balance of forces by engaging outsiders in the conflict, mobilizing the public, or attracting international attention that can put the pressure on governments or even lead to an intervention (for example, in Libya in 2011). Deliberate government suppression of news images of oppression, if it becomes known, may lead to the “Streisand effect,”<sup>4</sup> a phenomenon when denial and suppression of information leads to the opposite effect. The term takes its name from the ill-fated attempts of the American entertainer Barbra Streisand to suppress images of her California home online, which led to an explosion of popularity of the specific image she tried to suppress

(*Forbes*, 11 May, 2007). Whether or not violence against challengers inspires

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<sup>4</sup> Or perhaps we should call it the “Patriarch Kirill effect.” The ill-fated attempt to airbrush an expensive Swiss watch from the wrist of the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Kirill, in early 2012 made him the butt of many jokes for months. Whoever did the airbrushing of the extravagant timepiece forgot to also remove the reflection of the watch on the shiny table. The photograph was subsequently removed, Kirill’s spokesperson apologized for misleading the public; but Russian bloggers had already disseminated the image. International press picked up on the scandal as well: *The New York Times* ran an article titled “\$30,000 Watch Vanishes Up Church Leader’s Sleeve” (Schwartz 2012) and the (generally pro-government) English language channel RussiaToday reported that the scandal led many bloggers to “accuse the clergy of enjoying luxury lifestyles and preferential treatment from the Russian government” (“Patriarch’s disappearing watch act: Now you see it, now you don’t,” *Russia Today* 2012).

sympathy, a disruption in social routines by protest activities challenges the power of the state authorities, and therefore cannot be ignored. In other words, it becomes pragmatically expedient for the government to stop the protest irrespective of how the protesters are framed.

The study of violence and nonviolence are closely interlinked, because the strategies are part of the same continuum. As some historical examples have demonstrated, brutal oppression of peaceful protesters by the authorities may enhance the activists' power. The communication scholars Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle go so far as to argue that "[t]he practice of nonviolence does not avoid suffering or end violence; it redistributes both. Answering violence with nonviolence may be no less painful and destructive in its effects on individuals and groups" (Marvin and Ingle, 1996). Nonviolent acts contain violence, though they are directed inwardly rather than to others. Pragmatically, by provoking violence against themselves, nonviolent activists ensure that their demands are publicized and addressed. Furthermore, public endurance of violence (suffering) engages empathy of the audience, creating a special bond for group members by appealing to the sacrificial nature of martyrdom.

#### News Image of (Non)violence

Just as nonviolence as a tactic against a more powerful opponent has existed throughout human history (Sharp 2005), so have depictions of nonviolent resistance. Both historical and fictional accounts (and those in between) attest to a universal human quality of nonviolent protest and its sacrificial nature. From the early pictures of sacrifices in ancient Egypt and sculptures of the suffering Christ to Goya's famous

rendering of the execution of the Spanish rebels, the image of violence against an unarmed peaceful freedom fighter has a privileged place in public imagining and been able to arouse emotional response, be it pity, fear, or righteous anger.

In examining news images, I employ political semiosis (see Chapter 2 for a full discussion of the methodology) and view photos as a type of “speech acts” (Austin 1978; Wagner-Pacifici 2010). The American linguist Austin (1978) differentiated between performative speech acts and constatives in that the former cannot be identified as true or false while the latter can be. Performative speech acts enact change by their very utterance. Images of violence bring forth the questions of fear, moral superiority, and social hierarchies as violence in protest activities creates moments when power is simultaneously claimed by competing actors. Narratives that interpret news images reproduce power and change society by their very utterance, in other words, they are the quintessential performative speech acts.

Scholars have emphasized the tension between the capacities of the verbal and the visual to represent and narrate political events (Landes 2001; Perlmutter 2007). While words are necessarily contained within the linguistic domain in which they operate, images are capable of crossing linguistic (and political) borders, with today’s technology, in a matter of seconds. I discuss that in detail in Chapter 3.

The distinction between verbal news and news images here is crucial: the latter have the capacity to jump political borders and carry within them a wide range of possible interpretations. Verbal news, on the other hand, is necessarily bound to the linguistic community in which it arises, and bears the identifiable stamp of biases of its author. For example, in the coverage of the British suffragettes, the *Daily Mirror* initially



published images that might have undermined the negative verbal story line (Gorbenko in progress).

Visibility and capacity to capture the public attention, however, is not the only way in which the communication carrying capacities of images and texts are qualitatively different. For example, the sociologist Robin Wagner-Pacifici writes about the differences between the visual and the verbal presentation of data in the 9/11 Commission Report (2010). In comparing the four diachronous verbal narratives about the fateful morning and simultaneous presentation of four planes' routes, she finds that the text, in this example, is lacking the capacity to show simultaneity of events happening in four different locations, making the reader go through a painful reiteration of the events, "the resetting of the narrative clock induces a futile and irrational hope that 'this time' at 'this airport,' the terrorists will finally be prevented from boarding" (Wagner-Pacifici 2010).

As I approach photography from the point of view of social constructivism, the representational capacities of the image are less important than the social meanings that actors attach to it. The moments when pictures are taken only superficially represent what "really happened"; as images get replicated they take on a life of their own in the meaning-making process of event formation. Images construct events, not just reflect or illustrate them. Thus the study of news images is neither an attempt to get at some kind of "true" representation of events, for such a representation simply does not exist, nor is it an analysis of how pictures deform reality, though certain image manipulation always takes place. Instead, my work views images as carriers of multiple meanings in themselves that can be deployed strategically depending on the actor's goals, capable of

working as shortcuts for communicating authority, power and ideology.

While there are clear differences between the textual and the visual rendering of events, images can, like words, state actions. The end of segregation in the United States can be alternatively pinned on specific events. The historian Taylor Branch's in his trilogy *The King Years* (2006), for example, identified a televisual interruption in a fictional film about the Nazis with breaking news from Selma, Alabama as a point at which "the segregation order started crumbling in the deep South" (Branch 2006). The visual representation of the event worked individually in the homes of viewers watching evening programming with their families. The effect of the program was magnified by the fact that people were aware of millions of other Americans tuning in to the same show that evening. Its representational power continues to work through the later viewings and renderings of the same event years later, each time endowing it with power of social transformation.

While the image may be staged or manipulated in some ways, its spontaneity or truthfulness of representation is beside the point. Images and stories surrounding them are social constructs, and while they may not be "real" in their representational identity to the objects they represent, people attach meanings to them, form consensus or disagree on their alternative interpretations. The social construct of an image thus can have real consequences to the public beyond the participants of the photo op. The ripple effect may go much farther, as in tipping the balance in favor of an international invasion or convincing a majority of people to vote a certain way.

An extension of this social constructivist approach to news images is that even when no image of a certain interaction *per se* exists, a verbal narrative can conjure up

pictures in the minds of the readers. People have the capacity to imagine things as they hear or read about them, and here the line between words and images gets blurred. On the other hand, an image in the absence of the meaning-making capacity of words can be completely nonsensical. Our cognitive ability to “read” pictures always ultimately comes in the form of words. Vittorio Gallese, a neuroscientist who is credited with discovering “mirror neurons” in the study of empathy, writes, “Visual representation [...] is not understanding. A visual representation of a given stimulus doesn’t necessarily convey all the information required to assign meaning to it, and therefore to understand such a stimulus” (Gallese 2001). I will come back to the question of words and images in representing violence in Chapter 4, when I discuss state violence in words.

The ability of images to affect the viewer’s body directly, passing cognition, has been studied extensively in social sciences (Barnett 2008; Milne et al. 2011). Milne, Wenzer, Brembeck and Brodin (2011), for example, write that videos of animal abuse in pig farms in Sweden, for example, “provoked a bodily reaction of disgust and dismay” (Milne et al. 2011:184), challenged the idea of humanity and safety in meat processing and ultimately resulted in changes in the regulations of pork production in the country. Although it is clear that images have an impact on the viewers, predicting the direction of this impact has proven to be difficult. Milne et al. (2011) have argued that visual representations of suffering, be it of people or animals, speaks directly to the body, “prompting a heightened awareness identifiable in bodily changes that precede rather than follow the cognitive or rational assessment of risk levels” (Milne et al. 2011:184), and may create a shared feeling of anxiety in all those who see the images. In short, images elicit emotional responses, and are made visible by images. Because “emotions

link the individual with the social in dynamic ways,” they ultimately represent power relations in society (Bourke 2003:113).

In sum, challenger groups that seek equal rights usually experience discrimination in everyday interactions. However, because these interactions are routinized and often subtle, they are not necessarily recognized by those who do not experience them. A photographed instance of police brutality stands a better chance of igniting strong emotional response in the viewers than, for example, a story about being passed over for a job promotion because of one’s race or gender. In other words, an image that posits the challengers and the state in stark opposition to each other summarizes the struggle in one vivid image of injustice. Importantly, this image is deliberately created. Anthropologists Klein, Das and Lock write: “Much of routinized misery is invisible; much that is made visible is not ordinary or routine. The very act of picturing distorts social experience in the popular media” (Klein, Das and Lock 1997:xiii). An image of violence has a capacity to engage viewers’ emotions speaking directly to the body, although cognitive processing that places the situation within the specific context takes place as well. The utility of the image depends on its spread. Therefore, challengers need bystander witnesses to document asymmetrical violence against themselves and relay this image to outsider audiences. The next section discusses the role of the audience in civil disobedience.

#### Witnesses to (Non)violence

Any social movement activism is only as effective as its reach. Social movements historically have depended on mass media to broadcast their message to their audiences, as multiple examples in the past have shown (Branch 2006; Gitlin 1980; Morris 1986;

Sharp 2005; Smithey and Kurtz 1999). Before a public act can be recognized as a challenge to the existing power structure, it needs an audience paying attention and doing the recognition. The presence of eyewitnesses is crucial: it is through their heeding and recognition that a mundane speech act gets transformed into a historic one, and “opens up a space of contingency and change” (Wagner-Pacifici 2010). There are two kinds of eyewitnesses, both of them critical to creating the meaning of the event: those physically present at the scene who are sometimes visible in the pictures, and the invisible others, removed physically but heeding the act through mass media technology. News about the movement helps in coordinating and organizing challengers as well as getting their message to the outside audiences, who by their action or inaction can influence the outcome of the conflict. It is not only important that outsiders know of the conflict, but also that the challengers are cognizant of other people’s knowledge as it emboldens them to continue to protest (Chwe 1998; Martin and Varney 2003).

In his analysis of punishment and culture, sociologist Phillip Smith (2008) uses the theoretical framework of Michel Foucault and Emile Durkheim to argue that a public trial or execution has the capacity to create a situation pregnant with vice and genre ambivalence: the condemned has the power to challenge or redefine the dominant meaning of punishment by portraying him or herself as worthy of sympathy, respect, and even emulation. “Public sentiment,” Smith writes, “could take the side of the victim, refuse the official narrative, and allocate the moral culpability to the state rather than to the criminal” (Smith 2008:39). Visual representation of asymmetrical violence against nonviolent activists, similarly, opens up the possibility of multiple interpretations of the conflict. The public may endorse the state's heavy-handed response, but may also

interpret it as overkill and take the side of the protesters. An extreme form of violence against nonviolent actors may result in their death, after which they are often recast as martyrs (Biggs 2008; Smith 2008; Foucault [1975] 1995). Public executions have declined in the last century because the state could never fully control the behavior of the criminal and the possible interpretations of the punishment ritual by the audience (Smith 2008). While the aim of the state was, in a Durkheimian sense, to enact a ritual that would “destroy and cleanse that which is evil, restore order from chaos” and to dramatize the Foucaultian power of the state, the person being punished had the opportunity to sabotage the execution ritual if he managed to touch the sentiments of pity in the audience and be subsequently rehabilitated in the public eye, becoming a martyr-like figure (Smith 2008:39-41). In other words, the image of asymmetrical violence - be it execution, torture, or brutal repression of unarmed protesters - transforms the conflict into a scandal. “[B]y dint of the provocations and normalizations they bring about, scandals can transform norms and spawn social change,” the sociologist Ari Adut argues. “Combining disruptiveness with salience, scandals... become central references in the collective consciousness of societies... and function as ‘historical events’ transforming social structures” (Adut 2005).

The witness is the key actor in the meaning-making process of event formation (Wagner-Pacifici 2005; Zelizer 2002). In writing about the Abu Ghraib scandal that was triggered by the publication of images of torture of Iraqi prisoners by the American troops, Susan Sontag writes:

It seems doubtful that such reports were read by President Bush or Vice President Dick Cheney or Condoleezza Rice or Rumsfeld. Apparently it took the photographs to get their attention, when it became clear they

could not be suppressed; it was the photographs that made all this "real" to Bush and his associates. Up to then, there had been only words, which are easier to cover up in our age of infinite digital self-reproduction and self-dissemination, and so much easier to forget (Sontag 2004).

Sontag highlights an important difference between words and images here: seeing the shocking photos of prisoner abuse was qualitatively different from verbal reports that may or may not have been read. Seeing the pictures made the viewers eyewitnesses to the atrocity, and in that, held them responsible to some sort of reaction.

Yet even after the images were published, many of them were closely cropped on the torture, destroying context. Included with Sontag's article is an uncropped image depicting naked men in a hallway, which shows other soldiers who are standing by (Sontag 2004). This version of the image provides the chilling details that suggest that torture of prisoners in Abu Ghraib was sanctioned by the U.S. military command (MacAlister 2005:301-2). The cropped closeups eliminated eyewitness from the scene: the presence of military intelligence and a civilian contractor negated arguments that the torture was the unseen depraved acts of rogue soldiers. This along with the fact that the soldiers were eager to share these images, demonstrates that the U.S. soldiers "were either told or winked at... somewhere along the line..." (Sontag 2004). What made these uncropped images so powerful is the incongruence between reactions to torture by the two types of eyewitnesses: those present at the scene and those removed from it. The uncropped image showed bystanders who displayed no outrage at the torture, moreover, who seemed engrossed in routine activities like looking at their phones or chatting with each other, indicating that they found torture activities taking place in front of them absolutely normal and ordinary. This suggested that torture was routinized and

normalized at Abu Ghraib (MacAlister 2005:301-2).

In today's world, when taking a picture and sharing it with others takes all but a few seconds, an image showing conflict between the state and nonviolent resisters often works as a catalyst that sets off a scandal, which, in its turn, has the potential to transform social structure. Public executions may have declined in most of the world, mediated spectacles of human suffering, however, are abundant (Kleinman et al. 1997:xii). Visual media allow a similar outlet to anti-state actors' activities as public executions did in the past – their behavior generates a variety of interpretations, most of them beyond the state's control. Anti-state actors may use these publicity opportunities to potentially create morality plays which could sway public opinion to their advantage. The French sociologist Luc Boltanski argues that such spectacle creates unease and calls for the spectator's action to alleviate the suffering of the unfortunates (Boltanski 1999:12-3). The anthropologists Kleinman, Das and Lock, for example, argue “what we represent and how we represent it prefigure what we will, or will not, do to intervene. What is not pictured is not real” (Kleinman et al. 1997:xiii). Therefore, nonviolent direct action is the protesters' attempt to provoke violence or even inflict suffering upon themselves in order to win the “distant publics” (Boltanski 1999).

In other words, an image can trigger a series of reactions that may ultimately unravel the system as it is, i.e. it works as a performative speech act (Austin 1978; Wagner-Pacifici 2010; see Chapter 2). Whereas information in the form of words carries an identifiable source with associated biases, images seem to avoid this attribution to individuals, even though they are no less authored or biased. (I return to the question of verisimilitude of pictures versus words in Chapter Three and again in Chapter Four when



I discuss coverage of the forcible feedings of the suffragettes.)

### Project Overview: Toward a Theory of Mass Media Technology and Social Change

This section explains the logic of the organization of the following chapters.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the dissertation. It establishes the main questions the dissertation seeks to answer. The chapter defines nonviolences and its types, outlines the role of violence in nonviolent resistance, discusses the social constructivist approach to the analysis of news images, and delineates the role of the audience in mass mobilization. It ends with a discussion of the research contribution of the project.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of methodology: political semiosis and comparative historical methods. Furthermore, it establishes violence as the organizing principle for the empirical part of the dissertation.

Chapter 3 is a social history of visual news. It focuses on the technological part of the story as an environment that images inhabit. Specifically, it examines how visual news have been imbued with truth value at various points in time, as well as on their ability to foster universalistic identities spanning across cultural and linguistic borders, different from the linguistically-defined communities of print.

Chapter 4 focuses on news images that are capable of migrating between different types of media and resurfacing in various cultural contexts. The chapter looks at four types of violence typically present in nonviolent protests: state violence, third-party violence, self-directed violence, and symbolic violence. Using a variety of examples from

different places and times, the chapter shows how images of nonviolent resistance get embedded in discourse about power, justice, and change.

Chapter 5 serves as the Conclusion to the dissertation. It summarizes main findings and delineates the implications of this research for sociological theory.

### Research Contribution

My dissertation makes three sets of arguments: theoretical, methodological, and substantive. In a theoretical register, it argues that for understanding social change, we should pay close attention to how different actors embed and use news images discursively to enact a most favorable outcome.

On a methodological level, it argues for a more thorough examination of images in addition to text, as well as the interplay between image and text, in our analysis of social movements' communication strategies in the context of mass-mediated politics. This dissertation thus both carries out a form of visual sociology and simultaneously develops principles for the practice of visual sociology. This dissertation aims to highlight the incongruence between existing scholarship requirements in the social sciences and the current state of visual media that has firmly become part of our life. At the time when we receive most of information through interactive media that is very visual in nature, dissertations are still written by the canons of the 19th century, words on the page. While still and moving images are central to my research, the format of this dissertation lags behind the objects it studies. Thus the dissertation provides only a glimpse of the theoretical analysis of phenomena it studies.

Furthermore, the strength (and also a limitation) of this work is in its comparative

format. By employing transhistorical and transnational comparisons in the study of social movements, this dissertation aims to get a theoretical handle on the questions of power, ideology and social change. Understandably, generalizations produced by this work will have many caveats because ultimately the outcome of any movement is contingent on the unique cultural, economic, and political conditions.

In terms of substance, my dissertation explores the ways in which news images work to create alternative framings of events by social movements, governments, and journalists. It views news images as key to understanding of the porous connections between events and spaces and time. The movements I study (suffragettes in the UK; civil rights and anti-war movements in the US; anti-Putin protests in Russia; gay rights activists in Russia; Orange revolution in Ukraine) provide an illustration to the argument I am making as all of them have suffered violence that was publicized through news images in various types of media.

Although I am discussing the archetype of nonviolence, it is important to note that there is no static pattern that would define a nonviolent interaction once and for all. In each of its iterations, there is a unique recombination of elements and sometimes an addition or subtraction of some of them (Wagner-Pacifici 2005:3-8). Beyond the scope of my study are left other important parts of conflicts: eventual success or failure of particular social movements, what they mean for participatory governance and reforms of their home societies, the colossal organizational work of movement members that brought people together. These are all fascinating questions that need to be addressed in future research.

## Chapter 2. METHOD FOR VISUAL NEWS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The methodological challenges of this project represent the flip side of its main contribution, the invitation to sociological scrutiny of news images in social movement mobilization. The visual data that gets overlooked in the discipline requires the use of a combination of analytical tools to make it theoretically accessible. Furthermore, it requires technologies that allow visual data to be incorporated into text. The purpose of this chapter is to make transparent the assumptions behind my analytical choices and classification strategies that inform my analysis in the later chapters.

Because “our knowledge on [social phenomena such as nonviolent social movement activism] is necessarily fragmented” (van der Pijl, Breuil and Siegel 2011), studying it is best achieved through a combination of methods, a variety of actors and sites rather than an in-depth study of one location or a representative sample of social movements or activists. I use political semiosis (Wagner-Pacifici 2005; 2010) for the analysis of images and theory of violence for the classification of my data. For the purposes of situating my case studies within appropriate contexts, I have recourse to methods used in historical sociology, parallel historical analysis and contrasting histories (Skocpol and Somers 2008). In case study selection, I utilize methods employed in comparative social sciences, diverse case and most different case selection strategies (Seawright and Gerring 2008). The first section of this chapter delineates different approaches to images in sociology and adjacent social sciences. The next section discusses my main methodology, political semiosis, and the theory of violence that guided my analytical organization of findings, followed by a summary of historical and

comparative methods that informed my case selection. The chapter ends with a brief summary of cases examined in the dissertation.

### The Image in Sociological Research

Over the course of the 20th century, the relationship between sociology and visual culture has been uneven. Photography and sociology - both products of the democratizing changes of the 19th century - initially benefitted from each other. The works of the social reform photographers such as Jacob Riis and Lewis Wickes Hine drew attention to the inhumane conditions of child labor and the plight of the urban poor. Sociology initially used photography as illustration, using images as representation of reality of which they wrote (Mateju and Lingart 1990; Stasz 1979). Other sociological uses of photography: as visual aids during interviews<sup>5</sup> (Crane 1999; Harper 2002; Twine 2006) or visual ethnographic notes (Bourgois and Schonberg 2007), came later. For the better part of the 20th century, however, sociology has neglected visual analysis. By 1915 pictures virtually disappeared from the *American Journal of Sociology*, substituted by “hard” data such as graphs and statistics (Henny 1986; Mahoney 2004). This was a result of sociology’s image of itself as a science that needed to rely on quantitative data and to present data in forms recognized by natural sciences. It was not until the 1960s that photography and the study of industrialized society began to converge again (Harper 1986). The emergence of a new field - science and technology studies (STS) - provided the fertile ground for the examination of science and technology as socially embedded (Latour 1987). By the mid-1980s, there were multiple calls for using photography as both

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<sup>5</sup> Also used in counseling patients (Weiser 2002; 2004).

a research tool and a source of data in mainstream sociology (Harper 1986; Henny 1986; Stummer 1986). In 1986, the *Current Sociologist* dedicated a full issue to the theory and practice of visual sociology.

Discourse analysis of mass media is a popular methodology in sociology and communication (Herbst 2003; Lee et al. 2010; Steinberg 1998; Vicari 2010). Some researchers have analyzed media biases (McCarthy, McPhail and Smith 1996; Oliver and Maney 2000) while others - social movement activists' tactics to garner media attention (Bob 2005; Branch 2006; Gitlin 1980; Morris 1986). Analysis of images per se, however, is lacking. This has to do partly with the technical difficulties associated with publishing images, partly with sociology's status that required distancing from the arts and taking on the methods of more prestigious hard sciences (Henny 1986). The tendency to privilege text over visual data is prevalent in most social sciences, of which few have special journals dedicated to visual culture, and even fewer - special professional associations (Barnhurst 2010; Landes 2001).

Throughout the 20th century, publishing constraints associated with images made sociologists, already under pressure to "publish or perish," to neglect images that are perceived as more subjective and less quantifiable. More recently, images made a comeback in ethnographic studies in sociology, perhaps due to their methodological proximity to anthropology, whose study of "the other" had never stopped using photography as a tool of inquiry. Indeed, in anthropology both film and photography helped to capture 'the primitive' and 'the exotic.' Ethnographies in anthropology have utilized photos for years, most notably in Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's work *Balinese Character* (1942) and a number of other works that followed (Harper 1988).

Not all disciplines, of course, neglected visual analysis. However, even those that did not have often privileged the analysis of text over images. In the field of communication, for example, most data has a visual dimension, but even research on television tends to rely heavily on language (Barnhurst, Vari and Rodriguez 2004). Despite this caveat, visual studies has spread across the divisions of the International Communication Association (ICA), with all but 4 out of 17 divisions hosting visual work at the ICA conference in 2003, making visual studies truly central to the communication discipline (Barnhurst, Vari and Rodriguez 2004).

Scholars in the humanities have traditionally paid more attention to visual culture. Analysis of visual data in history, for example, is one of the major methodological strengths of the discipline (Tickner 1988; Green 1993; Landes 2001). The historian William Rosenberg writes of visualization as an important “complementary angle of exploration” of historical events: “visualization connects events to experiences and experiences to places” (Rosenberg 2008:142-3). Because my dissertation examines historical cases and draws from history and historical sociology for methods and background information on the cases, this discipline’s long engagement with images provides a useful point of departure. In contrast to historical analysis, however, my project is not content with providing a historical narrative, but uses images to shed light on the social structure under stress that undergoes rapid changes.

Given this fraught relationship between the study of images and the discipline of sociology, my dissertation’s methodological contribution is to bring attention to the role of images in addition to text, as well as the interplay between images and text, in the analysis of social movements’ communication strategies in the context of mass-mediated

politics. The key question is this: **how do news images and text of nonviolent activism reflect and create social structure?**

The juxtaposition of words and images creates incongruities that point to the places in the social structure in which change is under way. These incongruities may be difficult to identify and trace. Analysis of images requires an awareness on the part of the researcher that her reading of the image, just like analysis of text, is by necessity subjective, and should not be taken for granted. Text as data, on the other hand, has been given privilege in social science research, both because it appears easier to analyze and because researchers have to use words, again, to describe the image. The contribution of visual sociology in the very least, then, is to teach the reader what to notice and give weight to.

Following an established tradition in social sciences, I treat events and social movement interactions as socially constructed. In doing so, I avoid ascribing causality to images or debating their verisimilitude, truthfulness of representation. I believe it is the narratives that people construct around news images that lead to social change.

As the sociologist Ray Birdwhistell wrote, the power of a still image is “coercive”: “audience and producer have, without being aware of it, over the years negotiated a conventional telecommunicative structure. Performer, recorder, receiver, and spectator accede to a convention” (Birdwhistell 1970:183, 187). In other words, while the object of the photograph (just like a particular event in the history of gay liberation, e.g. the Stonewall riots) may be arbitrarily (or even randomly) selected, what the audience sees in it and what gets foregrounded in the discussions about the image (or an historical event) derives from the existing social conventions. In analyzing the image and reactions



to the image, the researcher has a point of entry into what the medical philosopher Annemarie Mol calls “multiple reality” of understanding a social phenomenon (Mol 2002), in this case, of nonviolent social activism. Although photos hardly ever directly “cause” events, people often ascribe transformative power to images in hindsight. Photographs get imbued with this power and revered as symbols of resistance, victory, and pride, or on the contrary, of suffering, sacrifice, and martyrdom. They freeze an unfolding event at arbitrary moments, and are therefore productive entry points to understanding not only the construction of events but also the process of social change.

#### Political Semiosis and Friction Ethnography

Just like the term “nonviolence” subsumes violence within itself, visual renderings of nonviolent resistance also operate in relation to violence. Nonviolent tactics often involve breaking laws that protesters deem unjust, using the visual news record to document their transgression. A refusal to obey the law on the part of social movement activists challenges the authority of the state power, inviting a response by the state. The situation thus involves much uncertainty. Will the state heavy-handedly repress dissent? Will it ignore the protests? Or give in to the demands? Because violence at this point has not occurred, nor has it been completely ruled out, the situation usually involves a great deal of what Randall Collins calls “confrontational tension and fear... [that] make violence difficult. [This confrontational tension and fear is] not merely an individual selfish fear of bodily harm; it is a tension that directly contravenes the tendency for entrainment in each other’s emotions when there is a common focus of attention”

(Collins 2008:27). In other words, people are wired to get entrained with each other rather than to fight (Collins 2004).

Chains of nonviolent activism interactions comprise what, with the benefit of hindsight, make up historical “events.” Robin Wagner-Pacifici offers a sociological theory of “the restlessness of events” (2010). She argues that the social constructedness of events lends them to be at the same time unique and bounded as well as transformative of the social structure in which they are embedded. Images represent some of the structural nodes within events and, for that reason, deserve sociological scrutiny because “structure becomes visible when systems are under stress and when cycles of reforms have begun” (Bosk 2003:238). Images create points of “constructive friction,” “zones of awkward engagement, where words [and images] mean something different across a divide even as people agree to speak” (Tsing 2005:xi). Methodologically, such approach is described in anthropology as “friction ethnography” that brings out the places of awkward engagement to highlight social structure (Tsing 2005), when frames seep or bleed into one another (Goffman 1974).

The most productive way of engaging the “friction ethnography” approach in relation to images is by analyzing the incongruity between words and images. Studying effects on the audience is, by the most part, rendered impossible due to the fact that the contemporaries of some of the movements I study are no longer alive. But looking at the material evidence and analyzing the alignment between words and images, as well as their misalignment, allows the researcher to identify places of contention and renegotiation. For example, if women suffragists are repeatedly described in contemporary press as “manly,” while images apparently fail to provide any evidence to

support that claim, the researcher is confronted with data that suggests that the concept of womanhood was being renegotiated (Gorbenko in progress).

Starting out with the theoretical premise that nonviolent social movement interactions potentially make up historical events, I turn to Wagner-Pacifici's methodological framework, "political semiosis," which "offers a method for capturing the restless conveyance of power and meaning in the eventful constitution of history" (Wagner-Pacifici 2010). Building on Austin's theory of speech acts (Austin 1978), Wagner-Pacifici describes three types of communicative acts that work as pillars in the event-formation: performatives, demonstratives, and representations. While there is necessarily some overlap among the three types of communication acts, it is useful to differentiate among them for the purposes of analysis.

### *Performatives*

Performative acts transform the nature of relationships, for example, "I now pronounce you husband and wife" or declarations of war. The actual speech act works as the cause of change in the social structure, in other words, "word and deed coincide in them" (Wagner-Pacifici 2005:144). The crucial element of performative speech acts is their dependency on the audience that must consent and acknowledge the speaker's position of authority in performing the speech act.

A performative act can fail in a number of ways, which Austin describes collectively as "infelicities" (Austin 1978:14). For example, the official state election committee announces the elections as "valid and free from fraud," but the people refuse to accept it, and, in fact, take to streets to protest allegedly rigged elections, as happened in several countries in the 2000s. The performative speech act that should have concluded

the political ritual, elections, is thus cut short. Moreover, it has put the authority figures in a precarious position, deprived of support of those who lend them legitimacy. Once this support has been withdrawn, the status of the officials is no longer valid, and they must leave the post. Therefore, performative speech acts are important moments which have the capacity to “reroute... the present” in what is later perceived as a sudden and drastic way (Wagner-Pacifci 2005:144), or, alternatively, as something that, in retrospect, was long in incubating.

While Austin’s definition is based on the analysis of text, performative speech acts can also be expressed visually. All of the movements included in this dissertation demanded an extension of rights - political, social, or legal - to the groups they represented. Visual news, the vehicle of imagined community formation, is a perfect location for contestation of the concept of citizenship. By making known - and more importantly, visible - the fact that they are treated unfairly and unequally, images of protest open up opportunities to redraw the map of full citizenship.

The actual acts of civil disobedience that get reported through various visual news involve a theatrical performance, with an audience, a pre-approved scenario and even oftentimes rehearsals. An image documenting this performance, however, works in ways markedly different from the actions themselves, irrespective of immediate reactions of their “live” audience, such as passers-by or agents of the state. An image of nonviolent direct action elicits verbal interpretations which give it meaning and, to use Austin’s linguistic terminology, works as a ‘perlocution,’ a type of performative speech act that has real consequences, intended and unintended (Austin 1978:101).

I apply Wagner-Pacifci’s theoretical model to visual news in order to extend the

analysis of text news to images. It is in the process of dissemination of images and the active processing of their multiple meanings that new power reestablishes itself, recognized (or not) by the public it claims to govern. The relationship between images and text, the specific parts of the image on which a verbal interpretation hinges, is crucial to understanding the relations among actors participating in the event, and the social structure in which they are embedded. The image of nonviolent protest interaction, then, is simultaneously “a point of rest” and an invitation to contingency and change (Wagner-Pacifici 2010).

Performative conditions of non-violent interactions are important in defining acts of civil disobedience as such. It is also important, however, that they are duly situated in the cultural and historical context. This role in political semiosis is delegated to demonstratives and representations.

### *Demonstratives*

Another feature of political semiosis is demonstrative. In Austin’s theory of speech acts demonstrative pronouns, such as we - they, this - that, here - there etc. are useful in ordering things and showing which direction things are going. One type of demonstratives commonly used in images is a shared focus of attention. For example, Wagner-Pacifici writes about the central elements of Raphael’s painting *The Marriage of the Virgin*, where some the participants of the event are depicted looking at one object in the picture the exchange of wedding rings (Wagner-Pacifici 2005:53-4). The focus of attention of the onlookers, however, can also lie outside of the frame of the image. Zelizer, for example, describes a type of image widely replicated after 9/11: people witnessing the attack, looking in horror at that which we do not see, the twin towers of

the World Trade Center (Zelizer 2002). In a famous photograph taken immediately after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., three people are similarly pointing in the same direction to something outside the photo frame. In a way, the object outside the frame is brought back into the viewer's experience by this shared focus of attention, the intersecting lines of vision of the onlookers further confirming its significance.

Such images focus our attention on what is absent, but not by showing it (the representational aspect does that) but by pointing toward something that is inside or outside of the frame. A violent conflict, perhaps a fight or an arrest, attracts attention and creates a circle of onlookers. The camera itself, by its mere presence at the interaction, plays the role of the demonstrative, pointing in the direction of something that is worth seeing.

The demonstrative aspect of political semiosis highlights some aspects of the role of witnesses because they are the ones who point to the event and render it real; they are the pointers/ shifters that create meaning, both remotely and on the spot (Wagner-Pacifici 2005). The complementary aspect of a demonstrative is often an object that becomes the focus of attention of everyone in the audience. For example, sometimes technology (such as a radio transmitter, see below) is placed at the center of the image, as if to underscore the seemingly limitless audience that is paying attention to the unfolding event. At other times, media products (a copy of newspaper, a TV screen) become such points of shared attention, suggesting, in essence, the same: that the media had invested the event with official attention and rendered it historically significant.



Illustration 1. People listening to the radio during the aborted coup, August 1991. *Lenta.Ru* (Oleg Klimov).

In the image<sup>6</sup> above, for example, taken during the coup attempt in Moscow in 1991, when Communist apparatchiks tried to turn back the course of reforms started by Gorbachev, the radio is in the center of attention. Eyewitnesses write that radio was like a lifeline during the three days of the coup attempt. The photo shows people listening intently, most of their lines of vision intersecting at the small black box in the middle of the photo. Broadcast technology - the tools that help disseminate the news - create an awareness of the great numbers of invisible others who are, presumably, also glued to their radios elsewhere at the same time. In retrospect, it gives the event the status of historically significant because “everyone was paying attention.” It simultaneously

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<sup>6</sup> The image can be found at <http://1991.lenta.ru/1991/08/21/images/gallery/big/0003.jpg> (Accessed September 12, 2012). More photos of the coup are available at <http://1991.lenta.ru/1991/08/21/>.

freezes the moment because it is worth memorializing, and shows its transience, clearly demarcating it from the present by the strange glasses fashions, clothes of the bygone days, and improbable hair styles. In other words, the picture of broadcast technology and people paying attention to it is a demonstrative that points to the significance of the event, transforming it into what communication scholars Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz call “media events” (Dayan and Katz 1992).

The image of nonviolence has four main actors who may be depicted or implied as participants in the conflict: the victim, the perpetrator, the benefactor and the witness. I borrow the first three actors from the work of the French sociologist Luc Boltanski, and add the witness from the work of the sociologist Robin Wagner-Pacifici (2005) and the communication scholar Barbie Zelizer (1998). Boltanski identifies the tripartite scheme of the victim-perpetrator-benefactor in his analysis of the visual representation of human suffering in the media. He argues that we feel “tender-heartedness” if a benefactor is displayed or implied in the image, and indignation if the perpetrator is known (Boltanski 1999:48, 58, 77). While all three actors do not need to be simultaneously present in a given picture (in some cases, such as the photographs of mounds of shoes in the concentration camps, none of them are present), the overall story of the conflict helps fill in the gaps in the viewer’s imagination. Boltanski’s model, however, is incomplete without adding another personage to the mediated story of conflict. The witness is always present or implied in the image and is crucial to render the image intelligible, and open it up to mediated audiences that in turn become witnesses too (Wagner-Pacifici 2005; Zelizer 1998).

Although in most iconic images one can easily identify the victim and the



perpetrator in the picture, such public consensus is not always present at the time when the protest is taking place. The historian Vicki Goldberg writes, for example, about how the image of the “tank man” in the Tiananmen Square was widely exhibited by the Chinese authorities in the summer of 1989. It was accompanied by an explanation that the Chinese troops showed remarkable restraint and “chose not to run over a lone man blocking the march of an entire line of tanks” (Goldberg 1993:251). This examples shows that the same image can be interpreted in a number of ways, and the same actor depicted in the picture can become the victim (a student nearly killed by the Chinese government), the perpetrator (one of the organizers of the rebellion), or the benefactor (a hero ready to sacrifice his life to stop the violence).

The witness is a crucial character in the image of nonviolent resistance. In her study of surrenders, the sociologist of culture Robin Wagner-Pacifici analyzes the role of the witness, which is simultaneously to “coauthor the events... locate the focal points of action... represent what had happened, rendering it historically legible” (Wagner-Pacifici 2005:36). When a number of witnesses are present at the scene, their act of witnessing proclaims “a public reckoning by a collectivity” (Wagner-Pacifici 2005:48). The political scientist Michael Suk-Young Chwe argues that common knowledge generated by an inward-facing circle (in both physical and metaphorical meaning) helps in coordination (Chwe 1998:57). One could argue that bearing witness to the others’ acts of witnessing similarly generates common knowledge about the event. The fact that other people *know* becomes no less important than *what* they know. Such mutual awareness of others’ awareness of the Nazi brutality, for example, brought the society to a clear consensus on the German crimes (Zelizer 1998).

## *Representations*

Similar to human interest stories of the 1930s (Hughes [1937] 2004), visual depictions of popular dissent help to sell the copy, be it a hard copy of a newspaper, cable or online subscription. They push the boundaries of the event and, as this dissertation will show, work as “semantic holes,” opportunities for polysemy in the interpretation of the event, its boundaries and its focal points. Combined with words, they can put in stark relief the incompatibility of the “official” version of the events and oppositional narratives, highlighting the differences and creating “liminal space” (Turner 1982), “social crossroads,” moments in which change becomes possible. Although images are no less biased than words, their meaning comes under attack when alternative interpretations collide. An image is not a complete bounded entity; its workings come out in the interaction with everything else that surrounds it: captions, subjective perceptions of the viewer influenced by previous experiences, political and social forces at work in the place where it is replicated, time and distance from the event and the particular interaction depicted. By their uncanny capacity to appear proximal and real, images have an ability to engage the viewer on an emotional level and create opportunities for identification with those depicted.

The German art historian Hans Belting cites Vilém Flusser who argues that images exist in the world where “everything repeats” (Belting 2005). In other words, we make sense of images by connecting them with other ones in our memory; our mind is constantly seeking out patterns. But, as Belting is quick to point out, images also work as vehicles for collective imagination, engaging the viewers and allowing them to imagine that which does not yet exist (Belting 2005). We create images, but also are living with

them, making sense of them, using them to prove or subvert a point as well as mobilize a counterpoint.

Copies of different elements of events are created immediately by visual news as the event unfolds. While representations, Wagner-Pacifici writes, “assume a world that has, at least provisionally, stabilized,” their real thrust lies in their repetition (Wagner-Pacifici 2010). Particular iterations of events are never the same, as replication involves the transformation of context, time, culture, and medium that delivers it to their audiences. Representations are by their nature, paradoxical: “even the ‘original’ documents signed and stamped and the ‘original’ handshakes beginning or ending such things as battles are, in this sense, copies, as they take their forms from templates developed in the past and brought to bear on this emergent event” (Wagner-Pacifici 2010). For that reason, images that receive the greatest circulation work as important junctures that hold events together, as both whole unto themselves while linked to previous moments, connected to similar struggles: images have a lineage. In Schutz’s (1967) sense, they are layered on the social sediment of prior images.

Moreover, the ubiquity of symbols is associated with power, which gets amplified with the use of broadcast technology. Thus showing images of technology that retransmits representational copies of the event helps to confirm the power of the participants and render the event historically meaningful. In short, visual representations of events in the context of nonviolent activism work as putative claims to power and often as attempts to displace authority.

The representational aspect of nonviolence images attempts, on the one hand, to fix or stabilize existing order by freezing the moment of non-compliance with existing

laws by the movement members. Paradoxically though, it is precisely these images that move the boundaries of the event, affect potential recruits into the movement, and demand a government response to the publicized protest activities, lest its legitimacy is in danger. Thus instead of creating “points of rest,” representations of nonviolent confrontations mark what Wagner-Pacifci refers to as “restlessness of events” (Wagner-Pacifci 2005:145; Wagner-Pacifci 2010).

Journalistic values that put emphasis on newsworthiness give more prominence to pictures that are likely to arouse a response in the viewer. For that reason, images of violent oppression of nonviolent protesters are from the outset endowed with more representational power than those of peaceful protests. Their interpretation, however, is open to contestation. Framing of the movement outside the frame of the photograph becomes central to giving credence, or, on the contrary, undermining the government’s narrative that usually presents nonviolent protesters as fringe outcasts. For example, in the 2012 presidential campaign in Russia, Vladimir Putin’s administration managed to successfully present the opposition as well-to-do elite intellectuals that have nothing to do with the majority of the Russians. Irrespective of whether or not it is true, this framework was prominent in the media, including the internet, and arguably helped mobilize at least some part of the electorate - those who did not feel represented by the intelligentsia - to vote for Putin.

The meaning of the image is born not when it is created by the image maker, but in conjunction with the active viewer who interprets the image using her own “pictorial sophistication,” in Stuart Hall’s classical encoding-decoding process (Belting 2005; Deregowski 2000:401; Hall 1973). In relation to visuals, the art historian Ernst Gombrich

refers to the arbitrariness of interpretation as the “beholder’s share,” the influence of previous images we store in our mind on what we currently see (Gombrich 1974:250). In other words, the prior knowledge and exposure of the viewer to similar pictures in the past enhances representational value in the present.

Because our “reading” of the image depends on our prior knowledge about the subject, an image stripped of verbal details placing it at a particular time-space juncture is more likely to gain currency in a variety of settings. Therefore, it is not surprising that researchers identify familiar, memorable form as a common characteristic of iconic images. Their power derives from vague captions, a familiar shape, and anonymity of those depicted, which translates into a universal image applicable to a variety of situations. A certain level of abstractness and generalizability of an image is necessary to convey the event’s occurrence as typical. “It is precisely their nonspecificity,” writes the communication scholar Michael Griffin, “that makes [the iconic pictures] timeless” (Griffin 1999:131). Significantly, an iconic image may or may not have been accidental. The image of the raising the flag at Iwo Jima that the Americans recognize as iconic, for example, was carefully staged already after the event had taken place (Goldberg 1993).

While advertising images and those in the news belong to different registers, both types of photography aim to engage the viewer’s attention, if for different reasons. Sometimes they overlap, jump boundaries, diffuse, and the viewer, confronted with multiple modalities, is invited to make connections. Candid photographs that capture people in action without them looking at the camera appear more authentic and “unstaged” than routine portraits of celebrities and politicians shaking hands and smiling at the camera. A certain level of abstractness is necessary to make the image most

believable and emotionally engaging. Lack of identifying details, showing people from the side or back engaged in some activity, and degraded image quality due to the subject being in motion lends a sense of authenticity, legitimacy, and verisimilitude to candid photography. In this case, the people depicted stand for somebody the viewer might know personally, a brother, a neighbor, a friend, or even the viewer herself.

The significance of representational, or rather, distributional importance of new social media to protest activities was illustrated in the so-called “nano-meetings” across Russia in January of 2012. A number of social movement organizers in the city of Barnaul in the Western Siberia, who were repeatedly denied an official permit to hold a rally against fraudulent elections staged a protest, images of which went viral on the social networking sites. Instead of people, pictures show toys - from lego or kinder surprise eggs - holding miniature posters such as “A thief should be in jail, not in the Kremlin” (in reference to the pro-Putin party, United Russia, which was famously labeled “party of crooks and thieves” by a nationalist opposition blogger Alexey Navalny), “146%” (referring to a telltale typo that appeared on one of the regional TV stations summing up the parliament elections results in December 2011). The Barnaul authorities, though perplexed, were contemplating an arrest of the organizers of the miniature anti-government demonstration. Humorous though this incident may be, its handling by the state authorities shows that the wide replication of unusual images with a specific meaning may be as powerful as the actual demonstrations. The fact that toys and not people were protesting contributed to the event’s novelty and led to its wider dissemination than it could get otherwise.



Illustration 2. "Nano meeting" in Barnaul. Ugolok.Ru blog. December 2011.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The poster reads: "There are elections, but there is no choice" (a pun in Russian: the words for "elections" and "choice" sound almost identical). More photos of the protest

Yet real change, of course, does not come after toy demonstrations. The next section of this chapter examines images of violence in nonviolent activism, its meaning and role as society attempts to reinvent itself on new grounds.

### Semiotics of the (Non)violent Image

Violence is a central organizing principle of nonviolence as a political strategy because nonviolent resisters put the onus of committing violence on the state, refusing to engage or strike back. For that reason, I use violence as a referent to divide images of nonviolent protest into analytical categories. For the purposes of my analysis, I use the definition of violence by the World Health Organization: “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (Krug et al. 2002). The four types of violence that are relevant to the dynamics of nonviolent resistance are: state violence, third party violence, self-directed violence, and symbolic violence.

The first two kinds of violence - state-sanctioned and third-party violence - involve protesters provoking their opponents to use violence against them, and by doing so, lose their moral status in the eyes of a bystander audience. News of violence toward protesters are critically important to the analysis of nonviolent activism because they most convincingly portray protesters in a positive light, in Tilly’s terms, “WUNC, worthy, united, numerous and committed” (Tilly 2004). Social movements espousing

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can be found here: <http://ugolock.ru/blog/cat9/17162.html> (Accessed September 12, 2012).



nonviolence focus their efforts on positive self-presentation. Following Bob (2005) in his discussion of the Marketing of Rebellion, I use the metaphor from the unlikely field of marketing to describe social movements' self-promotion tactics. Creating rituals and positive experiences is part of a successful movement because it is not enough that new members join, but they also need to stay in the movement. Experience of positive emotions, such as feeling of solidarity inherent in the collective rituals that protests invoke, creates a strong bond amongst activists and encourages their stronger commitment to the movement.

Activists perform the other two kinds of violence themselves (the fact that they often resort to violence, in fact, threatens to render their claims to nonviolence oxymoronic, though not meaningless). News images of self-directed and symbolic violence show the escalation of conflict to the point at which activists are provoked. Hunger strikes, self-immolation, spectacular suicide - all of these self-directed types of violence are meant to provoke bystanders to sympathize with activists because their life under current conditions must be absolutely unbearable if they consider ending it (or, end it) in such a public and horrific way. An alternative interpretation of such behavior, of course, is to discount these committed individuals as insane, and deal with them accordingly.

Symbolic violence, on the other hand, is usually directed at things rather than people. The borderline between symbolic attacks and terrorism lies in the absence of human victims in the former case, but the two are part of the same continuum. For that reason, symbolic attacks are often framed by the state as "terrorism," "hooliganism," or "outrages." Symbolic violence can also be used by the powerful (usually state actors) to

distract attention. Destruction of monuments of bygone eras by invading armies and new regimes, for example, has taken place in every country at every period: converting churches into mosques and back tells the history of the region in Granada and Istanbul; removing all communist statues from Budapest into a specially designated “Statue Park” outside the capital illustrates the Hungarian purging of its socialist past; dynamiting ancient Buddha statues in Afghanistan shows the Taliban’s attempt at cleansing anything un-Islamic within the territory they controlled. State-supported symbolic violence is often seen as less problematic than symbolic violence organized by protesters because the state is better equipped to control the narrative around the event.

The escalation of violence engages the audience emotionally. Images are attempts to speak “directly to the body” (Milne et al. 2011), “infusing affective dispositions under the skin of their audiences” (Barnett 2008:193, cited in Milne et al. 2011:183). Images of violence in particular have the capacity to elicit emotional response in the viewers, such as physiological sensations, cognitive assessment, and behavioral action by individuals and groups (Fernandez et al. 2011). Despite the almost guaranteed emotional impact, effects of viewing images of violence are so varied that they are ultimately unpredictable (Linde 2005, *Reflexiones sobre los efectos de las imágenes de dolor, muerte y sufrimiento en los espectadores. Comunicar, 25.*, cited in Fernandez et al. 2011).

In other words, the four types of images also correspond to different stages in the confrontation between activists and the state. In theorizing escalation and deescalation of conflict, Collins argues, “polarization is the dark shadow of the highest level of successful interaction ritual” (Collins 2011). Solidarity among group members rises at the same time as barriers to outsiders increase and members of the outgroup are demonized.

This type of morality shifting is well described in the literature in the field of psychology (Leidner and Castano 2012).

This means that when the image of violent confrontation between the state and dissenters appears, the audience's judgment on the nature of the interaction is strongly influenced by their previous exposure and understanding of what's right and wrong in the conflict. Because mass media are very good at creating heroes and villains - simple narratives make good copy - it is very likely that any violent interaction will be verbally presented in such simplistic terms, pointing out the victim and the perpetrator (Bosk 2007). This is precisely the moment when mass media have a chance to become inadvertent allies of social movements, irrespective of what their moral stance in the conflict may be. If a particular news outlet is a commercial enterprise, its presentation of the nonviolent interaction is guided by the considerations of profitability and public interest. The tragedy of violence, however, "will not offend us" if the presumed victim is described as "a very bad character" (Aristotle [350 BCE] 1997). The publishing pressures and competition in journalism allows the media to show the human and sympathetic side of protesters.

More than any other images, pictures of nonviolence are meant to invoke strong feelings playing on the opposition of good and evil and inducing the viewers to take sides. The British art historian Ernst Gombrich maintains that the image's capacity for arousal is supreme, while its expressive possibility is problematic, and "unaided it altogether lacks the statement function of the language" (Gombrich 1974:242-3). In other words, images of violence, death, or suffering make the viewers' emotions run high but remain polysemic, i.e. open to a variety of interpretations, as well as a variety of forms of

action and inaction they encourage. While the audience may receive most of information through words, visuals carry additional meaning that may contradict the information in the text, and for that reason requires closer scrutiny (Glasgow University Media Group 1981:30).

### Historical Analysis and Case Study Method in Sociology

My dissertation includes analysis of a broad spectrum of social movements in different locations and at different times. Such an approach takes into consideration the contingency and happenstance of human interaction and allows examining the phenomenon from multiple perspectives. My analysis contributes to the study of nonviolent social movement activism by a close examination of multiple pieces in “patchwork ethnography,” a method of collecting fragments of information about the event from multiple actors and types of media (van der Pijl, Breuil and Siegel 2011). The pieces that I focus on deals with the interaction between images and words in the news.

In the search of rules and regularities that govern relationships between words and images in the context of news coverage of the nonviolent activism interaction, I am using small-N/ case study method (Abbott 2004:58-9; George and Bennett 2005; Skocpol and Somers 1980). “Thick description” allows comparisons within and between cases (Geertz 1973); comparison across cases allows for more analytical leverage than narration or ethnography, while preserving the nuances of cases that get stripped away in the standard causal analysis (Abbott 2004:58). In its form, this methodology is more akin to ethnography or narration that are the main methods in neighboring disciplines of anthropology and history. By putting starkly disparate cases side by side, this project

aims to produce knowledge that is both particular and universal. It hopes to elucidate contemporary movements, with a clear view of limitations of historical cases such as the changed social and technological conditions in which current movements are operating. As a scholar of social movements, I find myself with those who caution against the hype about “new media” technology, and call for a more historically grounded knowledge about technological and social change.

I believe that the hyperfocus on the present, such as Hillary Clinton’s remarks about how information “has never been so free,” occludes more than it elucidates (Clinton 2010). Images of nonviolent struggle, with crowds of people flooding main squares and adjacent thoroughfares of major foreign cities, have become the norm in the last few decades. Whether these developments will inspire more direct action by social movements, or lead to a “protest fatigue,” sending movements toward more urgent and violent tactics, remains an open question. A comparative historical perspective has the advantage of grounding the theory in the case studies of the past, without, however, surrendering to deterministic view of history and keeping in mind those circumstances that make each of the cases unique.

Historical analysis focuses on “the role of contingency and accident in all methodological development” (Abbott 2004:70). Comparative historical sociology was born out of the critique of historical analysis that does not generalize patterns and similarities across historical cases. Following the tradition in comparative historical sociology, this dissertation employs case study analysis in order to seek such explanations. The standard critiques of small-N analysis is that it uses too few examples to make a truly generalizable argument, as compared with standard causal analysis, and,

on the other hand, that it treats its cases superficially as compared to historical narration (Abbott 2004:72). These critiques point at limitations of the case study methodology and should act as a reminder to stay within the limited reach of possible generalizability of the findings.

Because the purpose of looking at a number of cases, in this dissertation, is providing contrasting contexts (Skocpol and Somers 1980) rather than eliminating bias (Collier and Mahoney 1996; Seawright and Gerring 2008), comparing my case selection method with that of quantitative studies is of little use. One thing that can be borrowed from small-N standard causal analysis is the idea of purposive strategy in case selection. I chose my cases based on two main criteria: cases had to be diverse and most different (Seawright and Gerring 2008). Because my interest in different types of communication technology has been driving this project from its inception, most examples I chose engaged different types of information and communication technology (ICT). Furthermore, the examples come from different historical and cultural spaces, which adds additional level of difference to the examples. These characteristics of the cases help inform my analysis of a nonviolent protest interaction, in both word and image.

Initially, the cases I chose reflected changes in mass media and image technologies over time. Such a chronological arrangement, however, was making my account unnecessarily rigid and technologically determinist. Examples are now organized in an analytical rather than chronological order, and come from the following historical moments: the Orange revolution in Ukraine, the women's suffrage movement in Britain, the anti-Putin protests in Russia, the civil rights movement in the United States, and the coup attempt in the Soviet Union.

Why these specific cases? Indeed, I could have chosen a dozen or more others that would have provided no less thick descriptions of nonviolent social movement activism and included plenty of images. I chose these cases because I was most familiar with them. The examples from the anti-Putin protests are the most recent. They began in December 2011 and are far from over at the point of my writing. These developments are the least historically conclusive, but that is precisely why they speak to the contingent and evolving meaning of nonviolence.

Beyond my personal familiarity with the movements, I chose the examples from movements that distinguish themselves by their diversity. The five movements that appear in the analysis are organized around different - gender, ethnic, regional or national - identities. They each took place in a different country, i.e. were embedded within different cultural contexts. They each utilized available technology, but the technology they could use varied from case to case due to the changes that took place between the movements. Therefore, they are as diverse as one could ever imagine them to be. The civil rights movement in the United States has become an iconic textbook example of nonviolence across the world. Other movements are well studied by regional studies scholars, but are virtually forgotten in mainstream sociology.

Following sequence analysis arguments, I assume that when events occur impacts how they occur (Abbott 2004; Mahoney 2004; Tilly 1984:14). In the later chapters I analyze how the interaction between social movements, the state, and mass media plays out in specific cases. I base my analysis on the juxtaposition of images and words that make this nonviolent interaction public.

My dissertation does not seek to make predictions as to possible success or failure

of social protest. While news coverage definitely plays a role in how the movement is perceived and the rate at which it grows (or doesn't), this is beside the point in my argument. I assume that outcomes of all social protests are ultimately contingent upon the social, political and economic conditions in which they take place. Following Mahoney, I define contingency as "the inability of theory to predict or explain, either deterministically or probabilistically, the occurrence of a specific outcome" (Mahoney 2000). Instead of establishing macro-causal connections in a way that multivariate hypothesis-testing may do, my dissertation focuses on critical junctures and turning points, represented by news images and text around them, in order to lay bare the ways in which actors use images productively in their narratives of success and failure, past and future, and social change.

### Summary

This chapter began by discussing the position of visual data in sociology and other social sciences. News images and the text in which they are embedded are at the core of my project holding it together and allowing the reader to see relationships between social movements and the state, mass media and social movements, and the state and mass media. The chapter then described what images can do as communication acts, summarizing my main methodology, political semiosis. After that, I moved to describing violence as the organizing principle of my dissertation because it is central to nonviolent direct action. The final section documented comparative historical research methodology and case study selection strategies that I rely on in Chapter 4. Before I proceed with the



image analysis per se, however, it is incumbent upon me to situate visual news in their social and historical contexts outlined in Chapter 3.

## CHAPTER 3. SOCIAL HISTORY OF VISUAL NEWS

### Introduction

In order to have an impact on the audience, news images of nonviolent social movement activism must be recognized as such. The anthropologist Andrew Lakoff writes that in order for ideas to travel, they must reduce complexity and engage the universal (Lakoff 2005; van der Pijl et al. 2011). The crystallization of such abstract concepts as nonviolent activism, in other words, takes place through the replication of its expression, be it in words, images, or actions. Therefore, before we can discuss images of nonviolence, it is necessary to understand the process of their dissemination. For that reason, this chapter examines the relevant technological advances that created various types of media in which images circulate.

This chapter is a social history of visual news technology that sets the stage for the analysis of images of nonviolence in Chapter Four. The chapter is not meant to cover all technological innovations of image capturing, reproduction and dissemination in the 20th century, of which there were many. Instead, I focus on specific technological advances that allowed visual news to participate in the social construction of nonviolent social movements, examine the social context and contingency of image technology, its perception by contemporaries, and its significance for social movement (i.e. anti-state) activism. I begin with an overview of innovations in visual news (illustrated dailies, newsreels, television, cable television, and online press), move into a discussion of the

role of specific media types in community building and empowerment, and end by discussing the significance of visual news technology for social movement activism.

#### Image Timeline: production, distribution and spread

This section provides the historical background on innovations in visual news production, distribution, and dissemination technologies: illustrated press, newsreel, television, cable television, and online news. It focuses on technologies that are particularly relevant to the case studies in this project by showing how visual news, whatever form it took has often been considered inferior to news delivered in words. Even in the case of silent newsreels that enjoyed unprecedented popularity precisely for their visual quality, words had to introduce the topic and frame it in a specific way. The next four subsections focus on the contingencies that led to the rise of specific types of mass communication. Each advance in technology led to the changes in tactics and strategies for both state and anti-state actors.

#### *Illustrated Dailies*

Born out of the industrialization in the 19th century, photography was evolving for over fifty years before it became accessible to laypeople, easily used and affordable. The early prints were awkward, required quite a bit of special knowledge, and could only be made in studios with special lighting. By the early 20th century, technology capable of capturing movement was still relatively new. It was made possible by the introduction of the electric flash in the first decade, which shortened the exposure allowing the recording of objects in motion at speeds exceeding 1/5000 second, freeing photography from the

confines of the studio (Gernsheim and Gernsheim 1955). This led to a proliferation of unstaged, candid photos, taken in the streets, unstaged, and affected the way images and text were used in the news. At the same time, the invention of gelatin paper for printing, which substituted for cumbersome glass plates, paved way to mass-production printing, a necessary step before photography could really integrate with mass-circulating newspapers (Gernsheim and Gernsheim 1955).

Such integration was slowly established with the help of daily newspapers that became pioneers in press photography. Technological advances in another field - printing - allowed illustrated dailies to come into existence. A cheap method of reproducing black and white drawings known as “process” had been available since the 1860s (Wright 2003). In 1886, halftone blocks enabled photographs to be reproduced in print by covering “varying percentages of the press sheet... with halftone dots to represent the varying tones in the image” (Dharavath 2006).

Admittedly, this transformation was not purely technological. Cultural inhibitions against the use of images in “serious publishing” had to be overcome first. The use of photography was seen as “somehow for the less than literate,” therefore “the gentlemen of the fourth estate [not unlike academics of today] were... careful to preserve their... status as... literary purveyors of the written word” (Wright 2003). The technology for reproducing illustrations had been available for decades, and the idea of illustrated press itself was a Victorian phenomenon. But the respectable British paper *Times*, for example, did not give in to press photography until 1922, when it finally started a “picture page.” Despite the uneasiness of the journalistic community on the question of pictures, readers were obviously ready to embrace the integration of text and images.

One of the first newspapers<sup>8</sup> that introduced photography widely into the press was the British *Daily Mirror*, founded in 1903. It was launched by the successful publishing magnate Alfred Hamsworth (later Lord Northcliffe) as a newspaper for women and was his first newspaper failure. Gender differences in literary culture might account for this initial failure; the journalistic profession was even more male-dominated than it is today. Hamsworth's own flippant explanation, that "women can't write and don't want to read" (Fyfe 1935) cannot be taken seriously because literacy rates for men and women were about the same at the end of the 19th century, according to an analysis of signatures of brides and bridegrooms in the marriage register (a popular methodology in history for calculating literacy rates) (Stephens 1990:555).

After losing half a million dollars in the first two months, Lord Hamsworth replaced the first female editor, Mary Howarth, with Hamilton Fyfe, who was supposed to save the newspaper (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 March 1904; *New York Times*, 27 February, 1904; Fyfe, 1935). He fired all the women journalists and hired the Hungarian inventor Arkas Sapt who claimed to have discovered a method of reproducing photos in print on the fast presses used for publishing daily newspapers (Fyfe 1935). Thus the *Mirror* transformed into the *Daily Illustrated Mirror*, for both men and women. By turning the *Daily Mirror* into an illustrated paper, Hamsworth once again demonstrated his keen business acumen, making the paper a huge success.

The story of the *Daily Mirror* is significant to this project for several reasons.

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<sup>8</sup> Different scholars cite different "firsts" in their studies of illustrated press. Gernsheim and Gernsheim (1955, 371-2) also mention the *New York Daily Graphic* as the first newspaper to publish a photograph (rather than a redrawing of the photograph or an engraving) in 1880, though later identifies the *Daily Mirror* as the first newspaper to use half-tone technology for printing photographs.

First, it was founded in 1903, the same year as the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in Britain, an organization of the militant suffragists. The concurrent rise of the organization and the newspaper allows analysis of news images of the movement to be analyzed just as press photography was established. Even though the *Daily Mirror* might have not been the first illustrated newspaper, it made its reputation as such, and grew in popularity alongside the British women's suffrage movement.

Second, the *Daily Mirror's* vast readership suggests that discussions in the newspaper were consumed and circulated among large numbers of people. The *Mirror* described itself as "a morning journal with the second largest net sale" in 1906 (*Daily Mirror*, 28 December 1906:1) and boasted the certified circulation of over 940,000 copies per day on the eve of the World War (*Daily Mirror*, 23 May 1914:1). The primary audience that swelled the subscription numbers of the *Mirror* and other illustrated dailies was the lower middle class, making the half-penny press possibly the most democratic type of media of its time (Kelly 2004).

Third, the *Daily Mirror* started out as the first newspaper "for gentlewomen, by gentlewomen" (Wright 2003). It failed as such, but this original designation proved to be prophetic because of the role the newspaper played in the movement to enfranchise British women. While the *Mirror* is usually described as "neutral" in its treatment of suffragists (Kelly 2004), its relationship with the movement was complicated from the outset. In 1905, the newspaper pronounced the movement dead with the article 'Votes for Women: How Illustrated Papers Have Killed the Suffrage Movement,' according to which the suffragists 'became almost as extinct as the dodo' because women were now allegedly distracted from the vote by stories about fashion and homemaking in illustrated

dailies (*Daily Mirror*, 11 March 1905). The article concluded with the emphatic ‘No woman really wants a vote.’ The next decade would prove the *Mirror* wrong. Existence of the *Daily Mirror* and other half penny illustrated papers with a penchant for sensationalism provided the perfect stage on which the WSPU spectacle would unfold (Tickner 1988:58-9). Although critical or mildly condescending of their demands and tactics in the text, the *Daily Mirror* could not afford to ignore their activities and was pulled, at least initially, into becoming an inadvertent ally of the movement by publishing their photos (Gorbenko in progress).

### *Newsreel*

Moving pictures had already existed for a number of years by the turn of the 20th century, though scheduled newsreel films and special newsreel theaters were yet to come.<sup>9</sup> A precursor of television news that came a few decades later, newsreel offered news coverage that was overwhelmingly visual in nature long before majority of newspapers and magazines adopted photography as well. The first motion pictures hardly provided what we might think of as “news coverage”; they did, however, initiate the early coupling of news with image technology.

From its early days, the novelty of the medium was drawing audiences, so the

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<sup>9</sup> The idea of a news film is credited to Leon Franconi, who was an interpreter for Charles Pathe, the owner of the French *Pathe Freres* organization. The first news film *The Pathe Journal* was shown in Paris in 1909 in a theater devoted exclusively to newsreel presentations. Evidently this was a success because Pathe launched a version of the newsreel in England in the next few months in 1910 under the title the *Animated Gazette* or the *Pathe Gazette*. In the United States, Pathe’s newsreel premiered on August 8, 1911 (Fielding 2006:46). The term newsreel appeared later, and is credited to William Randolph Hearst, who named his production *The International Newsreel* in 1918 or 1914, according to different sources (Fielding 2006:58).

content did not matter as much. The first moving pictures in the 1890s were films of prize fights and “actualities,” which were short unmanipulated films of everyday life. In the beginning, the films had to be viewed through a peep-show instrument by individual patrons, that is, the early viewing experience was not a social affair (Fielding 2006:39). Like the illustrated press that came a few years later, the news films focused on state-sponsored “media events” that exhibited a lot of pageantry and guaranteed economical, preplanned, convenient filming (Dayan and Katz 1992). In short, these early newsreels were a cheap, ready-made production, requiring little organizational infrastructure.

The newsreel was met with unabated enthusiasm. The *Moving Picture World* reported that finally

...[t]he confusion of tongues begun at the Tower of Babel bids fair to be undone by this new institution. It will bring the continents and nations together and work for a better understanding of one people by another [...] Who would not take part in the news of the world “just as it really happened” as part of the regular picture entertainment? (Review, *Moving Picture World*, 12 August, 1911, 359-60, cited in Fielding 2006:48).

A popular belief in the verisimilitude of the medium was amazing, given that there had been a number of prominent fakes over the course of the first twenty years of the moving pictures’ existence. The early silent newsreels<sup>10</sup> (first voiced newsreels appeared in the late 1920s) had great impact on the audiences. Before the introduction of voice, the medium’s candor was universally praised in the trade papers and popular press; even though it was clear that newsreel footage could, and was on occasion, manipulated.

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<sup>10</sup> Of the five major firms that came to dominate the newsreel business (*Pathe, Hearst, Universal, Fox, and Paramount*), *Fox Movietone* was the first newsreel in America to introduce sound in 1927. In England, sound newsreel did not launch until 1929 with the first *British Movietone* issue (Fox’s affiliate in Britain). By 1946, *Fox International Movietone Newsreel* was regularly exhibited in forty-seven countries with an estimated audience of over two hundred million each week (Fielding 2006:109-121).

However, “talkies” of the 1930s immediately triggered criticism of the veracity of the medium (Fielding 2006). Apparently, the disconnect between the authoritative male voice that typically narrated pre-shot footage and the images themselves made newsreel’s attempts at persuasion more obvious than before. When voice and images appeared side by side, people were able to attach authorship to words, and any disconnect between words and images could be perceived as attempts of persuasion. Moreover, voice and text by necessity restricted the audience to those speaking the same language, whereas a purely visual medium had the capacity to reach a potentially global audience with no regard to their language or origins. This suggests that a purely visual medium had effects in a more general humanitarian, universalistic direction, whereas voice/ text media, constrained by the language in which they present the information, are by necessity more particularistic. Admittedly, images can and often do support nationalistic claims as well, but they are legible to wider audience than words.

Newsreels in different countries varied in their content choices, presentation and style. The American newsreel had a distinct newspaper-like flavor: screaming headlines, most exciting events delivered upfront, no commonality among the stories. By contrast, the German newsreel of the 1930s *Die Deutsche Wochenschau* was by far more dramatic, following a cinematic tradition of building up the tension in the beginning of the program that led to a climax in the later part. Time, Inc.’s production *The March of Time*, which received an Oscar in 1937 for “revolutioniz[ing] the newsreel,” was more similar in style to the German newsreel, with its emphasis on drama and a distinct story line, which was achieved through the practice of reenactments and staging events (Fielding 2006:85-6, 157). Different cultural traditions in journalism might have accounted for the national



differences between the European and the American newsreel structure. The fact that the order in which news items appear affects perception has been studied in psychology. Dolf Zillmann (2005), for example, studied the paradoxical enjoyment of drama that shows mostly distressing events. According to his excitation-transfer theory, excitations caused by different sources combine to intensify feelings and actions in the immediate vicinity of the individual. For example, having avoided an accident on the road, one feels excited and interprets this feeling as fear. Fear transforms into anger if the pedestrian that nearly caused the accident is around, which can turn into shame if the driver realizes that person is blind. Due to editing, mediated representations of reality (especially fictional, but also news) play intensely negative and positive events close together, which intensifies the experience of the viewer. TV news programs of today in most countries arrange their news lineup deliberately.

Having their eyes set on newspaper journalism, newsreel producers' attitudes were nonetheless linked with those of show business. The *Motion Picture Herald's* editor Terry Ramsaye summed up: "The newsreel is not a purveyor of news and never is likely to become one.... The newsreel ought to be an entertaining and amusing derivative.... Whether they know it or not, the newsreels... are just in the show business" (Terry Ramsaye, "News and Corpses," *Motion Picture Herald*, September 3, 1934, editorial page, cited in Fielding 2006:151). Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) cite Fred Friendly on TV news as saying every story ought to have a narrative arc accompanied by good visuals.

Newsreel producers clearly felt the deficiency of the medium, and relied on the written word to a perhaps greater extent than it was called for. A swirling image of a newspaper front page was a popular way of introducing breaking news on the screen. A

story of the fire in Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey) in 1931 in the *British Pathe*, for example, begins with the intertitle: “Words are superfluous for a picture such as this - the tragedy of the Burning of Smyrna.” Although “words [we]re superfluous,” pictures had to wait until being introduced by words, arranged on the screen in a form very reminiscent of a book’s table of contents, under the title “The next Edition will contain...” Slight indentation on the left and leaders, lines filled with dots running to the end of the page characteristic of a book table of contents, suggest visual representation of news was still relying heavily on the tradition of the printed word. At the time when the newspaper was an established purveyor of news, the nascent medium tried to present itself in a similar vein, initially to the detriment of its own capacities. Although one might expect that the video footage of the burning of Smyrna, for example, may be more “impressive,” the low quality of production required words to explain exactly what the pictures showed.

On many occasions, this inferiority complex of newsreel vs. newspapers makes itself known through showing newspaper clippings as hard evidence that something “really happened.” For example, *Scrapbook of 1922* (made by the Pathe Documentary Unit in 1947) prefaces footage of Gandhi by a press clipping headlined: “Six Years for Gandhi: Gandhi has been sentenced to six years simple imprisonment.” The voice-over explains: “In India, the leader of non-cooperators, Mahatma Gandhi aroused the ire of the British raj.” There were no images of the arrest or court proceedings, so the producers turned to stock footage of Gandhi, using words to carry most of the informational weight of the message.

The primary audiences of these newsreels were in Europe and the United States. British newsreels of the 1930s and 40s showed Gandhi’s mobilization tactics as he began

his noncooperation campaigns in his native India. Although India had its own newsreel for the domestic consumption, *Indian News Parade* (1943-46), sponsored by the colonial government, the reception of the newsreel in India was mostly negative. The government had to force theaters to show the films and the public loudly resisted against the jingoistic style, lack of focus on the domestic issues, and colonial bias. Whether the newsreel producers were aware of it or not, they played an important role in Gandhi's campaign for India's independence. By allowing the viewers in Europe and the United States to become "eyewitnesses" of Gandhi's speeches and actions, the newsreel had the capacity to create sympathizers for Gandhi in a non-Indian audience.

### *Television*

Just like the early newsreels that resembled newspapers in form, early televisual broadcasts were transplants from radio, with some of the early shows simulcast on radio and television at the same time. Produced by monopolist radio broadcasters, television was originally conceived as radio with pictures: "We now add sight to sound," David Sarnoff, director of the Radio Corporation of America and the founder of NBC, pronounced at the 1939 World's Fair (Wu 2010:136). Indeed, the first television broadcasts of news were "talking heads" in form (Zelizer 1992). The communication scholar Barbie Zelizer (1992) argues that in the United States, television journalism did not earn legitimacy until after the Kennedy assassination. Before then, radio news reports carried more weight as authoritative sources of information than did television (Zelizer 1992).

Television is one medium that did not emerge out of a fuzzy struggle of multiple

innovators. On the contrary, powerful actors in the industry delayed its appearance until all the relevant commercial and regulatory frameworks were in place. In the United States, it came together as a new medium in the 1930s and 40s. All the industry, legislative, and regulatory decisions and choices had been made prior to 1953 (Boddy 1990:15). Television in the United States could have come decades earlier, but for deliberate decisions of the most powerful broadcaster at the time, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), which chose not to create a rival for its already existing radio services (Boddy 1990:16; Wu 2010).

Before television, the debate around the social implications of radio had been broad and all encompassing (Lenthall 2007). Although potentially a powerful tool of persuasion, television managed to almost completely evade a public discussion comparable to the debate about radio in the 1920s. While the early decisions on radio attempted to put the medium's capacity for educating and enlightening the public first, and commercial interests second, this was not the case of television. Stations had commercials from day one of operation (Boddy 1990:16). In fact, the original three networks' drive for commercial interest was so strong that the commissioner of the Federal Communications Committee (FCC) Newton Minow, in what became one of the most famous speeches of the 20th century, labeled television "a vast wasteland" (Minow 1961).<sup>11</sup> Instead of letting the market play itself out by experimentation, the Television

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<sup>11</sup> "When television is good, nothing -- not the theater, not the magazines or newspapers - - nothing is better. But when television is bad, nothing is worse. I invite each of you to sit down in front of your television set when your station goes on the air and stay there, for a day, without a book, without a magazine, without a newspaper, without a profit and loss sheet or a rating book to distract you. Keep your eyes glued to that set until the station signs off. I can assure you that what you will observe is a vast wasteland. You will see a

Broadcasters Association announced in 1944 that the organization's aim is to avoid the mistakes made in radio industry due to lack of clear strategy and regulation<sup>12</sup> (Boddy 1990:16). The particular "mistakes" they wished to avoid had to do, not surprisingly, with curtailing competition. The emerging radio industry in the 1920s saw a large number of amateur and other noncommercial broadcasters, philanthropic and publicly supported rivals. In manufacturing, similarly, weak patent and commercial barriers to entry led to a proliferation of manufacturers of radio sets, much to the chagrin of the industry leaders (Boddy 1990:16-7).

Similar to the early illustrated press that originally considered women their primary audience, television was marketed specifically at the housewife and the family (Boddy 1990:20). The assumption of women being the primary television audience was based on the expectation of women to stay at home during the day while their husbands were at work. In the context of the post-WWII gender relations in America, this is not surprising. Conservatives in opposition to the new medium voiced concerns that women, distracted by television, might forget to do their household chores, fail to pay attention to their children, which presumably would increase divorce rates and "destroy the family"

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procession of game shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families, blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, western bad men, western good men, private eyes, gangsters, more violence, and cartoons. And endlessly, commercials -- many screaming, cajoling, and offending. And most of all, boredom. True, you'll see a few things you will enjoy. But they will be very, very few. And if you think I exaggerate, I only ask you to try it" (Minow 1961).

<sup>12</sup> The Radio Act of 1927 by which the FCC was born was also inspired by the oversaturation of the frequency spectrum to such a degree that "interference-free reception in most metropolitan areas of the United States had become virtually impossible" (LeDuc 1973:1). The original goal of the FCC was to regulate local-oriented radio and television stations, so that "each licensee offered an exclusive territorial right to disseminate programming on a specifically assigned set of frequencies" (LeDuc 1973:1).

(Boddy 1990:20; Boddy 2004:44-53). As at other times in history, male commentators referred to what was deemed the primary television audience, housewives, as “maladjust[ed]” and “escapist daydreaming” viewers exhibiting psychopathology that required medical intervention (Boddy 2004:51). *Queen for a Day*, a show that made women share stories of their financial or emotional plight in exchange for sponsors’ prizes, both reflected and helped perpetuate the stereotypical perception of the medium and its female audience. Just like with other types of mass communication, the addition of the visual component to radio transmissions was originally marketed to women and the lower classes whose ability to understand the written or spoken word was seen as suspect, from the perspective of the established journalistic community (that is, the educated male elite).

By the time of *Brown v. Board of Education*, television had been a fixture of home life, even though its spread across class, gender, region and race lines was very uneven. In the late 1950s, when the television market in the North (for both network licenses and television sets) was saturated, the South continued to be a growth market for programmers and advertisers (Torres 2003:21). This was partly due to the lower economic standards in the South, partly due to the fact that electricity was still an issue in some parts of the South in the 1950s. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Housing and Construction Reports on distribution of homes with television by region, 85 percent of homes were watching the story of the “Little Rock Nine” in 1957 (Torres 2003:20).

The historian William Thomas writes that television’s coverage of the civil rights was not the same across the board, nor was it necessarily always positive. The reason

television did not become the weapon for segregationist forces, in Thomas' view, had to do with "a convergence of technological, governmental, social, and political forces at work as the medium developed" (Thomas 2004). In Virginia, for example, the conservative Byrd family both dominated the Democratic Party and also controlled a number of local newspapers in the state and two radio stations in Richmond. In 1955, however, the Byrd Organization failed to secure a television license from FCC because its radio news programming was of mediocre quality. Thus "television remained a medium over which Byrd and his allies had little direct control" (Thomas 2004).

Furthermore, the networks were trying to get "option time," network access to affiliate's time, which would allow the network headquarters in the North to control the timing and content of the message, and thus would bring the network the highest possible revenues for advertising (Torres 2003:21-3). This does not mean that network bosses in the North were heroically struggling for desegregation. Rather, they "wanted to exploit the visibility and topicality of race trouble in both news and entertainment programming" without "alienating southern audiences and provoking southern affiliates" (Torres 2003:23). On occasion, this led to "unintended consequences" in coverage. During the Montgomery bus boycott, for example, "Montgomery whites didn't think to censor televised representations of the protest" because both television and the movement were new (Torres 2003:27). Television helped break the silence about the protest that had been established in many newspapers in the South (Thomas 2004).

Torres writes of a documentary or ethnographic impetus in early American television that put pressures on depicting African Americans in an "authentic" way (Torres 2003:13). From the very beginning of television, the idea of "liveness" - not fully

realized until years later - was at the core of television's self-promotion and reception (Torres 2003:14, 112). Even though the civil rights coverage was shot and then rushed by planes to the studio in New York, the temporal proximity and immediacy of moving images justified television's claims to "liveness" - indeed, this was the most "live" an information technology had ever been before, the sense of liveness improved by video tape technology. Because our "reading" of the image depends on our prior knowledge about the subject, an image stripped of verbal details placing it at a particular time-space juncture is more likely to gain currency in a variety of settings. Therefore, it is not surprising that researchers identify lack of specificity as a common characteristic of iconic images. Television's propensity to show the "other" in what appeared to be a more "direct," "live" and "unmediated" way might have helped the audience to identify with the people they saw on the screen.

By the early 1960s, the three American networks have gone global. ABC acquired a minority interest in twenty-two stations abroad; CBS was the largest exporter of TV programming in the world in 1963. At the time when the American race story was in full swing domestically, the three networks were both aware of the global audiences and interested in them financially (Boddy 2004:60). The global reach and the wholesale transmission of representations of American life all over the world raised questions about the American image abroad. A special congressional committee was formed to investigate the prevalence of violence on television because it played into the hands of the ideological adversaries, who allegedly "propagandizing that this TV gangsterism and violence really is America" (Boddy 2004:61). This was the flip side of the success of American television: increased self-consciousness and scrutiny first of representations of



America on TV, and by extension, those issues that seemed especially problematic in the eyes of international audiences (Dudziak 2000). The growth rate of TV set ownership went from 80 million to 500 million worldwide between 1970 and 1988. With only 5% of the world's television audience, the USA supplied one-third of all programming in the world (Boddy 2004:62). The pressure on reassessment of the U.S. global influences in television became more intense on the eve of the end of the cold war, and, coincidentally, as alternative forms of television sprang up outside of the purveyance of the networks. One of those unlikely rivals of networks was cable television.

#### *Cable Television and Online Press*

As television was becoming increasingly a household item in the post-war economic boom, the rural population living more than fifty miles outside of major urban centers was largely excluded from participation. Distance from cities and the specificity of the terrain, as well as the FCC's freeze on licenses for new stations in 1948-52,

threatened to stop the growth of the popular medium (Phillips 1972:3). The four years of the freeze on new stations became an auspicious opportunity for the birth of community antenna television (CATV). After the 1948 FCC ban was lifted four years later - which basically allowed stations to be built anywhere in the country, including small mountain communities - there was the question whether the newly-invented cable systems would survive, especially if every town built its own station. The costs of the latter, however, proved prohibitive and therefore cable systems were still in demand (Phillips 1972:42).

Pennsylvania emerged as an important state for cable television because of its

mountainous hinterland that prevented the television signal from getting into the valley. Thus a lot of communities, cut off from the new exciting medium, chose to apply DIY tactics to get “radio with pictures” into their small towns and living rooms (Lockman and Sarvey 2005:1-8). The original cable stations were community antennas on top of a mountain with the cable connecting it to the valley below. While Pennsylvania might not have been the first state to adopt community antennas (Oregon and Arkansas are variously cited as other possible firsts), it certainly was the most active one: in 1952, there were 38 community antenna systems in Pennsylvania, and only 28 in the rest of the country. In the later years, when the industry would develop pay-per-view TV and the specialty channels we have today, Pennsylvania would again be an early adopter. It is not surprising, therefore, that the largest cable companies, such as Adelphia Communications (since bankrupt) and Comcast were conceived in the Keystone state as well (Lockman and Sarvey 2005:4-5).

CATV originally emerged as a grassroots demand from the communities deprived of the reach of fledgling television. The growth of cable television exemplifies the classic American dream story: a small-town entrepreneur develops a system in response of a demand by his fellow townsfolk, and makes it big. The pioneers of cable televisions were repeatedly hailed for their ingenuity in exemplifying “grassroots demand and development” (Phillips 1972:45). Because of the way CATV developed in America, television programming, a lot of which was reaching their rural audiences through cable, was firmly entrenched “in the life of each local community it was serving,” providing little international news and closing the imagined community of viewers onto itself (Phillips 1972:45). Community antenna television offered virtually unlimited

opportunities for program delivery as it did not depend on the FCC assigned frequencies, which bound radio and television broadcast stations (LeDuc 1973:1).

By 1973, cable television was hardly a distinct medium, but rather an auxiliary service, with about seven million subscribers that served slightly more than one in ten television families. The remaining 90 percent of the potential audience were located in those markets that were, until April 1972, restricted from CATV access by FCC regulation (LeDuc 1973:6-7).

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the community antenna systems grew into a mighty telecommunications industry. There were over eight thousand cable systems in the United States, and 66 percent of homes with television received it through coaxial cable (Parsons 2008:3). A typical cable system offered fifty or more channels to its subscribers, and there were over half a million programming networks that provided content to cable and direct broadcast satellite providers (Parsons 2008:3).

Along with cable television, broadband internet came into most homes by the end of the 20th century. Already by 1997, there were over 1,500 newspapers online worldwide (an 15-fold increase from the year before), and it was clear that this technology, unlike videotext and flat panel prototype, was here to stay (Chyi and Sylvie 1998). Established newsmakers were initially hesitant to adopt new technology: news organizations' websites were holding off content meant for the subscription edition (Barnhurst 2002; Barnhurst 2010). The greater push to move online was necessitated by the cheaper production costs of online publishing, even though the sources of revenue were still uncertain. Professional journalists resisted change, complaining about the prevalence of images over substance in online editions and saw them as somewhat less

serious (Burg 2011; Barnhurst 2010). At the same time, studies show that print editions had more visuals of better quality than their online counterparts, and more in-depth coverage (Barnhurst 2010; Engebretsen 2006). In 2001, news websites looked very much like print, with few stories taking up the home page, this began to change toward in mid-decade. Almost half of stories were linked on the home page by 2005, offering a larger selection of topics to the viewer and abandoning the hierarchical arrangement of stories that dominated news organizations through the 20th century (Barnhurst 2010). The importance of advertising revenue resulted in more local interest content in both ads and news (Barnhurst 2010b). At the same time, studies show that between a half to two-thirds of online traffic was generated by viewers outside of the paper's locality, suggesting that online press crosses local borders more easily than it had been previously understood (Sylvie and Chyi 2007)

While newsreel came originally in the form of a moving newspaper, and only later evolved to take full advantage of its unique capacities of news presentation, television, too, initially appeared in the form of "radio with pictures." Such dependence on the previously existing medium, however, was quick to disappear once the unique capacities of the medium were recognized. This recognition came, to some extent, thanks to the medium's ability to present a coherent story of an unfolding event that captured everybody's attention. For example, the Kennedy assassination story became such an event in the United States, forging alliances around the new medium and giving it the much-sought-after recognition and respect as an important political actor (Zelizer 1992).

In sum, photographs published in the early illustrated newspapers helped imagine a national community and the challengers within it. The more women activists were

depicted on their pages, the more the nationally imagined British community became inclusive of not only men but also women, finally extending to them the right to vote. Admittedly, the appearance of women in illustrated newspapers cannot be single-handedly credited for the enfranchisement of women. Yet this was likely one of the multiple factors that helped the general extension of voting rights to women at the time. The moving pictures - newsreel and television - added the transnational component as well as simultaneity of experience. From the point of view of social movements, this created opportunities for internationalizing their struggle. The later inventions - cable and online press - were seemingly unbounded but in reality ended up becoming more local due to fragmentation of audiences and the “echo chamber” effect. The term the “echo chamber” effect has been used to describe the unintended consequences of the increased level of customization of information to individual preferences today that reduces the benefits of serendipitous encounters and prevents people from learning from something of value that is not directly related to their existing interests.

### Imagined Communities of News

The idea that mass communication is integral to creating, maintaining, and mobilizing communities is not new (Anderson [1983] 2006; Tarrow 1998; Weber 1994; Gellner 1983). Scholars have argued that the monolingual press is capable of sustaining a national or an ethnic community. The early Chicago school sociologist Albion Small, Edward Ross, whose longest tenure was at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and William Sumner of Yale (Hardt 2001:143-68) mid-century sociologists (Janowitz 1967), and in-between (Park 1922; Hughes [1937] 2004; Thomas and Znaniecki [1918-20]

2009) celebrated the role of the press in both creating local communities through ethnic foreign language papers and creating mass public through more widely distributed papers. In its search for profit, capitalism homogenized the existing variations of vernaculars and offered the type of publications that were likely to become popular among the greatest number of people, creating at the same time new reading publics such as women, merchants and immigrants (Anderson [1983] 2006:40; Hughes [1937] 2004).

Max Weber (1994) pointed out that group solidarity has a lot to do with the emergence of a shared culture, which derives from a common language. He admits that the “propertied classes of yesteryear” spoke in foreign languages, whereas the “masses” depended heavily on their ability to communicate with each other in the vernacular. Therefore, the rise of literature for mass consumption and above all newspapers created a link that was able to “cement the masses most strongly” (Weber 1994:178). His argument connected the material culture (print) with ideology and group identity. Georg Simmel ([1922] 1983) wrote about group affiliations (e.g. by profession such as workers or clergy) that divided citizens into narrower categories within the state, while at the same time connecting them with others of similar position across state borders. This type of associations could only be made possible once there was a single way of communication within these groups, such as a shared language and a medium for creating a common forum.

Most famously, anthropologist and historian Benedict Anderson examined the relationship between community building and the press in his classic study *Imagined Communities* ([1983] 2006). In his book, Anderson placed mass media at the very heart of his theory of nationalism, arguing, in essence, that the rise of press engendered

communities of print and association in particular language fields, which, in turn, led to the rise of modern nationalism. This change began, according to him, with the degradation in the status of the sacred script-language (Latin), a changed perception of the monarchical power as a sign of divine predilection, and a new perception of time (Anderson [1983] 2006:36). Drawing his historical evidence from medieval Europe, Anderson argues that the early capitalists who owned the print presses were seeking larger profits than the limited market of bilingual Latin-speaking intelligentsia could provide (Anderson [1983] 2006:38). Additional factors, such as the increasing esotericism of Latin that made it less and less accessible to the majority of the population, the impact of Reformation that demanded translation of the Bible into vernaculars, and the gradual spread of vernaculars as a result of absolutist administrative pressure, ensured that these medieval capitalists would win the new markets (Anderson [1983] 2006:39-40).

In contrast with the monolingual press, however, visual news provided a vehicle for the symbols of shared humanity that were not limited by political or linguistic borders. The capacity of images to jump those borders made them ripe for borrowing by more universalizing movements whose main audiences were not national, but global. Instead of focusing on the limited language-specific national community, they invoked a different type of audience - a generalized humanitarian identity. In Chapter 4, I will discuss how exactly images do that with the help of iconographic resonance and semiotics of images.

The introduction of the visual news at different stages, as I have shown in the previous sections, expanded the news market to new social groups. This process was

neither easy nor uniform. Numerous voices from the right and the left of the political spectrum doubted visual news' capacity to educate the public, and expressed concern about the dangers of distracting the viewers with pictures from the more pressing matters. On the other hand, the addition of the visual component to news each time proved very popular with their audiences, and therefore led to more investment because of its incredible profitability (even though it has not necessarily led to a decline in nationalistic feelings). Moreover, it provided opportunities to connect groups separated by language into a single humanitarian identity, which proved beneficial to social movements as it allowed them to appeal to international audiences and win their attention and possibly even support.

States and social movements are differently positioned in terms of their use of ICTs. Established organizations, such as governments and mass media, exhibit what the sociologists Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell termed 'institutional isomorphism,' the tendency of organizational norms to diffuse among the organizations that repeatedly come in contact with each other (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Organizations such as governments have closer ties with mass media producers. In writing about media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power, sociologists Gamson and Modigliani (1989) find that conservative bias in the media is structural: "[news] packages succeed in media discourse through a combination of cultural resonances, sponsor activities, and a successful fit with media norms and practices" (Gamson and Modigliani 1989:9). Media routines that depend on the speed and ease of access to reliable information tend to turn to "official" sources like easily identifiable heads of organizations rather than more democratized entities like social movements without a clear leader (Gamson and



Modigliani 1989; Gitlin 1980; Kielbowicz and Scherer 1986). In discussing the oil spill near Santa Barbara coast, for example, Molotch and Lester (1975) write about the dynamics of media control: “An accident may bring some attention to non-state actors, but the state will eventually take control over representation” (Molotch and Lester 1975).

The communication scholars Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz developed the concept of “media events,” historic occasions that mesmerize a nation, several nations, or the world, as they are being broadcast live on television (Dayan and Katz 1992). Drawing their theoretical argument from the anthropological theories of the ritual, Dayan and Katz analyze the “media event” as a type of television genre that enforces a liminal experience on the viewing public, thereby “integrat[ing] societies in a collective heartbeat.” Because Dayan and Katz limit their definition of media events to those organized by the state, the purpose of the broadcast is always to “renew loyalty to the society and its legitimate authority” (Dayan and Katz 1992:9). The amount of montage that goes into media event broadcasts from several spots simultaneously makes this original location inaccessible to live audiences (Dayan and Katz 1992:17). As Lang and Lang (1953) demonstrated in their classic paper about the effects of television, there are striking differences between the experiences of the TV viewers and participant observers on the scene. The live television broadcasts thus create a unique experience shared by thousands, even millions of others, bringing a ritual-type feeling of transcendence and unity.

This unity is reinforced by “mutual awareness” - the fact that people realize that many anonymous others are tuning in to watch the same programming. The economist Michael Suk-Young Chwe (1998) writes, “Communication is not about distributing a message: it is also about what the people involved know about each other’s knowledge”

(Chwe 1998). As an earlier example of this process, Chwe cites king processions: as the king moved along his territory, his presence inevitably attracted crowds of onlookers, who were aware of each other's awareness of the presence of the king. Mutual awareness of each other's knowledge facilitated by ICTs can foster a sense of community and solidarity, in essence, creating a community. However, it is the same process of mutual awareness that can give leverage to dissenters within the state by bringing outside attention to their cause, in other words, expanding the simultaneous audience of the event. Thus the difference between news images and news as text here is crucial: the simultaneous audience of a news image is always larger than any news item presented in words only. Recognition that the same image of a nonviolent resister is simultaneously seen by multitudes of others, coupled with the fact that the image will remain "for posterity" - both within and across national borders - gives the protest unprecedented significance, if not necessarily a shared meaning. Particularly poignant news images have the capacity to become symbols or rallying points for the movement, and later get appropriated by historical narratives of the events. The ability of the state to control the image circulation within its borders is crucial, which is clear to governments that have been working on regulating access to online content (Morozov 2011).

The political scientist Sidney Tarrow contends that modern social movements, not only nations, were engendered by communities of print and association: "The commercial press not only spread the information that could make potential activists aware of one another and their common grievances, it also equalized their perception of their status with that of their superiors and made it thinkable to take action against them. The private association reflected existing solidarities, helped new ones to form, and linked local

groups into movement networks that could contest the power of national states or international empires” (Tarrow 1998:90). An example of such solidarity would be the category of class that was able to transcend national interests (Simmel [1922] 1983).

Before the era of mass circulated newspapers, social movements relied on other communication strategies to maintain cohesion and coordinate their actions. The sociologists Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986), argue that, in fact, social movements virtually delivered the early newspapers. The communication scholar James Hamilton (2009) writes that in the early 1800s in the United States success of religious denominations was indistinguishable from their success in the print market (Hamilton 2009:68). He cites David Paul Nord’s (1984) work on Evangelical Christians in which Nord asserts that the U.S. evangelicals of the early 19th century were “the first [to] dream the dream of a genuinely mass medium - that is, they proposed to deliver the same printed message to *everyone* in America” (emphasis original) (Nord, 1984, “The Evangelical Origins of Mass Media in America, 1815-35,” *Journalism Monographs* no. 88, May 1984, p. 2 , cited in Hamilton 2009:69). News images created opportunities for social movements to not only talk about the injustice they have to experience daily, but also show their experiences to outside audiences.

Social movements lack organizational resources of governments, and their “media events” (Dayan and Katz 1992) need to be disruptive to glean media attention. That is why events organized by challengers of the state, such as a parade, a demonstration, or a march, often have similar structure and may take place around the same time and close to the same place of the official state-sponsored event, though they are inherently anti-state. Even though media events are hegemonic in nature, social movements that understand

their utility may be able to use them to their advantage by latching onto the state-sponsored media events. A popular tactic of movements, as a result, is piggybacking on an official media event, already full of cameras to get their event photographed as well. Demonstratives do the indexical work in this case, orienting audiences and participants to a central focal point. The British suffragettes, for example, organized their own Women's Coronation Procession in 1911, to make use of the presence of the press for the coronation ceremonies of George V. Spatial and temporal proximity is key in organizing such counter media events. What defines both anti-state and pro-state media events, however, is their focus on unity of the community, rather than on the divisions. This unity is defined in different terms and the community is circumscribed along different lines, depending on the perspective.

Understandably, news images are mobilization tools that can be employed by social movements on the left and on the right. For example, anti-abortion movements have adopted the use of ultra-sound images in advocating "personhood" of the foetus (Petchesky 1987; Wyatt and Hughes 2009). While ever so cautious of technological determinism (Bob 2005; Morozov 2011; Higgins 1999), scholars have nonetheless shown that media technology can, indeed, lead to empowerment. Higgins studied the community television movement that saw the use of video equipment by lay people as a promise to democratize and empower communities. He finds the chief contribution of the movement in its emphasis on "notions of the public interest and the public sphere over profits" and "on providing an outlet for access to and the expression of marginalized ideas than on audience size" (Higgins 1999).

Whereas the natural division of humanity into various language-fields may

prevent an emergence of imagined community concurrent with the humankind, such attempts have been made in the past by social movements with universalizing agendas. For example, Vicki Goldberg writes about the transformative moment at Christmastime in 1968, when

...the astronauts broadcast live on television to all nations everywhere, sending back images of Earth that looked “like a sort of large misshapen basketball that kept bouncing around and sometimes off the screens back here...” Poets and philosophers had told us for centuries that human beings were insignificant and transient, but no one had shown us so forcefully how tiny, how alone, how poignantly beautiful our planet was (John Noble Wilford, “Apollo Nears Moon on Course,” *New York Times*, December 24, 1968, 1, cited in Goldberg 1993:55).

While this may be an idealized presentation of a rather insignificant broadcast compared to all the social and political turmoil of that year, it illustrates that the visual has the potential to trump political borders. Goldberg suggests that the image of Earth from space, even if not immediately after the broadcast but in the following years, became an emblem for the ecological movement and has been used extensively ever since to sum up the idea of the planet as “everyone’s home”: “[f]or once language and culture made no difference” (Goldberg 1993:56-7).

In sum, while textual news contribute to creating a sense of community and solidarity with unknown but imagined fellow readers and viewers, visual news help to trump particularistic identities and appeal to the universal identities that include all of the humankind. Therefore, nonviolent social movements that appeal to such universal concepts as human rights are particularly suited to benefit from visualization of their struggle.

## Summary

However the role of ICT in social change has mutated over time; one thing is constant: interest in media capacity to “move the public.” Does television increase people’s political engagement? Or does it, rather, make them apathetic about politics? Do violent video games and TV shows desensitize us to violence? Or do they show the world “as is” without embellishments and fake decorum of show business? Did Twitter help topple dictatorial regimes in the Middle East? Or would they have crumbled faster, had there not been a convenient distraction of social media? Did the cold war end thanks to successful Western propaganda? Or despite it? How did news coverage affect the Occupy Wall Street movement and the anti-Putin protests in Russia?

At times of crises, such questions move out of the realm of academia and become an issue of public concern as well. The public debate usually turns to the journalistic community, identifying heroes and villains, and more often than not, celebrating technology. Ironically, ICT easily embodies the best of human qualities: it is a result of human genius, as well as a communal expression thereof. Although we tend to attribute particular technological innovations to individuals, the story often gets muddled with names of early influences, sponsors and powerful antagonists of the innovation.

Attribution of event outcomes to technology makes a compelling sociological story: it focuses the reader on the structure, which, though created by human agency, constrains and dictates social action on large scale in a too-familiar “iron-cage” fashion. It is also convenient methodologically: here is a collection of available data ready to be mined, quantified, analyzed, and theorized to tell us a story about society. Focus on technology also plays into sociology’s desire to meddle with the mundane, to surprise by

looking at the familiar from a new perspective and, by doing so, to challenge the commonsense.

Between the early illustrated press of the 1900s and the high-speed information highways of today, access to news and entertainment has undergone a considerable change not only in the quantity of content available to subscribers, but also in the quality of interactions between the audience members and service providers. While most innovations had a democratizing effect on the audience, seemingly offering a more participatory role in news creation, each new innovation also got incorporated into the existing structures of news organizations. The introduction of the visual component have often been perceived as frivolous and targeted at marginal or underprivileged groups such as women or immigrants. However, visuality of news would repeatedly be discovered to be profitable and thus remained.

While the structure of news making affected the ways people might have imagined themselves in terms of their local and national allegiances, visual news found a way to trump borders and appeal to the humanistic identity. In order to understand the working of images in the social fabric, it is useful to look at the extreme case of it: when hundreds, thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of people simultaneously join a movement and come into the streets to join a vast protest. A specific case I am looking at is nonviolent social movement activism. Although images no doubt play a role in the life course of any social movement, I argue that they are located in a more strategic juncture in the case of nonviolent resistance. Violent attacks on the protesters may lead to direct destruction of what the state perceives as the enemy, and on many an occasion, peaceful bystanders. The images that result from this violence, as a rule, galvanize the community

under attack, pushing them toward the increasing loop of counter-mobilization, what Randall Collins refers to as “C-escalation” (Collins 2011). In nonviolent resistance, provided it does not deteriorate into violence, news images tap into empathy for fellow human beings while minimizing opportunities for the state to produce a competing narrative of injustice.

In sum, what the addition of the visual component did to the interaction between ICTs and communities was in a qualitatively different order and magnitude than words. No longer constrained by the linguistic community in which they originated, images had the capacity to show nonviolent challengers in their humanity to a global audience with little to no control over how these images would be interpreted in various contexts. On occasion, images would become unintended allies of movements (Gorbenko in progress); other times, they were employed to undermine the state challengers and present them as marginal outcasts. The replication of images implies the existence of someone with the agency to exert control and power over the circulation of images. In other words, images are always embedded within the relations of power in society. In the next chapter, I use empirical examples to explore how news images highlight these relations.



## CHAPTER 4: NEWS IMAGES OF VIOLENCE IN NONVIOLENCE

## Introduction

While the title of this Chapter, “Violence in Nonviolence,” may sound like an oxymoron, there is in fact no contradiction in terms. As I have explained in Chapter 1, nonviolent resistance often involves violence, although it is typically directed at protesters themselves. By disobeying the law, activists act as citizens of the state in which they want to live rather than the one in which they live at the moment. If the state does not stop them, change is *de facto* achieved. If police interfere with acts of civil disobedience, the state reinstates its power, but runs the risk of appearing too harsh on its own citizens.

Violent repression may deter people physically from continuing their unlawful activities; images of violence, however, continue to circulate and can be analyzed, interpreted and challenged long after the incident has ended. It is in the competing narratives of repression, disseminated through information and communication technology (ICT), socially constructed around images and videos of the event, that the real battle for power takes place. The state attempts to present challengers as deviants that are not part of society at large; rather, that society should be protected from them. Anti-state actors, on the contrary, strive to present themselves as law-abiding citizens whose demands for change are not unreasonable. Both the state and anti-state actors, in short, construct a narrative that makes them appear the champion of the rights of the “average citizen,” the audience members who have not taken a side in the conflict yet. Images of violent repression become locus points at which multiple interpretations converge (or diverge), and are for that reason ideal entry points to understanding the changing social

structure at times of political turmoil. This chapter examines news media renderings of violence in the midst of civil disobedience interactions.

Publicity - both in word and image - has the capacity to cast the state in a negative light. As Smith (2008) writes in his analysis of punishment and culture, a public trial or execution inevitably creates a situation pregnant with vice and genre ambivalence: the condemned has the power to “redefine, destroy, or challenge” the dominant meaning of punishment by portraying him or herself as worthy of sympathy, respect, and even emulation. “Public sentiment,” he writes, “could take the side of the victim, refuse the official narrative, and allocate the moral culpability to the state rather than to the criminal” (Smith 2008:39). Compared to the public punishment of criminals, the state’s punishment of nonviolent activists invariably looks worse than a public execution of a convicted criminal. As activists disobey *only* those laws that they consider wrong, but follow all the other laws to the t, their transgression may not be necessarily visible, nor does it encourage the sense of moral indignation in the viewers; whereas the state’s violent response, if made public, is likely to receive condemnation of the populace.

The chapter begins with a discussion of concrete examples of the four types of violence in nonviolent resistance as portrayed in news images. The chapter analyzes typical images of nonviolent resistance, many of which have been recognized as iconic. They range from tense pictures of confrontation that symbolize contingency and rest,<sup>13</sup> pre-violence, when hopes for a peaceful resolution are still present; to images that show violent physical assault directly, point-blank; to depictions of consequences of violence,

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<sup>13</sup> Following Wagner-Pacifici (2010:1365-7) I use the term “rest” here to refer to the stabilizing efforts of images that freeze interactions into symbolic moments, even though interactions themselves are always processual and polysemic.

be it on people or objects. It also discusses verbal narratives that can work in place of photos to help the readers create mental images of events and interactions. I identify four types of violence that are part and parcel of nonviolence: state violence, third party violence, self-directed violence, and symbolic violence. The four categories are only analytically separate; empirically they are intertwined. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings.

### State Violence

This section examines representation of state violence in the news in both word and image. I begin with images of arrest that contrast nonviolent leaders with representatives of the state, move to the juxtaposition between the strong and the weak (guns, girls and flowers), and conclude with an exploration of how images can be conjured up in the absence of photographs.

### *Guns, Girls, Kids and Flowers*

News images do not benefit as much from their truthfulness of representation as from their ability to invoke other situations/ compositions/ events/ characters/ interactions across history and in different places. In other words, much of the representational power of pictures lies in their similarity to others in a constructed genealogical chain, which makes them more legible to greater audiences. On the other hand, the singularity of the image, the specific details of a concrete interaction, render its outcome uncertain and put the responsibility for the outcome on the audience and the participants. If nothing like that exactly has ever happened before, the outcome is ultimately unpredictable. Below I

examine how demonstrative and representational elements work in images of protest by connecting the unfolding event with its historical predecessors. By doing so, news photos become central actors in the narratives of political legitimacy, moral right and wrong, and point toward a possible resolution.

Because nonviolence is basically a confrontation between the unarmed activists and the armed state, images that include any symbols of this power imbalance may find favor with the public, and often become iconic. Photos that juxtapose people and objects that stand for physical prowess and sheer strength and those that in our mind represent the quintessentially powerless, defenseless, or harmless provide a striking contrast and play on our ideas of the good and evil. Characters get slotted into pre-existing narratives more easily, the viewers experience an instant recognition, and the picture goes viral (or, in previous times, gets picked up and replicated by various news outlets.) An image of nonviolence often takes the form of contrasting elements representing strength and weakness. Significantly, images that emphasize the contradiction between the strong state and the weak protester are not representative of all protests or social movements in general. On the contrary, demonstration photos often show protesters' own provocative symbols and actions, such as sarcastic posters, masks, throwing stones. This section focuses on only one of many types of protest imagery that tries to engage the sympathy of the viewer by appealing to the tragic.

In this classic photo<sup>14</sup> taken by the French photographer Marc Riboud, the image

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<sup>14</sup> The image is available at the *Magnum Photos* website ([http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult\\_VPage&VBID=2K1HZO9L53GPI&IT=ZoomImage01\\_VForm&IID=2S5RYDZ247PK&PN=4&CT=Search#/SearchResult\\_VPage&VBID=2K1HZO82NY57M&IT=ZoomImage01\\_VForm&IID=2S5RY](http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult_VPage&VBID=2K1HZO9L53GPI&IT=ZoomImage01_VForm&IID=2S5RYDZ247PK&PN=4&CT=Search#/SearchResult_VPage&VBID=2K1HZO82NY57M&IT=ZoomImage01_VForm&IID=2S5RY))

is cut into two by the symbolic closeness of the bayonet and the flower at its center, attached to, also symbolically, to the men on the left representing the state at war and a young woman on the right, representing civilians demanding the end of the war. Riboud took this photo in 1967 during a protest that came to be known as the March on the Pentagon. The photo was discovered by LOOK in 1969 and published under the title “The Ultimate Confrontation: The Flower and the Bayonet.” On October 21, about 100,000 people joined the rally in attempt to shut down the Pentagon, at least for a day. At a place where their way was blocked by some 2,500 soldiers, Riboud noticed a lone girl “trying to catch the eye of the soldiers, maybe try to have a dialogue with them” (Curry 2004). Riboud recalled that it appeared the soldiers were more afraid of her than she was of them (Curry 2004). The girl in the picture, Jan Rose Kasmir, was only 17 years old when the picture was taken. When she found herself in front of the soldiers, she tried to appeal to them not to resort to violence, as she recalls:

I was begging them to come join us. 'You don't really want to kill me, come join us.' ... The moment that Marc snapped that picture, there is absolute sadness on my face because, at that moment, it was *sympatica*. At that moment, the whole rhetoric melted away. These were just young men. They could have been my date. They could have been my brother. And they were also victims of this whole thing. They weren't the war machine. They were human beings and they were just as much a puppet of this whole horrible, horrible travesty... The gesture was prayerful (60ssurvivors 2012).

Kasmir’s efforts to convince the soldiers to avoid violence were actually not unfounded. The rally ended with some of the first violent clashes of the anti-Vietnam war

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DZ247PK&PN=4&CT=Search) with the following caption: “USA. Washington DC. 1967. An American young girl, Jan Rose KASMIR, confronts the American National Guard outside the Pentagon during the 1967 anti-Vietnam march. This march helped to turn public opinion against the US war in Vietnam.” (Accessed September 12, 2012).

movement. Protesters were tear gassed as the federal agents forced their way into the building; 681 people were arrested; and many were beaten at the perimeter of the Pentagon (Curry 2004).

Images of police brutality pitch the protesters against the state in very clear terms. According to one of the activists of the Serbian “bulldozer revolution” in 2000 that helped oust Slobodan Milosevic, a forerunner of the so-called “color revolutions” in Eastern Europe in the first decade of the 21st century, “you need to put young girls in the front, because if they [police] beat, that looks good in the photos” (Anatomy of a Revolution 2004). While gender does not always become an inherent part of the story, images that contrast women - especially young, beautiful, and visibly weak or defenseless women - with riot police in full gear, tend to get resonance among viewers in most countries. The more “womanly” the woman in the picture is, the stronger the contrast; Buffy the Vampire Slayer wielding a stake against the armed men would hardly inspire sympathy or desire to protect her. At the time of the campaign for women’s suffrage in Great Britain, opposing representations portrayed women activists as hysterical and insane, or as “womanly women” of the gentry class (Gorbenko in progress). The latter representation was arguably more beneficial for the movement.



Illustration 3. A girl offering flowers to the riot police. Kyiv. *Den*, 26 November 2004.

The above photo, almost exactly replicating Riboud's in its grammar and main characters, was taken during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and published in the Kyiv daily *Den*. Although the main characters are the same: riot police and a young girl with a flower, this image tells quite a different story. In contrast with Riboud's photo, the hard confrontation is smoothed by the side angle of the camera, which also shows a long line of riot police and a barricade in front of them all adorned with orange ribbons (the symbol of the Orange Revolution) and flowers. There is not one flower, but many; guns are conspicuously absent. The woman in the photo is smiling as she is effortlessly putting a flower onto the fence separating her from the police, which already overflows with orange color. This suggests that the balance by now has shifted, and, in contrast to the March on the Pentagon, that violence might be averted, as it indeed happened in Ukraine. The Orange Revolution was one of the few protest movements of its kind that managed to completely avoid bloodshed.



Illustration 4. Tanks near the Russian Supreme Soviet during an abortive coup (RIA Novosti).

In another image featuring guns and flowers taken during the coup attempt in Moscow in 1991 we see a different composition.<sup>15</sup> The tank gun adorned with a flower and a small tricolor flag of independent Russia (the coup took place when the Soviet Union still existed, and foreshadowed its demise) is the main symbol of collaboration between the protesters and the military. The fact that soldiers allowed such decoration of their military equipment suggests that they were not entirely against the idea of fraternizing with the protesters. Indeed, at the center of the image, a soldier sitting atop the tank at ease appears to be fraternizing with the protesters; the tank gun, though still

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<sup>15</sup> See the photo on the RIA Novosti website: [http://visualrian.ru/en/site/gallery/#169150/context\[q\]=169150](http://visualrian.ru/en/site/gallery/#169150/context[q]=169150) (Accessed September 12, 2012).



ominous, is pointing to the left of the frame; its potential threat is reduced by the angle and the flower/ flag decoration. While the presence of tanks in the city center conveys tension and potential for violence, the “pacified” tank’s weapon gives hope for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. In this case, however, this was more of wishful thinking of the protesters and the photographer. On 21 August 1991, three young men were killed during a scuffle involving tanks, trolleybuses, and protesters. The coup was averted, and the three funerals broadcast on all TV channels became a mourning ritual for the Russians (Freidin and Bonnell 1995).

In another instance of contrasting the defenseless and the military, an image of a young boy of a bicycle became a symbol for the anti-Putin protests in Russia in 2012. The photo was taken by the Russian American photojournalist Julia Ioffe of the *New Yorker* on her iPhone. She first uploaded it to her Twitter feed and did not notice it had gone viral for a few heated days when the protests continued across Moscow. After thousands of shares on the social media platforms and dozens of op-eds about the picture, Ioffe wrote in the *New Yorker* about the context in which the photo was taken.

There was a phalanx of riot police on this bridge... blocking another route to the Kremlin. In front of them stood a young brunette in a short red dress and wedge platform shoes. She was waving the orange flag of the opposition Solidarity movement, and, judging by the expression on her face, she thought she was Moscow’s Lady Liberty—the icon of the protest. I thought she was, too. It was just so Russian: a woman in heels, even during a violent protest, self-consciously, calculatingly, making herself into a consumable, sexy image while those around her talked about fair elections and Putin’s villainy (Ioffe 2012).

The woman, it seemed, presented a perfect picture that could sum up what the protests were about, offering a poignant image contrasting an ideal of femininity (“a woman in heels” “making herself into a consumable, sexy image”) and ideal of, well,

masculinity (“a phalanx of riot police”). But Ioffe was wrong. Among the pictures she took that day, the photo that did become iconic contrasted the actors along a line other than gender. Ioffe writes,

I saw a small boy on what looked like a tricycle moving through a scrum of people raining abuse on the police. Then he just stopped. I had followed him, my phone still in hand, and, when he stopped, I kneeled down and snapped the picture (Ioffe 2012).

In Ioffe’s Twitter post that day, she captioned the picture “Russia’s Tianamen [sic] image.” This interpretation stuck: a google search for “boy on bike Russia” returns dozens of pieces that discuss the same image, along with the photo of the “tank man” taken in Beijing in 1989.



Illustration 5. The Boy on the Bicycle. *The New Yorker*, May 2012.

In its composition this image, indeed, is reminiscent of the classic “tank man” photo taken from the video footage of protests in 1989 in China. A small figure of the boy on the bicycle with training wheels easily conflates with the tiny figure of a man with a grocery bag in his hand, both of them dwarfed by the ominous presence of the state, be it the riot police or a line of tanks moving forward. The fact that we cannot see the boy’s face in this image makes him stand, anonymously, for others: other children, the photographer, protesters, the viewer herself. Facing row upon row of armed men, the boy becomes a symbol of courage, as he is not turning away: he is unafraid.

The symbolic value of the image was clear to those present at the site because Ioffe was not the only one who took photos of the boy on the bicycle. Other images from the same set appeared, for example, on the Russian Facebook clone, Vkontakte. The second photo may offer a better view of the boy’s face, but the striking contrast between the boy and the riot police in full gear is now gone. The sense of a direct confrontation, too, is deflected as the boy is cycling his way back and away from the police. An extra detail - a protester standing in front of the line of police, possibly posing for pictures, is a distraction, and the focus of attention is deflected from the boy to the man and to the sunlit building on the right.



Illustration 6. March of Millions, 6 May 2012 . Photo Album of Andrey Skryabin on the Russian social media site *Vkontakte*.<sup>16</sup>

On a technical level, the second image is also crisper. Although it may be counter-intuitive, the amount of detail in the photo is usually inversely correlated with its capacity to represent abstract concepts. Blurry images leave more to the imagination. They engage the viewer, leaving the space for her to not only interpret what she sees differently, but also include something from her own memory that looked like the image, making the experience more personal. Image degradation has been used in advertising to achieve a similar effect of verisimilitude and intimacy. The cartoonist and theorist of comics Scott McCloud explains the emotional power of cartoons by a similar appeal to the abstract: whereas people’s mental picture of objects and other individuals is detailed, the mind-picture they have of themselves is usually vague: “just a sketchy arrangement... a sense

<sup>16</sup> The image is publicly available here: [http://vk.com/photo9639411\\_282692350](http://vk.com/photo9639411_282692350) (Accessed September 12, 2012).

of shape... a sense of general placement. Something as simple and as basic – as a cartoon” (McCloud 1993:36). When people observe a simple form of a cartoon, he argues, they are more likely to identify with the protagonist. Striving to produce a sense of identification in the moviegoers, producers often “cheerfully accept the degraded visual quality... as a trade for an increased sense of immediacy and intimacy, while others incorporate or even celebrate the image degradation, making it integral to their stories” (Willis 2005:22). The communication scholar Paul Messaris argues that in movies, subjective head-on shot is typically avoided when showing the protagonist in order to maintain the viewers’ identification (Messaris 1997:45). This may also explain the power of the low-quality videos and images from cell phone cameras during protests that somehow appear more “authentic” and “true” than the (crisper) images obtained by professional crews.

Reactions to this photo of the boy on the bike varied from praising the photographer to inquiring what happened to the boy to blaming the photographer and the parents for exploiting the situation instead of saving the child from the obvious danger. The concerns were not unfounded: about 400 people were arrested that day and there was, indeed, violence. Ioffe herself describes how the peaceful march descended into chaos:

I watched riot police approach terrified bystanders—women and middle-aged men who had come to the rally but had not signed up for this—pull them off the fences, and force them into the scuffle. “I don’t want to go in there!” a woman yelled. “I’m scared!” I saw people keel over, wheezing and coughing from the tear gas... Very scary angry young men, either anarchists or nationalists or provocateurs who looked very different from the mass of middle-class protestors, threw themselves into the battle. [...] I saw a burly riot cop stumble out of the scuffle, fluorescent red blood streaming down his face. I saw bloodstains on the ground, and yellow

port-a-potties go down, spilling their contents, turning into makeshift barricades... I saw two rows of riot police press in on the stragglers from two sides, and I saw the panic in the faces of those around me (Ioffe 2012).

The fact that this battle raged, in fact, just on the other side of the street from where the photo of the boy on the bicycle was taken, made the concerns about his well being even more persistent. The sociologist Joel Best, in his research on images of child victims of abuse, writes that the now universal concern with children should not be surprising: “they replenish society’s population, and adults must insure enough children survive and that they learn ways of their people” (Best 1990: 3). However, our concern with saving children, Best writes, is a relatively new phenomenon that did not exist prior to the 20th century (Best 1990: 3-4).

In the case of the Russian “boy on the bike,” the parent of the child responded to the comments on the *New Yorker* webpage confirming that there was no violence in that part of the street, and his son Peter was safe. The emotional responses to the image by the Russians and foreigners alike, however, highlight the capacity of the image to engage and move people to action, even if that action is mere venting their frustration at some clear injustice in the comments of an op-ed piece on the internet. This is not the first time, of course, that the question of the photographer’s responsibility for “saving the child” has come up. After taking the famous photograph of a starving Sudanese child and the vulture, the South African photojournalist Kevin Carter was similarly accused of not saving the little girl from imminent death. In their autobiography his friends Greg Marinovich and Joao Silva, also photographers, wrote:

...the heart-wrenching image of a starving, helpless infant being scrutinized by a vulture had inevitably raised the question, “What

happened to the little girl?” and, followed close on that, “What did the photographer do to help her?” His job as a journalist to show the plight of the Sudanese had been completed, exceeded, in fact. The bottom line was that Lifeline Sudan had not flown Kevin and Joao in to pick up or feed children – they were flown in to show the worst of the famine and the war, to generate publicity – but the questions remained (Marinovich and Silva 2000:151-2).

The photo flew around the world in a matter of days, and eventually went on to win the Pulitzer Prize, but Carter committed suicide the following year. With the present-day technology capable of capturing, reproducing and disseminating still and moving images within seconds, we are yet to explain our fascination with the images of suffering, violence, and potential death. To Boltanski, an image of suffering has the power to unsettle people and induce them to undertake some kind of action to change the situation (Boltanski 1999:XV). The question “What is to be done?” is first posed by the photographer herself, when she makes an instantaneous decision that the picture is worth taking. The photograph of violence or suffering then presents the viewer with a moral imperative of action, and the photographer herself may be the first to be subjected to such moral scrutiny. Creating a striking image that touches upon universal ideas of justice and engages the viewers emotionally is a rare talent and a powerful tool. The direction in which the public discourse and possible behavioral responses will go, however, is difficult to predict. As the viewers are seeking ways to discharge their discomfort, the photographer runs the risk of being held responsible for the injustice just because she brought attention to it, in a typical “punish-the-whistleblower” fashion.

Similarities between images of nonviolence across contexts can be explained by the concept from organizational sociology, “institutional isomorphism” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), and the process of “reduction and standardization of complexity” that

allows concepts to become more transferable across contexts (Lakoff 2005).

Borrowing the term “liquidity” from the field of finance in the sense of “production of standardized value” (Carruthers and Stinchcombe 1999:356, cited in Lakoff 2005: 67). In his discussion of transnational transfer of psychiatric knowledge in creating international standards, Lakoff writes: “An individual experience of suffering becomes a case of a generalized psychiatric disorder only in an institutional setting in which the disorder can be recognized, through the use of specific concepts and techniques that format the complexities of individual experience into a generalized convention” (Lakoff 2005:77). Similarly, nonviolent activism can only be recognized when specific struggles and conflicts are “liquidified” or reduced to some universal generalized conventions about peaceful resistance and civil disobedience. These conventions are created and mediated at the intersection of the journalistic community, social movements, and the state.

Riboud’s photo of the flower girl that opened this section has since become an essential part of nonviolence iconography in exhibits and print; multiple reiterations of guns, girls, kids and flowers are now part of the international nonviolence repertoire. The objects invariably present may be universal; the background details reflect the unique cultural and historical context of each situation. In all of these images, the contrast between the powerless and the powerful has the potential to undermine the legitimacy of the state, if its violence is directed at its own defenseless citizens.

Besides the play on the juxtaposition between the overwhelming strength of the state and the meek weakness of protesters, putting women and children in front has a tactical advantage, because violence against them is guaranteed to have the look of atrocity. In a similar fashion, guerrillas and terrorists use civilians as human shields,



knowing that the agents of the state are likely to refrain from violence against the most defenseless, fearing public outcries against such incidents.

### *Arrest Photos*

Famous nonviolent resisters have repeatedly embraced willing imprisonment as a symbol of opposition to the society's laws they strive to reform. In their view, prison is the only place for an honest person under the regime they oppose. An image of arrest of a leader of nonviolent resistance pits the movement against the state in a condensed form, making the confrontation public. Arrest images are a genre in news coverage of nonviolent activism. The fact that imprisonment is symptomatic of nonviolent resistance suggests it is necessary to take a closer look at this universal image of resistance.

Most leaders of civil disobedience got arrested more than once and later reflected on those experiences. The American civil rights organizer Bayard Rustin, for example, was beaten and arrested for sitting on the "wrong" side of the bus in 1942 (Rustin 2003:2-5). His nonresistance, he recalls, impressed a fellow passenger so much that he went to court with him and ensured that he would not be punished unfairly. The American Abolitionist who is credited with coining the term "civil disobedience," Henry Thoreau, wrote his classic essay following his trip to jail (Thoreau 1974). Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah came out to greet his supporters wearing prison hat and uniform, as a reminder of his imprisonment (King 1957). Dr. Martin Luther King was arrested several times, once on Good Friday, a step with much religious significance because Christians believe that Jesus committed his ultimate sacrifice on that day (Morris 1984:265). American suffragist Alice Paul, who had been imprisoned several times in England before returning to America, noted in an interview to the *New York Times* that on many

prison walls in England was carved “Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God” (*The New York Times*, 18 February 1910).

Although British women had been advocating women’s suffrage for over thirty years by the turn of the century, it was only in the early 1900s that the movement took a more spectacular and occasionally violent turn. This change was marked by the founding of a new women’s organization, the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903 by Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, who, together with two of her daughters, became the leader of the organization. From the early days of the WSPU, the suffragists welcomed arrest. The first publicized arrest of a suffragist took place in Manchester on October 16, 1905. Christabel Pankhurst (the eldest daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst) and Annie Kenney interrupted an election meeting at the Free Trade Hall to ask Liberal politicians Winston Churchill and Sir Edward Grey when women would have the right to vote. Having received no reply, they unfurled a banner “Votes for Women,” and were subsequently thrown out of the building and arrested. Instead of paying a fine for “assault” (one policeman claimed they had kicked and spat on him), they chose to go to prison (Pears 2003; Tickner 1988:8). In the next decade, arrests of suffragists became commonplace.

After the first arrests, every demonstration and political campaign of the suffragettes made a point of remembering their imprisonment experiences with pride. During the parade of 1910, for example, the “Prisoners’ Pageant,” consisting of 617 women, marched along the streets of London. The women wore white dresses and carried “a glittering host of steely broad arrows” as the symbol of their imprisonment (Tickner 1988:112, quoted from Nevinson, *Votes for Women*, 24 June 1910).

A typical image of arrest features a female suffragist sandwiched between two policemen “bobbies” uncomfortably, sometimes dragged away against her will, other times offering no resistance and taking her arrest with dignified calm. A famous photo of Emmeline Pankhurst’s arrest after attempting to present a petition to the King in Buckingham Palace in 1914 pictures her being carried away by a policeman.<sup>17</sup> The stocky police officer is holding her across her chest a few inches above the ground. A cropped version of same picture was published again on the front page of the *Daily Mirror* fourteen years later, announcing the death of the suffragette leader the previous day. Having fought for women’s suffrage most of her life, Pankhurst died only two weeks before the passing of Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act, which became law on 2 July 1928, and granted equal voting rights to women and men in the United Kingdom.

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<sup>17</sup> The image can be found at the Corbis Image website <http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/HU007549/emmeline-pankhurst-arrested-at-suffrage-demonstration> (Accessed September 12, 2012).



Illustration 7. Emmeline Pankhurst Arrested. *Daily Mirror*, 15 June 1928.

Forty-four years later, the famous American photographer Charles Moore took several photos of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Montgomery, Alabama. After Rosa Parks was arrested for violating the segregation of buses city ordinance in Montgomery in December 1955, Montgomery Improvement Association was organized and Rev. Martin

Luther King, Jr. was elected its president. Three years later, he had become a nationally recognized leader of the nascent civil rights movement.

It is in this context that his arrests happened in Montgomery in 1958. In the first of the two iconic pictures, King is led away by two policemen, his right arm twisted behind his back.<sup>18</sup> Another photo shows King getting arrested in the Courthouse in Montgomery, the police officer pushing him across the counter. At this second encounter with police, he was fined \$14 but refused to pay it, choosing to be imprisoned for fourteen days. The police commissioner paid the fine to minimize media attention to the charismatic leader (King 2010). In both of the images, King is held by two white police officers, who seem to be using more muscle power than necessary as the arrested does not appear to be resisting.<sup>19</sup>

By contrast, an image of arrest of the popular Russian nationalist blogger turned politician, Aleksey Navalny, shows him struggling with at least four riot policemen. In the context of 2012 anti-Putin protests in Russia following the latter's reelection for the third term that the opposition considered illegitimate, the state-controlled media focused on casualties among OMON, the special riot police forces, while the oppositional media flooded the internet with images of police brutality, generating hundreds of shares and retweets on Facebook and Twitter.

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<sup>18</sup> The image can be found in the Bettman/Corbis collection here: <http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/BE047083/police-arresting-martin-luther-king?popup=1> (Accessed September 12, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> See <http://www.monroegallery.com/photographers/detail/id/693> (Accessed September 12, 2012): "Martin Luther King, Jr. Arrested on a Loitering Charge, Montgomery, Alabama. September 1958" (Charles Moore, Monroe Gallery of Photography).



Illustration 8. Blogger Aleksey Navalny Arrested, *RIA Novosti* (Vladimir Astapkovich).

Arrests of protest leaders such as Navalny were publicized on both state-controlled and oppositional media. It seemed that the polysemy of the image allowed its insertion into various narratives about the protests.<sup>20</sup> The state media (such as the ORT and NTV TV channels, as well as the satellite English language channel RussiaToday) focused on the fact that some of the protests organized by the opposition were unsanctioned, and showed riot policemen who got injured during violence that broke out, blaming the oppositional leaders for all the casualties. The oppositional media (the *Rain* TV channel, the *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper, and radio *Echo of Moscow*), on the other hand, showed police brutality. Images of arrest of nonviolent activists always show an unequal distribution of force between opponents. This puts the law enforcement, and by extension, the state, into a dangerous situation where the viewers may sympathize with

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<sup>20</sup> One of the widely replicated photos of Navalny can be found here: [http://ria.ru/photolents/20120506/642781146\\_2.html](http://ria.ru/photolents/20120506/642781146_2.html) (Accessed September 12, 2012).

the arrested. In fact, the more brutality the pictures show, the more likely the public opinion to turn against the state. Because most activism happens in public, it is very difficult for the state to control what images and stories get out into the public domain following the interaction.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast with the first two images, in which Emmeline Pankhurst and Martin Luther King, Jr. do not appear to be resisting arrest, the photo of Aleksey Navalny shows a lot more confrontation. It is probably safe to say that the former two images inspire more respect to the dignified leaders than the latter one. The latter picture does not fit so well with the nonviolence trope, making Navalny look like a run-of-the-mill soccer hooligan, being dragged away by police against his will. When the Russian protests are over and the dust settles, it is probably safe to say that this image will not become a textbook example of this event. If Putin remains in power, there will be no historic renderings of these protests, and if the opposition comes to power, there will be more poignant images of women and children that will better transmit the essence of nonviolence.

Arrest images share the same “visual grammar”: they depict law enforcement holding charismatic leaders, presumably in order to isolate them from their followers, confirming their power and highlighting their sacrifice for the sake of the movement. The punitive role of the jail is rendered meaningless when a nonviolent resister is not deterred or intimidated by the punishment. The fact that several police officers are usually needed

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<sup>21</sup> Arguably, this has become even more difficult with the emergence of “frictionless sharing” of today: only a few seconds may pass between the moment the picture is taken and the moment it is accessible to large audiences on the internet through the social media. The flip side, of course, is that the state may shut down the service or use a variety of other counter-attacks well described by Morozov (2011) in his book and Slate column.

to capture one protester adds to the unequal distribution of physical power, but adds symbolic strength to those under arrest. In short, arrest images create publicity opportunities for nonviolent leaders, confirm their commitment to the cause, and suggest that the authorities are scared to have them at large because of their presumed influence over the people. By arresting, attacking, or killing protesters, the state inadvertently recognizes them as strong opponents that cannot be ignored, and, simultaneously, shows its own brutality, inviting others to join the protests in attempt to reform the state.

The Weberian monopoly of the state over (legitimate) violence within its borders clashes with the state's responsibility to defend (not attack) its citizens. Because violence in nonviolent protests is always directed against the protesters themselves, their actions are often interpreted as a willing sacrifice that would benefit others in the group they claim to represent. The sacrificial nature of violence in civil disobedience highlights activists' commitment to the cause and determination to the (sometimes, actual) end. Moreover, it casts the state in negative light, displaying its conservatism and moral bankruptcy as it resorts to violence against its own citizens in order to preserve the status quo. When the magnitude of the state response is incommensurate with the degree of the offense, the state is likely, to borrow the Marxist adage, to create "its own grave-diggers," as outsiders begin to sympathize with protesters, more people join the movement, and those already in it become more radicalized.

On the other hand, there are times when the heavy hand of the state actually stops the protesters. The puzzle of how much repression is "just enough" to instill sympathy and encourage the movement, and how much would intimidate them into staying home, has been explored by scholars of social movements (Goldstone and Tilly 2001).



Furthermore, after the initial recruitment of new members, the simplified version of conflict as “good versus bad” may not work on the various audiences any more. In general, it is easier to simplify conflicts into heroes versus villains dichotomies from afar; from within the struggle, things rarely appear as simple and therefore do not hold sway with the more savvy local audience.

Heroic images may not secure victory for nonviolent resisters; nor do movements that use none of these symbols necessarily have to fail. The prevalence of heroic images across contexts suggests a deliberate attempt on the part of various actors to align themselves with familiar narratives from the past and thereby win sympathy of wider (or perhaps more influential and Western) audiences. Rather than determining outcomes of protest activism, the choices that movements make in creating the spectacle to attract media attention, as well as the results of selection by media producers, speak to the process of social construction of nonviolent struggle.

#### *State Violence in Words*

Just as blurry images are more likely to become iconic than those depicting every single detail of the interaction, words have the capacity to transmit mental images in an intimate way that engages people’s emotions and allows them to identify with the author. As the German art historian Belting (2005) writes, images need media to transmit them and bodies to see and process them. Language, too, is a medium that helps disseminate images from person to person.

Language transmits verbal imagery when we turn words into mental images of our own. Words stimulate our imagination, while the imagination in turn transforms them into the images they signify. In this case, it is language that serves as a medium for transmitting images. But here, too, it needs our body to fill them with personal experience and

meaning; this is the reason why imagination so often has resisted any public control. In the case of verbal imagery, however, we are well trained to distinguish image from medium, while in the case of physical or visible imagery we are not. And, yet, the appropriation of images is less far apart in both situations than our education allows us to believe (Belting 2005).

In presenting nonviolence, indeed, a verbal description of violence can be no less compelling than a photo. In this section I examine two instances in which photographs of the events were conspicuously absent, but the public reckoning congealed around mental images created by the verbal description.

Four months after the beginning of hunger strikes among suffragists,<sup>22</sup> the question of “resolving the hunger strike problem” arose among the members of the House of Commons (*Daily Mirror*, 1 October 1909). Home Secretary Herbert Gladstone suggested the method reserved for the mentally ill: forcible feeding. It had originally seemed like a perfect solution to the “suffragette problem” as is indicated by the *Mirror's* early articles reporting “smiles, laughter, and cheers of irony” in the House of Commons when the forcible feeding of the suffragettes was discussed (*Daily Mirror*, 1 October 1909). In the section titled “Medical Opinion,” the *Daily Mirror* cites the *British Medical Journal* describing the procedure as “tolerable” refuting allegations of its brutality (*Daily Mirror*, 1 October 1909). In the next few years, the myth of benevolence of forcible feedings came undone under the constant stream of gruesome evidence.

By December that year, testimonials of forcible feedings were trickling out from behind the jail walls. In the absence of photographs, testimonials worked just as well to allow the reader to imagine the procedure in every painful detail. When Mrs. Mary Leigh,

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<sup>22</sup> I will return to the question of hunger strikes in the section on self-inflicted violence below.

for example, sued the Home Secretary Herbert Gladstone for having given directions to the governor and doctor to feed the hunger striking suffragettes by force, excerpts from her testimonial were published in the *Daily Mirror*.

I was... taken to a room, where I found an arm-chair standing on a sheet. I was put into the chair by six wardresses, and my mouth was prized open by Dr. Helby with his fingers. He made it into a sort of pouch, and into it a wardress poured what I took to be milk and brandy. I was tied to the chair by a towel. Another doctor helped to hold me down. Someone held my nose. After that they fed me by a tube through the nose. I resisted with all my might. My pain was so evident that the tube was withdrawn. I suffered mental and psychological pain, and there was a noise in my ears like the buzzing of machinery (*Daily Mirror*, 10 December 1909).

The majority of doctors failed to condemn the practice at the time, even though it was clear that feeding a resisting hunger striker was incomparable to artificial feeding of the mentally ill.<sup>23</sup> The British neuropathologist Jennian Geddes (2008) writes about complicity of the medical profession in forcible feedings of the suffragettes. The procedure was used as a punitive measure rather than a life-saving operation as the government initially claimed. In the episode described above, the *Mirror* published direct quotes from Mrs. Leigh's testimony during the court hearings, but kept a tone of mild amusement at the opening and closing of the story. Mrs. Leigh's hunger strike is introduced throughout in quotation marks, diminishing the seriousness of the matter, whereas the procedure of forced feeding is referred to as “nasal treatment,” without quotation marks. The doctor in the story is given the supreme authority to decide whether and when the woman is to be fed: “Soon after the 'strike' began Dr. Helby kindly, but

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<sup>23</sup> For an excellent discussion on the role of prior medical discourse in administering forced feedings to the suffrage prisoners and the mentally ill in Britain, see Elizabeth A. Williams, (2008) Gags, Funnels, and Tubes: Forced Feeding of the Insane and of Suffragettes, *Endeavour* 32(4), pp. 134-40.

firmly, took counter measures. He and another doctor, finding all other methods of persuasion fail, fed Mrs. Leigh by the nasal treatment” (*Daily Mirror*, 10 December 1909). The article concludes with a similar appraisal of the procedure: “[t]he evidence for the defence [sic] was that Mrs. Leigh had been humanely dealt with, and that the nasal treatment found necessary was administered as gently as possible” and cites the President of the Royal College of Physicians on the “harmlessness of the treatment in question” (*Daily Mirror*, 10 December 1909).

However, the procedures were anything but harmless, and by 1913 articles about the consequences of forcible feedings to one or another hapless individual were standard. The newspapers reported of severe traumas that such “treatment” entailed. For example, forcible feedings had left Miss Emerson “with a facial disfigurement” as “[s]everal bones of her nose were broken” (*The New York Times*, 10 April 1913). Another suffragist, Lilian Lenton, was released on bail following a sudden deterioration in her health due to forcible feedings, which caused pleurisy and septic pneumonia (*The New York Times*, 1 March 1913). A male suffragist, Harry Humphries, was reported to have been forcibly fed through the nose 221 times, after which he was sent to a “lunatic asylum” (*Daily Mirror*, 20 July 1914). The doctors in the mental hospital concluded that Mr. Humphries showed no sign of insanity and should have been released under the “Cat and Mouse Act.”<sup>24</sup>

Despite the technical difficulties, images of forcible feedings did find their way into the

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<sup>24</sup> “The Cat and Mouse Act” (the Prisoners Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Act) was a bill passed by the British parliament in 1913 that prescribed temporary release of suffragists on a hunger strike when they became very weak so that they could recuperate, only to be rearrested again to continue their sentence. Intended to hush up public disapproval of forcible feedings, the Act actually highlighted the government’s cruelty towards the suffragists playing with them like a cat with a captured mouse, hence the name.

press, though mostly in the suffragist sympathizing publications. These are drawings taken from photographs and cartoons, ranging from rather benign pictures showing “kind” wardresses and doctors funneling food down a woman’s throat, to the ones that depict them as the epitome of evil. Iconographically, these images recall not only torture but sexual violence as well. The fact that few mainstream newspapers, including the *Daily Mirror*, published these images, points to the limits of this imagery's influence on the uninvolved audiences. It also suggests that the primary audience who did see these images and were moved by them were probably the suffragettes themselves. For uninvolved readers, verbal accounts describing the brutality of the procedure offered a way to imagine the procedure in the absence of photos. American suffragist Alice Paul who had spent two months in Holloway prison wrote about her experience in the *New York Times*.

They tied us down with bonds around our legs, chests, and necks. Then doctors and warders held us down and forced a tube five or six feet long, about the size of a finger, through the nostrils to the stomach... It always caused my nose to bleed and brought out a perspiration all over me. I had fits of trembling, and I never went through the experience without weeping and sometimes crying out loud (*The New York Times*, 18 February 1910).

She proceeds to describe the procedure in a dispassionate voice. The verbal account in this case functions as an aid to mental visualization process for the readers. It became evident that forcible feeding did not save the hunger strikers’ lives as it was initially argued, but caused immense pain, injuries and death. Having originally appeared in the *Mirror* under the general category of medical solution to the problem, linking civil disobedience with a mental illness that required external interference (Williams, 2008), categorizations of forcible feedings as torture appeared in the press more often.

Authorized by the state, the act of feeding hunger strikers by force placed control over violence back into where it belongs according to Weber's definition of the state. Yet the image of suffering - be it an actual image or a verbal description that would allow the readers to *imagine*, visualize the procedure in their mind, - provoked an alternative interpretation of the conflict and helped mobilize women for action and create a public outcry against forcible feedings.

A different case of the use of words in place of images took place in Russia just before a wave of mass anti-Putin protests in May 2012 on the eve of his inauguration for the third term as president. Scheduled for May 7, the inauguration was termed "the coronation" in the Russian blogosphere, referring to the almost monarchical power Putin wielded in Russia since 2000. Early May in Russia is punctuated by two national holidays, May Day, associated with Labour day of the bygone days of the socialist state, usually celebrated by demonstrations of workers; and Victory Day, May 9, the most important patriotic holiday celebrating the victory in "the Great Patriotic War," the Russian/Soviet term for the larger conflict that is known elsewhere as the Second World War. Accusations of illegitimacy of Putin's third presidential term were widespread, and protests had been ebbing and flowing since the allegedly rigged parliamentary elections in December 2011.

Pro- and anti-Putin forces split the country into a myriad of segments: cosmopolitan middle class vs workers, nationalists vs Central Asian migrant workers and other ethnics, Muscovites vs the rest of Russia, gay activists vs Orthodox fundamentalists, pro-Western liberals vs pro-Putin forces suspicious of anything foreign, etc. One of the marches that was lost in the flurry of later, much larger, protest activities

was organized by the Moscow State University of Medicine and Dentistry and scheduled for May 3. It involved a torchlight procession from one of the university's buildings to another along the Garden Ring, the capital's major circular thoroughfare. The procession was supposed to be in the memory of the Russian soldiers who died in World War II. Apparently, the dentists organized the procession each year since 2005 and it never elicited any complaints until 2012, when the oppositional bloggers drew attention to the fact that torchlight processions also had taken place in Nazi Germany. They cited image results on search engines (both the Russian [yandex.ru](http://yandex.ru) and Google) that returned multiple images of Nazi parades to the keyword search "torch" and "procession" in Russian (факельное шествие, *fakelnoye shestviye*).

While torch processions may not be a copyrighted "Nazi-only" trademark, the claim needs to be understood in the specific context of 2012 Russia. This reading of the symbolism by the opposition has deep roots: members of the opposition have long compared Putin's rule to that of Hitler, both of whom rose through the ranks in defeated empires. A now defunct pro-Putin youth organization, Nashi (which translates as "ours" as in "us" vs "them," with all the xenophobic connotations), has been nicknamed "Nazis" and "Putin-jugend" almost immediately upon its inception (Matthews and Nemtsova, 2007). Moreover, while May 9 had remained the most important national holiday, by 2012 many in the opposition felt that the holiday had been co-opted by the corrupt state, losing its prior significance. They felt the sanctity of the patriotic symbolism had been contaminated by the fact that Putin's regime had benefitted from the nationalist sentiment in the earlier years. In short, Victory day itself has become a bone of contention between the present government and the opposition, each side trying to apply its historical

meaning to the present to create a different vision of the future for Russia.



Illustration 9. Students of the Moscow State University of Medicine and Dentistry carry torches, symbolizing the university students who died during the World War Two. Moscow, May 3, 2012. Yuri Timofeev, Flickr.

What is particularly interesting about this example is that the struggle over interpretation of images had taken place *before* the pictures were even taken and *before* the march occurred, i.e. in the anticipation of the image.<sup>25</sup> This example confirms that an image is not only a physical entity (and with the introduction of digital technologies, it is increasingly not a physical entity at all), but also an abstraction, a concept, a point of departure for a social debate (Belting, 2005). In the absence of an actual image, oppositional bloggers in Russia were able to imagine what the procession would look like, and found it problematic for a variety of reasons, such as the irony of using a Nazi symbol on the eve of the commemoration of the victory over Nazi Germany. The fact that

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<sup>25</sup> One of the images of the march was published on Flickr by Yuri Timofeev: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/yuri\\_timofeyev/7141119437/lightbox/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/yuri_timofeyev/7141119437/lightbox/) (Accessed September 12, 2012).



this discussion only took place in 2012 and never before is also indicative of the other developments, such as the growing strength of the protest movement speaking against the usurpation of the national(ist) holiday, Victory day, by the conservative pro-Putin forces in Russia.

The two cases discussed in this section show various ways in which an image of state violence can be conjured up in the absence of actual photos. In the case of the forced feedings of suffragettes in Britain, testimonies worked in place of pictures and arguably inspired even more sympathy than the near-pornographic drawings of prostrate women with tubes going down their nostrils or throats. In the second example, alleged visual resemblance between processions organized by the violent Nazi state many years prior and a contemporary commemorative event pointed at the growing discontent about the current government in Russia. This section has demonstrated how words can work as a medium for transmitting a mental image of a violent interaction. It is particularly important to my argument because it shows that images are social constructs that do not even have to exist in a physical form of a photograph or a drawing to have real consequences in people's lives.

### Third-party Violence

In contrast with state violence, third-party violence portrays the representatives of the state as protectors of opposing groups of citizens who have differing political views. In that sense, even when the state explicitly endorses third-party activists to resort to violence against nonviolent protesters, images do not show the state as the bully. The connection between violence and the injustice of the state in this case is not obvious, and

any violence coming out of the confrontation may be dismissed by uninvolved audiences as a squabble between two marginal groups. This section explores third-party violence against nonviolent protesters and its representation in the media. In the two examples I discuss below, the state alternatively supports violence against nonviolent activists implicitly or explicitly.

### *Implicit State Endorsement of Third-party Violence*

During nonviolent protests, most states have the support of some groups that can be mobilized against the social reformers. Such groups usually have no scruples about using violent methods because they have implicit (or sometimes explicit) endorsement of those in power.

During the campaign for women's suffrage in Britain, for example, the press did not publish images of the ungentlemanly handling of women by police. The *Daily Mirror* had fewer such restraints in regards to anti-suffragist mobs, which made police look like guardian angels by contrast. In the spring and summer of 1913, the suffragettes took to protest in Hyde Park on Sundays, in spite of incessant persecution and taunting by the "antis" and male thugs (*Daily Mirror*, 12 May, 1913). The *Mirror* published several front pages covering what they referred to as "a new sport" of "suffragette baiting." The photographs show crowds of agitated men chasing, as we can guess, suffragists, who are depicted in other images surrounded by mounted police. Although the women were clearly attacked by angry mobs, struck at with sticks, and pelted with stones and other missiles, their platforms smashed and their taxi cabs upended (*Daily Mirror*, 28 April, 1913), the *Mirror's* captions kept the tone of mild sarcasm: "Guarded by mounted police,

[the suffragettes] were escorted from the Park in their cart, the crowd, which was quite good humoured [sic], booing and shouting as they beat an undignified retreat” (*Daily Mirror*, 28 April, 1913). While the pictures show asymmetrical violence against the suffragettes, the captions and accompanying articles interpret it through the framework of “suffrage outrages,” “mental disorder,” and generally label the suffragettes “wild women” and “militants,” generally failing to explore what exactly their demands are and why.

In most of these attacks, police are featured as valiant protectors of the women, in both word and image. A *Mirror* article reports that an elderly suffragette, “fashionably dressed,” was attacked the previous day just outside of Hyde Park by “a violently anti-suffrage crowd” (*Daily Mirror*, 21 April, 1913). She was “roughly handled by her pursuers, and some of her clothing was torn from her, *notwithstanding the valiant defense of the police*” (emphasis added). The police are portrayed as the benevolent defenders of “foolish” women who dared protest in the Park despite police warnings against it.



Illustration 10. Anti-suffragists Chasing Suffragettes in Hyde Park. *Daily Mirror*, May 12, 1913.

While police brutality was not uncommon, it was rarely captured in photographs. A demonstration in Parliament Square on November 18, 1910, when over 300 women were brutally attacked by the anti-suffrage mob while the police was standing by taking

no part, came to be known as the Bloody Sunday. Over a hundred women and four men were arrested on that day, and women anonymously reported a number of sexualized attacks. Police were often manhandling the women during the arrest, making derisive sexual comments, twisting and fondling their breasts in public to humiliate them (Green 1997:20-1). None of this made it into the published photos, which can be explained by the standards of decency in Edwardian Britain, the lack of sophisticated technology that allowed photographing of moving objects, and perhaps bias against women activists among the (mostly male) members of the journalistic profession.

#### *Explicit State Endorsement of Third-party Violence*

In contemporary context, an example of third-party violence can be drawn from the confrontations between gay rights activists and religious fundamentalists in Russia. The fact that the Russian authorities are bitterly homophobic is apparent: former Mayor of Moscow Luzhkov has called gay pride “satanic” and promised that there would be no such thing in his city (ABC News, 26 January 2010). As of June 2012, five regions have passed laws banning what they refer to as “propaganda of homosexuality,” which forbids all LGBT organizations and public events. The Duma is considering a federal law that will make any public expression of support for LGBT individuals illegal across Russia. The Russian gay pride parade was first scheduled in 2006, and has been banned each year since, culminating in a decision by a Moscow city court in June 2012 that made the

headlines for its absurdity: “Russia Bans Gay Pride for a Century.”<sup>26</sup> Although a couple dozen activists have come out each year, they are typically met by larger groups of Christian fundamentalists and nationalists.

Prominent among those groups is the so-called Union of the Orthodox Banner Bearers, the group whose aesthetics is reminiscent of the Hell’s Angels in the United States. The organization has received media attention for its extreme religious intolerance, racism, and homophobia. In 2010 the organization’s slogan that appears on their black t-shirts, “Orthodoxy or Death!” written in Greek and Russian in a circle around three skulls holding knives in their teeth, was included in the Russian federal list of extremist materials, compiled by the Ministry of Justice, after a decision by one of the Moscow courts in 2010 that found the message extremist. A few months later a different Moscow court, upon conducting another expert investigation, concluded that the slogan was not extremist. Following the scandal, the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church awarded the leader of the Union an Order of St. Seraphim Sorovsky for “serving the Church for many years, honorably representing the views of the Orthodox public on important social issues, and remaining faithful to the unity of the Church and obedience to its sanctity” (*Russky obozrevatel*, 16 August 2011), suggesting that the Russian Orthodox Church condoned and encouraged the group’s activities and views. Both the church and the state express their complete support for anti-gay activists by making their stand clear on the issue, encouraging the bullying and discrimination to continue.

In a collection of images on a *Book-Stop* website,<sup>27</sup> for example, one of the photos

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<sup>26</sup> The ban came after the gay activists found a loophole in the law that did not specify how far in advance applications for public rallies should be submitted, and thus applied to hold gay rallies until 2112.

shows one of the Banner Bearers “dashingly ram the [rainbow] flag with a camera tripod and begin to tear it with his hands.” This photo is one in the series of images that document the arrest of LGBT activists in Moscow in early spring of 2012, published by the website, whose main purpose is to provide the space for reporting instances of unscrupulous behavior by employers or businesses. The homepage of the website cautions against trusting all the information published here, but also welcomes people to submit articles that might be of interest to their subscribers. Similar to the images of the anti-suffragists I discussed above, this image shows a police officer present at the site but uninvolved. The attack is done by a third-party group, not the state itself, but with the latter’s full approval and support.

The endorsement of third-party violence by the state can also be less subtle. During the anti-Putin protests in Russia in May 2012, for example, the president-elect’s press secretary Peskov allegedly told a Duma colleague, “the opposition’s liver should be smeared on asphalt... for every injured riot policeman”<sup>28</sup> (Ponomaryov 2012). The violent threat of repression, probably aimed at intimidating the protesters, had the opposite effect of emboldening them. The colorful metaphor was not lost on the cosmopolitan Russian bloggers. The opposition picked up the liver reference and spun it

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<sup>27</sup> Moscow Gay Pride. Photo Report. Book-Stop: All-Russia Black List. [http://www.stop-book.com/articles/index.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=10069](http://www.stop-book.com/articles/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=10069) (Accessed June 3, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> The Duma member Ilya Ponomaryov (a member of A Just Russia, a center-left party that declared itself in opposition to Vladimir Putin but supported reforms of Dmitry Medvedev during the latter’s presidency) wrote in his LiveJournal, one of Russia’s most popular social media platforms, about his conversation with the press secretary of Putin, Dmitry Peskov: “In the Duma I asked [...] Peskov [...] whether it was an overkill to say [in an interview] on Dozhd [oppositional TV channel] that police should have been harsher on the protesters on May 6 [the day before Putin’s inauguration]. Peskov replied: ‘It was actually too soft of me to say that. For every injured riot policeman we should smear the opposition’s liver on asphalt’” (Ponomaryov 2012).

into a web of never-ending jokes: “foie gras a la Peskov is in demand”; “they say liver rejuvenates better than Botox” (a reference to alleged use of Botox by Putin earlier that year). Peskov’s comment made the government’s support for violence against protesters explicit; its claims to support among the Russians were shaken; the authorities’ fear of mass revolt became apparent.

While in the example above it was not clear who Peskov wanted to do “the smearing” (probably the riot police), Russia does have a youth movement that fits perfectly into the third-party paramilitary category. This is the youth group *Nashi*<sup>29</sup> (“Ours”), which was organized with the financial support from the Kremlin in 2005 in an attempt to avoid what was seen as the West-inspired youth uprising in Russia in the wake of a series of so-called “color revolutions” in neighboring Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan of 2003, 2004, and 2005 respectively. On the group’s website [nashi.su](http://nashi.su), which cannot be accessed from the United States, *Nashi* write in their manifesto: “the main purpose of the Movement [sic] *Nashi* was the fight with the unnatural union of oligarchs and liberals who want to give up sovereignty and independence of Russia according to the scenario applied in Georgia and Ukraine, the ‘orange revolution’” ([nashi.su](http://nashi.su), 2012). Through the years, their activities focused on commemorative events connected to World War II, as well as those for more recent tragedies, such as the Beslan school hostage crisis that resulted in almost 400 deaths in 2004.

*Nashi* have distinguished themselves by training exercises “to combat a possible

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<sup>29</sup> Newsweek described *Nashi* as “a bona fide private army fanatically loyal to one man, the president, that denounces political opposition groups as traitors and fascists, demonizes foreign enemies from Estonia to Georgia to Poland and dedicates itself to the glorification of the Soviet Union and Russian power” (Matthews and Nemtsova 2007).

Orange revolution in their city,” in which the Young Guards, for example, practiced to defend a local TV station that was mock-raided by a hundred volunteers wearing orange bandannas, apparently representing the “Western threat,” “wielding baseball bats to smash up an “Orange” tent camp, much like that erected on Maidan Square in Kiev two years ago” (Matthews and Nemtsova 2007). The purpose of the exercise was not unlike “duck and cover” drills American schoolchildren had to go through during the cold war to learn how to react in the case of a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union. In its absurdity, both ways of educating children fomented fear of the other in the United States or the Soviets, and inspired nationalist sentiment.

Third-party violence, implicitly or explicitly endorsed by the state, shifts the focus of public indignation away from the state, to conservative pro-government forces. While this shift rarely fools anyone as to where the state’s interests lie, it diffuses the public outcry making new “perpetrators” available for the role of villains. Working-class men and anti-suffrage organizers in the early 20th century Britain, segregationist whites in the American South, pro-Yanukovich supporters in Ukraine in 2004, fundamentalist Christians and pro-Putin youth group “Nashi” in contemporary Russia - all these groups have acted on behalf of the existing order to fight against nonviolent activists. The governments at different times were able to resort to the assistance of third-party groups, using them in their “proxy wars” against nonviolent advocates of reforms.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, civil disobedience campaigns bring out competing narratives of representation: both the state and anti-state actors claim to represent “the people,” trying to convince the uninvolved audience that they must take their (the state’s or the social movement’s) side. Those in the audience who already



support the status quo may feel emboldened by this rhetoric of representation to carry out their own justice in the name of the state. Because punishment of nonviolent resisters becomes the state's goal, the professional police force or army at such moments may stand by and observe violence being carried out by third party enthusiasts without intervening. In other words, whoever supports the state briefly becomes the carrier of "legitimate" violence within its borders.

### Self-inflicted Violence

In this section, I examine violence performed by nonviolent protesters against themselves. While self-killing for a cause may take multiple forms, I focus here on two examples from Edwardian England: hunger strikes by the suffragettes and a spectacular suicide by Emily Wilding Davison.

In writing about self-immolation, the sociologist Michael Biggs (2008) points out two modern developments that created the space for protest by self-killing. The first one is the rise of modern media that expanded the audience of self-directed violence to potentially millions of strangers around the globe. The other one is the decline in state violence organized as a spectacle for the public.

### *Hunger Strikes of Suffragettes*

Usually activists have limited capacity to wield public attention from behind the prison walls. This, however, can change if their health deteriorates. Hunger strike is one of the ways to ensure that it happens. In a fictionalized account of the American suffrage movement in the HBO film *Iron Jawed Angels* (von Garnier 2004), Alice Paul is

questioned by a psychiatrist about the logic of her hunger strike, which he finds not very effective. She responds, “A stinking corpse on your doorstep? What will the neighbors think?” The threat of being held accountable for the death of an activist puts the state in a precarious position, in which it no longer controls violence within its territory because protesters take over that control. Moreover, the suffering experienced by hunger strikers, though self-inflicted, is attributed to the state, whose claim to legitimate power within its territory is rendered void by the look of atrocity that hunger striking presents.

The definition of nonviolent tactics presumes a decision on the part of activists to not resort to violence against their opponents even in the light of the imminent harm to themselves and threat to their lives. Self-immolations of different kinds (the term broadly refers to any self-killing, not only the practice of setting oneself on fire, Biggs 2008) have been part of the nonviolent resistance repertoire because the objects of their violence are the activists themselves. Instead of attacking their opponents, activists on hunger strike, for example, exercise control over their bodies through controlling their food (and sometimes, water) intake. Self-directed violence that may or may not lead to the death of an activist is a way to externalize the suffering and make the state responsible for the inhumane conditions under which the group has to live, the conditions that are so unbearable that death becomes preferable to living. A release of an imprisoned hunger striker is probably the most sensible thing to do: the person lives, and the government projects an image of magnanimous authority. In some cases, though, the state chooses to respond heavy-handedly, for example in the case of the forced feedings of the suffragettes that I discussed above.

Hunger strikes have long been considered a “weapon of the weak,” i.e. a tactic of the seemingly powerless. In her analysis of female fasting in medieval Europe, the historian Caroline Walker Bynum (1987) examines the role of food abstinence among Catholic saints. Analyzing the different forms of food abstinence, Bynum contends that that hunger strike as a political act is more likely to be performed by men, and cites the examples of Gandhi and the Irish Republican Army. On the other hand, a renunciation of food as a symbol of asceticism and religious fervor, from her data from the Middle Ages, has been performed overwhelmingly by women (Bynum, 1987, 192). Being at the center of food preparation and control, women could manipulate not only their bodies but also the male-dominated environment through their fasts (Bynum, 1987, 208). Political hunger strikes, she suggests, may derive from this female fasting tradition but can be performed by both men and women. When publicized by mass media, a hunger striker puts the state at risk of being held responsible for the activist’s physical suffering and possible death. Confronted with the image of suffering of a magnitude incommensurate with the wrongdoing, even those bystanders who initially disapproved of the movement’s methods or goals might sympathize.

In 1908, the government decided to revive “the Tumultuous Petitioning Act” that had been adopted under Charles II in 1661 to obstruct petitioning to the king and either of the Houses by more than thirteen people (Mackenzie 1975:69). The suffragettes reacted immediately by organizing their deputations to exceed this number, thus ensuring that they would get arrested. In June 1909, painter Marion Wallace Dunlop went into the House of Commons and stenciled in large block letters on the wall of St. Stephen's Hall: “Women's deputation June 29. Bill of Rights. It is the right of the subjects to petition the

king, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal” (Mackenzie, 1975, 110-2). She was promptly arrested and sentenced to one month in prison. Demanding political prisoner status, Ms. Wallace Dunlop went on a hunger strike (Tickner 1988:104). She was released 91 hours later, weak but victorious, and advised no one to follow her example (*Daily Mirror*, July 9, 1909). However, in two months’ time hunger striking became a standard practice among the suffragettes, and by late September 1909 37 women had been released due to deterioration of health following a refusal to eat (*Daily Mirror*, July 21 and September 25, 1909; Tickner 1988, 104). Within a year, the activists proudly carried a large purple, white and green Hunger Strikers’ Banner embroidered with 80 signatures in the 1910 Procession in London (Tickner 1988:112). It seemed the suffragettes found a way out of prison: after a few days’ hunger strike, their hearts would show signs of arrhythmia and they were promptly released (Richardson 1953; Tickner 1988). Images of weakened suffragettes released from prison began appearing on the pages of the daily press.<sup>30</sup>

Activists were putting themselves in danger during arrests and hunger striking, subjected to hooligans’ attacks outside of jail and forcible feedings within, thereby demonstrating their determination to sacrifice their lives for the cause. The confrontation between the suffragists and the government was escalating until it culminated in the spectacular death of Emily Wilding Davison.

### *Spectacular Suicide*

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<sup>30</sup> See, for example, a picture of weakened Christabel Pankhurst released from jail, available in the Corbis collection: <http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/HU008988/sylvia-pankhurst-after-her-release-from-prison> (Accessed September 12, 2012).

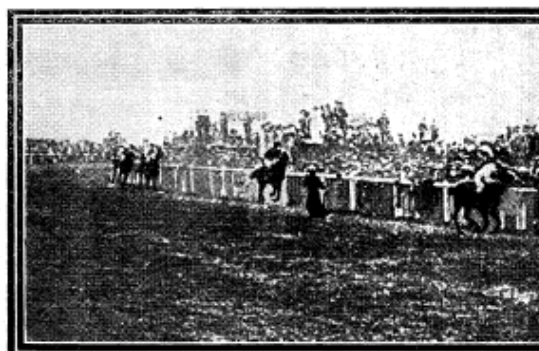
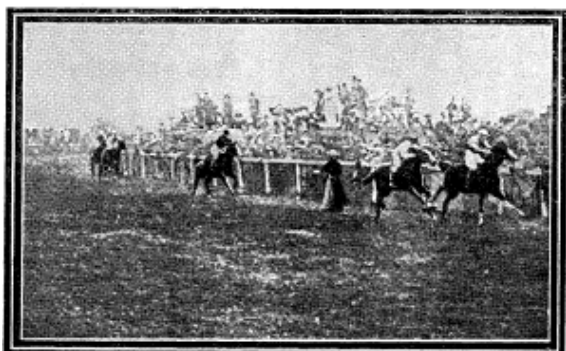
4 June 1913 was the day of the annual Derby in Epsom. The Epsom Derby is an annual horse race that has always attracted large crowds of spectators since the 17<sup>th</sup> century when it originated and is especially known as a social event attended by the royal family and other celebrities. Over sixty thousand viewers including the royal family gathered to attend the race. The Canadian-born suffragette Mary Richardson writes in her memoir that everything happened two or three hours after the race had begun, when their Majesties had already arrived (Richardson 1953:19-20). As the first group of horses passed galloping round the corner, a tall, slender, red-haired woman ducked under the railing and ran onto the racing course towards Anmer, the horse of King George V. Cinematograph films show Emily Wilding Davison throwing up her hands as if trying to stop the horse and a moment later “woman, horse, and jockey are on the ground” (Gullickson 2008). Richardson who had witnessed the whole incident barely escaped an angry mob chasing her because she had been selling the *Suffragette* newspaper and thus was an easily identifiable target of their rage. She later learned that extra police was summoned to the hospital where Davison had been taken to prevent the mob from lynching her. Suffering a head injury, the woman died a few days after the accident without recovering consciousness (Gullickson 2008).

Emily Davison’s death was caught on film and the next day the *Daily Mirror* published a series of images grabbed from the newsreel footage on the front page. Poor quality of the photographs is augmented by extensive captions describing the actions: “Miss Davison... runs towards the horses... clutches at the bridle of Anmer... this knocks her over, causing her to turn a complete somersault... she is badly hurt” (*Daily Mirror*, 6 June 1913). The tone of the captions is concerned, if patronizing. The headline

screams, “How a suffragette tried to spoil the Derby,” but the caption points out that of the two injured people lying on the ground, the King’s jockey and the suffragette, the woman was attended to first. The news of the incident spread quickly, though most of the sixty thousand people who attended the Derby that day learned about the accident from the papers (*New York Times*, 5 June 1913).

Davison’s death provoked debates among both supporters and opponents of women’s suffrage, who characterized it either as a reckless suicide or as a noble sacrifice of one’s life. The historian Gay Gullickson (2008) writes that the question whether Emily Davison committed suicide remains inconclusive, the latest consensus among historians being that “she was willing to die, but hoped she would not” (Gullickson 2008). Davison had a round-trip ticket from London to Epsom on her, as well as two suffrage flags under her coat (Gullickson 2008), which suggests that her actions were a deliberate attempt to attract attention to the suffrage cause, though she may not have anticipated that it would kill her. The fact that images of the incident became breaking news has as much to do with advancement in technology as with the fact that it took place during one of the most camera-saturated “media events” (Dayan and Katz 1992) the annual derby at Epsom, which was attended by throngs of people and the royal family: numerous journalists were guaranteed to cover the event.

HOW A SUFFRAGETTE TRIED TO SPOIL THE DERBY: THE EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT DESCRIBED IN A SERIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS.



Miss Davison, after "ducking" under the railings at Tattenham Corner, runs towards the horses as they come galloping along the Derby course.



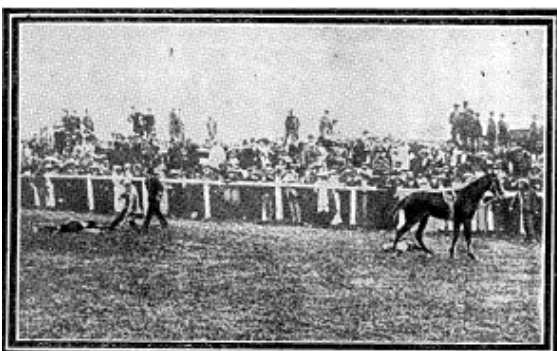
She clutches at the bridle of Anmer, the horse's chest striking her.



Jones, whose eye is bruised, leaving Liverpool-street Station for Newmarket yesterday.—(*Daily Mirror* photograph.)



This knocks her over, causing her to turn a complete somersault.



With Jones, who is just behind the horse, she is badly hurt.



Both lie unconscious, but the helpers' first thought is for the woman.

Illustration 11. Death of Emily Wilding Davison at the Derby. *Daily Mirror*, 6 June 1913.

Emily Davison's funeral was a tragic opportunity to stage one of the largest stand-alone media events in the history of the WSPU. The funeral cortege made its way through the streets of London on 10 June 1913, attended by over five thousand WSPU members and sympathizers, both female and male, militant and constitutionalist. Emily Davison's body was wrapped in a suffragist banner, and a suffragist badge had been placed in the

coffin, prison arrows covering the coffin as a symbol of her imprisonment (*The Lost Angeles Times*, 10 June 1913; *The Washington Post*, 15 June 1913). The procession was fully three-quarters of a mile long, and presented a picturesque view. The majority of women was dressed in white with black armbands, and carried white lilies and purple irises. Several carriages filled with flowers immediately preceded and followed the coffin, which had been placed on a flat dray, covered with a purple pall, on which rested three huge laurel wreaths (*The New York Times*, 15 June, 1913).

Though being essentially anti-state, the funeral came close to a pre-television form of a media event, locking all the popular attention unto itself, making even the anti-suffragists silent (*The New York Times*, 15 June 1913). Her act placed the heroine and the funeral in the center of the world's attention, making the suffragists' cause impossible to ignore. The procession may not have convinced opponents of women's suffrage (who still referred to the militants as "malcontents" and "victims of mental derangement," *The New York Times*, 10 June 1913) of the urgency for change, but it could hardly be ignored by the thousands of spectators who were irrevocably captivated by what Luc Boltanski refers to as "politics of pity" (Boltanski 1999).

The state's Weberian monopoly over legitimate violence was undermined by the women's power to direct violence against themselves, while holding the state responsible for the rapid deterioration in their health and possible (or actual) death. It highlighted oppression and entrenched conservatism of state officials, who refused to reform even in light of physical suffering and imminent death of nonviolent resisters. Though hardly amenable to illustration, news about hunger striking prisoners had the potential to portray the heavy hand of the state in negative light.



Inspiring sympathy, however, was not the only reason why self-inflicted violence could help social movements. Even in the absence of sympathetic feelings for the suffering or dead activist, a disruption of this magnitude may lead to a cautious reevaluation of tactics by the state. After the Derby incident, for example, the injured woman had to be protected from the mob that would lynch her, an attitude also reported in the autobiography of Mary Richardson who witnessed the event. Whether out of public sympathy or rage, it is clear that self-inflicted violence makes people's emotions run high, and can be very disruptive to the social order. In the case of the suffragettes, the government eventually gave in, perhaps partly in order to avoid such disruptions.

### Symbolic Violence

This section examines two examples of symbolic violence performed by nonviolent resisters: an (in)famous attack on the Velasquez painting the *Rokeby Venus* by a Canadian-born suffragette Mary Richardson in 1914 and a prayer performance by a Russian punk band Pussy Riot in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow in 2012.

### *The Rokeby Venus and Other Symbolic Attacks of Suffragettes*

“I have tried to destroy the picture of the most beautiful woman in mythological history as a protest against the Government for destroying Mrs. Pankhurst, who is the most beautiful character in modern history” (*Times*, 11 March, 1914), Canadian-born suffragette Mary Richardson made this statement upon her arrest on March 10, 1914, after her legendary attack on the Velasquez known as the *Rokeby Venus*.

Richardson decided to target a work of art in order to convey the outrage and

sense of helplessness she felt about the way the government was slowly killing Mrs. Pankhurst by releasing her under the Cat and Mouse Act, only to rearrest her every time her health would improve. In her memoir, Richardson describes the anxiety she felt about carrying out the plan after she got Christabel Pankhurst's approval. The public nature of the attack was bound to lead to her arrest, and, if she went on a hunger strike, to forcible feedings. She also knew she would only have one chance at completing the attack, so her actions had to be carefully calculated.

After entering the National Gallery, Richardson proceeded to the painting. She pretended to be drawing the Venus in the sketchbook she brought with her until the guards stopped paying attention to her. As one of the guards hid his face behind the newspaper, she dashed forward with the little axe she had sewn into her sleeve and broke the protective glass covering the painting. One of the attendants slipped on the polished floor and fell as he ran toward her, which gave Richardson an opportunity to take four more goes at the Velasquez (Richardson 1953).

Although Richardson's attack was symbolic, she and the others refer to the painting as if the woman in the painting were alive. "I found I was staring at an almond-eyed madonna whose beauty it was far beyond my powers to reproduce. Her smile, however, impressed itself sufficiently upon my senses to bring me a certain calmness of mind" (Richardson 1953). The *Times's* description of the damage to the painting, similarly, recalls a medical examination record, as if the woman in the picture had been actually injured.

...[T]he most serious blow has caused a cruel wound in the neck. For three or four inches... it runs almost vertically, and spreads out an inch wide. Another severe cut has been aggravated apparently by the chopper's

having been twisted a little as it was withdrawn for the next blow... there is a broad laceration starting near the left shoulder and roughly forming, with two other cuts, a letter 'N.' ...The other cuts are cleanly made in the region of the waist (*Times*, 11 March, 1914).



Illustration 12. The Rokeby Venus after Mary Richardson Slashed it with a Cleaver. *Times*, 11 March 1914.

The choice of the painting was not incidental. The *Rokeby Venus* was the Gallery's prized possession and an attack on it was poised to bring unprecedented public attention. Acquired in 1906 with the help of public contributions ranging from 10,000 pounds from "An Englishman" to two shilling from "A Young Student," this was the only surviving Velasquez painting of a female nude, a subject rare in Spanish painting of

the seventeenth century (*Times*, 11 March, 1914; 11 February, 1976).

Most papers published the photo of the mutilated painting. The *Daily Mirror* dedicated the entirety of the front page to the photographic depictions of the episode, with a reproduction of the painting and a photo of Richardson taken into custody above the fold, smaller pictures of the Gallery and the meat cleaver she used during the attack at the bottom of the page. In her own words, Richardson meant to draw public attention to “the slow destruction of Mrs. Pankhurst” by attacking “a financially valuable object” as a symbolic act (Richardson 1953:165). The headline in the *Mirror*, however, frames the incident in no sympathetic terms: “Suffragette's 'Reason' for Slashing a Famous Velasquez with a Cleaver.” Although allowing Richardson's statement to appear on the front page, the paper strips her explanation of legitimacy by putting her “reason” in quotation marks. The caption at the bottom of the page describes her act as “crazy,” tapping into the dominant frame through which the suffragette activities were interpreted in the press. Using this uncontested symbol of feminine perfection, Richardson meant to bring public attention to the suffrage cause. Attention she did bring. Reactions in the media, however, were mostly negative.

THE DAILY MIRROR, Wednesday, March 11, 1914.

It Is Not Too Late to Begin "The Story of a Woman's Heart."

# The Daily Mirror

LATEST CERTIFIED CIRCULATION MORE THAN 800,000 COPIES PER DAY.

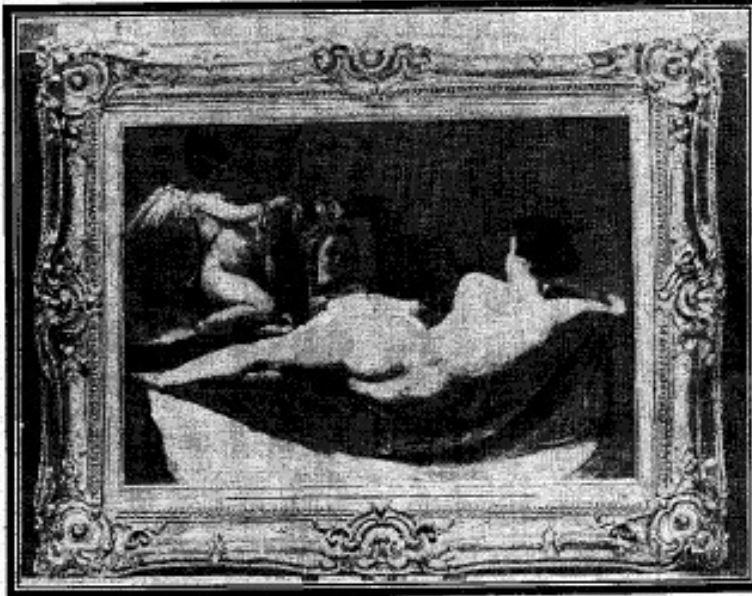
No. 3,288.

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1914

One Halfpenny.

SUFFRAGETTE'S "REASON" FOR SLASHING A FAMOUS VELASQUEZ WITH A CLEAVER.



The famous "Venus and Cupid," which was bought for the National Gallery for £20,000.



Miss Richardson leaving the police-station for Bow-street. She was committed for trial.



Exterior view of the Gallery, where so many art treasures are housed.



Lord Curzon, a trustee of the Gallery, talking to a woman, and a facsimile of the cleaver used by the woman.

"I have tried to destroy the picture of the most beautiful woman in mythological history as a protest against the Government for destroying Mrs. Pankhurst, who is the most beautiful character in modern history." This is the extraordinary statement of a

suffragette named Mary Richardson, who yesterday committed the crazy act of damaging Velasquez's famous "Venus and Cupid" with a cleaver. The picture, which is in the National Gallery, is the historical Rokeby Venus, and is almost priceless.

Illustration 13. Front Page After Arrest of Mary Richardson. *Daily Mirror*, 11 March 1914.

The discussion of the women's "neurasthenia" and "nerve problem" had been the prevalent framework through which the suffragettes' activities had been interpreted. This was clearly the holdover of the Victorian era, during which the position of women was conceptualized through their procreative function, and any female behavior was explained through medical references to "female nerves" (Poovey 1988:36). Cultural historian Mary Poovey (1988) writes about the medical profession's consensus on the biological difference between men and women that made the latter susceptible to an array of nervous disorders and required their "constant and expert superintendence by medical men" (p.37). All natural biological functions such as menstruation and childbirth were portrayed in the medical literature as abnormal, making "woman... by definition, disease or disorder" (p.37). From these discussions came the authoritative definition of "hysteria" as a medical "fact" which supposedly led to insanity. The suffragettes' activities were uniformly condemned by the illustrated press.

The *Rokeby Venus* episode was only one in a series of attacks that appeared on the *Mirror's* pages in 1913-14. Each time, the paper would show damage incurred and accompany it by a negative commentary that gave almost no details of why the women were carrying out the attacks. Their activities ranged from throwing pepper on Premier Asquith to stamping hotel bedding with "Votes for Women," from "cover[ing] the Earl of Derby statue with tar" to burning slogans with acid in the golf green, thus putting the golf championships at St. Andrew's into "a state of siege" (*New York Times*, 26 April, 1914).

A picture page of the *Daily Mirror* from March 11, 1913, depicting a train station burned down by the suffragettes, is captioned by an invective summary: "The suffragettes were more than usually wicked and stupid yesterday." The photos show the caved-in roof

of the station, a man holding melted chocolate from the vending machine, and a destroyed bridge that is also “believed to be the work of the suffragettes.” On February 7, 1914, a burned house belonging to the husband of the vice-president of the Edinburgh Anti-Suffrage League made the *Mirror* front page. Two pictures of particularly damaged train carriages are headlined by the caustic title “Women Who Did This Want a Vote,” suggesting that universal suffrage is not a right but something to be earned by proper behavior. The *Mirror*’s cartoon from 13 March 1914, satirizing the degree of the precautions now taken in the national galleries, suggests that the practice of symbolic attacks on the works of art might require a new form of museum practices. Focus on art galleries, museums, golf courses and politician's property indicates, once again, the social class of the women performing these acts: they were characteristically gentry class targeting gentry class audiences, the only ones who would care about such damage (Adut 2008). Because the “suffrage outrages,” as the attacks were referred to in the press, were sudden and clandestine, there was rarely an opportunity to photograph or film the moment of provocation. Rather, a majority of the images depict the damage done without a sign of the perpetrator. Suffragette literature or flyers that were usually found at the site of the attack were the only indication of who would bear responsibility for the act. To demonstrate some action, the *Mirror* would sometimes modify photos to show precisely how the action was carried out. For example, on June 12, 1913, a bag of flour was hurled at Mr. Asquith in the House of Commons, followed by a cry “Remember Miss Davison” who died at the derby several days before. The *Mirror* ran a photo with images of the assailant and detectives superimposed and arrows added to show the path of the bag as it made its way to the stage. The photograph in this case was modified to demonstrate

exactly from where the bag was thrown.

All in all, pictures of destruction helped make the front pages for the suffragists, but their utility as a promotion tool for their cause was rather limited. Showing physical damage to buildings or trains, opponents of the suffragettes framed these photos as evidence of the women's lack of civility and good manners at best, or of their unstable mental state and a confirmed case of “neurasthenia” at worst. Their violence notwithstanding, the suffragettes' attacks pale in comparison with the brutal treatment with which they were confronted. However, open to unfavorable interpretation, such images hardly helped the women win sympathy of the general public.

The *Rokeby Venus* episode came at the end of the series of attacks by suffragettes, and toward the end of the arson campaign. Collins (2011) writes that during a counter-escalation dynamic, two sides in conflict reach a point (after about 3-6 months) at which sympathy for the opponents becomes virtually impossible: each side sees the other as the epitome of evil. This explains why some news photos may not be read the same way by all the participants neither at the time, nor after the event, but may engage sympathy in outsiders who are not part of the conflict, or in the descendants of the participants years later.

#### *Witch Hunt in Putin's Russia: Punk Rockers in the Church of Christ the Savior*

On February 21, 2012, a feminist punk band Pussy Riot performed what they called “punk prayer” with a provocative title, “Mother Mary, Blessed Virgin, drive Putin away!” in the main cathedral of Russia, Church of Christ the Savior in Moscow.

Although the band members wore colorful balaclavas which covered their faces, and



were able to leave immediately after the performance, three of the women (Yekaterina Samutsevich, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Mariya Alyokhina) were subsequently arrested and indicted on charges of “hooliganism” (Article 213, part 2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) punishable by up to seven years in prison. The court extended detention of the women several times, postponing the hearing. Amid the domestic and international media uproar and protests in most major cities around the globe, Judge Marina Syrova took three hours to read the verdict on August 17, 2012: two years in prison camp for each of the women. The sentence referred to the church regulations from the fourth and seventh centuries, the Council of Laodicea (363 CE) and the Quinisext Council (692 CE), and was based on the third expert assessment of the women (the first two did not find anything wrong with them), according to which they suffered from “‘a mixed personality disorder’, a condition that included different combinations of a ‘proactive approach to life,’ ‘a drive for self-fulfillment,’ ‘stubbornly defending their opinion,’ ‘inflated self-esteem,’ ‘inclination to opposition behavior,’ and ‘propensity for protest reactions’” (Lipman 2012).

This was not the first time Pussy Riot scandalized the public or targeted Putin. The band’s previous unsanctioned concerts took place inside one of Moscow’s metro stations, on the roof of a prison, on top of trolleybuses and even in Red Square itself, the latter performance followed the protests against the rigged Duma elections in December, 2011, and had a telling title “Putin Got Scared” (Putin Zassal).



Illustration 14. Pussy Riot performance of “Putin Got Scared” on Red Square, *Reuters* (Denis Sinyakov).

While many Russian commentators - both believers and nonbelievers - admitted their discomfort at the fact that the performance took place in a church, the majority were shocked at the enormity of prospective punishment in relation to what amounts, at most, to a minor misdemeanor. The case drew international attention as well. One of multiple pages in support of Pussy Riot on Facebook, “Free Pussy Riot Now! (Putin, Fear No Art),”<sup>31</sup> documents protests in front of Russian embassies and consulates around the world, including Melbourne, Mexico City, London, Krakow, Edinburgh, Rome, Tel Aviv, New York, San Francisco, Lisbon, Berlin, and others, as well as a concert in Tallinn, attended by the President of neighboring Estonia. Donations were collected to pay bail; posters of icons wearing colored masks appeared on the streets of Novosibirsk (*Gazeta.Ru*, 12 March 2012); Amnesty International expressed concern about the case, calling the three women “prisoners of conscience” (*Amnesty International*, 17 August

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<sup>31</sup> The number of followers of the site grew from a couple thousand to over 70,000 over the three months of the summer.

2012).

The official reaction from the Russian Orthodox Church was also not uniform. The press secretary of the Patriarch called the three arrested women sinners and the Patriarch himself described the act in his sermon as “an insult to the feelings of the believers,” condemning the “people who justify this blasphemy, minimize it, and present it as some funny prank” (*Patriarchia.Ru*, 24 March 2012). On the other hand, a group of Orthodox believers collected 400 signatures under a petition in the popular Russian social network LiveJournal to the Patriarch asking him to close the criminal case against the women (*Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 7 March 2012), two of whom had young children that they had not been allowed to see in the three months of their pre-trial detention. The reaction of the lead antagonist in this story, Vladimir Putin, was, according to his press secretary Peskov, “negative” (interview to the oppositional TV station Dozhd/ Rain). The then-President, Dmitry Medvedev, offered timidly in an interview about Pussy Riot on the oppositional TV channel Rain (Dozhd) that “they got what they asked for.” The three journalists interviewing him raised eyebrows and asked for a clarification, “You mean, they got imprisoned?” Lowering his eyes like a student in front of the exam committee, Medvedev explained: “No, they became popular” (*Vesti.Ru*, 26 April 2012).

The choice of the location - Cathedral of Christ the Savior - was not incidental. It was bound to bring a lot of resonance to the case that followed. The original cathedral had been blown up during a communist reconstruction of Moscow in 1931. Several projects were proposed to take advantage of the beautiful spot on the Moskva River. One of them, never realized, was a gigantic statue to Vladimir Lenin. Later on, an open pool was built instead, oozing the chlorine smell for a few kilometers in all directions. After

the end of the Soviet Union and a return of the Orthodox Church to a more prominent position, the Cathedral was rebuilt. With plastic light switches and extravagant light shows organized around religious holidays, the building came to symbolize the new Russia: with its outrageous capitalist excesses, reminiscent of the old in its form, but hollow and plastic at its core.

In comparison with Mary Richardson's attack on the Velasquez, the punk performance in the Christ the Savior Cathedral did not actually lead to any destruction. No part of the interior was vandalized; no holy objects went missing. In fact, the song itself in its form - a prayer - was actually appropriate for the place and the occasion, except that instead of a private conversation with the divine, loud punk rock demands to "Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin" clashed with the serenity of the place. By bringing a public political cause into the church, the worst that the women did was mix the sacred with the profane, something that the head of the Russian Orthodox Church has been guilty of as well, on a number of occasions. Since the year 2000, the Patriarch (Aleksiy, and later, Kirill) delivered a special sermon on each inauguration day, and expressed his support for Vladimir Putin and his policies. In short, the only thing that truly was "desecrated" in the Christ the Savior Cathedral in February was Putin's name.

### Summary

What does the image of nonviolent protest tell us about the social relations within a given society at the moment when it is undergoing a structural change? This chapter has attempted to answer this question by analyzing empirical examples of violence against nonviolent protesters. I started out with the premise that violence is an inherent part of civil disobedience. By looking at news images showing four types of violence, three of

which are directed at peaceful protesters, this chapter showed the different ways in which the state and the protesters contest power in the public domain using news images. Working from the assumption that all images are social constructs, rather than reflections of reality, I examined images and narratives about them to understand how actors advocated for their causes aligning themselves with previous heroes of civil disobedience and playing on the popular understandings of good and evil.

I examine news photos as social constructs that are used as narrative devices in historicizing events and making transhistorical claims. For that reason, the question of whether or not, and to what extent, news photos influence political outcomes is irrelevant here. Indeed, one could argue that the famous images of the “tank man” on Tiananmen Square had no impact on Chinese politics for the next two decades; the flower child photo from the Pentagon demonstration did not end the Vietnam War; in fact, all anti-war protests of the time were ineffective. While photos are often invested with efficacy after the fact, made appear singly influential (especially those of them that are picked out and classified as “iconic”), outcomes of protests are always contingent on a score of social, political, economic and cultural factors (Abbott 2005).

This chapter has examined individual instances of nonviolent protest, their visual representations in the news, and various interpretations of those images. While images of violence against unarmed protesters may be strategically beneficial to the protesters: at the individual level no one wants to get hurt. Symbols emphasizing peaceful intentions and a commitment to refrain from violence work to forestall violence against individual protesters. Women and children are used as symbols of protection against violence because violence against them always predictably has the look of atrocity.

Words and images may work together to create the mental picture of nonviolent struggles. As the discussion of the forcible feedings of the suffragettes has shown, it is not always possible (nor necessary) to publish an actual photograph of torture to inspire a public outcry against the cruelty of the state because people are capable of creating their own mental image based on a verbal description.

Third-party violence is less problematic for the state and less potent for social movements. The state has a chance to present itself as a “valiant protector” against uncouth hooligans, while at the same time taking a bit too long to come to the protesters’ rescue. Accusations of lack of police involvement or protection are generally hard to prove; they are diluted by the fact that in the end, a few third-party attackers are usually lightly punished along with the social movement activists. The State’s direct espousal of violent rhetoric may damage its image as the protector, but the connection between the official state viewpoint and the attacks by third-party hooligans, even when obvious, are difficult to trace or prove to uninvolved observers.

Self-inflicted violence is bound to draw public attention and elicit sympathy; the state officials tend to dismiss the practice of self-killing accusing activists of insanity. In this case, the viewer is asked to imagine the state being violent toward the activist, even though in the images and descriptions the state is nowhere to be seen.

Symbolic violence, while eschewing actual attacks on people, contains within it the danger that audiences may take the side of the state in protecting the objects that are attacked. In the case of the Rokeby Venus, there was a public outcry against the attack because the connection between the suffrage cause and the painting was hard to trace. One had to imagine the state destroying Mrs. Pankhurst who wasn’t anywhere near the

picture, and was not even mentioned each time the attack was reported.

In summary, the further the actors are removed from the image, the more difficult it is to sympathize with their cause, the more investment it requires to understand their actions and justify them by appealing to human rights and justice. Images that show violent interactions between the state and the activists, who are also presented as weak but worthy, seem to carry the most weight and tend to live on years later in the historical narratives of nonviolence. Images of state violence are most potent because they involve both the protesters and the representatives of the state in a single image, showing us who's the villain and who's the hero. Images of guns and girls, similarly, make the most powerful pictures because the sides in conflict are apparent. All further types of violence are further removed from the actors involved and their power, for that reason, is diminished.

While many central aspects of nonviolent resistance remain intact from one instance to the next, the standards of nonviolence are never set in stone; rather, they get reinterpreted and reinvented with each new case of popular upheaval. This allows all the actors - the movement, the state, and the media - to disagree on the meaning of the event. The struggle over meaning is often waged in the form of historical comparisons that can alternatively portray the activists as heroes or villains. This chapter has dealt with the question of social implications of the image of violence amid civil disobedience after photographs are taken and disseminated. In other words, I looked at images and narratives around them as social constructs that reflect social processes and struggles for - *and against* - change.

## CHAPTER 5. WHEN DO TECHNOLOGIES LIBERATE?

## Introduction

This project has focused on a specific subset of news images of nonviolent resistance: the ones that involve actual or implied violence. The methodological, practical, and theoretical demands of this dissertation have sometimes been difficult to reconcile. There are several tensions within visual sociology that this project highlighted. For one, the dissertation format requires that an analysis of visual material be carried out in words, which on the surface may seem to undermine the project of visual sociology. In fact, it does not. As the section on the forcible feedings of the suffragettes in Chapter Four showed, text often works as the medium for the transmission of mental images, which makes the line between words and images even more blurred (Zelizer 2010). Because news images are socially constructed, their existence presupposes both - the visual form and the language that makes it meaningful.

The tension between the image and the media within which it circulates has been a prominent topic in visual sociology. The tendency to collapse and conflate the two may lead to a technologically deterministic reading of the role of images in social change. The novelty of the medium is then credited with the liberating power, while the content that is being transmitted receives less attention. On the other end of the spectrum is a theoretical approach that insists on the primacy of the visual to the point of forgetting that images must be shared in order to affect people and move them to action.

Another tension is between the body that experiences pain and suffering and its representation. The German art historian Hans Belting defines the “body” of the image as “either the performing or the perceiving body” that is as important as the medium for the



construction of the image (Belting 2005). Research has shown that people are able to empathize with others emotionally before cognitive evaluation of what they see kicks in (Milne et al. 2011). This suggests that visual news affects the audience in ways that are different from words, yet the direction of this impact is hard to predict. Advocates of the quality improvement movement in healthcare, for example, recognize the importance of memorable images that “pull at the heart strings of everyone” and stand for stories of medical failures (Pronovost 2010). A perfect story, and a perfect image, lies at the intersection of the universal and the specific: it makes connections with the abstract ideals of right and wrong, yet provides enough context to appreciate the individual struggle of a human being.

The next sections document the social constructionist approach to the analysis of news images of violence within nonviolent social movement activism. I conclude by revisiting the initial theorizing in Chapter One, summarizing the contribution of the empirical part of the project, and identifying limitations and areas for future research. Below I document the significance of visual news for nonviolent social movement activism and how two tensions - universality vs singularity and words vs images - have informed each other within the confines of this dissertation.

### Visual Media as a Resource for Social Movements

The introduction of 24-hour news opened up seemingly unlimited time stretches of news reporting, while online publishing bid farewell to the constraints of space. Our media experiences can be simultaneous with experiences of other people on the other side of the globe, while English, the *lingua franca* of our age, provides opportunities for

connections with anybody anywhere. Armed with the internet and the iPhone, the world population seems to be moving toward a single planet-wide community of fate. In such a world, minorities and underprivileged groups should have more opportunities to get a sympathetic hearing of their grievances. Or so it would seem. Instead, more news outlets diffuse the hard-won public attention, and make it increasingly difficult for movements to climb to the top of the agenda of those who produce news in the variety of markets and media in which it is consumed. Even if we might be more thoroughly “wired” today than we were twenty years ago, the argument of limited public attention space rings as true today as it did in 1988 (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988).

Simmel’s idea that the growing number of voluntarily chosen group memberships “tends to enlarge the sphere of freedom... [because they allow] the individual to make his [sic] beliefs and desires felt” (Simmel 1983[1922]:323) has been revived in the current debate about “internet freedom” (Clinton 2010) that tends to center around the uses (and abuses) of social networking sites and their derivatives. Some have argued that the mere existence of the internet provides unsurpassed opportunities for people to connect across linguistic and class borders and hail the liberating capacities of new technologies (Jarvis 2011; Shirkey 2008), whereas skeptics have pointed out the limits of such connections, called to rein in the undue enthusiasm, and accused technology enthusiasts of a dangerously myopic vision of technological accessibility, basing their commentaries on their own experiences with the latest technologies, coming from the privileged Western position (Bob 2005; Morozov 2011).

Broadcast media technologies have been employed - with more or less success - by a variety of movements on the left and on the right. Some reflections on the possible

effects of media on society are as old as journalism itself - Tocqueville noted the importance of newspapers for democratic institutions, and Lenin compared the crucial role of the press to the revolutionary cause with scaffolding in the construction of a building. Even before mass circulated newspapers took off in the 19th century, other means of mass communication were employed to mobilize people for a variety of causes. From the first illustrated newspapers to YouTube, new mass communication technologies have provided opportunities for broadcasting visual messages to a mass audience. Each time, the image-disseminating technology was hailed the “dawn of a new era,” the era in which censorship crumbled, the people learned the truth, and good prevailed over evil. Each time, the euphoria was followed by bitter disappointment, when the same technologies were adopted by unscrupulous politicians for dubious purposes, or simply failed to deliver on their promise.

One voice that has spoken up especially clearly against what he terms “internet-centrism” is that of Evgeny Morozov (2011) of Stanford University. Morozov argues that not only democratic movements, but also dictatorships can use Twitter and Facebook to promote compliance and apathy among their electorate, or, like in the cases of Russia and China, even mobilize the people to nationalist anti-Western causes. There is nothing inherently “good” or “democratic” about new technologies. Just like radio and newsreel were employed with great dexterity by both Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, new digital technologies can - and have been - used to promote causes on the left and on the right. In extolling the positive aspects of new technologies, Morozov argues, technology commentators have failed to examine technology for what it really is - a tool of mass persuasion that can be wielded for all kinds of causes.

After a wave of protests in Iran, followed by the uniform Western media celebration of Twitter, the Canadian author Malcolm Gladwell (2010) wrote a piece in *The New Yorker* criticizing technological determinism. In an article titled provocatively “Small Change: why the revolution will not be tweeted,” Gladwell posits that the high-risk activism of the civil rights era, for example, required the kind of commitment that is incomparable with the “weak ties” (Granovetter 1973) connections we maintain through social media. Signing a petition online or clicking the “share” button on Facebook is not the same as “spending a summer being chased by armed men in pickup trucks” (Gladwell 2010).

Morozov and Gladwell were not the first to raise concerns over an unrealistically “rosy view” of the media as the watchdog of history (Bob 2005:2). The political scientist Clifford Bob (2005) offered a powerful critique of existing studies that attribute too much importance to the media’s “all-seeing eyes, pinpointing places in gravest distress” (Bob 2005:2). Bob writes that whereas the world’s heed to pain and suffering is limited, the number of non-state actors who strive to be recognized at any point in time is disproportionately large. This situation creates an unequal market-style dynamic (hence the book’s title), in which on the supply side are a small number of influential Western NGOs, and on the demand side are multiple non-state actors for whom international assistance means an opportunity to change the balance of power in their domestic conflict in their favor (Bob 2005:5). As his evidence demonstrates, winning NGO support is neither easy nor automatic, and the competition among groups is by no means fair: some are immediately advantaged over others due to their economic, political, or organizational situation (Bob 2005:5; Powell and DiMaggio 1983). What matters are the

cumulative efforts of the challengers and their active role in securing assistance from NGOs and sympathetic coverage from news outlets (Bob 2005:7).

One of the ways to promote a movement's image in the international media is by putting an appealing face on the group's cause. Visual representation of challengers plays a critical role here. Because NGOs' and media organizational requirements force them to prefer the groups whose profile most closely resembles their own (Bob 2005:5; DiMaggio and Powell 1983), challengers have to tap into the media's own criteria of newsworthiness in order to get publicity. Creating a political "spectacle" is one of popular strategies movements adopt. For example, anti-Milosevic protesters in Serbia in 2000 started a "Police University" in which they were reading excerpts from Plato and Aristotle over the bullhorn:

Clumps of students kept extending their way up the sidewalks, forcing the police to stretch their line and thereby liberating individual policemen for "intensive private tutorials." By midday, the police were having a hard time keeping a straight face, by midafternoon they weren't even trying. Every few hours the current unit would be marched out ("Class dismissed," the cry went up the crowd) (Weschler 2004:56).

To capture the distant viewer's imagination, challengers attempt to frame a local movement in a way that fits with powerful master narratives of the target audience (Bob 2005:28, 30, 33; 80-92; 161-164). Framing is a dynamic process between non-state actors, foreign NGOs, and the media, in which movement leaders are hard pressed to demonstrate most flexibility and adjust their presentation so as to satisfy the sponsors (Benford and Snow 2000; Benford and Hunt 2003). Because most distant conflicts appear "puny, parochial, or perplexingly abroad" (Bob 2005:30) to the Western audience, their appearance is groomed into familiar shapes in order to be more accessible to the average

*New York Times* reader.

In order to receive the international support, broader associations get highlighted while “local issues, sometimes those at the heart of a conflict, swept into the shadows” (Bob 2005:33). In *Remembering to Forget* (1998), the communication scholar Barbie Zelizer points out the persistent Holocaust tropes in imaging atrocity of today. For example, in the Bosnian war tribunal coverage, the *New York Times* allocated a much larger space to an image of the Nuremberg trials than the picture of the accused (Zelizer 1998:225). In her opinion, the danger of repeatedly using the Holocaust imagery to explain contemporary atrocities lies in “habituation” and “normalization” (Zelizer 1998:226) of horror that numbs the viewer and strips her of an ability to empathize. It is true that without the Holocaust as a model, some of these brutalities might have never made it into the papers. Cautioning against technology determinism, both Bob and Zelizer point out that news images thus far have overwhelmingly failed to affect policy decisions or translate into action (Zelizer 1998:232; Bob 2005:26). Chapter 4 examined some instances in which news images of famous examples of civil disobedience were used by sympathetic photojournalists to make sense of current protests they were covering.

Advantages of nonviolent methods notwithstanding, violence can be a powerful way to draw media attention. The organizational demands of news media require that challengers appeal to some universal ideals of good and evil (Bosk 2007). By their nature of creating a wider audience and speaking “directly to the body” (Milne et al. 2011), images have the potential to “pierce” the audience (Barthes 1981), engage them in ways that interviews, manifestos, and speeches cannot. The medium that transmits this image is

also important, as novel technologies are likely to be cheaper, have little social gravitas and may therefore appeal to the less advantaged groups within society, thus affecting the size and composition of their audience. Chapter 4 explored how violence - be it actual or implied - is portrayed in news images of nonviolent resistance, and what kinds of narratives are constructed around these images.

### The Value of Uncertainty

The power of news images lies in both the universality and singularity of representation. On the one hand, news images have the capacity to connect movements with their genealogical predecessors, and in doing so reduce uncertainty about possible outcomes, pointing out directions in which events might evolve. The sociologist Mabel Berezin, for example, writes that “[f]orm in politics... derives its power from familiarity” (Berezin 2006:73). A blurry image, for example, may have more purchase across cultural and political domains, as it can be differently interpreted and appropriated by larger - and more varied - audiences. On the other hand, the unique combination of factors that contributes to a particular nonviolent social movement interaction increases uncertainty about outcomes, makes the unfolding event less predictable and therefore may encourage more active participation on the part of all actors.

The social history part of Chapter Three described the way visual media came into existence, the contingencies and interactions of various business and government actors, and the opportunities they opened up for social movements to make their claims. Any news medium is ultimately a creation of a combination of forces, and none of them can fully control the result. The ever-changing media then always provide some outlet to

not only the state within which it emerges, but also to those who seek to reform the state. The media are the environment within which images circulate and as such they influence who images reach and, to a lesser extent, what effect they may have on the viewers. The power of the image, however, lies in the combination of its visual form and the medium within which it appears. Furthermore, its appeal to the universality and the singularity of the case, in combination, makes the image an important part of competing narratives of power and change.

Without giving the primacy to either the image or the medium, this dissertation inhabits the place in-between, exploring the tension between the medium and the message. Some of the images I studied are incredibly similar across time and space, which suggests the genealogical connections deliberately built by actors on both sides of the barricades, state and anti-state. Whether people received their news from TV broadcasts, press photography, newsreels or online, there are certain types of images that appear to be timeless. Tweaked a little bit to identify the protagonists, and embedded into narratives of struggle and power, these images are recognizable across cultural divides, and play on the viewers' understanding of right and wrong. This is especially true of those images who become iconic internationally because their transferability by necessity tends to reduce their complexity.

### Word vs Image

In writing about the tension between words and images in art, the art critic and media theorist Boris Groys concludes that

...one can neither say that the border between image and language can be



stabilized because it is constantly crossed in both directions nor can one say that this border can be abolished or deconstructed. Instead, this border is constantly negotiated; words and images are constantly transported, imported and exported. And in many respects, the economy of this trade has been the true engine of the development of art in the past decades (Groys 2011).

Not only art, but also news industries have thrived thanks to this negotiation.

Throughout the 20th century, broadcast media have laced together images and words, sometimes adding the former (print photography to newspapers, moving images to radio), other times the latter (silent newsreels added spoken words). The types of media I studied are undeniably different, but they all combined words and images in what at the time was perceived as a media revolution. I find in Chapter 3 that the addition of the visual component often meant expanding the audience of news, particularly reaching out to the formerly disadvantaged groups such as women or immigrants. By doing so, visual news have been able to create and sustain larger communities, at times coterminous with the humanity as a whole. This is visual news' limitation and its appeal: initially, visual news is often stigmatized as targeting groups whose literacy is considered suboptimal. But it is precisely this capacity of visual news to reach out to the disadvantaged that makes it an awesome tool for rebellion against the state because just like they protesters chanted in 1968 in Grant Park in Chicago, "The whole world is watching" (Gitlin 1980). This universalizing appeal of visual news has made it ripe for use by challengers within the state, even though they have not always done so with full awareness of the new medium's potential.

In our text-driven society, we are used to the fact that words can lie, or at least twist and distort the truth. Images, however, hold a special place in public imagination.

Chapter 3 has documented that many types of visual communication technologies were met with questions regarding their verisimilitude and universalizing capacities, and described some of the instances in which these discussions occurred. All image-reproducing technologies have repeatedly claimed better and more truthful representation of reality than their predecessors. They are perceived as simultaneously more “truthful” and more capable of lies than words. Sociologists using visual methods are accused of “manipulating” their subjects and/ or the reader in their published research, a claim that is quite the opposite of what obtains, for example, in courtrooms, where visual evidence reigns because “[u]sing legal photography, it's possible to bring whole accounts of historical facts into the courtroom” (Cantor, n.d.). It is

Because images, as opposed to words, are harder to contain within one linguistic field, they are more predisposed to jumping borders and appealing to the universal ideas of our shared humanity. Images that seem to especially touch their audiences are the ones that are least specific, but speak to some universal connection that all people have some affinity for: mothers and children, births and funerals, laughter, tears, hugs, what Barthes famously described as the “punctum” of the image (Barthes 1981). Sound - spoken words, music, background noise and emotional exclamations - stand between written words and images in their capacity to transmit information across linguistic boundaries. Sound and its interaction with images was not the focus of this dissertation; however, it presents a fruitful avenue for further inquiry.

### Limitations

This dissertation explores the ways news images of nonviolent resistance get

employed in narratives about social change by various actors. This study does not claim to document all nonviolent social movements in all times and places. The generalizability of its findings is limited to specific movements and time periods.

Some of the movements I studied (e.g. anti-Putin protests in Russia) are far from over at the time of my writing. It is impossible to predict the outcome of this activism, although the Russian government seems to have chosen the path of repression rather than negotiation with the opposition. Future research involving wider selection of news outlets, complemented by interviews with photojournalists covering those protests and social movement activists would be necessary to better understand the dynamic of these events. Other protests featured in this dissertation, such as the anti-coup protests in Moscow in 1991, have received some scholarly attention but the jury on their meaning is still out.

The case selection is simultaneously a major strength and a limitation of this project. I have focused on the movements in countries whose languages I can speak (U.S., U.K., Russia, Ukraine), excluding relevant cases from other parts of the world, which may or may not confirm my findings.

The study focuses on violence within nonviolent social movement activism. Nonviolent resistance is not limited to interactions that imply, involve, or threaten violence. Political humor and art, persuasion tactics of various sorts, political rallies and demonstrations, however fascinating, have remained outside the scope of this project.

Because this research is based on the analysis of images by the author, it is subjective and has some inherent biases. I hope that my analysis is taken in the spirit of inquiry and not conclusiveness. Some of the discussions of images are taken from

published journalistic accounts, while others are my own interpretations. I have no doubts that another researcher, when looking at the same images, might have found a different lens through which to analyze nonviolent social movement activism. Although including text commentary on images by movement contemporaries might have corrected this bias to some extent, it might have been useful to interview viewers from different countries about their perceptions of the images I used. The transhistorical nature of the project, however, has rendered this approach impossible: one could hardly find a meaningful sample of informants on the perceptions, for example, of the British suffragettes.

Despite all these limitations, I believe this study contributes significantly to the literatures on social movements, mass communication, conflict and social change. Nonviolent tactics have become increasingly popular in the past decades in various parts of the world. A better understanding of the dynamics of nonviolent resistance and its relation to violence may help explain and possibly reduce the social and economic costs of social protest. As the types of mass media we use are becoming more and more visual in form, we are poised to benefit from a closer examination of how news images reflect and create social hierarchies of power and social change.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

This project has dealt with a few topics in passing that may deserve further study. Below I identify some areas that I find particularly promising and feasible.

1. This project has focused on media products to the detriment of the organizational work carried out by social movement activists and journalists.

Ethnographic work that would tap into the structural routines behind image selection would provide an insight into what professional journalists and photographers, as well as social movement activists themselves, see as crucial in the image of nonviolence they would like to create.

2. The focus on nonviolent social movements in this project, ironically, brought out the emphasis on violence in news images of protests. In the case of social movements that resort to violent methods explicitly, does the meaning of violence change? What similarities and differences are there between nonviolent and violent social movements in their self-presentation?

3. This qualitative project would benefit from a quantitative study to compliment it. How often do different types of images appear in the news outlets with different ideological biases? How prevalent is violence in those images? How this portrayal is different in various countries, when covering a domestic conflict or the one abroad? What is the gender composition of people featured in those images, in various countries?

4. The movements I focused on were relatively successful in attracting media attention and making their cause visible. The question of what makes a movement successful in gaining publicity has remained outside the scope of this dissertation and deserves further study.

5. Chapter 5 has touched upon the dangers of fusing new technologies with left-wing idealism. While the internet has provided new ways to rally support for distant causes, it has also privileged opinions of English speaking people with the best and most reliable access to the internet, which has sometimes led to misrepresentation of

conflicts in distant countries, such as in the case of the Invisible Children and their Kony 2012 program. Future research comparing news coverage of protests within the domestic and international context could help explain and highlight some of these inherent biases of internet technologies.

### Research and Practice

Acts of civil disobedience have an impact on society only to the extent that other people are cognizant of them. The audience is a crucial part of the nonviolent social movement interaction. While eyewitnesses at the scene are important, the other part of the audience - removed but paying attention through mass media - also have power to impact protest outcomes. For that reason, social movements strive to create publicity opportunities to get media attention. Because the audience of visual news is always larger than that of news delivered in words, challengers create spectacles that are likely to be covered by the media visually. Violence is one of the major criteria for newsworthiness, and a crucial part of nonviolence repertoire.

When violence breaks out, news outlets are more likely to cover the event. This may result in much needed public attention for the cause that nonviolent resisters advocate. At times, however, it may lead to their isolation, especially when their actions are not clearly articulated to the larger audiences. While all types of violence increase publicity and engage people's emotions, different types of violence have different capacities to be embedded in the narratives about justice and power.

In Chapter 2, I identified four types of violence within nonviolence by their direction and actors involved: state violence, third-party violence, self-inflicted violence

and symbolic violence. In Chapter 4, I examined several instances of each type of violence to understand how power is contested by the state and anti-state actors in the public domain with the help of visual media, in both text and images. I have noted how various actors use news images to construct their narratives of unfolding events, as well as make transhistorical claims about the past in order to make predictions or express their aspirations for the future. In this process, they deliberately employ news images to advocate for their causes, align themselves with previous heroes of civil disobedience and play on the popular understandings of good and evil.

Direct implication of the state in perpetuating violence against peaceful resisters is more likely to inspire sympathy of the audience (although it may also intimidate them into avoiding protests out of fear for their own safety). Third-party violence usually involves some group within society that organizes to support or defend the existing order. The state, as a rule, does not explicitly support those groups, though often shows its approval implicitly through court decisions (e.g. in the case of the Pussy Riot trial in Russia) and comparatively lighter punishments for pro-state groups.

Self-inflicted violence, often in the form of suicide that gets reinterpreted as martyrdom, draws much media attention. The state may dismiss the incident as reckless behavior or a case of insanity. For example, Emily Wilding Davison's death was alternatively interpreted as a suicide or an act of martyrdom. Whether she did or didn't intend to die that day at the Derby, her death became a rallying point for both the suffrage movement and its opponents. Inserted in alternative narratives of heroism or insanity, her death and the images that documented it were used by actors to frame the movement in ways that fit with their ideal outcome for this conflict. Symbolic violence removes the

state from the picture, and thus from the mental map of the audience is well. This results in some difficulties for social movements to articulate their claims and explain their behavior, which may also be explained away by the authorities as insanity or evil intent.

With the addition of social media that allow a fast and easy dissemination of images, photos of protests have the potential to create echo-chambers of activists reposting and showing pictures to one another, without reaching broader population. The Russian American journalist Masha Gessen, for example, writes that the Russian online communities are incredibly isolated from one another, which may lead to a faster escalation of conflict between various group in society (Gessen 2012)

News images may assist us in understanding how events unfold, but they are poor substitutes for actual people on the ground locking hands and sitting down in protest against what they consider unjust. No number of photos can topple a dictator; a stubborn and determined minority can. Yet at the same time it would be disingenuous to forget that while images themselves are social constructs that signify an absence (Belting 2005) - something that has been and will never again be in that place - behind them are lives and struggles, sacrifices and accomplishments of real individuals who, for one reason or another, believed that change was possible and that it should come from them. The pictures may provide the inspiration for countless others, and therein lies their power.



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