
PSNIRA vs. peaceful protesters? YouTube,
'sousveillance' and the policing of the union flag protests
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Abstract

The decision to change the flag protocol at Belfast City Hall prompted a campaign of loyalist flag protests across Northern Ireland between December 2012 and March 2013. Although most passed off without incident, a small number ended in violent clashes between loyalists and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Activists uploaded footage to YouTube purporting to show 'heavy-handed' policing during these incidents. This paper uses a thematic analysis to examine 1,586 comments left by those who viewed 36 'sousveillance' videos. Results indicate that these conformed to and reinforced competing narratives on policing within the deeply divided society. Those who perceived the 'PSNIRA' as being complicit in Sinn Fein's 'culture war' against loyalists were likely to believe the claims of the protesters, even in the absence of corroborative evidence in these videos. The same was true for critics of the protests watching footage of loyalists threatening PSNI officers.

Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Sousveillance as response to 'surveillance society'](#)

[Sousveillance and social media](#)

[Conflicting narratives on policing of flag protests](#)

[Media coverage blames protesters for violence](#)

[Loyalist narratives on 'political policing' dismissed by most commenters](#)

[Working-class loyalists frequently dehumanized and mocked by commenters](#)

[Comments threads provide opportunities for informal learning?](#)

[Conclusion](#)

Introduction

In December 2012, Belfast City Council voted in favor of a new protocol on the flying of the union flag above City Hall, which would see it flown on 18 designated days rather than every day, as had previously been the case. This provoked a 'flag protest' campaign by loyalists disrupting rush hour traffic in towns and cities across Northern Ireland. Although most of the demonstrations passed off peacefully, a minority ended in violent clashes between loyalists and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Most notably, in January 2013, there were six consecutive nights of violence in East Belfast as loyalist rioters clashed with the PSNI (Melaugh, 2013). Petrol bombs and bricks were thrown at the PSNI as they tried to disperse crowds who had gathered to block roads in support of the protests. Although elements of loyalist paramilitary group the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) tried to 'soften' flag protest-related violence [1], its senior members were blamed for orchestrating this violence [2].

In November 2013, Detective Superintendent (DS) Sean Wright confirmed that there had been 440 arrests as a result of two police investigations into the flag protests [3]. Nevertheless, critics argued

that the police had misinterpreted the legislation covering freedom of assembly by facilitating these unlawful street protests. Anthony McIntyre, a republican writer, contrasted the ‘passivity’ of the PSNI during the protests with their use of “dogs, armed men’s fists and batons” against nationalist residents in North Belfast a few months earlier [4]. This echoed the protesters’ claims that they had been ‘brutalized’ by the ‘PSNIRA,’ a pejorative term suggesting the police were being controlled by Irish republican terrorist organization the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). The police were accused not only of being heavy-handed towards those participating in these demonstrations, but also of failing to protect them from being attacked by nationalists during the rioting in East Belfast on 12 January 2013. This was part of a broader narrative suggesting that working-class loyalist communities had no confidence in the PSNI as an ‘impartial’ police service.

This paper will focus specifically on how commenters responded to the footage shared on YouTube by eyewitnesses to highlight alleged police brutality towards the flag protesters. It does so by reviewing the relevant literature on sousveillance and social media, analysing how the policing operation was framed by the news media, and presenting the findings from a thematic analysis of 1,586 comments posted in response to 36 YouTube videos uploaded by eyewitnesses to the flag protests between December 2012 and March 2013.



Sousveillance as response to ‘surveillance society’

YouTube, the world’s most popular video-sharing Web site, has emerged as an important repository for content showing eyewitness perspectives on the conduct of authority figures in recent years (Burgess and Green, 2018). This paper focuses on how its socio-technical affordances empower citizens to engage in sousveillance (translated into English as ‘to watch from below’). It can be broadly understood as ‘inverse surveillance’ that empowers citizens to “access and collect data about their surveillance” [5]. The ‘surveillance society’ was said to be disrupted by people’s use of body-worn cameras for sousveillance, which was conceptualized as “the many watching the few” [6]. The rationale for this ‘undersight’ was that data generated by the surveillance of private citizens by entities in positions of power lacked ‘integrity’ and provided evidence that was “less than the full truth” [7]. There were two forms of sousveillance originally identified by Steve Mann in the early noughties: *personal* referred to the use of cameras at “eye-level for human-centred recording of personal experiences” while *hierarchical* was a more purposive, political activity documenting the actions of authority figures such as the police [8]. The former did not necessarily involve a political agenda whereas the latter shared the ‘injunction to care’ that was an integral component of ‘media witnessing’, the term used to capture the ways in which digital media transform people’s capacity to bear witness to events and encourage others to engage with their perspectives (Allan, 2013). Moreover, there is a significant overlap between the conceptual frameworks of hierarchical sousveillance and citizen journalism, the process whereby citizens play an active role in the “collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information” [9]. Citizens themselves are more likely to use the latter to describe their use of technology to ‘watch the watchers’ due to the frequency with which it is invoked by journalists to characterize such activity.

Yet, irrespective of intentionality, the recording of personal experiences in public spaces can potentially contribute to ‘equeveillance’, defined as an “equilibrium between surveillance and sousveillance” [10]. Mann argued that a ‘Veillance’ society was inevitable due to the growth in citizens’ use of smartphones for sousveillance (Mann, 2017). However, there are two caveats in relation to this sur/sousveillance distinction that should be noted. First, sousveillance was not primarily conceived by Mann as a mechanism to document incidents of police brutality. The feedback loops created by citizen sousveillance were said to be equally capable of capturing evidence of police officers “doing acts of good”, as demonstrated by footage of New York Police Department (NYPD) officer Larry DePrimo purchasing a pair of shoes for a homeless man in November 2012 [11]. Furthermore, the emergence of a proleptical environment, in which citizens anticipate antagonistic interactions with police and thus record them, could potentially lead to some officers might become self-disciplining subjects (Singh, 2017). This Foucauldian ‘inverse panopticon’ could militate against police misconduct during their interactions with citizens, irrespective of whether they are being recorded or not.

Second, it was anticipated that all forms of surveillance would increase in ‘Veillance’ societies in which these technologies are increasingly ubiquitous and embedded into architectures (Murakami Wood, 2015). This was illustrated by Mann’s ‘Veillance Plane’, an ‘eight-point compass’ showing how the amount of surveillance and sousveillance in a physical space could be added or subtracted through, for example, an increase in the number people recording footage on smartphones. Both sousveillance and surveillance were conceptualized as orthogonal vectors in this model, with increases in one not necessarily being at the expense of another. Therefore, reductive analyses that frame sousveillance as a panacea to surveillance have been replaced by more contextualised approaches that recognize their co-existence within contemporary societies.

The efficacy of sousveillance in focusing attention upon the actions of authority figures may ultimately depend upon the size of the network through which it is distributed, as well as the pervasiveness of hegemonic narratives on the legitimacy of the state and the police (Mann and Ferenbok, 2013). This was certainly the case in the most prominent example of sousveillance in the pre-social media era, the Rodney King assault. This revolved around video footage of four Los Angeles police officers assaulting Rodney King on 4 March 1991. George Holliday covertly captured the assault on the African-American taxi driver using his Sony Handycam and shared the video with local television station KTLA, which was later used as evidence in the trial of the police officers (Mann, *et al.*, 2003). The footage raised broader questions about police brutality towards African-Americans and the legitimacy of both local and national governments [12]. It was repeatedly shown by U.S. networks during the trial and subsequent acquittal of the defendants, which resulted in five nights of rioting in Los Angeles that left 50 people dead and 2,000 injured (Reis, 1995) [13].



Sousveillance and social media

Social media have been linked to an “intensification of sousveillance and the rise of sousveillance cultures” [14]. These platforms are part of a sousveillant assemblage that is comparable to the ‘surveillant assemblage’ developed in the 2000s to collect data on citizens (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000). While many social justice campaigners are cognisant of the privacy concerns raised by the use of online platforms, they continue to use sites like Twitter to focus attention on hierarchical sousveillance. Probably the most prominent examples of ‘social media sousveillance’ were deployed by Black Lives Matter (BLM), the campaign to highlight police killings of unarmed African-American citizens (Bonilla and Rosa, 2015). Emerging first in July 2013 as a hashtag and then transitioning into a much larger social justice movement, it shared distressing footage of these controversial killings (Fischer and Mohrman, 2016). The eponymous hashtag was used to focus attention on these videos, and highlight the NYPD’s disregard for ‘Black Lives’ (Freelon, *et al.*, 2016). Twitter debates surrounding such footage facilitated “large-scale informal learning” about the tensions between the police and Black communities, particularly amongst conservatives who acknowledged for the first time that these killings were ‘unjust’ [15]. In this sense, the integration of hierarchical sousveillance into a social justice campaign enabled non-elites to shape public discourse around race and law enforcement in the United States. Yet, the lack of punishment for these officers for violating established norms of ‘good policing’ suggests that the full potential of the proleptical environment has yet to be realized (Singh, 2017).

The increasingly important role of social media platforms in amplifying sousveillance may create other challenges for activists. Drawing on McLuhan’s tetrad, Schaefer and Steinmetz (2014) argue that these practices are problematic due to the sheer volume of content available online, the frequency with which those with opposing views go off topic, and the distance between the viewer and its target. There has also been increasing evidence that both democratic and non-democratic states are forcing these companies to filter and suppress ‘contentious’ political content (Gillespie, 2018), including evidence of the maltreatment of citizens by the authorities. Moreover, the use of corporate social media to share such content contributes to the ‘surveillance capitalism’ that underpin these companies, which revolve around the profiling of user communities and the sharing of user data with third parties including national governments (Zuboff, 2019). Hence, these practices

may produce outcomes far removed from the hierarchical and personal sousveillance originally conceived by Mann in the noughties.

Viewers may not always agree that such footage is *prima facie* evidence of misconduct by authority figures such as the police. Take, for example, how YouTubers responded to videos showing alleged police brutality during the so-called ‘Battle of Stokes Croft’. There were violent clashes between the police and members of the public in the Stokes Croft district of Bristol, England on 21 April 2011 in the aftermath of a controversial police raid on a local squat. Both local and national media were quick to frame the violence as a manifestation of the local campaign against the opening of a new Tesco supermarket in the area on the grounds (People’s Republic of Stokes Croft, 2014). Activists used social media to refute these allegations and blame the ‘brutal’ police dispersal of a peaceful protest for the violence (Hall, 2011). A key component of this strategy was the sharing of hierarchical sousveillance on YouTube, in support of claims by local residents that the police tactics were ‘heavy-handed’. Analysis of comments posted under these videos provided little evidence to suggest that this footage had successfully focused attention on police ‘brutality’ (Reilly, 2014). The anti-social behaviour of the crowd was more heavily criticized than the actions of the police, with many commenters erroneously conflating the violence with the anti-Tesco campaign. Indeed, the results indicated that there was little rational debate about who was responsible for the violence, with the views of many commenters influenced by the media coverage of the riot (Reilly, 2015). This paper adds to this emergent literature on social media and sousveillance by exploring whether a similar pattern of engagement was evident in relation to YouTube footage purporting to show ‘heavy-handed’ policing of the flag protests.



Conflicting narratives on policing of flag protests

Citizens are more likely to accept the authority of the police if they feel they have been treated fairly and respectfully by individual officers (Tyler, 2006; Worden and McLean, 2017). Nevertheless, public confidence in the police has typically been positively associated with the perceived legitimacy of governments in both democratic and non-democratic states (Kwak, *et al.*, 2012; Tyler and Fagan, 2008). Early political socialisation has been identified as a key factor shaping these attitudes, with childhood distrust of these institutions unlikely to shift significantly in adulthood. Therefore, the police are often in a “no-win situation” where adults’ negative experiences of policing are more likely to have a detrimental impact on their attitudes than “satisfactory ones have a beneficial effect” [16].

These trends are evident in the discourses of ‘political policing’ during the flag protests, which built on a long history of contention over the policing of dissent in Northern Ireland. During the thirty-year sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland (known colloquially as ‘The Troubles’), the minority Catholic community, who predominantly identified as Irish rather than British and supported reunification with the rest of Ireland, perceived that they were poorly treated by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), a police force which was almost exclusively Protestant and viewed as an arm of the unionist-controlled Stormont government (Hearty, 2018). Republican paramilitaries such as PIRA engaged in an ‘armed struggle’ against the RUC and the British security forces in order to force a British withdrawal from Ireland. Meanwhile, unionists and loyalists, who self-identified as British and supported the existing union with Great Britain, viewed the security forces as a bulwark against this republican terrorism. While the 2007 St. Andrews Agreement saw Sinn Fein, the political wing of the republican movement, make the historic decision to support the PSNI, loyalist and republican critics of the Agreement have continued to accuse them of ‘political policing’. While dissident republicans have argued that the PSNI is in effect the RUC under another name, some loyalist groups claim the police service is a vehicle for the ‘Sinn Fein/IRA’ war on unionist and loyalist culture [17]. This was a widely held perception amongst the flag protesters, despite the fact that the PSNI appeared no more representative of working-class nationalists than their loyalist counterparts (O’Rawe, 2011).

It was in this context that the PSNI’s decision to facilitate public demonstrations blocking roads across Northern Ireland proved particularly controversial. Senior police chiefs retrospectively

justified this approach by claiming that any move to arrest protesters for blocking roads might have increased support for terrorist organizations within both communities [18]. Nevertheless, the two main narratives relating to the policing of the flag protests were highly critical of the PSNI, albeit for different reasons. First, there were many unionist and nationalists who felt that the PSNI had simply not done enough to prevent loyalists blocking roads and participating in illegal marches. Nationalist residents' groups such as the Greater Ardoyne Residents' Collective (GARC) argued this was further evidence that the PSNI was a *de facto* 'unionist police force', which was unwilling to take any action against the 'armed masked men' participating in illegal loyalist roadblocks [19]. The PSNI Chief Constable Matt Baggott rejected this characterisation, promising that those responsible for the protest-related violence would be arrested and prosecuted as part of Operation Dulcet [20].

The legal basis for the PSNI strategy of non-intervention during unlawful public demonstrations was undermined by a judicial review in April 2014. Mr. Justice Treacy ruled that the police had misinterpreted the Northern Ireland Public Processions Act (1988) and the Police (NI) Act (2000), which they believed limited their ability to prevent these illegal street protests or arrest those who participated in them [21]. The PSNI successfully appealed against the ruling a few months later; a team of three judges concluded that they had not undermined the 1998 and 2000 Acts, as Treacy had asserted in his original judgment [22]. DB, the appellant, successfully challenged this decision in the Supreme Court in February 2017, with Lord Justice Kerr stating that the "PSNI misconstrued their legal powers to stop parades passing through or adjacent to the Short Strand area." [23] These legal actions illustrated how there was a certain degree of confusion over whether blocking roads constituted a legal form of protest, not least amongst the protesters (INTERCOMM and Byrne, 2013).

Focus groups revealed that there was a widely held perception amongst loyalists that the PSNI were "overly aggressive, antagonistic and confrontational" towards the protesters" [24]. Protest leader Jamie Bryson used his own Facebook page to condemn the PSNI 'bloodlust' towards Protestants, positing that it was due to the fact that a large number of these officers were Roman Catholic [25]. This use of affectively charged language conformed to a long-established pattern of 'whataboutery' in Northern Irish politics [26]. Loyalists complained that they had been subject to police brutality during the flag protests while a 'light touch' approach had been adopted towards the policing of protests organized by nationalist residents' groups. There were also complaints about a biased local media that focused only on violence perpetrated by 'loyalist mobs', with very little coverage of the protests being attacked by nationalist residents (INTERCOMM and Byrne, 2013). Yet, no charges were brought against any PSNI officer, nor did any of the independent bodies responsible for reviewing the policing operation conclude that the protesters had been 'brutalized.' For example, only 21 of 133 cases reported to the Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPON) resulted in recommendations being made to the PSNI; only four of these censured individual officers for their conduct [27].

Media coverage blames protesters for violence

News media narratives on the protests provided little succour to flag protesters who claimed they had been the victims of 'political policing.' Much of the coverage in the three main local newspapers (*Belfast Telegraph*, *Irish News* and *News Letter*) between December 2012 and March 2013 revolved around statements from senior PSNI officers confirming details of the police's ongoing efforts to arrest and charge those responsible for the flag protest-related violence [28]. Very few articles in the *Belfast Telegraph* and *Irish News* directly addressed loyalist allegations that the PSNI had been heavy-handed. Those that did so typically carried statements from protesters alleging that they had been maltreated by the PSNI, which journalists were unable to substantiate. The exception to this was an article published in the *Sunday Life* on 27 January, in which loyalist claims were linked to a video posted on YouTube purporting to show a man being the victim of an unprovoked assault by the PSNI outside the Wyse Byse store in East Belfast. It noted that it was "unclear why the altercation took place" and confirmed that a 42-year-old man had been arrested for assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest [29].

The majority of articles addressing the protests in these newspapers focused on the culpability of the protesters for the region-wide disruption and violence seen in East Belfast. The newspapers also covered criminal justice proceedings involving loyalists charged with public order offences. Quotes from District Judges questioned the claims by the defendants that they had engaged in ‘peaceful protest’, as demonstrated by Justice McCloskey’s remarks that the “vast majority of this kind of behaviour” was “thuggish rioting.” [30] It was in this context that online platforms such as YouTube afforded loyalists opportunities to counter these narratives and focus attention on the ‘heavy-handed’ policing they blamed for the violence.

Drawing on the literature reviewed above, the following research questions were investigated:

RQ1: How did commenters respond to sousveillance footage shared on YouTube?

RQ2: Were the comments congruent with the assumed expectations of those who uploaded this content?

A qualitative thematic analysis (TA) of comments relating to YouTube footage of the policing of the union flag protests was conducted by two researchers between October 2014 and January 2015. Several terms relating to the policing of the protests were entered into Webometric Analyst (<http://lexiurl.wlv.ac.uk>) in order to identify a corpus of 53 videos uploaded to the video-sharing site between 3 December 2012 and 31 March 2013, the high-water mark of the flag protest movement. The next step was to remove content that did not conform to the requirements of the study, such as news media coverage of the protests. This resulted in a final corpus of 46 videos, which had been uploaded between 21 December 2012 and 10 March 2013. While the primary focus was on how commenters responded to this footage, closer inspection of the metadata revealed that one YouTuber was responsible for uploading 19 of the videos. All of these eyewitnesses appeared to have spontaneously used their smart phones to record these incidents, as demonstrated by the short run time of many of these videos. The shortest one (*PSNI Ruin Peaceful Protest Again 8/1/13*) was just eight seconds long with the longest (*Sectarian Republican Nationalist Extremists Attack Protestants At Shortstrand*) lasting 12 minutes 52 seconds.

Nearly a quarter of the corpus (10 videos) had received no comments from those who had watched them. This left a total of 36 videos that conformed to the requirements of the study by virtue of having been commented on. Further evidence corroborating the claims made in previous research that more people choose to watch online content rather than offer commentary (Thelwall, *et al.*, 2012; Walter, *et al.*, 2010) was found in the ‘ratio’ of views to comments, which was as low as 42:1 in the case of *Belfast flag protest attacked by PSNI* (see [Table 1](#)). A total of 1,586 comments were identified, of which 1,109 (70 percent) were linked to just three videos (*Belfast ambush 5th jan filmed by Jim Dowson Britain First*, *Belfast flag protest attacked by PSNI*, and *Newtownards Road East Belfast rioting 5th Jan 2013 after peaceful protest*). Although there were 576 unique commenters identified in the corpus, the 50 most frequent contributors accounted for 414 (26.1 percent) of these posts. It should also be noted that the comments sections with more than one post tended to be dominated by conversations between a small number of YouTubers. Most notably, 288 of the 479 comments under *Belfast ambush 5th jan filmed by Jim Dowson Britain First* were posted ‘in reply to’ those from other commenters. This provided further evidence of the small but highly engaged group of viewers who commented on such content.

Video	Date	Views	Comments	Commentators
<i>PSNI block peaceful protest</i> [31]	21 Dec	472	2	2
<i>PSNI disrupting a peaceful protest</i> [32]	22 Dec	1,486	5	5

<i>PSNI intimidate peaceful protest with dogs [33]</i>	22 Dec	3,360	9	4
<i>PSNI try to arrest innocent protester [34]</i>	29 Dec	15,079	38	25
<i>PSNI Refusing To Let Protestants Go Home! [35]</i>	1 Jan	2,663	2	2
<i>Police brutality at peaceful protest in Carrickfergus 02-01-2013 [36]</i>	3 Jan	3,240	11	7
<i>HD Police heavy handed tactics in east Belfast [37]</i>	5 Jan	5,709	7	6
<i>Police heavy handed tactics at Belfast city hall [38]</i>	5 Jan	3,223	3	3
<i>Belfast ambush 5th jan (filmed by Jim Dowson Britain First) [39]</i>	5 Jan	32,496	479	146
<i>Newtownards Road East Belfast rioting 5th Jan 2013 after peaceful protest [40]</i>	5 Jan	67,111	313	199
<i>PSNI/dogs attack peaceful protest 5/1/13 [41]</i>	6 Jan	12,245	56	44
<i>Peaceful protest attacked by nationalists 5/1/13 [42]</i>	6 Jan	10,959	26	20
<i>Belfast flag protest attacked by PSNI [43]</i>	6 Jan	13,194	317	70
<i>Peaceful protest ruined by PSNI 6/1/13 [44]</i>	6 Jan	5,695	13	12
<i>PSNI stop peaceful protest-brutality 5/1/13 [45]</i>	6 Jan	6,204	29	20
<i>PSNIRA baton charging peaceful protesters [46]</i>	6 Jan	653	1	1
<i>Short strand and PSNI attack Protesters Sat 5th Jan 2013 [47]</i>	7 Jan	4,519	14	13
<i>Nationalists Attack Peaceful Protest 7/1/13 [48]</i>	7 Jan	2,284	4	4

<i>PSNI Ruin Peaceful Protest Again 8/1/13</i> [49]	8 Jan	4,755	3	3
<i>psni officer go's to hit a man with his baton when another officer pulls him back 7 1 2013</i> [50]	10 Jan	1,843	1	1
<i>Sectarian Republican Nationalist Extremists Attack Protestants At Shortstrand</i> [51]	12 Jan	18,672	76	50
<i>East Belfast Verses PSNI/SFIRA,12/01/13, (Part3).</i> [52]	12 Jan	878	6	5
<i>Political Policing In Northern Ireland</i> [53]	14 Jan	608	2	2
<i>PSNI brutality @ shaftsbury square protest</i> [54]	14 Jan	9,496	22	17
<i>Newtownards Road, East Belfast RIOTING 5th January 2013 After Peaceful Protest</i> [55]	18 Jan	5,389	7	5
<i>East Belfast 26th January 2013</i> [56]	26 Jan	3,362	16	13
<i>PSNI Brutality – Harassment 26/1/13</i> [57]	26 Jan	2,315	9	8
<i>PSNI Brutality</i> [58]	26 Jan	1,112	5	3
<i>PSNI Heavy Handed in East Belfast Part 1</i> [59]	26 Jan	1,939	2	1
<i>PSNI Heavy Handed in East Belfast Part 3</i> [60]	26 Jan	348	1	1
<i>PSNI officer Baton Drawn Despite no sign of trouble at city hall</i> [61]	26 Jan	1,180	6	6
<i>PSNI Brutality On Innocent Man 26/1/13</i> [62]	27 Jan	849	5	4
<i>PSNI Dont Know What They Are Doing 26/1/13</i> [63]	27 Jan	1,824	1	1
<i>PSNI Block Me From Going Home 9/2/13</i> [64]	9 Feb	3,094	4	4
<i>PSNI treatment of</i>	16	4,952	5	5

<i>residents</i> [65]	Feb			
<i>Double standards by the psni</i> [66]	2 March	2,654	86	12

There are a number of limitations that should be acknowledged. First, there was evidence that comments had been removed from these threads in the intervening period between the videos being uploaded and the data analysis in October 2014. Therefore, the study did not include all responses generated by these videos. Second, the analysis relied on ‘easy’ data that was publicly available on YouTube, as opposed to harder to reach content that might have provided further insight into how these videos were interpreted by social media users (Burgess and Bruns, 2015). It was highly likely that these videos were being shared and debated on private Facebook pages that were by definition off limits to the researchers. Third, the YouTube comments analysed below should be viewed as the “traces of behaviour” of a small but vocal minority that lack the robustness of traditional opinion polls [67]. Therefore, in the absence of corroborative evidence, it would be misleading to automatically infer the attitudes of those who left comments under these videos. Previous research has indicated that the majority of individuals who access online spaces are unlikely to make public contributions (Papacharissi, 2015) and the views of these ‘watchers’ are impossible to detect using text-mining tools such as Webometric Analyst. Nevertheless, the purpose of this study was to analyse how (rather than why) YouTubers responded to this footage and it was considered appropriate to focus on the themes that emerged from the data despite these inherent limitations.

It was clear from the analysis that activists intended to capture sousveillance footage which they believed exposed ‘political’ policing. Nearly all of these videos showed crowds of eyewitnesses using their mobile phones to record images of police officers allegedly violating the right of loyalists to peacefully protest. For example, *PSNI treatment of residents* showed PSNI officers with dogs ‘kettling’ loyalist residents after violence broke out prior to a football fixture between North Belfast rivals Cliftonville and Crusaders. Loyalists were heard expressing their anger at an alleged assault by a PSNI officer on a member of their group, with one yelling ‘we have got his number’ in reference to the alleged perpetrator. This was one of a number of attacks that it was claimed had occurred off camera. *Belfast ambush 5th jan filmed by Jim Dowson Britain First*, the most commented upon video, saw Jamie Bryson and ex-BNP fundraiser Jim Dowson condemn the PSNI for their heavy-handed approach towards loyalists after they had been ‘ambushed’ by the Short Strand residents. A man appeared on camera claiming he had been struck on the head by a bottle thrown by nationalists on the Newtownards Road. However, it was notable that none of those who spoke on camera appeared fearful of being attacked by the riot police, who were positioned a few feet away.

The arrest of an unidentified man in East Belfast on 26 January was amongst those events documented in *East Belfast 26th January 2013*. It showed three police officers forcibly holding down and handcuffing the man. In the background two women yelled at the police officers “get the fuck off him.” Yet, there was no conclusive evidence suggesting that the police were ‘heavy-handed.’ This was typical of many videos in the corpus whose contents did not correspond to what was suggested in their provocative descriptions. In the case of *PSNI brutality at shaftsbury [sic] square protest*, for example, the poor picture quality meant that it was impossible to tell who was responsible for the brawl witnessed by this eyewitness. A chaotic picture also emerged from *Newtownards Road East Belfast rioting 5th Jan 2013 after peaceful protest*, which was produced by photojournalist company ‘Frontline Freelance Media’ [68]. Despite numerous shots of baton-wielding police officers and police landrovers blocking the path of loyalist protesters, this footage disorientated the viewer rather than providing evidence of police brutality.

Although these eyewitnesses intended to highlight police brutality, the videos raised more questions about the conduct of loyalists. *PSNI/dogs attack peaceful protest 5/1/13* captured the moment when protesters used flagpoles to attack police officers in East Belfast. There were also numerous examples of loyalists threatening members of the ‘PSNIRA’, including one scene in which a loyalist yelled “you listen to me wanker or you’ll suffer the consequences” at a police officer (*PSNI Heavy Handed in East Belfast Part 1*). Overall, these videos appeared more likely to incriminate loyalists than the PSNI officers accused of brutality. The analysis of the videos corroborated the findings of a

Police Ombudsman investigation into 170 hours of YouTube footage of the protests, which concluded that the PSNI had shown great restraint in the face of loyalist provocation [69]. One potential explanation for this was that these officers were fully aware that they were being recorded by both eyewitnesses and professional journalists, and had been trained not to react to any extreme provocation from the protesters. In effect, these officers were self-disciplining subjects, who were fully aware that their actions might be recorded and shared online, and acted accordingly (Singh, 2017).

The six phases of TA proposed by Braun and Clarke (2013) were used to analyse the 1,586 comments, beginning with the initial reading of each YouTube post, and ending with the definition of themes that emerged from the entire corpus. Two coders read each comment initially to explore emergent themes from the data and to then decide whether this content met the requirements of the study. Fieldnotes were taken to capture relevant information, such as angry back-and-forth exchanges between supporters and opponents of the protesters. As per previous studies of online comments (Antony and Thomas, 2010), the inductive construction of codes was completed through manual data analysis that focused on how commenters interpreted key events and issues. Approximately 10 percent of the comments were coded independently by each coder and agreed definitions of each theme were developed on this basis. A particular focus here was whether these videos polarized opinion in the same way as other activist content posted on the video sharing site (Freelon, *et al.*, 2018). For example, the footage capturing the fatal shooting of Oscar Grant by Bay Area Rapid Transit police (Oakland, Calif.) in January 2009 generated a range of responses including criticism of bystanders for not intervening and praise for the eyewitness who had documented the events (Antony and Thomas, 2010). It was anticipated that critics and supporters of the protests would take diametrically opposite positions on the legitimacy of the policing operation captured in this footage.

As per a previous study of loyalist Facebook pages (Reilly and Trevisan, 2016), the focus here was on what was said rather than on who said it. Therefore, commenters were not identified by username and their posts were paraphrased or quoted in such a way as to protect their anonymity. The comments were instead identified in relation to their host video, a strategy congruent with the ‘do no harm’ and ‘reasonable expectations of privacy’ principles proposed by guidelines for Internet research (see Markham, *et al.*, 2012, for example). This strategy was approved as part of the ethics approval process at the host institution.



Loyalist narratives on ‘political policing’ dismissed by most commenters

A small minority of commenters expressed support for the claims made in these videos about PSNI brutality towards the protesters. The ‘PSNIRA’ was condemned for being a ‘political police force’ that favored the nationalist Short Strand residents over working-class loyalists; one commenter characterized this as a form of ‘treason’ that violated the officers’ oath to the Queen. Acronyms such as acab (‘all cops are bastards’) were used by these YouTubers to convey their outrage at the policing tactics. In many cases they simply repeated the accusations made by loyalists in this footage. For example, it was argued that the PSNI had no right to stop and search the middle-aged man being restrained by several police officers in one video (*PSNI Brutality-Harassment 26/1/13*). It should be noted that many pro-loyalist commenters claimed to have witnessed the incidents of police brutality alluded to in these videos. Clearly it was not possible to verify whether they had actually been present during these events.

Loyalist commenters directed much vitriol at the ‘PSNI scum’ who ‘lost it’ during the confrontations with protesters in Carrickfergus and East Belfast; the police were also heavily criticized for failing to intervene when protesters were attacked by the “vermin” in Short Strand (*East Belfast 26th January 2013*). Such negative views of the ‘PSNIRA’ were also evident in the comments section of *PSNI try to arrest innocent protester*, the video that generated the most pro-loyalist comments. They were accused of supporting ‘IRA Marxists’ and provoking violence so they could arrest the protesters; one eyewitness even claimed that a police officer had tried to ‘steal’ his camera during the fracas. Self-identified loyalist commenters accepted this version of events

despite the lack of corroborative evidence, with one suggesting it was important to film these incidents in order to hold the PSNI accountable for their actions. This was one of a few comments that acknowledged how such footage might help shape public opinion about the policing of the protests. Two comments in the corpus compared one incident, in which a PSNI Tactical Support Group officer was accused of knocking a protester to the ground, to the ‘man in England’ who had been assaulted by the police (*PSNI Pushing Protestants Out Of Their Own Area*). This was presumably a reference to the video of an unprovoked assault by a Metropolitan police officer upon Ian Tomlinson during the London anti-G20 protests in April 2009, which resulted in the death of the newspaper vendor a few hours later. Yet, not all loyalist commenters engaged with this content as a form of *sousveillance*. Indeed, there were a handful of comments that poked fun at the PSNI and mocked their calls for the protesters to disperse in these videos.

The overwhelming majority of comments refuted accusations that the PSNI were heavy-handed in dealing with the protesters. In the case of the East Belfast man whose arrest was the focus of several videos, one commenter joked about the ‘42-year-old pensioner’ in reference to the fact that he was not as old as loyalists had claimed on various online platforms. There was much bemusement about claims that such footage constituted evidence that loyalists had been ‘brutalised’ by the police. A handful of commenters referred to incidents such as Bloody Sunday as evidence that loyalists had no idea what it was like to be oppressed by state forces (*peaceful protest ruined by psni 6/1/13*). This ‘whataboutery’ saw self-identified nationalists and republicans claim they were the true victims of ‘political policing.’ There were also many comments directly challenging the assertions made by the eyewitnesses responsible for uploading this ‘*sousveillance*’ footage. For example, in *PSNI officer Baton Drawn Despite no sign of trouble at city hall* one commenter drew attention to the fact that the baton was in fact still in the officer’s holster. There was a similar response to the footage of loyalist clashes with the PSNI in Shaftesbury Square, with one commenter suggesting that images of ‘black shadowy figures’ running around could hardly be considered evidence of the police brutality mentioned in the video’s title (*PSNI brutality @ shaftsbury square protest*). In some cases, the lack of visual evidence to corroborate claims that loyalists were the victims of unprovoked violence was used to cast doubt upon their veracity. For example, a man who claimed on camera he had been injured by a bottle thrown from the Short Strand district was called a ‘liar’ (*Belfast ambush 5th jan filmed by Jim Dowson Britain First*).

Nearly all of these commenters condemned the behaviour of the loyalists rather than the PSNI officers captured on camera. They questioned whether genuinely peaceful protesters would throw bricks at the police and expressed sympathy for the ‘poor PSNI’ officers. Loyalists were characterized as sectarian for the anti-Catholic comments heard in the background of several videos. Some even contended that this abuse merited more aggressive policing actions than those documented in this footage, with the forcible restraint of the East Belfast man justified on the basis that he must have done something to deserve it. A few commenters argued that the PSNI should have acted more decisively to prevent protesters from blocking roads and arrested those refusing to disperse when asked to do so. There was little sympathy for loyalists injured during the protest-related violence, as demonstrated by the commenters who mocked footage of an unconscious man being carried into the back of a police vehicle to receive medical attention (*PSNI Heavy Handed in East Belfast Part 3*). Indeed, there were a few commenters who appeared to take great pleasure in the fact that loyalists had been hurt during clashes with the police.



Working-class loyalists frequently dehumanized and mocked by commenters

Bryson and Dowson were unsurprisingly subjected to many *ad hominem* attacks from critics of the flag protests; the former’s speech impediment was ridiculed in an excoriating riposte to his allegation (not on camera) that the PSNI was a ‘Catholic’ force, while the latter was labelled a racist due to his BNP links. However, for the most part, these offensive remarks were more indiscriminate in nature. Sectarianism was observed in the comment threads of half (18) of the videos, with loyalists more often than not the targets of such abuse. For example, the comments under *PSNI Refusing to Let Protestant Home!* saw protesters derided as “stupid Orange bastards!” prompting angry responses from loyalists warning republicans to keep their “irish fenian views to yourself”. A

similar pattern emerged in the comments section below *Sectarian Republican Nationalist Extremists Attack Protestants At Shortstrand*, which saw loyalists mocked for being frightened of being outnumbered by Catholics due to recent demographic changes within Northern Ireland. These vitriolic exchanges saw a small number of loyalists react angrily to suggestions that republican residents were merely defending their community from an extremist loyalist mob. One of these commenters went as far as to call for a ‘napalm attack’ to ethnically cleanse Short Strand, which echoed a comment from a critic of the protests who suggested the PSNI shoot loyalists who blocked roads. Both were examples of hate speech that might have led to prosecutions under legislation such as Section 127 of the U.K. Communications Act 2003 [70].

There were also a couple of instances in which critics mocked the spelling and grammar of loyalists in their responses to these videos. Most notably, one commenter, who claimed he was one of the PSNI officers present during the events caught on camera, asserted that nobody cared about ‘proda stants [sic] bastards’ (*East Belfast 26th January 2013*). Clearly it was difficult to verify this claim, but the spelling and grammar errors suggested the post was inauthentic and part of the broader movement on social media portraying working-class loyalists as poorly educated (Reilly and Trevisan, 2016). A constant refrain of these commenters was that these were ‘worthless’ people who were either unable or unwilling to recognize that these were not sousveillance videos providing evidence of the ‘unprovoked brutality’ of the PSNI. In many cases it was suggested that those protesting were probably members of loyalist paramilitary organizations such as the UVF who engaged in criminal activities such as drug dealing. The flag protesters caught on camera were often depicted as ‘chavs’ [71], with one commenter asserting that “these are chavs, they are not people” (*PSNI Brutality-Harassment 26/1/13*). Overall, it appeared that loyalist efforts to expose police brutality had made minimal impact on this small but vocal group of YouTubers, and may in fact have reinforced their prejudices against the protesters.



Comments threads provide opportunities for informal learning?

There were two areas in which these comment threads appeared to facilitate some form of informal learning amongst loyalists. First, there was some clarification over the legality of the public demonstrations and marches that caused widespread disruption across Northern Ireland during this period. One commenter responded to the scenes shown in *East Belfast 26th January 2013* by arguing that loyalists were clearly not fully aware of the legal definition of peaceful protest; for example, they were reminded of the importance of acting in a respectful, non-threatening manner during the regular demonstrations at Belfast City Hall. It was confirmed that marches along public highways, held every Saturday at the peak of the protests, were technically illegal except in those circumstances where the police had been notified of the route at least six days in advance. Second, there was a debate over whether the eyewitnesses should be sharing footage revealing the faces of serving PSNI officers. The eyewitness responsible for *PSNI intimidate peaceful protest with dogs* argued with one commenter over whether this left these officers more vulnerable to attack by dissident republican terrorist organisations, such as the ‘Real IRA’. They offered to remove the footage on the condition that the PSNI take down the images of loyalists they wished to question in connection with protest-related violence, which had circulated in the mainstream media. Both seemed unaware of the fact that, under Section 58a of the U.K. Terrorism Act (2000), police officers did indeed have the power to stop eyewitnesses from recording them if they believed that the footage could be used for the purposes of terrorism. Yet, it was hard to tell whether the sharing of such information via social media actually altered the behaviour of loyalists, both collectively and individually. On 31 January loyalists would transition from blocking roads to white line protests, in which protesters positioned themselves in the centre of the road but did not obstruct traffic flow. This announcement occurred shortly after a meeting between the Ulster People’s Forum and representatives from the PSNI [72]. It was reasonable to presume that this dialogue about the legality of the protests was more likely to have influenced the change in strategy, as opposed to the advice proffered by a YouTube commenter. There were also no responses within the comments threads that shed light on whether this advice was likely to be adhered to in the future, nor any digital traces indicating how ‘lurkers/watchers’ interpreted and acted upon this guidance. Nevertheless, there certainly appeared to be an effort by a few commenters to use the

communicative spaces opened up by these videos to encourage informal learning about these issues amongst the protesters.




Conclusion

A key question in this paper was the extent to which this ‘sousveillance’ footage enabled loyalists to counter media narratives blaming them for the flag-protest related violence throughout this period. The provocative descriptions of these videos, as well as the views of the pro-loyalist ‘viewertariat’ in comment threads, portrayed these protesters as the victims of ‘political’, ‘heavy-handed’ policing. Yet, the analysis of these videos suggested they didn’t constitute a form of hierarchical sousveillance. Congruent with previous research (Reilly, 2015), they focussed attention on the anti-social behaviour of the protesters rather than the alleged police brutality. There was simply no evidence to corroborate claims that protesters had been the victims of ‘unprovoked assaults’ by police officers, who appeared aware that they were being filmed and had been trained not to react to the provocation of the crowd. While it is beyond the remit of this paper to examine whether a proleptical policing environment exists in contemporary Northern Ireland, these officers were self-disciplining when interacting with protesters, some of whom were recording these events on their mobile phones. Conversely, there were many examples of loyalists threatening police officers, which was held up as further evidence that they were to blame for unrest in areas such as East Belfast. In this regard, the study provided further evidence of how the use of social media for ‘cop watching’ might have unintended negative consequences for activists.

Like BLM, YouTube provided communicative spaces for informal learning, particularly about the legality of street protests and police powers to stop people recording footage that might aid terrorism. It was possible that viewers who did not leave comments may have developed their knowledge in these areas. However, the ‘trolling’ of working-class loyalists within these comment threads militated against the video-sharing platform facilitating deeper conversations about why they felt they were the victims of ‘political policing’. This was congruent with previous research into video activism, which suggested that back and forth exchanges between those with opposing viewpoints were inevitable during the short period in which they paid attention to such footage.

The views of these commenters reflected broader discourses about the legitimacy of policing in the deeply divided society (or lack thereof). Those who perceived the ‘PSNIRA’ as being complicit in Sinn Fein’s ‘culture war’ were likely to believe the allegations of police brutality made by Bryson and Dowson in these videos, irrespective of the lack of corroborative evidence therein. Pro-loyalist comments in the corpus reflected how these communities were increasingly dissatisfied with the Stormont Assembly and disputed the legitimacy of the ‘PSNIRA,’ who they accused of ‘political policing’. The same might be said for critics of the protests watching videos showing loyalists threatening PSNI officers. The lack of visual evidence of ‘police brutality’ reinforced their views that these allegations were fabricated and that loyalists were the aggressors in confrontations with the police. This was perhaps to be expected given that activist content uploaded on YouTube typically polarizes commenters. Congruent with recent research disputing the notion that social media facilitate hermetically sealed echo chambers (Bruns, 2019), the video-sharing site exposed these commenters to oppositional viewpoints on policing within the deeply-divided society. However, long-established perceptions of the PSNI’s legitimacy (or lack thereof) were unlikely to be altered as a result of these communicative exchanges.

This paper illustrates the problematic nature of exploring sousveillance, or imagined sousveillance as was the case here, through the collection and analysis of ‘easy,’ publicly available data. No generalizations could be made about the impact and reach of this sousveillance footage based on the contributions of the viewertariat active in these comments sections. These conversations were dominated by a small number of YouTubers who had strongly held opinions on the legitimacy of both the flag protests and the policing operation. The ratio of views to comments raised questions about the representative of this group. It was highly likely that these videos were being scrutinised on private Facebook pages and other online platforms that lay beyond the reach of the researcher. Further work in this emergent field should ideally adopt a cross-platform approach to examine how

sousveillance footage uploaded to YouTube ‘travels’ between these online platforms and is interpreted by different audiences therein. Yet, the triangulation of social media data generated by sousveillance may fail to fully capture the motivations of those who comment or just watch such footage. These are digital traces of behaviour from which it may be difficult to infer attitudes, especially given the propensity of some social media users to ‘troll’ others online. Therefore, future research should contextualize the analysis of social media data through the use of traditional research methods such as focus groups. This will not only provide more robust indicators of how audiences respond to such footage, but also whether they perceive it as a form of sousveillance in the first place. 

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Notes

1. Nolan, *et al.*, 2014, p. 81.

2. Baggott criticised senior UVF members for coordinating the violence. For more see <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/jan/07/senior-uvf-figures-belfast-violence>, accessed 10 May 2018.

3. DS Wright issued these statistics close to the anniversary of the protests. For more, see <http://web.archive.org/web/20190309002844/https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/psni-seek-names-for-150-faces-29768368.html>, accessed 10 May 2018.

4. For more on this see <http://web.archive.org/web/20190309003153/http://www.thepensivequill.com/2013/01/psni-differences-in-policing-loyalist.html>, accessed 10 May 2018.

5. Mann, *et al.*, 2003, p. 333.

6. Mann, 2013, p. 1.

7. Mann, 2017, p. 3.

8. Mann, 2004, p. 1.

9. Bowman and Willis, 2003, p. 9.

10. Mann, 2004, p. 627.

11. Mann, 2013, p. 4.

12. The King incident was not the only one captured on camera during this period. Footage of a racially motivated assault on white truck driver Reginald Denny was captured by a news helicopter and broadcast on television in March 1991. The subsequent trial and prosecution of the ‘LA Four’ fed into the debate about racism within the U.S. during this period. For a timeline of key events,

see <https://apimagesblog.com/blog/2017/4/28/rodney-king-riot-timeline-of-key-events>, accessed 13 November 2019.

13. Much of the rioting and looting targeted Asian-American businesses in South Central Los Angeles. For more on this, see <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/28/us/la-riots-korean-americans/index.html>, accessed 26 November 2019.

14. Bakir, 2010, p. 23.

15. Freelon, *et al.*, 2018, p. 79.

16. Worden and McLean, 2017, p. 488.

17. Hearty, 2018, p. 7.

18. Pennington and Lynch, 2015, p. 556.

19. The GARC statement was reproduced by Anthony McIntyre on his blog at <http://web.archive.org/web/20190309100317/http://www.thepensivequill.com/2013/01/psni-differences-in-policing-loyalist.html>, accessed 10 August 2014.

20. Baggott discussed the remit of the Operation during a Policing Board meeting in February 2013. Details of this can be accessed at <http://web.archive.org/web/20180601015709/https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/policing-matters-2013>, accessed 10 August 2014.

21. <http://web.archive.org/web/20190309100017/https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-27189536>, accessed 10 August 2014.

22. <http://web.archive.org/web/20190309095928/https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/psni-win-union-flag-protest-appeal-30397882.html>, accessed on 10 August 2014.

23. For more on the decision, see: *DB v Chief Constable of Police Service of Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland)*, [2017] UKSC 7, paragraph 81.

24. INTERCOMM and Byrne, 2013, p. 10.

25. <http://web.archive.org/web/20190309095745/https://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/22873>, accessed on 10 August 2014.

26. Whataboutery is broadly defined as the “blaming and finger pointing that goes on between communities in conflict” with one another. For more on this, see http://sluggerotoole.com/2005/02/09/glossary_what_is_whataboutery/, accessed on 10 August 2019.

27. This information was obtained by the authors of ‘The Flag Dispute: Anatomy of a Protest’. It can be found at [http://web.archive.org/web/20190309004048/https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/the-flag-dispute-anatomy-of-a-protest\(5eb2044d-4628-48a1-a23f-1fafebbb767d\).html](http://web.archive.org/web/20190309004048/https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/the-flag-dispute-anatomy-of-a-protest(5eb2044d-4628-48a1-a23f-1fafebbb767d).html), accessed 10 April 2017.

28. Based on author’s content analysis of 44 articles published in these three newspapers between December 2012 and March 2013.

29. “Clashes with police as protesters return from City Hall,” *Sunday Life* (27 January 2013), p. 6.

30. “Flags Crisis — Judge hits out at ‘thuggish rioting’,” *Irish News* (14 December 2012), p. 2.

31. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38zPoil2G14>, accessed 26 November 2019.

32. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9k6Hk_qsek, accessed 26 November 2019.

33. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SflXSzT2ANo>, accessed 26 November 2019.
34. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOy0bCqbjF0>, accessed 26 November 2019.
35. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POh2dwOf1fY>, accessed 26 November 2019.
36. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfRbERaYf5Q>, accessed 26 November 2019.
37. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPy6VO-Hxlg>, accessed 26 November 2019.
38. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t73RCFCjp0w>, accessed 26 November 2019.
39. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gswXMPO_HAM, accessed 26 November 2019.
40. Video no longer available as of 26 November 2019.
41. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KzJKErprM, accessed 26 November 2019.
42. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auXJ16HXsqA>, accessed 26 November 2019.
43. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GOSlb7XABY>, accessed 26 November 2019.
44. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAf4tx7I4zY>, accessed 26 November 2019.
45. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvnaXSDOMD0>, accessed 26 November 2019.
46. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COodZ2IUW8w>, accessed 26 November 2019.
47. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_vCUA3FXmk, accessed 26 November 2019.
48. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrF2eRgw-Uk>, accessed 26 November 2019.
49. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fb4ueMi6eBI>, accessed 26 November 2019.
50. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNcKw7AaW9I>, accessed 26 November 2019.
51. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKRheNLDHtA>, accessed 26 November 2019.
52. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_ws8rppT_8, accessed 26 November 2019.
53. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QjGWKEaW7E>, accessed 26 November 2019.
54. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWuJPrFBYIs>, accessed 26 November 2019.
55. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrNsXlrhyV0>, accessed 26 November 2019.
56. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EP5S4I_9JQ, accessed 26 November 2019.
57. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R9P00fYgZU>, accessed 26 November 2019.
58. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOY4xS_ARLU, accessed 26 November 2019.
59. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p68RILC0orQ>, accessed 26 November 2019.
60. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9RIJymRbpg>, accessed 26 November 2019.
61. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7RCAFNKHPg>, accessed 26 November 2019.
62. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nViu4MiLD9Q>, accessed 26 November 2019.
63. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGRQLHFNpfM>, accessed 26 November 2019.
64. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwpE3fKUTJQ>, accessed 26 November 2019.

65. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVIduhd5haw>, accessed 26 November 2019.

66. Mahrt and Scharrow, 2013, p. 24.

67. Frontline Freelance Media is run by professional photojournalist Mark Winter. See <http://frontlinefreelance.wixsite.com/ffmedia> accessed 26 November 2019.

68. Nolan, *et al.*, 2014, p. 79.

69. The Act prohibits the use of a public electronic communications network to send “a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character”. See <http://web.archive.org/web/20190309004001/http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/section/127>, accessed 10 May 2018.

70. ‘Chav’ is a derogatory term used to stereotype white, working-class communities in England based on their attire and supposed propensity for anti-social behaviour.

71. The police spokesperson confirmed those involved would only be arrested if they blocked traffic. See <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/police-welcome-forum-white-line-protest-vow-1-4741899>, accessed 10 April 2017.

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by Paul J. Reilly.

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