STRATEGIES AND TACTICS EMPLOYED IN REPRESENTING PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRINT MEDIA

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Aim of the research:
• Identifying and exploring manipulative strategies and tactics used in the media to represent protest movements
• Establishing the differences in their use

Central research case: the Yellow Vest movement in France

Methods:
• Data collection: a sample of 50 articles about the Yellow Vests movement (sampling)
• Data analysis: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (N. Fairclough, C. Hart)
N. FAIRCLOUGH'S MODEL FOR COMMUNICATIVE EVENT ANALYSIS

C. HART’S DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

• Connection between ideology and grammar

• Legitimization/delegitimization

• Linguistic means of event representation:
  o Description of processes
  o Mystification (Passive Voice, nominalization)
  o Description of social actors
  o Hidden evaluation
  o Visual images
RESULTS
SOCIAL ACTOR ANALYSIS

• “Riot police fired tear gas to try and disperse the protesters around the Place de la Republique, but demonstrators responded by starting fires and throwing flares and paving stones.” (The Irish Independent)

• “It was the third weekend of protests and confrontations with the police by the group, and by far the most damaging.” (The New York Times)
Conservative and neutral newspapers:

• “Everything leads us to believe that rioters will try to mobilise again.” (The Straits Times)

• “French television showed images of volunteer medics treating a yellow-vested protester lying on the ground, with the smell of tear gas mixed with black smoke choking the air.” (The Irish Independent)
RESULTS
SOCIAL ACTOR ANALYSIS

Liberal newspapers:

• “Well-spoken, tidy, clipped beards and short hair, these gilets jaunes (yellow vests) seemed hardly the stone-throwing, shop-smashing rabble those packed into the public benches had come to watch.” (The Guardian)

• “Several had lost an eye or limb in clashes with riot police.” (The Guardian)

• “He had two children with his girlfriend, but they did not live together, his mother was being operated on for lung cancer this week and his arrest meant he would almost certainly lose his job.” (The Guardian)

• “He worked as a forklift truck operator earning €1,200 a month out of which he paid €300 a month for his council flat.” (The Guardian)
Conservative and neutral newspapers:

• “Protesters dragged two officers to the ground and kicked them repeatedly, the video showed.” (The New York Times)

• “Rioters also vandalised a Boss menswear store and the luxury Longchamp handbag store.” (The Irish Independent)

• “Rampaging groups last weekend threw cobblestones through Paris storefronts and looted valuables in some of the city’s richest neighborhoods.” (The Mercury News)
Liberal newspapers:

• “The gendarmes fired tear gas and stinger grenades.” (The Irish Times)

• “A group that observes police conduct at gilets jaunes (yellow vest) protests said officers had attacked five of their number during the demonstration, injuring one of them.” (The Guardian)

• “In driving rain, protesters marched under umbrellas, waving placards reading “Macron, clear off”.” (The Irish Times)

• “Marching from outside the economy ministry, protesters calmly carried French flags with slogans against Macron written on their yellow vests.” (The Guardian)
Conservative and neutral newspapers:

• “We need to stop being a country that listens to those who cry the loudest,” Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer told LCI news channel.” (The Globe and Mail)

• “Two police union officials told The Associated Press they are worried that radical troublemakers from both the far right and far left will hijack Saturday’s protests.” (The Mercury News)

Liberal newspapers:

• “We’re suffocating with this government who wants to put us on our knees,” said Annie Moukam, a 58-year-old teacher among the protesters.” (The Guardian)

• “Laetitia Dewalle, a protester from the Val-d’Oise, said: “We’re continuing – always in a peaceful spirit.”…she added: “This movement itself is not violent. That’s not our way of doing things.”” (The Guardian)
RESULTS

MYSTIFICATION: PASSIVE VOICE

Conservative and neutral newspapers:

• “A French yellow vest protester’s hand has been ripped apart during violent clashes in Paris as demonstrators tried to storm the French National Assembly during a 13th consecutive week of unrest.” (The Irish Independent)

• “…after dozens of Yellow Vest protesters were injured by “dispersal grenades” and rubber pellets.” (The New York Times)

Liberal newspapers:

• “Some bins and bicycles were also torched.” (The Guardian)

• “Did he know about the off-licence that had been looted near where he was arrested? No.” (The Guardian)
As scuffles broke out in front of the National Assembly and French police responded with tear gas, paramedics huddled around the injured protester at the National Assembly gates.” (The Irish Independent)

Skirmishes also broke out between the police and protesters in major cities in western France, including Nantes, Bordeaux and Caen.” (The New York Times)

Clashes also broke out between demonstrators and police near the Porte de Champerret, close to the Arc de Triomphe, as protesters prepared to march across town towards Gare d’Austerlitz.” (The Irish Times)
Conservative and neutral newspapers:

• “French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner blamed “thugs” and “bullies” on Sunday for the violence that hit demonstrations the previous day marking marked the first anniversary of the anti-government “yellow vest” protests.” (The National Post)

• “Philippe announced new security measures … aimed at avoiding a repeat of Saturday’s violence, in which rioters set life-threatening fires, ransacked luxury stores and attacked police around the Champs-Elysees.” (The National Post)

• ““Once again, the republic was attacked with extreme violence — its guardians, its representatives, its symbols,” Mr. Macron wrote.” (The New York Times)
Liberal newspapers:

• “Lawyers estimate that as many as 17 people have lost an eye because of the police’s use of such weapons since the start of the street demonstrations, while at least three have lost their hands and others have been left with their face or limbs mutilated.” (The Guardian)

• “…It was like a war. It was our first demonstration. I had no idea the police had weapons that could do that damage.”” (The Guardian)

• “She said using the sting-ball grenades was akin to using military weapons against a civilian population.” (The Guardian)

• “The demonstration, which passed off peacefully…” (The Guardian)
RESULTS
ANALYSIS OF VISUAL IMAGES

Conservative and neutral newspapers:

More than 3,000 came out in Paris, the government said. Credit... Olivier Morin/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images (The New York Times)

Thousands of yellow vest protesters took to the streets across France on Saturday for a 15th straight weekend of demonstrations (Daily Mail)

A burning bicycle near the Champs-Élysées. Credit... Michel Euler/Associated Press (The New York Times)
RESULTS
ANALYSIS OF VISUAL IMAGES

Liberal newspapers:

Protester who had been injured by a stun grenade, and others with crosses bearing names of injured people, Bordeaux, September 2019. Photograph: Georges Gobet/AFP/Getty Images (The Guardian)

Jérôme Rodrigues, one of the leaders of the gilets jaunes movement, is helped after being injured in the eye during clashes between protesters and police. Photograph: Zakaria Abdelkafi/AFP/Getty Images (The Guardian)

Priscillia Ludosky started the movement with her online petition against the rising cost of fuel. Photograph: Eric Feferberg/AFP/Getty Images (The Guardian)
RESULTS
ANALYSIS OF VISUAL IMAGES

Conservative and neutral newspapers:

A protester attacking a shop window near the Champs-Élysées in Paris on Saturday. Credit... Zakaria Abdelkafi/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Liberal newspapers:

A statue of Marianne, a symbol of France, inside the Arc de Triomphe was damaged by rioters on 1 December. Photograph: Etienne Laurent/EPA (The Guardian)
RESULTS
ANALYSIS OF VISUAL IMAGES

Conservative and neutral newspapers:

About 89,000 security forces were deployed across the country on Saturday, including 8,000 in Paris, compared with 4,600 a week earlier.

Credit... Benoit Tessier/Reuters

Liberal newspapers:

A woman remonstrates with riot police during an anti-government yellow-vest demonstration on Saturday in Paris. The yellow-vest (gilets jaunes) protests first erupted last November.

Photograph: Zakaria Abdelkafi/AFP/Getty (The Irish Times)
RESULTS

ANALYSIS OF VISUAL IMAGES

Liberal newspapers:

Protesters clash with riot police forces near the Opera Garnier in Paris. Photograph: Zakaria Abdelkafi/AFP/Getty Images (The Guardian)

Conservative and neutral newspapers:

Protesters clashing with French riot police officers on the Champs-Élysées on Saturday. Credit... Etienne Laurent/EPA, via Shutterstock (The New York Times)
References


Newspaper articles:


Strategies and Tactics Employed in Representing Protest Movements in Contemporary English-language Print Media
References

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