

# Politics, Consumption or Nihilism: Disorder and Protest, the UK and beyond



Pendleton, Salford, Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August (photos courtesy of Stephen Broadhurst)

**Sheffield Hallam University, 210 Norfolk Building, Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> and Friday 14<sup>th</sup>  
September 2012**

**Sheffield  
Hallam  
University**

**The Sociology, Politics and Policy Research  
Group and Cultural, Communication and  
Computing Research Group**

## Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September

09.30 - Welcome/refreshments

10.00 - Opening Address: Prof. David Waddington, Dr Bob Jeffery and Dr Joseph Ibrahim

10.15. - Keynote 1: Prof. Simon Hallsworth - 'When the rules went down: reflections on the "year zero" riots'

11.30 - Coffee break

11.45 - Panel 1: Student Protest

- Audrey Laurin-Lamothe, Université du Québec à Montréal

*Student's Strike in Quebec against Entrepreneurial Universities: Law and Order Response and Discourse*

- Alexander Hensby, University of Edinburgh

*'Going to a party where you don't know anybody' – paths and barriers to mobilization in the 2010/11 student protests against fees and cuts*

- Dr Joseph Ibrahim, Sheffield Hallam University

*The moral economy of student protest networks in the UK*

13.15 - Lunch

14.15 - Panel 2: English Riots 2011

- Ryan Powell, CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University
- Prof John Flint, University of Sheffield

*The English City Riots of 2011, 'Broken Britain' and the Retreat into the Present*

- Christian Garland, University of Warwick

*'Simulating events as they happen: spectacle, ideology, and readymade boogeymen - the 2011 August Riots and the media'*

- Prof Tony Jefferson, Keele University

*The Riots 2011: Another moral panic or ... what?*

#### 15.45 - Refreshments

#### 16.00 - Panel 3: Occupy and Occupations

- Ass. Prof Marilena Simiti, University of Piraeus

*The Occupy Movement, Protest and the Far Right in Greece*

- Prof Leocadia Diaz Romero, University of Murcia, visiting scholar at Columbia University

*Direct Democracy, Social Movements and Protest in Digital Societies. Special Consideration to Occupy Wall Street*

- Prof Simon Winlow, University of Teeside

*Occupy, Postmodernism and the Politics of Opposition*

#### 17.30 - Keynote 2: Prof Nick Crossley - 'Collective Action Networks: A Relational Approach'

#### 18.45 - Close and restaurant

## Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September

09.30 - Welcome/refreshments

10.00 - Keynote 3: Prof. Tim Hope - 'TBA'

11.15 - Refreshments

11.30 - Panel 4: Rioting in Salford

- Waqas Tufail, Manchester Metropolitan University
- Dr Bob Jeffery, Sheffield Hallam University

*Policing, Gentrification and Securitisation: The Pendleton Riot Deconstructed*

- Will Jackson, University of Central Lancashire

*Liberalism and the denial of conflict: the UK riots as 'shopping with violence'*

- Dan Silver, Salford Action Research Foundation

*A Tale of Two Cities: Complex Causes, Complex Solutions. A Response to the August, 2011 riots in Salford & Manchester*

13.00 - Lunch

14.00 - Panel 5: Public Disorder: Causes, Meanings and Evidence

- Fabien Jobard, Center for Sociological Research on Law and Criminal Justice Institutions (CESDIP) /CNRS

*Disorder and Protest in France and the UK in comparison, with a look at peaceful Germany*

- Roger Ball, University of West of England

- Dr John Drury, University of Sussex

*(Mis)representing the August riots: How statistics were used to sustain ideological explanations*

- Dick Pitt, Sheffield Hallam University

*Mass movements – the markets and democracy*

15.30 - Refreshments

15.45 - Panel 6: Organising Dissent/Policing Protest

- Dr Pollyanna Ruiz, London School of Economics and Political Science

*Disordering Demonstrations; Maptivism, Sukey and the Occupation of City Spaces*

- Joanna Gilmore, University of Manchester

*'Is it because he is Muslim?': The criminalisation of dissent in the 'War on Terror'*

16.45 - Closing roundtable chaired by Prof. David Waddington

17.30 - Close

## Keynote speakers

### Keynote 1: Prof. Simon Hallsworth, University Campus Suffolk

Biography:

**Professor of Sociology and Head of the School of Applied Social Sciences.** Simon has written extensively on urban violence and wider changes in the nature of punishment in the post war era. Co-editor of the *New Punitiveness* and the author of *Street Crime* his recent work has involved studying the social response to the English riots, urban street gangs and animal abuse. He is currently completing a book with John Lea on what they term the emerging security state for Pluto press.

### 'When the rules went down: reflections on the "year zero" riots'

By drawing distinctions between the riots of the 1980s and those of 2011 my aim will be to reflect on three questions the recent riots have left as their legacy. First, if the riots of 2011 reflect crisis tendencies in the social system, what is it a crisis of? Secondly, while the weight of evidence suggests the riots were not perpetrated by urban gangsters (as the government argued) the question remains as to how best we classify the population who were involved. Finally, in the context where the riots of 2011 have been condemned as essentially non-political, I want to reflect on whether this is an appropriate characterisation. In answer to the first question I will argue that while the riots of the 1980s reflected the crisis tendencies of the welfare state, those of 2011, reflect instead the emerging crisis of the neoliberal state. Second, if the riots of the 1980s reflected the voices of the social residuum, those of 2011 reflect instead that of the emerging precariat. Finally, while the year zero riots of 2011 may be defined by an absence of the concrete demands reflected in the earlier riots it is precisely in their absence that we can discern an even greater political demand being articulated.

### Keynote 2: Prof Nick Crossley, University of Manchester

Biography:

**Professor of Sociology, Co-founder of the Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis.** Nick is the author of *Relational Sociology*; *Contesting Psychiatry: Social movements in mental health*; *Reflexive Embodiment in Contemporary Society*; and *Making Sense of Social Movements*, amongst other works.

### 'Collective Action Networks: A Relational Approach'

In this presentation I will provide an overview of my on-going work on the relational approach to sociology and, more specifically, the importance of social networks and social network analysis in relation to collective action and our understanding of it. In addition to a theoretical discussion the presentation will draw upon a number of recent and on-going projects to illustrate key points.

### **Keynote 3: Prof. Tim Hope , University of Salford**

Biography:

**Chair of Criminology.** Tim is Scientific Advisor to the International Centre for the prevention of Crime, he is Editorial Advisor to *Safer Communities*, *Criminal Justice Matters* and the *European Journal of Policing Studies*. He is the author of over a 100 research publications in 9 languages.

**'TBA'**

### **Chair of closing roundtable: Prof. David Waddington, Sheffield Hallam University**

Biography:

**Professor of Communications, Director of the Communications and Computing Research Centre, David is the author of *Policing Public Disorder: Theory and Practice*; *Rioting in the UK and France*; *Contemporary Issues in Public Disorder: A Comparative and Historical Approach* and *Flashpoints: Studies in Public Disorder*, amongst other works.**

## Panel presentations

### **Panel 1: Student Protest**

Audrey Laurin-Lamothe, Université du Québec à Montréal

#### **Student's Strike in Quebec against Entrepreneurial Universities: Law and Order Response and Discourse**

On February 13th, a Quebec students strike against the rise of education fees started and within three months, grew into a massive mobilization, eventually transforming into a social movement, symbolized by the red squares: "squarely in the red". The issue of the tuitions fees was only the tip of an iceberg, under which multiple other concerns were articulated, which revealed the students' acute understanding of the transformations public higher education is undergoing in a knowledge-based economy. After remaining impassive in the face of these students' calls as well as through the rise of a more general unrest in the population, the Liberal government, led by Jean Charest, adopted the Bill 12 (better known as draft Bill 78) with the aims of restricting the right to protest and hold demonstrations. This moment highlights a transition of a historical student's strike to an unprecedented social protest, which is going to be impacted by an early and cynical election on September 4th.

This paper firstly aims to present the socio-historical context of this conflict and the actual desire of elites in Quebec to transform social democratic educational system according to the new business model of university. Secondly, we will present how the government and the police turned this conflict in their advantage. Finally, we will present some key point of their "law and order" discourse.

Alexander Hensby, University of Edinburgh

#### **'Going to a party where you don't know anybody' – paths and barriers to mobilization in the 2010/11 student protests against fees and cuts**

Why might people who are sympathetic to the goals of a protest campaign choose not to participate in them? What distinguishes them sociologically from those who do participate? This paper uses the 2010/11 student protests in the UK as a case study for understanding how contemporary social movements mobilise individuals into more alternative forms of political participation. The student protests saw large-scale regional and national demonstrations take place, as well as the formation of a network of simultaneous campus occupations across the UK, presenting a greater scale and diversity of protest participation opportunities than had been seen for a generation.

In the context of the Liberal Democrats' u-turn on its 2010 election campaign pledge, one can argue that the student protests reflected the dissatisfaction many young people felt with formal political participation processes. Protest, therefore, represented participation by alternative means: one that was felt to be exciting and empowering, but also had far greater potential to enact real political change. Nevertheless, sociological factors such as political background, biographical availability and access to existing activist networks remained significant, not only for shaping students' attitudes towards protest as an effective and meaningful activity, but also making protest participation appear as an option available to them. This paper uses extensive interviews with participating and non-participating students from four UK universities to explore the range of pathways to mobilization for national demonstrations and campus occupations.

Dr Joseph Ibrahim, Sheffield Hallam University

### The moral economy of student protest networks in the UK

After a period of abeyance, the winter of 2010 saw a number of high profile, nationally organised student protests in London. In addition, students have carried out a number of occupations on university campuses around the UK (Anon. 2011, Occupations.org.uk). These were a direct response to the government policy to lift the cap on higher education tuition fees and the reduction in government funding for higher education institutions in England. National protests took place on November, 10<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The protests on November 10<sup>th</sup> were condemned by student union leaders and politicians alike after hundreds of students stormed Conservative Party Headquarters at Milbank and smashed windows and inflicted damage to property (The Guardian).

In light of this wave of student protests and to build on recent research conducted by the author on student protest networks (Ibrahim, 2011; Crossley and Ibrahim, 2012), I wish to draw on and reorient the work of E.P. Thompson (1971, 1993) and argue that we are witnessing a 'moral economy' of student protests. These student protest networks are not just a critical mass, but a connected and politicised critical mass that are networked sufficiently to mount local and national campaigns. Further, these should not be read as random crowds who are merely expressing grievance strains of the system, but as organised social networks with political motivations.

### **Panel 2: English Riots 2011**

Ryan Powell, CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University

Prof John Flint, University of Sheffield

## The English City Riots of 2011, 'Broken Britain' and the Retreat into the Present

The responses to the English city riots of 2011 bear a remarkable resemblance to those of historical urban disorders in terms of the way in which they are framed by concerns over "moral decline", "social malaise" and a "lack of self-restraint" among certain sections of the population. In this paper we draw on the work of Norbert Elias and take a long-term perspective in exploring historical precedents and parallels relating to urban disorder and anti-social behaviour. We reject the notion of "Broken Britain" and argue that a more "detached" perspective is necessary in order to appreciate that perceived crises of civilisation are ubiquitous to the urban condition. Through this historical analysis, framed by Elias' theory of involvement and detachment, we present three key arguments. Firstly, that a 'retreat into the present' is evident among both policy discourse and social science in responding to contemporary urban disorder, giving rise to ahistorical accounts and the romanticisation of previous eras; secondly, that particular moral panics have always arisen, specifically focused upon young and working class populations and urban disorder; and, thirdly, that previous techniques of governance to control these populations were often far more similar to contemporary mechanisms than many commentaries suggest. We conclude by advocating a long-term, detached perspective in discerning historical precedents and their direct linkages to the present; and in identifying what is particular about today's concerns and responses relating to urban disorder.

Christian Garland, University of Warwick

### 'Simulating events as they happen: spectacle, ideology, and readymade boogeymen - the 2011 August Riots and the media'

Last August's riots which began in London after the death of another black man at the hands of policei combusted on the night of Saturday 6 August, and swept across London and the rest of England over the course of the next three nights; and from the time of the first explosion of accumulated rage in Tottenham that Saturday night, the media relayed its own version of events, complete with a 'factual' narrative of key actors, good guys ('ordinary people'), bad guys, ('mindless thugs' and 'criminal gangs'), and readymade 'real-time' coverage of events 'as they happened'.

The BBC and all other television news offered the voice of liberal 'impartiality': the first and last line of defence against any serious critique both of the selective presentation of events, and the reasons for this presentation - itself a version of events, skewed and spun in more or less explicit ideological terms. Meanwhile the right-wing tabloid press, openly reactionary in their hysterical denunciation of the riots, really got into their stride as events unfolded, over the Monday and Tuesday evenings, rushing to relay and encourage the most knee-jerk law and order clichés

they could, all the time encouraging talk of maximum repression, which sure enough the state was on hand to provide.

As the riots combusted across London on Sunday 7 August, in at least 50+ areas of the city, and spread across England, the favoured media maxim kicked into play: 'fear, fear, fear', and the division of the country into 'good' and 'bad' came into its own: those burning and looting were an underclass of feral youths in lawless gangs, completely out of control, taking everything they could, and laughing at all that 'decent law-abiding citizens' held in high regard. This paper will seek to offer an analysis and critique of the media narrative of the events in English cities last August, with the aim of contributing to their demystification and better understanding, 12 months on.

Prof Tony Jefferson, Keele University

#### The Riots 2011: Another moral panic or ... what?

Reading some of the recent commentaries on this year's riots was like hearing several blind men describe an elephant by the part of its anatomy they variously happened to touch; or, without even bothering to touch it at all, in some cases. This paper will start with an attempt to describe what happened, when and where it happened, and who was involved, based largely on the fairly exhaustive coverage by the Guardian newspaper and its reporters and commentators. It will then interrogate this data by asking, first, whether these riots might best be conceptualised as another example of a moral panic. This will involve situating these riots within a history of police/black relations, and apparently similar riots, going back to the seventies. It will then try to identify what features might be new about the present riots. It will conclude by offering some 'notes towards' a reading of the riots based on what we (think we) know of the 'whole anatomy' of the riots, not just the parts that best fit existing ideological predilections.

#### **Panel 3: Occupy and Occupations**

Ass. Prof Marilena Simiti, University of Piraeus

#### The Occupy Movement, Protest and the Far Right in Greece

The Occupy Movement in Syntagma Square became the primary political force challenging parliamentary parties and the social injustices generated by neoliberal policies in Greece. Syntagma Square became the locus of massive mobilizations for a period of more than five months. The occupation started in May 2011, when a group of demonstrators decided to settle down in Syntagma Square in Athens. The

following weeks, people joined in and the square became gradually occupied by political activists opposing neoliberal policies. The Occupy Movement in Syntagma Square, established institutions of direct democracy and generated new public spaces (e.g. open discussions, general assemblies, working-groups). People, who joined in, belonged to the whole political spectrum. People with different income, educational level, social status, political beliefs coexisted united by their opposition to the Memorandum. However, a distinctive feature of the mobilizations at Syntagma Square (e.g. in comparison with the Occupy movement in Spain), has been the active participation of the extreme right. Throughout the mobilizations, Syntagma Square was divided in two parts, which were also spatially divided. One massive bloc was at the top of the square facing the Parliament and one massive bloc was at the bottom of the square. The people, who participated at the top of the square, were holding Greek flags and articulated strong nationalistic slogans. At the bottom of the square there were no Greek flags. Solidarity was expressed to foreign movements, which mobilize against austerity measures. In this bloc the parliamentary Left (SYRIZA) and the extra-parliamentary Left dominated. What has been remarkable was the strong presence of the extreme right at the top of the Square. Extreme rightist groups did not only participate at the mobilizations, but utilized the protest at Syntagma Square to increase their appeal to society. Following this strategy, the extreme right has even adopted terminology used by the Left or the extra-parliamentary Left (e.g. social revolt, social insurrection), in order to present itself as the only genuine anti-establishment political force in Greece. This strategy had a strong appeal to the younger generation. In the elections of May 2012 young voters (15-25 years old) opted for SYRIZA, but a high percentage voted in favour of the neo-Nazi party CHRISI AVGI. The presentation aims to explore this "hidden" political dynamic in recent protest events in Greece.

Prof Leocadia Diaz Romero, University of Murcia, visiting scholar at Columbia University

#### Direct Democracy, Social Movements and Protest in Digital Societies. Special Consideration to Occupy Wall Street

The paper I am working on aspires to study: 1.- in the first place, current trends in participatory democracy, the so called "deliberative", direct democracy and examine the role of civil society as catalyzing force of social, political change; 2.- in this context, new impetus of political activism –social movements, protest, mobilization as mechanism of "real" democracy-. Thus, I would revisit theories which conceptualize social protest as destabilizing factor for a polity, symbol of critical periods or crisis; or, on the contrary, as a human right essential to any democracy. To this purpose, I will pay special attention to "Occupy Wall Street". The movement claims for political, economic, social reforms. In short, it demands structural changes in the current democratic and economic models. I will cast light on causes,

backgrounds –Anti-Globalization Movement, Tea Party-, ways of spread, effects and consequences for participatory democracy; 3.- the third dimension of my papers deals with new media and digital societies –the internet and social networks-. As a matter of fact, Facebook, Twiter, etc., have become an open space for discussion showing great impact as communication, propaganda and discussion platforms- e.g., electoral campaigns, electronic voting, "virtual" congress-. Certainly, the web has contributed decisively to citizens´ action and has represented a landmark for political communication. All in all, the Habermasian "public sphere" seems to have turned nowadays into a "virtual public sphere" or open government. On the whole, in my work converge both theoretical and empirical approaches. The Occupy case study serves to "illuminate" with updated ideas traditional concepts related to democracy, protest, etc. In addition, this empirical part of the article reveals the impact of digital tools in the Politics of the XXIst century.

Prof Simon Winlow, University of Teeside

#### Occupy, Postmodernism and the Politics of Opposition

In this paper I will offer an appreciative critique of the global Occupy movement, focusing in particular on the dynamics of Occupy London's encampment outside St Paul's cathedral. My central claim is that, despite what appeared to be the genuine oppositional narrative against the manifold harms and injustices of contemporary global capitalism, the Occupy movement suffer the fundamental ideological absence that besets all Western oppositional political movements today. The Occupy movement is therefore indicative of – rather than oppositional to – the post-political inertia of the current epoch. Using Badiou's analysis of the truth event, this paper suggests that the Angle of History will continue to postpone a direct intervention until the social is again capable of constructing a progressive universality.

#### **Panel 4: Rioting in Salford and Manchester**

Waqas Tufail, Manchester Metropolitan University

Dr Bob Jeffery, Sheffield Hallam University

#### Policing, Gentrification and Securitisation: The Pendleton Riot Deconstructed

In this presentation we explore the social dynamics in the city of Salford at the time of the Pendleton riot, which took place amidst the five days of national rioting that began with the flashpoint of the killing of Mark Duggan in Tottenham by the Metropolitan Police Service. Beginning with an overview of the events of August 9<sup>th</sup> 2011, we argue that an understanding of local contextual factors is critical both in terms of answering the question 'why Salford?', but also in terms of explaining the

ferocity of the violence targeted towards officer of Greater Manchester Police. We therefore offer a short overview of the social history of Salford, from industrial slum to the pains and consequences of deindustrialisation. We explain how the challenges of the late 1970s and early 1980s were met by an 'entrepreneurial turn' by the city council and urban elites. While such policies have led to the creation of a number of 'landmark' post-industrial playgrounds, we argue that they have fundamentally failed to ameliorate the levels of poverty, inequality and dislocation that exists amongst the marginal, residualised working class of the inner-cities. Developing this point further, we show how a number of processes related to the broad project of 'state-led gentrification by capital' have impacted upon local 'structures of feeling', namely in terms of a history of broken promises and official condescension, the imposition of new imagined geographies, the distance that exists between working class locals and middle class incomers in both physical and social space, the ways in which the attitudes of each group to one another belies the existence of 'tectonic communities' (Butler and Watt, 2007) and the ways in which these processes are fundamentally reliant upon a 'securitisation' of the urban environment that leads to an increased punitiveness being exercised against working class communities (Hancock, 2007; Minton, 2009). We illustrate these points through reference to interview data from three research projects conducted over the last five years in the city, incorporating the viewpoints of local, incomers, police officers and the municipal authorities.

Will Jackson, University of Central Lancashire

### Liberalism and the denial of conflict: the UK riots as 'shopping with violence'

This paper seeks to explore the political dynamics of the riots of the summer of 2011 and in doing so attempts a critical engagement with the dominant interpretations of these events that has defined them almost unanimously as devoid of any political component. Understanding that the construction of these events as the result of a 'naked criminality' underpinned by a combination of greed and nihilism, serves an important role in deflecting any attention from the current government's political project, the paper seeks to situate this response within a much wider liberal political framework. The paper argues that to understand the dominant interpretation of the riots that has characterised interpretations offered from both the right and the left, there is a need to consider how liberalism defines the possibilities for political action in the contemporary era. By illustrating that liberalism is defined by a denial of any true opposition, the paper suggests that the mainstream response to the riots has to be one of depoliticisation. Whilst avoiding any attempt at a single explanation of the riots, the paper seeks in the first instance to consider the events in Salford and suggests that in this case there is evidence of a political conflict behind the supposedly 'nihilistic' violence. In doing so the paper's aim is to illustrate that an alternative concept of the political exists outside of the incredibly narrow parameters set to contemporary mainstream political discourse. The paper suggests that it is this

concept that places opposition, antagonism and conflict at its core, that needs to be (re)established before we can make sense of what constitutes 'disorder' in the current era.

Dan Silver, Salford Action Research Foundation

A Tale of Two Cities: Complex Causes, Complex Solutions. A Response to the August, 2011 riots in Salford & Manchester.

A Tale of Two Cities builds upon extensive engagement with communities directly involved, or affected by the riots, as well as academics and policy-makers. The report explores and evaluates responses to the challenges faced by the communities of Manchester and Salford made evident by last summer's riots and provides ideas to develop communities that are better able to adapt, transform and deal with challenges as they arise, providing a vision for developing more resilient communities in order for people within Greater Manchester to fulfil their potential in this era of austerity.

**Panel 5: Public Disorder: Causes, Meanings and Evidence**

Fabien Jobard, Center for Sociological Research on Law and Criminal Justice Institutions (CESDIP) /CNRS

Disorder and Protest in France and the UK in comparison, with a look at peaceful Germany

Aim of my paper is to sketch the overall benefits one is able to gain in comparing two national situations, here the French and the British ones. As such, my contribution hopes to draw further the perspectives opened by the book edited together with Dave Waddington and Mike King, above all in focusing on the episodes that hit Britain in Aug. 2011 and the ones that hit France since 2007. We will focus on 4 aspects of the riots: are riots experienced in both countries comparable in terms of historical development, of aspects and forms, of causes and of social and political consequences? In the first part, I will question the notion of protest cycles and compare a 4-phases British history (1980s, 1990s, 2001, 2011) to a 2-phases French history (1980-81 and from 1990 onwards). In the second part, I will present a systematic comparison between both countries, focusing on the rioters' targets (police, stores, public goods, cars, adverse communities), the space and time scales of the events, the protestors' profiles, and the organizational frame of the riots. In the third part, I will try to answer the question regarding the places of short-term causes and macro-social causes. In the fourth part, I will distinguish the consequences on the politics, on the policies taken, and on the polities at stake.

I will also refer to Germany as a test-country, as far as macro-social dimensions can be comparable in the three countries, but Germany is the only one out of the three under scrutiny which never experienced such large-scale urban disorders.

Roger Ball, University of West of England

Dr John Drury, University of Sussex

(Mis)representing the August riots: How statistics were used to sustain ideological explanations

In this presentation we will analyse the way that statistics were used to support two kinds of accounts of the riots of August 2011 prevalent in media coverage and in pronouncements by government ministers.

The first of these accounts suggested that the rioters were typically characterised by uncivilized predispositions. The second kind of account suggested that damage to property was typically irrational or indiscriminate. These accounts echo discredited 'convergence' and 'submergence' explanations in early crowd psychology.

We will show that the 'convergence' explanation – that the rioters were typically 'career criminals' or gang-members – was based on arrest figures, treating as unproblematic the circular way that such data was produced (with those already known to the police most likely to be identified and arrested). The 'submergence' account – the suggestion that violence was typically indiscriminate or irrational – was based in part on grouping together attacks on properties in different districts; those areas where 'anyone and anything' was attacked were affluent districts where the target was the rich district itself.

Like their academic counterparts, the two types of accounts of the riots of August 2011 are profoundly ideological, for they serve to render the riots marginal and meaningless rather than indicative of wider problems in society.

Dick Pitt, Sheffield Hallam University

Mass movements – the markets and democracy

In a period of crisis political activists are in a stronger position to spread disaffection against the rich and powerful. Great men, great corporations, and sections of the establishment are seen to be deeply flawed at the same time as living standards are falling. In this country the names of Fred Goodwin, RBS, MP expenses scandal, Barclays, Murdoch, and phone tapping come to mind. The argument 'we didn't cause the crisis why should we pay' is simple and growing. There is an interesting and important interplay between objective conditions and the ideas of the masses.

Certainly successful huge movements spread the ideas for radical change. 'If they can do it so can we' is a very powerful message. There have been a string of, at least partial, victories against the ruling elites including Iceland, Latvia, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya.

However, focussing only on the protesters is like trying to comment on a football match while seeing only the home team players. Two important other factors are present. The first is the rise of neo-Nazi organisations and ideas across Europe from Finland, Austria, Holland, Hungary, France and now Greece. The second is the undermining of democracy by 'the markets'. An obvious case is the removal of Berlusconi after 'the markets' lost faith in the Italian Prime Minister's ability to achieve austerity measures. A second is the removal of Papandreu the Prime Minister of Greece. He was forced to resign as markets demanded a consensus Government to force through further cuts in Government spending. The paper explores the interplay of the objective conditions, and ideas with a focus on the threat to democracy.

### **Panel 6: Organising Dissent/Policing Protest**

Dr Pollyanna Ruiz, London School of Economics and Political Science

#### **Disordering Demonstrations; Maptivism, Sukey and the Occupation of City Spaces**

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* de Certeau stands on top of the world trade centre and likens himself to a Solar Eye reading the city spread out like a text below. He compares this all-seeing position to the enmeshed position of those whose intermingled footsteps pass through the city streets, writing stories that deliberately elude legibility. These two ways of experiencing the city offer a theoretical frame through which I will explore both the administration of protest spaces, and protesters' ongoing attempts to subvert and evade those controls.

This paper will examine the dynamics surrounding the practice of maptivism with reference to engagements with and against dominant material and digital cultures. Our sense of engagement including our perception of ourselves as political subjects, activists and citizens emerges in part through, and is performed in, technology. This paper will focus in on the way in which students, who have been newly politicised by the coalition governments' cuts, have engaged with both pre existing protest movements and networks, and more mainstream institutions and organisations.

It will focus in particular on the 'anti-kettling app' Sukey which has been produced in response to the police authorities' attempts to contain demonstrations which err from official routes. Consequently this paper will examine the way Sukey combines the weak ties of participation with the stronger ties of activism to create a resilient network of texts, tweets and maps. It will reflect on the political potential of these developments and ask how Sukey's occupation of mainstream rather than

alternative digital space impacts upon maptivists' ability to occupy city spaces and resist the totalising administrations of the state.

Joanna Gilmore, University of Manchester

'Is it because he is Muslim?': The criminalisation of dissent in the 'War on Terror'

On 27<sup>th</sup> December 2008, Israeli forces launched 'Operation Cast Lead', a three-week military incursion on the Gaza Strip which resulted in the death of over 1,400 Palestinians and injured thousands more. This attack by the world's fourth largest military power on a largely defenceless civilian population triggered a wave of protests, vigils and occupations throughout the world and in the UK culminated in the largest demonstration in support of the Palestinian people in British history. Immediately following the demonstrations, the Metropolitan Police Service launched 'Operation Ute' and scores of protesters were arrested in 'dawn raids' and aggressively pursued through the courts. This paper presents some of the findings of an extensive ethnographic study of this series of demonstrations and the legal cases which followed, highlighting some of the important lessons arising from the protests in terms of the state's response to the latest wave of collective dissent.

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<sup>i</sup> Laville, Sandra The Guardian 5 August 2011 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/aug/05/man-shot-police-london-arrest> see also Vasagar Jeevan The Guardian 9 August 2011 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/09/mark-duggan-police-ipcc>