

# **“The Police and the Populace”: Canadian Media’s Visual Framing of the 2010 G20 Toronto Summit**

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**ABSTRACT** *The clash between the slick marketing slogans of the police and the democratic protections of political dissent was on full display throughout citizen protests during the 2010 G20 meetings in Toronto, Canada. In addition to the summit’s excessive costs and organizational lapses, the eruption of violence and questionable police tactics dominated media coverage of the summit. This research investigates the media’s visual framing of the policing of the G20 Toronto summit through an analysis of 852 news images published in several print and online media outlets in Canada. The article examines how the “visual tone” of the images, news ideology, and the news medium affect the visual framing of the anti-corporate globalization movement in communications research.*

**KEYWORDS** *Visual communication; Frame analysis; Ideology; Globalization; New media*

**RÉSUMÉ** *Le conflit entre les slogans mercatiques sophistiqués de la police et les garanties démocratiques de la dissidence politique a été dévoilé lors des affrontements violents entre la police et les protestants lors des réunions du G20 en 2010 à Toronto au Canada. En plus des coûts exorbitants et les faiblesses organisationnels, l’éruption de la violence accompagnée des tactiques policières qui ont été mises en question ont dominé la couverture médiatique durant le sommet. Cette étude examine le cadrage visuel du maintien de l’ordre et la sécurité par les médias au sommet du G20 à travers une analyse de 852 images d’actualité publiées dans plusieurs journaux ainsi que des médias électroniques au Canada. L’article étudie le « ton visuel » des images, idéologie des médias, et le moyen d’information médiatique affectant le cadrage visuel du mouvement d’opposition au mondialisme.*

**MOTS CLÉS** *Communication visuelle; Analyse du cadrage; Idéologie; Mondialisation; Nouveaux médias*

## **Introduction**

Communications media have long constituted a symbolic battleground on which competing social constituents struggle to “frame” and present coherent narratives (Entman, 1993; Gitlin, 1980), control the pictures in people’s minds (Lippmann, 1922), vie for greater “visibility” (Thompson, 2000), and lobby “public opinion” to their side of history. In this contentious battle over power in society, corporate images, public pronouncements and outreach, strategic communication, and public relations

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have led the way. While strategic communication refers to “the strategic application of communication and how an organization functions as a social actor to advance its mission,” (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2007, p. 7) corporations have long cultivated their brands and passed themselves to the public as socially responsible corporate citizens. Non-governmental organizations employ strategic communication tools to attract public support for their myriad environmental, social, or political causes. Governments around the globe are positioning themselves as corporate enterprises that “sell” policies to the larger public (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Like other state organizations, police services are no different in trying to manage their public image carefully and glean public support from which they draw their legitimacy in liberal democracies (Mawby, 2002). For instance, the Toronto Police Service’s slogan, “To Serve and Protect,” has the unmistakable ring of a slick marketing slogan. For the public at least, the slogan encapsulates the mission of the police, which casts it in peaceful-sounding terms, “To Serve.” On the other side of the spectrum, the anti-corporate globalization movement has both appropriated and subverted these forms of “self-mass communication” to fight for an equitable world (Juris, 2005; Kahn & Kellner, 2004).

The clash between the police department’s slick marketing slogans and the democratic protections of political dissent was on full display throughout the violent confrontations and the policing of citizen protests during the 2010 G20 meetings in Toronto, Canada. The massive security operation of the G20 summit became the largest in Canadian history, involving local and provincial police, the RCMP, and the military (Monaghan & Walby, 2012). In addition to the unprecedented disruption of normal life in the city, the summit’s excessive costs and organizational lapses, the eruption of violence and questionable police tactics eclipsed media coverage of other summit issues. News images of burning police cruisers, threatening depictions of so-called Black Bloc protesters, and coverage of Toronto police rounding up potential suspects and incarcerating them in makeshift prisons overwhelmingly dominated media reports (Monaghan & Walby, 2012). This article investigates the media’s visual framing of the policing of the 2010 G20 Toronto Summit through an analysis of 852 news images published in mainstream print and online media outlets in Canada. Employing a visual framing analysis, the article analyzes how the visual “tone” of images, news organizations’ ideological leanings, and the news medium influence the visual frames of the anti-corporate globalization movement in the West.

### **Covering the anti-corporate globalization movement**

Police and anti-corporate globalization protesters have waged their communications war since the late 1990s, attracting researchers’ attention to the raging battle of images. From the “Battle of Seattle” to “the Battle of Genoa,” existing research related to the anti-globalization movement during the World Trade Organization (WTO), G8, or G20 meetings has almost exclusively focused on the communicative styles and strategies of the dissenting populace (e.g., Juris, 2005; Kahn & Kellner, 2004; Wall, 2003), or the media and journalists’ reporting strategies and framing of dissenting protests (e.g., Hall & Bettig, 2003; Jha, 2008), ignoring the state-apparatus and police forces’ communication tactics. For instance, Wall (2003) used the participant-observation

method to analyze and compare the communication tactics non-governmental organizations and the decentralized "street movement" groups employed during their 1999 protests against the WTO known as the "Battle of Seattle." Wall (2003) concluded that the "street movement" groups employed a "radical frame," unlike the institutional or "reformist frame" (p. 44) used by NGOs seeking to influence mainstream media. Juris (2005) critiqued the media-circulated images of wanton violence and destruction emanating from the anti-corporate globalization protests during the G8 summit in the Italian city of Genoa in 2001. He further argued that Genoa police successfully exploited images of protesters' own "performative violence" (p. 414) to portray militants as a threat to the social and moral order.

Despite different organizational covers, anti-corporate globalization protesters are united by their conviction that rich countries' policies "enable the super rich and powerful to exploit workers, ignore human rights, squeeze third world countries, and destroy the environment—all in pursuit of profits" (Hall & Bettig, 2003, p. 3). However, these issues never constitute the central "frames" in the presentation and coverage of the anti-corporate globalization movement by mainstream media (MSM). All too often, MSM's portrayals marginalize demands of activists by promoting narratives of "law and order" (Juris, 2008). Media ownership structure and framing strategies have been blamed for the jaundiced media coverage of dissent. In *The Whole World Is Watching*, Gitlin (1980) examined how the anti-Vietnam War movement of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was marginalized and portrayed as a threat to the social and moral order of the United States. The mainstream media "framed" SDS members as terrorists and anarchists bent on destruction, leading to the fragmentation and ultimate failure of SDS. Dominant and biased media frames largely result from concentrated media ownership in the hands of few corporations, which use their media power to serve and perpetuate the interests of the dominant structure. As Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue, the media are organically embedded in the dominant power structure, essentially both belonging to the same elite, and as such are disinterested in presenting counter-hegemonic stories that may pose a threat to U.S. "national interests." In the "propaganda model," Herman and Chomsky critique the mainstream media's overwhelming reliance on "official" sources—instead of oppositional voices—and on advertising whose ideological biases constitute "filters" that lead to the denigration of political dissent.

In contrast, the Internet has become a boon for dissenting social movements and activists seeking to circumvent MSM's skewed gaze in both distributing and receiving alternative news. While the role of the Internet and new media in energizing social movements cannot be underestimated (Kidd, 2003), most studies focus on social movements' use of the Internet as a "mobilization" and "counter-framing" tool. The rise of what Castells (2007) describes as "self-mass communication" opens up new spaces for more "horizontal communication" (p. 239) from the many-to-many. In the "network society," anti-corporate globalization activists and other social actors seek to harness these "self-mass communication" digital media tools to create a new "counter-power," that is, new tools to "challenge and eventually change the power relations institutionalized in society" (p. 248). The success of the Indymedia and

Independent Media Center projects in offering alternative news that challenges the hegemonic narratives of corporate media demonstrates the vital role of Internet activism (Kidd, 2003; Pickard, 2006). Yet, despite this promise, the websites of mainstream media still retain an audience reach advantage. Their capacity to “mass communicate” on these online platforms remains unrivalled due to their established institutional and organizational advantages over alternative news outlets (Hindman, 2008). The need to examine mainstream media’s online platforms is as great as the task of scrutinizing what Hindman calls “the myth of digital democracy” (p. 81). That is why this study compares both print and online coverage by mainstream media of the anti-corporate globalization movement.

### **Framing and the “visual turn”**

Media researchers have long recognized the media’s influential role in shaping the social world, processes described as “priming,” “agenda setting,” and “framing” (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). As a theory of how news stories are “constructed,” framing embodies a “visual trope” in communication scholarship (Frosh, 2011) that implies the existence of “prisms,” “windows,” and “angles” through which audiences make sense of news events. Frame construction involves “selection, emphasis, and presentation” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7) of certain aspects of the news to increase their salience as “interpretative” frameworks. A similar emphasis underlies Entman’s (1993) definition of framing as the selection of some aspects of reality “to make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (p. 52). The fact that “selection and salience” symbolically promote certain narratives has been captured in Reese’s (2001) definition of frames as “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (p. 11). Since words, phrases, and images are indispensable tools used to construct these “organizing principles,” or central narratives, media researchers have focused not only on the frames’ effects on audiences, but also on how these frames are constructed in the first place. The preoccupation with the construction and production of frames in media discourse, however, seems to have largely been limited to the traditional “textual” aspects of news stories, notwithstanding a deeper appreciation of the impact of visuals on the larger news frames.

The centrality of news images to the news framing process has recently been acknowledged in what has been described as a “visual turn” (Jay, 2002) in communication research. According to Griffin (2004), “more than they describe, photographs tend to symbolize generalities, providing transcending frames of cultural mythology or social narratives in which the viewer/reader is led to process and interpret other information on the page or screen” (p. 384). Scholarship on visual frames has begun to narrow this gap in framing research (e.g., Messaris & Abraham, 2003). In a comparative analysis of the *New York Times* and the *Guardian* newspapers’ photographs of the 2003 Iraq War, Fahmy and Kim (2008) concluded that the pictorial coverage was “unprecedented” (p. 455) in its emphasis on the human cost of the war, particularly among Iraqi civilians. News photographs assist audiences in cultivating not only awareness but also recollection of momentous events, and thus shape a nation’s collective memory (Sontag, 2004).

In an investigation of visual frames of the first, second, and third anniversaries of the Iraqi invasion as a "past (resurrected) event," Schwalbe (2006) found that these visual frames emphasize "the human face of war" rather than the war machine itself.

Despite the productive and systematic nature of framing analysis, media researchers have had to confront a persistent question: How can media frames be analyzed and detected in a way that yields "valid" and "reliable" (i.e., replicable) results? Thus, content analysis of visual data is quite common in visual framing studies that "inductively" or "deductively" identify the visual frames in photographs (e.g., Fahmy, 2004, 2007; Messaris & Abraham, 2001; Schwalbe, Silcock, & Keith, 2008). For instance, Schwalbe (2006) preferred to inductively glean visual frames from the actual photographs of the Iraqi War, rather than analyze the visual frames depicted in the data deductively. Similarly, Parry's (2010) analysis of British press photography used a similar "inductive" approach and then had independent coders code the data for content analysis. In this study, an inductive approach is used to analyze the visual frames found in news photographs of the Toronto G20 protests. The benefits of this inductive approach include a close and data-driven analysis that permits "visual frames" to emerge directly from the data.

### **Research objectives and questions**

The production and dissemination of news images of violence in anti-corporate globalization protests constitutes an important subject of study because of their potential to de-legitimize dissent in liberal democracies. Several interrelated objectives warrant this inquiry into how the media's visual framing strategies constructed the anti-corporate globalization protests during the Toronto G20 summit. The overarching goal of this study was to determine how news images of protesters' "violence" during the Toronto G20 summit fit within the overall police communication strategy that denigrates and demonizes activists and protesters. In terms of communication scholarship, this research contributes to framing literature regarding the potential intersections between the media's visual and textual frames. Another objective relates to tracking the evolving impact of mainstream new media on the visual framing of social movements. The last goal is articulated through comparing the visual frames circulated in mainstream print and online media outlets.

In approaching these objectives, the first research question of the study (RQ1) addresses print media's visual "tone" regarding anti-corporate globalization protestors, the police, and world leaders. Specifically, how do "primary" news images compare with "secondary" news images in the "tone" of their visual coverage of the G20? The visual "tone" of news has been found to play an important part in the framing of social protest and politics (e.g., De Vreese, Claes, Banducci, Semetko, Hall, & Boomgaaden, 2006; Fahmy, 2007; Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams, & Trammell, 2005; McLeod & Detenber, 1999). News photographs' visual "tone" (i.e., "neutral," "positive," or "negative" frames) constitutes an important part of the overall news frames that can be used to either legitimize or de-legitimize political expression and dissent. A "negative" visual tone can imply that protesters represent a threat to society, whereas a "positive" tone regarding the police can overemphasize their role as "guardians" of social peace, and thus may even legitimize their excessive use of violence and force. Based on accumulated litera-

ture on how mainstream media deal with political dissent and the G20 protest movement (e.g., Gitlin, 1980; Hall & Bittig, 2003), it is expected that the data will confirm a negative framing of protesters, and a positive framing of the police and world leaders. Since this is an inquiry into news images, comparing the visual frames emanating from “primary” and “secondary” news will be conducted to offer a more nuanced understanding of the “visual tone” of news coverage.

The ideological leaning and ownership of print media must be interrogated to fully grasp the impact of visual framing. In this regard, the second research question of the study (RQ2) investigates how the “ideology” of mainstream media affects the visual framing of social protest. Specifically, how does the ideological leaning of news organizations influence the visual framing of anti-corporate globalization protesters, the police, and world leaders? Below, I outline three overarching visual frames that dominate media coverage of citizen activists’ encounters with police during these G20 meetings: a “lawlessness and violence” frame, a “law and order” frame, and a “civil liberties” frame. To address RQ2, I compare how different newspapers with divergent ideological leanings employ each of the above visual frames.

Based on the proliferation and growing influence of new media, I further compare the visual framing of the G20 protests by studying how images from print and electronic news sources portrayed world leaders, the protesters, and the police. Hence, the third research question (RQ3) compares print and online mainstream media’s visual framing of anti-corporate globalization protesters, the police, and world leaders. Focusing on CBC.ca and CTV.ca, the study examines these websites as examples of mainstream online media in Canada. New media’s ascendance requires a framing analysis of published news images to shed light on how Canada’s mainstream media deploy visual framing strategies and various media platforms to legitimize or de-legitimize political dissent and anti-corporate global activism.

### **Method and data analysis procedures**

This research examines mainstream media’s print and online visual framing of the G20 Toronto summits. Canada hosted the 2010 G8 Summit in Huntsville, Ontario, on June 25 and June 26, while the 2010 G20 Summit was held in Toronto on June 26 and June 27 (TPS, 2011). To better capture the media’s visual “tone” during this period, the study’s sample focuses on news images published in Canadian media outlets between June 24 and June 28, 2010, a day before and a day after the official summit dates. This was a period of intense media attention given the chaos that reigned over Toronto and the ensuing violence as well as the questionable police interventions and reaction to anti-corporate globalization protests. To assess how Canadian media visually framed the G20 events, newspaper images were retrieved from microfiche newspaper records. In addition, news images of the G20 published on CBC.ca and CTV.ca were retrieved from the websites between May and June 2011. A second search of these websites was conducted in June 2012 to ensure that any missed images were included in the data.

The study selected eight Canadian newspapers and two mainstream news media websites based on their position and status in the Canadian news ecosystem. The analysis focused on the print editions of selected newspapers and the websites of two mainstream Canadian broadcasters, CBC.ca and CTV.ca. Newspaper issues were ordered

from Library and Archives Canada. Geographic location, national and regional reach, corporate ownership, and political influence were the primary criteria used to select the newspaper sample (see Table 1). In terms of location, the sample included major publications from four Canadian regions (Atlantic, Central, the Prairies, and the Pacific). The sample represented diverse ownership structures and affiliations, from Torstar, Postmedia, and Quebecor to CTVglobemedia. While the *National Post* and the *Globe and Mail* are national dailies, the rest of the sample includes a mix of local and regional newspapers. The sample exhibited diversity at the level of circulation, with the *Toronto Star* reaching a weekly circulation average of more than 2 million, whereas *St. John’s Telegram* represented the least circulated newspaper in the sample. *Le Journal de Montréal* and *La Presse*, two influential French-language newspapers based in Québec, were also included. Finally, publication frequency was taken into consideration: about half of the newspapers in the sample are published from Monday to Saturday. This was an important consideration given that the G8 and G20 events took place over the weekend of June 24, 2010. The second research question focuses on how the ideological affiliation of newspapers influences visual frames. Although it is challenging to categorize the ideological affiliation of news outlets, scholars can usually look to the editorial political leanings and ownership structure to get an approximate ideological categorization. Applying these tools to the Canadian mainstream news media, the *Toronto Star* has been considered as “left-of-centre” because of its “social-

**Table 1: Selected newspapers**

Newspapers	Language	Canadian Region	Province	Weekly Average Circulation	Publication Frequency	Owner
<i>The Vancouver Sun</i>	English	B.C. & Yukon	B.C.	1,072,029	M-Sa	Postmedia Network Inc.
<i>Winnipeg Free Press</i>	English	Prairies	Manitoba	891,133	M-Su	F.P. Cdn. Np Ltd.
<i>The Telegram, St. John’s</i>	English	Atlantic	Newfoundland	138,876	M-Su	Transcontinental Inc.
<i>La Presse, Montréal</i>	French	Québec	Québec	1,276,623	M-Su	Power Corp. of Canada
<i>Le Journal de Montréal</i>	French	Québec	Québec	1,469,899	M-Su	Quebecor/Sun Media
<i>Toronto Star</i>	English	Ontario	Ontario	2,044,024	M-Su	Torstar
<i>The Globe and Mail*</i>	English	Ontario	Ontario	1,906,686	M-Sa	CTV Globemedia Inc.
<i>National Post*</i>	English	Ontario	Ontario	949,498	M-Sa	Postmedia Network Inc.

\* While they are Ontario-based, the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* have national circulation and are thus classified as national dailies.

liberal editorial stance” (Greenberg, 2000), the *Globe and Mail* represents the mainstream political “center” (Jiwani, 2005), while the *National Post* falls within the “right wing” Canadian political spectrum because of its unabashedly conservative political stance (Greenberg, 2000). Although the foregoing does not constitute a full ideological analysis, this article will explore the relationship between the ideological bent of a newspaper and its visual framing of social protest.

### *Image data*

The image was the unit of analysis. A total of  $N=852$  G20-related images were categorized as either “primary” or “secondary” images. “Primary” images refer to large-size photos prominently placed on the newspapers’ sheets and/or accompanying a main news story, while all smaller-size images were coded as “secondary.” In addition, all images at the top of the news item in a news website, and plainly visible without scrolling down, which is roughly the equivalent of “above the fold” newspaper stories, were coded as “primary” images. Using microfiche archives of the selected newspapers, a total of 386 were retrieved from the issues of eight newspapers. Of these, 162 images were coded as primary and 224 were coded as secondary (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Print media image sample**

Newspapers	Number of Primary Images	Number of Secondary Images	Grand Total
Vancouver Sun	17	12	29
Winnipeg Free Press	9	11	20
The Telegram, St. John’s	4	4	8
Le Journal de Montréal	13	11	24
Toronto Star	56	88	144
La Presse, Montréal	7	6	13
Globe and Mail	29	22	51
National Post	27	69	96
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>386</b>

Similar to the print media sample, the online media sample represented a mix of ideological and professional affiliations in Canada’s mediascapes. Two news websites belonging to Canada’s most influential broadcasters were included in the study: the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s (CBC) news ([www.cbc.ca](http://www.cbc.ca)) and CTV News ([www.ctv.ca](http://www.ctv.ca)). These websites were included because they are well-established news outlets in the Canadian news ecosystem. Using the keywords “G8/G20 Toronto summit,” “G8,” and “G20,” these websites were searched and yielded many images published between June 24 and 28, 2010. In addition, hyperlinks to other stories published on the websites were traced to ensure that all related images were included in the data. A total of 45 images were retained from the two websites, including 28 “primary” images and 17 “secondary” images (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Online media image sample**

Websites	Number of Primary Images	Number of Secondary Images	Grand Total
CBC.ca	18	8	26
CTV.ca	10	9	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>45</b>

*Coding categories*

A visual analysis of the data was conducted following a simplified coding sheet at two stages. The first stage focused on the visual “tone” of media coverage, particularly how anti-corporate globalization protesters, the police, and world leaders were portrayed. Lack of access to hard copies of the newspapers selected for analysis prevented the researcher from a better measurement of the images’ size or employment of additional coders to calculate “intercoder” reliability. To address this shortcoming, the researcher showed a sample of G20 news photographs to media studies faculty and students to gauge how they would describe the visual impact and message of these photographs. Based on the feedback, image portrayals were coded as “positive,” “negative,” or “neutral” in tone. “Positive” images refer to those that “glamorize” their subjects, be they police, protesters, or world leaders. If police and other members of law enforcement were portrayed glamorously while preserving “law and order” and carrying out their duties, their image would be coded as “positive” (e.g., Figure 1). A “positive” image of anti-corporate globalization protesters would be one that shows protesters as marching in a peaceful or orderly manner. A “negative” image portrays its subjects as violent or threatening, or depicts desolate background scenes and disorderly gatherings. If an image shows a chaotic scene, where protesters are breaking store windows, for instance, it would be coded as “negatively” framing the protesters (e.g., Figure 2). Images that fail to clearly criticize or glamorize their subjects were coded as “neutral.” Thus, news photographs that neither criticize nor praise the police, activists, or G20 world leaders were coded as “neutral” in tone (e.g., Figure 3).

**Figure 1: A squad of mounted police patrol during the 2010 G20 Summit in Toronto**



Source: CBC.ca

**Figure 2: A protester vandalizes a storefront window during the 2010 G20 Summit in Toronto**



Source: CBC.ca

**Figure 3: World leaders in the 2010 G20 Summit meeting**



Source: CBC.ca

In the second stage of the analysis, I consulted previous research on the anti-corporate globalization movement, protesters, and police violence, as well as mainstream media's coverage of previous G20 meetings. In keeping with previous research, my review concluded that three overarching frames prevail in media coverage of citizen activists' encounters with police during these G20 meetings. These frames are a "lawlessness and violence" frame, a "law and order" frame, and a "civil liberties" frame. Images with a "lawlessness and violence" frame highlight the violence and chaos that ensued after the police and protesters clashed. For instance, images of a police cruiser on fire, overt use of violent force by the police, or of protesters breaking a store window would be coded as highlighting the "lawlessness and violence" frame (e.g., Figure 2). A "law and order" frame, however, would emphasize the need for security and the "constructive" role police forces play in ensuring citizens' safety. For instance, images that highlight the "security zone" erected by the police, or show the police in full riot gear, would be considered part of this frame (e.g., Figure 5). The "civil liberties" frame would include all news photographs that emphasize citizens' democratic rights to dissent and free speech. For instance, this frame would be depicted in an image of citizens using creative ways to express their disapproval of the G20 economic and social policies, or one that portrays Aboriginals

protesting against corporate-driven globalization, or an image that depicts demonstrators marching for maternal health and women’s rights issues (e.g., Figure 4). In some cases, images impart multiple frames, a “law and order” and “civil liberties” frame (e.g., Figure 5), and those cases were coded as featuring multiple frames.

**Figure 4: Activists march for women’s health during the 2010 G20 Summit in Toronto**



Source: CBC.ca

**Figure 5: A protester and police during the 2010 G20 Summit in Toronto**



Source: CBC.ca

## Results

### *Visual tone*

The first research question analyzes how newspaper images of the G20 depicted anti-corporate globalization protesters, the massive police forces deployed for the meetings, and world leaders attending the G20 meetings. Images that do not depict protesters, the police, or world leaders were labelled as “other.” Such images included but were not limited to deserted neighbourhoods, security fences, world leaders’ spouses, broken storefronts, or desolate buildings. Moreover, the study distinguished “primary” images that dominate the page from “secondary” images, those of lesser prominence. Image depictions of protesters, the police, world leaders, or “other” were coded as “positive,” “negative,” or “neutral” (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Visual coverage of G8 and G20 summits in Canadian print media**

	Primary Images						Secondary Images						Total	
	Negative		Positive		Neutral		Negative		Positive		Neutral			
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Protesters	26.87	36	11.19%	15	11.19%	10	33.58%	45	5.97%	8	14.93%	20	100	134
Police	3.96%	4	42.57%	43	42.57%	6	0.99%	1	44.55%	45	1.98%	2	100	101
World Leaders	1.83%	2	13.76%	15	13.76%	41	1.83%	2	2.75%	3	42.20%	46	100	109
Other	14.61%	13	7.87%	7	7.87%	9	29.21%	26	4.49%	4	33.71%	30	100	89

*Anti-corporate globalization protesters:* A majority of the combined images (60.5%;  $N=81$ ) depicted protesters negatively, with 26.9% ( $N=36$ ) primary and 33.6% ( $N=45$ ) secondary images (see Figure 4). Neutral depictions of protesters ranked second after negative portrayals, with 7.5% ( $N=10$ ) primary and 14.9% ( $N=20$ ) secondary images neutrally depicting protesters. Positive portrayals of G20 protesters were the least frequent, representing 11.2% ( $N=15$ ) primary and 6% ( $N=8$ ) secondary images.

*Police:* Overall, an overwhelming majority of all police depictions (87.1%;  $N=88$ ) were positive, with primary and secondary images constituting 42.6% ( $N=43$ ) and 44.6% ( $N=45$ ), respectively. A low number of images portrayed the police in a neutral fashion, with 5.9% ( $N=6$ ) primary and 2% ( $N=2$ ) secondary images, respectively. Negative depictions of the police were the least frequent, with 4% ( $N=4$ ) for primary and 1% ( $N=1$ ) for secondary images.

*World leaders:* News photographs showing world leaders attending G20 meetings were overwhelmingly neutral (79.8%;  $N=87$ ), of which 37.6% ( $N=41$ ) were primary images and 42.2% ( $N=46$ ) were secondary. Positive depictions ranked second, with 13.8% ( $N=15$ ) primary and 2.8% ( $N=3$ ) secondary images. Negative images were the least frequent, at 1.8% ( $N=2$ ) primary and 1.8% ( $N=2$ ) secondary images.

### *Visual frames and ideology*

The study selected three influential newspapers from the sample to analyze the relationship between ideological affiliation and visual framing of the G8 and G20 summits. The newspapers' own editorial policies and leanings were used to classify them in one of the following categories along the Canadian political spectrum: "left of centre" (the *Toronto Star*), mainstream political "centre" (the *Globe and Mail*), and "right of centre" (the *National Post*) (Greenberg, 2000; Jiwani, 2005). A framing analysis of the newspapers' images covering the G20 protests examined how the visual coverage constructed one of these overarching "visual frames": a "lawlessness and violence" frame, a "law and order" frame, or a "civil liberties" frame (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Newspapers’ ideological affiliation and visual frames**

Visual Frame	<i>The Toronto Star</i>		<i>The Globe and Mail</i>		<i>The National Post</i>	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
“Lawlessness and violence”	27.8	40	21.8	12	36.7	47
“Law and order”	48.6	70	74.6	41	52.3	67
“Civil liberties”	23.6	34	3.6	2	11	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>128</b>

A first look at the results indicates that the “law and order” frame predominated for the images of all three newspapers, representing 48.6% (*N*=70) of the *Toronto Star*, 74.6% (*N*=41) of the *Globe and Mail* sample, and 52.3% (*N*=67) of the *National Post* sample. While the *Globe and Mail* G20 images were overwhelmingly depicting the “law and order” frame, *Toronto Star*’s images were the least likely to promote this visual frame.

A deeper examination of the results reveals that the *Toronto Star* devoted more space to images that promoted the “civil liberties” frame, with 23.6% (*N*=34), compared to the *National Post*’s 11% (*N*=14), or the *Globe and Mail*’s 3.6% (*N*=2). Moreover, the *National Post*’s images were more likely than images from the other two newspapers to construct a “lawlessness and violence” frame, with 36.7% (*N*=47), compared to *The Toronto Star*’s 27.8% (*N*=40), and the *Globe and Mail*’s 21.8% (*N*=12).

*Visual frames in print versus online mainstream media*

In addressing the third research question, the study compared mainstream print and online media’s visual framing of the G20 Toronto protests (see Table 6). Despite the differences in the sample, a majority of the images from both print and online media promoted a “law and order” frame. Hence, 59.4% (*N*=249) of the images published in the print media sample clearly privilege the “law and order” frame, and, similarly, 51.9% (*N*=27) of the images published online promoted the same frame.

**Table 6: Media type and visual frames**

Visual Frame	Print Media		Online Media	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
“Lawlessness and violence”	29.8	125	21.2	11
“Law and order”	59.4	249	51.9	27
“Civil liberties”	10.7	45	26.9	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>52</b>

Within mainstream media, the visual framing of the protests in print and online sources varies, however, in the degree to which they promoted a “lawlessness and violence” or a “civil liberties” framing of the G20 protests. The “lawlessness and violence” visual frame constituted the second most frequent frame constructed in print media’s images, with 29.8% (*N*=125), while the “civil liberties” frame ranked a

distant third at 10.7% ( $N=45$ ). In contrast, the “civil liberties” frame ranked as the second most frequent visual frame to be encountered in online MSM sources, with a 26.9% ( $N=14$ ), while the “lawlessness and violence” frame was the least frequent, with 21.2% ( $N=11$ ).

### Discussion and conclusions

While visual frames work in tandem with textual frames to create an overarching news frame (Mellese & Müller, 2012), this study demonstrates how independent and powerful visuals are in framing dissenting voices in the public sphere. The article analyzed a total of  $N=852$  images published in Canadian mainstream media, including eight newspapers and the websites of two leading national news broadcasters. First, the image data indicate an overwhelming “negative” portrayal of the G20 protesters, a very “positive” depiction of the police, and a “neutral” depiction of world leaders and officials attending the summit. Second, the ideological affiliation of newspapers still matters in the visual framing of the anti-corporate globalization movement. However, ideological affiliation of mainstream media fails to translate into a positive coverage of the movement, since the news media are predictably more attracted to shocking images of “lawlessness and violence” compared to those that depict peaceful political dissent or a “civil liberties” frame. Third, a comparison of mainstream media online and print images found little difference between the two, although the “civil liberties” frame was highlighted more in online media compared to print media.

The finding that even “left-leaning” media fail to highlight the “civil liberties” frame as prominently as the “lawlessness and violence” frame suggests that the anti-corporate globalization movement and activists should rethink their strategic approach to mainstream media. If anti-globalization protesters’ presumed goal is to “re-appropriate” public space (Juris, 2005) and “hijack” media attention focused on these official summits, they do achieve their goal but at a huge cost to their cause. The larger frame that mainstream media highlight serves little to promote activists’ legitimate concerns about how corporate globalization sidesteps important questions regarding global health and poverty, equitable distribution of economic resources, and democratic governance and human rights issues. The overarching frame, instead, becomes one of “lawless” demonstrators wreaking havoc to the same public space they seek to “liberate.” Hence, visual frames perform ideological functions similar to other media/text frames, in the sense that they both (a) denigrate political dissent while promoting the status quo, and (b) obscure a grassroots critique of social inequalities and economic disparity. The images that capture the media’s imagination are not those of peaceful marches or creative dissent. Juris (2005) explained how the anti-corporate globalization movement’s media coverage reveals a tension between “traditional” and “non-traditional” forms of protest. On the one hand, traditional forms of protest, such as peaceful street marchers, yield sympathetic, albeit smaller, media coverage. On the other hand, “non-traditional” protests attract greater but less sympathetic media coverage. This tension between forms of protest seems to affect the visual coverage of the G20 protests as journalists, editors, and news organizations are irresistibly attracted to images of chaos and mayhem.

These findings go beyond reiterating cumulative research evidence that traditional MSM’s coverage of politics and social movements de-legitimizes dissent (Gitlin, 1980;

McLeod & Hertog, 1992). In fact, the findings cast some doubt on the potential positive impact of new media on the coverage of social movements and political dissent. That images gleaned from mainstream new media sources do not significantly diverge from print media's images of the G20 protests might be disappointing to those who have hailed the ability of the Internet to challenge the power of mainstream media (e.g., Kahn & Kellner, 2004). This implication has to be qualified, however, because the present study did not include blogs and social media in its analysis of new media, which should be investigated in future studies.

Overall, the study's main contribution illuminates mainstream media's visual framing of social protest and anti-globalization movements. The findings demonstrate that ideological leanings, corporate affiliation, and the type of medium have very limited influence on the visual framing of social protest in mainstream media. In this respect, the visual data from different mainstream Canadian media suggest the prevalence of the "lawlessness and violence" frame. The media's attention is wholly focused on constructing a visual narrative of the anti-corporate globalization movement driven by images of private property destruction and anarchy. Alternative explanations of these findings may argue that this attention is driven by newsworthiness considerations and how images of destruction are more sensational than peaceful demonstrations. Yet, this interpretation does not totally explain how the "civil liberties" frame remains less visible in the image data. The fact that news photographs depicting "civil liberties" frames are difficult to capture should not be used as an *a posteriori* rationale that exculpates the media from their social responsibility to provide enough visual information on social movements and grassroots protest to counter the media's excessive focus on pictures of mayhem. Alternative media sources have proven that it is possible to shed light on the "civil liberties" frames and provide more contextual information about the G20 protesters' social and political platforms (Pickard, 2006; Wall, 2003).

Despite their importance, these research findings have some limitations. First, the study's observations about ideological affiliation of the newspaper sample relied on deductive reasoning regarding the editorial policies of the newspapers. This means that a full ideological analysis requires both a close analysis of news reports as well as in-depth interviewing of reporters. Such full ideological analysis, however, falls outside the scope of the present article, because that would require a different set of questions and data gathering resources. Future research should take on this task because it has the potential to enhance visual framing theory. Second, the study's comparative analysis of mainstream print and online media relied on the visual data of two mainstream news websites (CBC.ca and CTV.ca). This was based on the fact that websites of these established, mainstream organizations attract more online visitors than the websites of lesser-known organizations, based on what Hindman (2008) describes as the law of "the winners-take-all" (p. 9). Still, the author acknowledges that a comparative analysis of "alternative" online news sources would shed further light on the potential of online media to challenge the denigration of social protest by hegemonic narratives and ideologies. Moreover, the study recommends that an analysis of the visuals used on television newscasts should be undertaken by future research because it will further enrich our understanding of the visual framing of social movements.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that the prevalence of the “lawlessness and violence” frame in both print and online mainstream media’s photographic coverage of the anti-corporate globalization movement should not be reduced to the media’s professional structure. It would likewise be simplistic to blame this lopsided visual framing on the ideological affiliation and ownership of the media. In fact, a more balanced approach would recognize that the mainstream media’s professional and ideological leanings operate in an information environment in which police services took a more proactive stance in 2010 to de-legitimize and “criminalize” Toronto’s G20 protesters. A public inquiry into Toronto police’s professionalism and questionable conduct released by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) in May 2012 offers some support for this conclusion. Based on hundreds of complaints about police tactics and conduct, the OIPRD 2012 investigation acknowledged that “disorganized, poorly trained police had often trampled on the rights of protesters and sometimes resorted to excessive force” (Gee, 2012, n. p.). On the brighter side, and despite their many shortcomings, mainstream media outlets helped document this same heavy-handed policing of citizen protest during the 2010 G20 Summit.

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