

**The impact of Police Public Relations on regional print news-coverage of Environmental Protest**

**By:** Richard W. Fern

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield

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Naturally, this thesis cites a number of academics and their works, these too I acknowledge. I am grateful to those who agreed to be interviewed for this research.

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I dedicate this work to my son Jasper. Jasper, long long before you were born I promised you that you would grow up in a house filled with books. This is for you…

**Abstract**

The thesis examines the impact of police public relations upon regional print coverage of environmental protests, focussing upon Fracking in three areas of England as case studies. It examines in depth the competition for positive coverage of those protests and the associated issues of communications, public relations and newspaper practice. In so doing it draws upon extant discourses of propaganda and legitimation – showing them to be insufficient in accounting for the news-coverage of these case studies. It goes on to look at press coverage of protest events as a field of conflict commensurate with the theories of Bourdieu and other associated academics. The thesis shows how such concepts as media logic, PR-logics and media rituals of objectivity are represented as indices of journalistic and public relations norms in the coverage. It is found that police media-relations is present in the coverage, but it is not dominant in all cases. It is argued that, while such PR practice yields advantages to police in the coverage, these advantages are not decisive in securing positive coverage. However, it is further argued public relations – as a wider form of practice including media relations – has produced significant impacts upon the public sphere and its discourses, and this is reflected in the press coverage. Moreover, police media-relations is found to be part of the representation of state policy-making, which is itself dominated by business or neo-liberal actors. As such police action and public relations are found to be central to a crisis of legitimacy generated by the interaction between political and business actors. Protest itself, and its policing - together with representations thereof - have become one ‘cockpit’ or crucible of that crisis.

**Contents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Section | Title |
| 1. 0 | Introduction |
| 1.1 | Why study police-PR? |
| 1.2 | Overview of policing strategy and tactics as relevant to thesis study |
| 1.3 | A description of the police forces studied in this thesis |
| 1.4 | Definitions |
| 1.5 | Timeline |
| 2.0 | Literature Review |
| 2.1 | Introduction |
| 2.2 | The Growth of 'PR' and Media-Management in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries |
| 2.3 | Regional newspapers |
| 2.4 | Community and its perception in news |
| 2.5 | Environmental protest and media management |
| 2.5.1 | A brief history of the global environmental movement |
| 2.5.2 | A brief history of activism in the UK |
| 2.5.3 | Environmental groups and media-management |
| 2.5.4 | Deviance and Adoption of Activist Positions |
| 2.6.1 | Police PR and media-management |
| 2.6.2 | Public relations and propaganda |
| 2.6.3 | Societal power in policing and its place in news as cultural production and reproduction |
| 2.6.4 | Defining propaganda as a review of the existing literature |
| 2.6.5 | Marxist and Neo-Marxist positions on state violence |
| 2.7 | Habermas - The public sphere |
| 2.8 | Bourdieu and Field Theory |
| 2.8.1 | Bourdieu and Symbolic Power |
| 2.9 | Legitimacy in policing |
| 2.9.1 | Taxonomies of legitimacy |
| 2.9.2 | Legitimacy, human rights and promotional society |
| 2.9.3 | Legitimacy and legal positivism |
| 2.9.4 | A legitimacy crisis - discussion |
| 2.9.5 | Public relations as legitimacy in rhetoric and management |
| 2.10 | Chapter summary |
| 3.0 | Methodology |
| 3.1 | Research methodologies |
| 3.2 | Overview |
| 3.3 | Research Sample |
| 3.4 | A brief description of the Argus, MEN and the Lancashire Gazette |
| 3.4 | Textual analysis |
| 3.5 | Frame analysis |
| 3.6 | Semi-structured interviews |
| 3.7 | Discovery of documentation |
| 3.8 | Qualitative methodologies and approaches |
| 4.0 | Textual Analysis |
| 4.1 | Chapter overview |
| 4.2 | Police Media-relations and their relationship to the media |
| 4.4 | Nomination - how actors are named |
| 4.5 | Difficulties in understanding the semiotic role of words |
| 4.6 | Comparison of nominative terms |
| 4.7 | Nominalisation - the semiotics of police and policing |
| **4.8** | **Who is allowed to speak?** |
| 4.9. | How spokespeople are introduced |
| 4.10 | Comparative discussion of Share of Voice which incorporates other PR actors |
| 4.10.1 | Brighton Argus |
| **4.10.2** | Manchester Evening News |
| **4.11.3** | The Blackpool Gazette |
| 4.12 | Framing by actor and/or agency |
| 4.13 | Conclusion to chapter |
| 5.0 | Police-PR as propaganda |
| 5.1 | ‘Strong’ and ‘Weak’ definitions of Propaganda |
| 5.2 | Myth, pre-conceived discourses – strong version |
| 5.3 | Myth, pre-conceived discourses – weak version |
| 5.4 | Intent and strategic coordination – the ‘strong’ version |
| 5.5 | Evidence for the construction state-level pro-fracking policy, or anti-fracking protest bias or prejudice. |
| 5.6. | Summary of arguments for strategic intent in propaganda practice |
| 5.7 | A revised definition of propaganda |
| 5.8.1 | Affective propaganda |
| 5.8.2 | Exaggeration propaganda |
| 5.8.3 | Fabrication propaganda |
| 5.9 | A discussion of other police statements as Societal and Political propaganda |
| 5.10 | Police action as event amplifiers, and police communication as amplifiers |
| 5.11 | Road Closures and budgets |
| 5.12 | Discourses of road closure and budgeting – Sociological propaganda vs political propaganda |
| 5.13 | Conclusion to chapter |
| 6.0 | Police-PR and legitimacy claims |
| 6.1 | Protestor attitudes towards legitimacy claims |
| 6.2 | Human Rights |
| 6.3 | Discussion |
| 6.3.1 | The role of legitimacy in preventing the need for coercion |
| 6.4 | Police public relations as a steering mechanism in legitimation crises |
| 6.5 | Police communications strategies as indicators of intent in legitimacy claims |
| 6.6 | Is legitimacy necessary? |
| 6.7. | Public relations practice as a legitimacy claim in a mediatized society |
| 6.7.1 | Introduction |
| 6.7.2 | Police PR and mediation and mediatization |
| 6.8 | Are the police mediatized? |
| 6.9 | Has mediazation influenced the policing of Fracking protests? |
| 6.10 | Promotionalism and its impact upon Police-PR and activist media |
| 6.11 | Conclusion to chapter |
| 7.0 | Bourdieu and Field Theory |
| 7.1 | Introduction |
| 7.2 | Applying Bourdieu to these case-studies |
| 7.3 | Does the practice in this study constitute a field? |
| 7.4 | Defining fields of practice |
| 7.5 | Capital, cultural capital and public relations |
| 7.6 | Descriptions and analysis of the nested fields in this study |
| 7.6.1 | Field of Power |
| 7.6.2 | Field of State Power and Political Field |
| 7.6.3 | Field of police-PR and public relations |
| 7.6.4 | Journalistic Field |
| 7.7 | The role of legitimacy claims - the uses of nested fields of state and political power |
| 7.8 | The Symbolic Power of the police |
| 7.9 | Summary of arguments so far |
| 7.10 | Framing and Bourdieu |
| 7.11 | What is the inter-field impact of nested and adjacent fields |
| 7.12 | Conclusion to chapter |
| 8.0 | Conclusion |
| 8.1 | Research question 1 (R1): To what extent can police-PR as found in this case study (or case studies) be characterized as propaganda? |
| 8.2 | Research question 2 (R2): to what extent can it be argued that legitimacy claims are the primary objective of police-PR? Research question 3 (R3): to what extent can police-PR as found in this study be characterised as a managerial or organisation response to mediation and/or mediatization? |
| 8.3 | Research question 4 (R4): To what extent can police-PR as found in this study be characterised as activity within a field of conflict in agreement with Bourdieu. |
| 8.4 | Discussion of key findings |
| 8.4.1 | State power and its capital |
| 8.4.2 | The structural role of public relations |
| 8.4.3 | PR-practice as an arm of the neo-liberal agenda. |
| 8.5 | To what extent is police-PR politicised? |
| 8.6 | A summary of thesis findings |
| 8.7 | Limitations |
| 8.7.1 | A personal perspective |
| 8.7.2. | Methodological limitations |
| 8.7.3 | Suggestion for further study |
| 8.7.4 | A post-modern critique |
| 8.7.5 | A discussion the role of ethics in the production of public relations |
| 8.7.6 | A further analysis of agency, context and contingency |
| 8.8 | Recommendations and observations |
| 8.9 | A few final words |
| 9.0 | Appendices |

**List of Illustrations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Content | Page Number |
| Diagram one – visualisation of newspaper, activist, police practice | 13 |
| Diagram two – Hallin’s spheres of consensus and controversy | 52 |
| Table 1 – Brighton Argus nomination word counts, comparison with Sussex Police statements | 98 |
| Table 2 - MEN nomination word counts, comparison with GMP statements | 99 |
| Table 3 – Gazette nomination word counts, comparison with Lancashire Police statements | 100 |
| Table 4 – nomination of events all titles all police statements | 102 |
| Table 5 – Police sources SoV and their associated word counts | 104 |
| Table 6 – Activist sources SoV and their associated word counts | 104 |
| Table 7 – Comparison of coded instances | 105 |
| Table 8 – Word count per quote | 105 |
| Pie Chart one - Brighton Argus (SoV) | 109 |
| Table 9 – Share of Voice – Brighton Argus | 109 |
| Pie Chart two - MEN - SoV | 111 |
| Table 10 - Share of Voice – MEN | 111 |
| Pie Chart Three - Blackpool Gazette (SOV) | 113 |
| Table 11 – Share of voice – Blackpool Gazette | 113 |
| Table 12 - Brighton Argus – Actors and agencies frame promotion | 119 |
| Table 13 - MEN – Actors and agencies frame promotion | 119 |
| Table 14 Blackpool Gazette – Actors and agencies frame promotion | 119 |
| Table 15 - Brighton Argus– Frames by actors and agencies | 120 |
| Table 16 MEN – Frames by actors and agencies | 120 |
| Table 17 - Blackpool Gazette – Frames by actors and agencies | 120 |
| Table 18 Disaggregation of legitimation framing by newspaper | 122 |
| Diagram three – Strong and Weak definitions of propaganda | 127 |
| Diagram four – Fields of practice active in this research | 187 |
| Framing graph one | 206 |
| Framing graph two | 206 |
| Framing graph three | 207 |
| Framing graph four | 207 |
| Table 19 – Framings as expressed by different PR actors | 207 |
| Table 20 – Frames as used by each actor | 211 |

**1.0 Introduction**

Police actions, particularly policing failures, are news – in that they appear in the news-media. This thesis will address the various influences – as they appear in regional print news-media – upon that central fact. Such coverage often challenges the reputation of the police, and so threatens the ongoing legitimacy of their policing actions. Take, for instance, the shooting of Jean Charles De Menezes, an innocent man, mistaken for a terrorist and shot in the head without warning by armed police officers. The story appeared in the papers, promoted by the police, was that: he was wearing a heavy jacket that might have concealed a weapon, he was not; that he had vaulted the ticketing-turnstiles, he had not; and that he ignored a warning, no warning was given (Siddique, 2016). At climate protests at Kingsnorth power station police press officers claimed that police officers had been injured, they were forced to apologise and retract this allegation when a freedom of information request showed the claims to be false (Guardian, 2010). At Hillsborough claims that Liverpool fans had urinated on police and robbed the dead were propagated via informal links to the news-media, which repeated them. The allegations were demonstrably untrue (Guardian, 2017). The so-called “Plebgate Affair” grew as both a political and policing scandal when police officers caused a government minister to resign by briefing apparent fabrications to the news-media in a deliberate act of disinformation (Halliday, 2014). Ian Tomlinson died after a police officer hit him from behind in an unprovoked attack at G20 protests. Police press statements blamed protestors, but were forced to recant their allegations when video of the incident came to light (Guardian, 2013). All of these are examples of police failures, and which are also, at their core, police-PR failures.

Ericson tells us that the police ‘patrol the facts’ (Ericson, 1989a). Chibnall (Chibnall, 1977, Mawby, 2010a), Schlesinger (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994) and others report the ‘golden age’ of journalist/police relations. This has now apparently passed in the wake of the scandals surrounding tabloid newspapers such as the News of the World, which led to inquiries into police conduct e.g. Elvedon and Weeting (Guardian, 2012a, Guardian, 2012b). Elvedon, Weeting and Leveson are reported as having a ‘dampening effect’ upon relations between police and news-media (Campbell, 2013, Guardian newspapers, 2015) – and this effect has spread to local newspapers according to Marsden (Marsden, 2013) who argues they are ‘now suffering for the sins of others’. Meanwhile, as the informal links between police and news-media are waning, police communications departments continue to grow (Mawby, 2012). This is, in part at least, a reflection of the growth of public relations across society over the last 100 years (Miller, 2008) and an accompanying promotional culture (Wernick, 1991).

The focus of this thesis is upon the police as actors in news production, and their subsequent appearance in the regional print news media. With this in mind the thesis approaches the subject using a case-study, formed from three sub-case studies, and seeks to answer four research questions. Each is designed to address the same central issues from different viewpoints found either dominant in the literature review (chapter 2) or found to emerging from the case-study dataset. This approach is addressed more fully in the methodology chapter (chapter 4).

* The first is a structuralist, Marxist or neo-Marxist position that assumes that police-PR fulfils a propagandist role in support of the dominant or hegemonic discourse. This is addressed in the chapter (6.0) on police-PR as propaganda which attempts to answer

**Research question 1 (R1): To what extent can police-PR as found in this case study be characterised as propaganda?**

* The second looks at legitimation claims as a central function for police-PR, using the work of Weber, Habermas and Beetham.

**Research question 2 (R2): To what extent can it be argued that legitimacy claims are the primary objective of police-PR?**

* The third question is based on a managerial or constructivist position which shows police-PR as a necessary part of a mediatized organisational structure in the face of mediated or pronominalized society. This is addressed in the chapter on Legitimation which attempts to answer

**Research question 3 (R3): To what extent can police-PR as found in this study be characterised as a managerial or organization response to mediation and/or mediatization?**

* The fourth looks at the cultural aspects of police-PR as actors and agencies in a field, or fields, of societal conflict. The section primarily uses Bourdieu and his field theory, is discussed under that heading, and attempts to answer the question

**Research question 4 (R4): To what extent can Police-PR as found in this study be characterised as activity within a field of conflictin agreement with Bourdieu?**

In this introduction it is possible to identify a number of actors – the police public relations professionals, media-activists, journalists – as well as a number of agencies such as the police services, protestor groups, local communities, and third party stakeholders such as local councils and drilling organisations. In order to answer these questions the thesis addresses a proposed field of practice found evident in regional print newspapers in their coverage of fracking protests, focussing upon the role of police public and media relations. The question of fields of practice and their identification and definition is addressed more fully in the chapter engaging with the work of Bourdieu (chapter 7).

It identifies and describes the role of the actors and agencies involved in that coverage, and gives a brief account of the protests covered in this work. Diagram one provides a visualisation of this proposed field of practice studied in this thesis.

Regional Newspapers

Police public relations

Activists/Protestors

Field of practice

Diagram one – visualisation of newspaper, activist, police practice

This argument is revisited and elucidated in chapter 7 that the habitus of police/media relations and the habitus of activist/media relations, together with the habitus of journalistic practice, combine to form a field of practice. This field is nested within others – notably the field of state power – to form its own doxic and orthodox practice. The regional print coverage is used here as a dataset, case-study and indices of that practice – that is to say that the newspaper reporting of the protests is evidence of the way these fields function.

The study proposes and seeks evidence that a field of practice does exist, that it is indeed nested within and without a number of other fields of practice. The field is found to be heavily contested between heteronomic poles of state and associated fields of neoliberal capital, and homogenic poles of journalistic cultural practice, and a democratic public sphere.

The thesis achieves this by considering a range of positions proposed in the extant academic literature which is considered in a literature review (chapter 2). The literature identifies a number of themes. The first is the role of regional print news-media in the public sphere. Such newspapers are described as facing a number of challenges, core amongst these is the growing role and influence of public relations practice. This growth is also identified in the literature. Public relations – with media-relations as a subset of its practice – is shown to have grown in size and dominance over the last 100 years (section 2.2) to the extent that some observers have seen as either a hegemonic force in its own right, or allied with the hegemonic forces of neoliberalism. Police public relations is shown to have also grown during this period, as has activist public relations – and these are addressed in the literature review in turn. The role of police public relations is addressed under three broad headings in the existing literature. The first is a Marxist, neo-Marxist or structuralist position which holds that the police are agents of the State and as such the police practice in this area is part of a hegemonic project to maintain the dominant hierarchy. In this section, theories of propaganda are addressed as models of police-PR and/or state communications warfare. The second is that police public relations is the practice of maintaining legitimacy with key stakeholders in a social contract (Hobbes, 2010) ‘…in which by offering protection to its citizens in return for their forfeiting the private use of violence, the state acquires a monopoly in legitimate violence’ (Mansley, 2014, p.42). This argument is addressed both in terms of procedural, moral and other framings using the work, as well as in terms of managerialist practice. In doing so the thesis draws heavily upon the work of Habermas and Beetham amongst others. Finally, the literature identifies police-PR as actors and agents in contested fields of practice – a position addressed by using the work of Bourdieu. However, it is important to emphasise through reiteration that this thesis does not address or argue these positions in their own right, but rather as they are expressed or found in public relations, particularly media-relations, practice.

The thesis then describes its methodology (chapter 3). Relevant regional print media have been identified and their coverage of protests analysed. In addition, document discovery has revealed the press statements made by the relevant police forces, as well as associated documents, communications strategies and police presentations. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key actors. These were triangulated by four related, approaches to the data. The first is a textual analysis aimed at yielding indicative quantitative data. However, noting the limitations of this approach the methodology drew upon the literature to identify three qualitative approaches to the data which looked at police-PR as: hegemonic practice, claims to legitimacy and actions undertaken in a contested field.

The textual analysis yielded interesting results that showed police-PR to be a dominant voice, but not the only voice present. The three case studies were not uniform, and the lack of presence of Lancashire Police (and the presence of organised pro-fracking actors) seemed to introduce variation in share of voice, word-counts and framing. Most notably, the evidence suggests that pro-fracking voices and police voices were interchangeable in the news-copy. The limitations of the textual analysis approach are reviewed in depth, but bearing these in mind the findings are used indicatively in the subsequent chapters.

As indicated, the three qualitative positions are addressed by building upon the work of a number of theorists notably Jurgen Habermas (Habermas, [1962]1989, 1972, 1988, 1996) and Pierre Bourdieu (Benson and Neveu, 2005, Bourdieu and Nice, 1977, Bourdieu, 1986, 1987, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1998 [1996], 1998, 2005, Calhoun et al., 1993), although other works are also cited in describing and defining propaganda. This forms the basis of the remaining chapters which address in turn arguments for hegemonic practice as propaganda, legitimacy as an objective of police public relations, and the place of the practice within nested fields of conflict on which economic and cultural capital, doxa and orthodoxy, symbolic power and violence are evident.

In this thesis, propaganda is found to be present in police communications, but not widely so (chapter 6). Even when non-stringent definitions are applied the majority of police communications activity is found to be acts of persuasion. In order to achieve a nuanced analysis, the definition of propaganda is discussed at length, and veracity, or rather its lack, is identified as core delimiter between propaganda and persuasion. A lack of veracity or fabrication is defined as including outright falsehood, exaggeration, the elision of core facts or an appeal to emotion. However, as part of this discussion, the cultural impact of symbolic power and societally-held images of policing are discussed. This cultural approach, favoured by authors such as Stuart Hall (Hall et al., 1978, 1988), is shown to produce a weak-version of propaganda in which the intent of propagandists can be questioned, whilst maintaining its hegemonic influence on discourse. In plainer speech, the police are able to draw upon dominant historic discourses of policing to create some communicative acts which are not propaganda, but are propagandistic. This is explained and discussed at length in chapter 6.

In the extant academic literature legitimacy is held to be a key goal of police communications practice. It is examined as such in chapter 6. The discussion draws upon a range of authors; Beetham is key amongst these. However, these are challenged in this thesis as not being found as necessarily applicable to these case studies by showing that while legitimacy claims of various types are present in police communications and the news coverage they are not necessary to wider police practice. That is to say that day-to-day policing does not require it to be legitimate in the eyes of all or any stakeholders. This point is argued at length in the chapter and given substantial evidential support. The chapter also discusses public relations practice as a normative management function; it makes the point that such practice is found in most if not all large organisations. Because such practice is found everywhere, it has become a dominant form of societal rhetoric and speaking in those rhetorical forms has become a necessary part of professional communications practice. The case studies provide evidence for this position and they are cited in this chapter.

Bourdieu’s Field Theory is used at length and in detail in chapter 7. Its component parts are revisited and applied to the case study material and the position of habitus and capital is addressed through the practice of the key actors and agencies. Capital is shown to be transferred between nested fields, and public relations practice is shown to be a key, even dominant, form of capital. This is a key element and finding of the analysis. It offers public relations as a means of hegemonic influence in neoliberal society; as a source cultural capital. As such it revisits many of the elements already presented in thesis; the role of propaganda, even in its weak version, and the utility of legitimacy claims amongst them. Further it shows how professionalised, managerialised police-PR functions are able to gain leverage through media logic and cultural myths to place themselves within the field of conflict. By doing this they establish themselves as dominant voices, and join other dominant hegemonic voices in news-copy. In so doing it is able to refer back to the textual analysis of chapter 4 and shed new light upon the data presented there.

The thesis concludes with an overview of its findings, a discussion of its limitations, and recommendations for further study.

This thesis’ original contribution to knowledge is its focus upon a limited number of actors, in a limited field of discourse, that can act as a case-study of the impact of public relations – most notably but not exclusively media-relations – upon the public sphere as expressed in the regional print news coverage. Moreover, by focussing upon police-PR the thesis studies a part of the State in its relationship to that discourse. It highlights how state-messaging can be transferred between levels of government and state-bureaucracy. It also examines tangentially how public relations as a societal practice has become integrated into the practice of government-policy formation and its enaction. In addition, it shows how that messaging is contested by activists and activism in a mediated cultural framework, and a democratic practice which is nominally informed by Human Rights. The thesis endeavours to use this case study to find evidence that either challenges or supports the assertions of the extant literature about State, public relations and the public sphere.

Having set out the broad approach and propositions of this thesis, the introduction will now turn to the wider context and necessary definitions for the study. It will begin by identifying police-PR as important within the context of this study, and it will then place it in the context of policing, its leadership and their position within the analysed case-studies.

**1.1 Why study police-PR?**

The police have a central role in our society’s reaction to protest, notably in this case, civil disobedience. They have the monopoly of violence (Weber, 2009), they are both repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses (in their PR functions) (Miliband, 1977), and part of The Establishment (Jones, 2015). They are the agents of the state at a protest, and its voice in terms of media-relations. This alone makes police-PR an interesting subject of study. The Marxist version of the role of the police is supported by any number of examples such as their role at Climate Camps (Guardian, 2010), G8 protests (Guardian, 2013), and historically the road protests (Monbiot et al, 2009). In each of these cases the role of media-relations, and public relations generally, has been central in legitimising policing activity, and delegitimising protest (Jones, 2015). In the wake of the G8 protests, and the death of Ian Tomlinson, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary conducted an inquiry and published *Adapting to Protest– Nurturing the British Model of Policing* (2009) – aimed to address some of the failings and make recommendations for the future. However, Jones (2015) notes “But when a new wave of protests convulsed Britain’s streets, there was little evidence of non-aggressive tactics recommended [in the report].” (p.141). What followed was an increase in questionable police-PR activity: at Kingsnorth where Kent Police were forced to apologise for fabricating evidence (Guardian, 2010); in the kettling of protestors; and in the ongoing revelations regarding undercover policing which led to the collapse of first protests and then trials (Jones, 2011). “A new authoritarian Establishment had granted the police sweeping powers to crack down on radical dissent.” (Jones, 2015, p.145). Into this atmosphere and prevailing mode of policing the prospect of Fracking, or at least its exploratory precursor was introduced and a new arena for protest was created. It was reminiscent of the road protests of the 1980s, with experienced protestors joining forces with locals to prevent Fracking. Indeed these protests had a local flavour and it fell to local news-media to cover them, at least as much as national press, if not more.

**1.2 Overview of policing strategy and tactics as relevant to thesis study**

In this section the leadership of policing is more closely examined – this includes the role of Chief Constables, approaches to community/neighbourhood policing and human rights legislation vis-à-vis protest and freedom of speech, as well as legal positivism as a driver of police practice. This thesis makes no attempt to critique police strategy and tactics, other than when they are directly relevant to communications practice. Police strategy and operations are clearly linked to police public and media relations; one will reflect in the other. For instance, a failure of policing must be explained to the public, and it makes sense to for a public relations professional to accentuate positive aspects of police work. The place of police public relations in policing practice is accentuated by this study in interviews with communications staff and by documents gained by freedom of information requests - these are available in the appendices, and discussed in section 6.7.2 looking at the mediatization of policing.

Much has changed in policing in recent years, and this is discussed in the literature review as a history described by a range of authors including Chibnall (1977), Schlesinger et al (1994), Rowbotham, Stevenson and Pegg (2013) and Mawby (2002, 2003, 2007, 2010a, 2010d, 2012) amongst others. Much of that literature, while addressing the changing nature of police/news-media relationships does not directly address protest. That said, Chibnall and Hall (1978) both look at the cultural factors that lead to police to an apparent police dominance in protest reporting. Later works, such as Stevenson et al (2018) give a history of Chief Constables, while Mansley (2014) looks at their role in public disorder policing. Brain (Brain, 2018) looks at the situation for Police Chief Constables after 1985 highlighting the Police and Criminal Evidence Act as a ‘threshold’ moment, at which the requirements of Section 106 of the act to obtain the view of the public on policing opened ‘A small chink in the operational autonomy of Chiefs’ (p.248). He says, the public disorder of the 1980s required strong police leadership, and this need was met by men such as Anderton, Oxford, Dear, Nyman and Bailey who were by turns ‘charismatic’, ‘intellectual’, ‘paternalistic’ and ‘outspoken’. During this period – of the poll tax riots, the miners’ strike, Wapping, and Hillsborough, as well as revelations of police-misconduct in the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four cases – the legitimacy of the police was slowly eroded. The result was two reports, *A Force for Change*, led in turn to *The Plus Programme* which identified the public as consumers and sought to change the ethos of the Police from 'force' to 'service' (Schlesinger, 1994, pp.108-109). Pressure mounted and change took place in a number of areas with some Chief Constables adopting high-profile and at-the-time controversial policies such as arming of police with CS gas and armed patrols. However, the pace of change was not fast enough for politicians (Major and his two home secretaries) and the Sheehy Report and the Police Reform White paper followed in 1993. The National Crime Unit was formed under the Conservatives. The move to managerialism – reflected in police public relations practice (Mawby, 2007, 2010d) had begun. Chief Constables successfully opposed some of the changes, but they were placed on fixed-term contracts, and police authorities became more managerial in their approach. Brain argues that some Chief Constables were able to adapt while others were not, but it was not until the period of a Labour government and the advent of the Police Standards Unit and Audit Commission scrutiny, that the scope and pace of change caused a number of Chief Constables to retire, resign or be dismissed. This argues Brain (himself a former Chief Constable) led to and was accompanied by increased centralisation – particularly in the face of global terrorism. The Conservatives return to power in 2010 heralded yet more change and the *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011* brought a move away from centralisation, the abolition of police authorities and the instatement of directly-elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) with the power to hire and fire Chief constables. This in turn led to a number of Chief Constable resignations, retirements and effective dismissals. “It is difﬁcult to conclude”, argues Brain, “other than that by the end of the period the Chief Constable cadre had lost status, authority and power compared to the professional elite described by Reiner in the late 1980s.” (p.263). This is the period in which this thesis’s case-studies took place.

Channing (2018) provides a history of *Chief Constables and Public Order: Tensions Between Discretion and Consistency* starting with the Chartist riots of 1839 and working forward, but for the period of this study he records:

The role Chief Constables play in the present era regarding public order operations has been reduced. The operational responsibilities are now largely the duty of Gold or Silver Commanders who have received speciﬁc public order training which is accredited by the National Police Improvement Agency. The function of the Chief Constable more generally relates to post-operational reviews, but they also play a signiﬁcant role in national operational decision-making. For example, the Police National Mobilisation Plan, which is in place to coordinate mutual support between forces, was agreed upon by Chief Constables in 2006. (P.190).

This is an important statement for the purposes of this thesis – Chief Constables play a small role in day-to-day policing of the kind of protests seen in this study. This is reiterated and emphasised in the body of publicly available documents on police public order training. For instance – the Gold Public Order Public Safety Command Course and the accompanying *Guidance for Public Order Public Safety Command Roles Accreditation* (College of Policing, 2019a, 2018) – emphasises the professionalised nature of the training. Further, nowhere in the dataset found in this thesis is it stated nor intimated that the relevant Chief Constable has been directly involved in day-to-day policing of protest – or its communication. There are however police reports of PCCs ‘quizzing’ Chief Constables (2013 9 20 Sussex Police Chief Constable to face questions on Balcombe anti-fracking protest policing) – the Argus reported this as addressing budgets and the use of pressure points. The Argus also carried an extended interview with the Gold Commander, Police Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs, (2013 8 18 THE BIG INTERVIEW: Sussex Police Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs on fracking and Balcombe) which addressed a range of issues including accountability. There is no evidence in the dataset to suggest a police national communications policy with special regard to fracking.

However, the mutual support of other police forces was requested at all of the protests discussed in this thesis. Mutual support, or Mobilisation as the College of Policing terms it (College of Policing, 2019b) is made possible but not obligatory in *The Police Act 1996* (The Police Act, 1996). It states

The chief officer of police of any police force may, on the application of the chief officer of police of any other police force, provide constables or other assistance for the purpose of enabling the other force to meet any special demand on its resources. (24.1)

That support seems to be have been provided in most cases; for instance a Cumbrian constable cautioned a driver for sounding his horn at Preston Road (2017 9 25 Blowing your horn for and against fracking Brian Morrison, anti-fracking campaigners and how we broke the story.) Interestingly, the Welsh PCC Arfon Jones [[1]](#footnote-1) refused to support the policing of protest - “Mr Jones said he was 'prominent' in lobbying the government to issue the moratorium, and will continue to fight to ban fracking completely. "I have opposed fracking as I considered it a danger in many respects, but mainly because of potential pollution of water," he added.” (Ibid). North Wales police support was withdrawn from Lancashire Police as a result.

A full account of these developments resides outside the scope of this thesis, but it is possible to note that by the period of case-studies the day-to-day policing of protests was professionalised, handled at operational level and subject to regionalised rather than exclusively national scrutiny. For this reason, this thesis will concentrate upon this operational level. This is not to say that Chief Constables do not set the tone for policing, or may not be answerable for policing – nor is it deniable that they are political players. In later chapters this thesis dwells upon the commensurate professionalisation of police communications in the literature review and in the section (2.9) on Legitimation. In the latter section the position of police communication is discussed as being both prominent and heavily integrated in command structure (at Gold Commander level), but there is no evidence in the interviews or coverage that Chief Constables were involved in front-line policing or its associated communication practices (albeit that it might be argued they set tone and approach at some wider level.

Community or neighbourhood policing is central to policing practice, and given the impact of fracking protests of local communities can be reasonably argued to be a primary motivation in policing practice. Indeed, the professionalisation of policing, as well as its localisation is in keeping with theories of community policing. Mohanty el al (Mohanty, 2014) argue “Community policing provides decentralised, personalised policing services to the community…Community policing is the need of the day and police forces in democracies around the world are realising its utility and implementing community policing initiatives in varied forms” (p.1). He goes on to discuss the competing definitions of community policing using a variety of models from a number of authors. For instance, he cites W G Skogan’s (1995) Community Policing in the United States -

1. Community policing relies upon organizational decentralization and reorientation of patrols in order to facilitate two-way communication between the police and the public.
2. Community policing assumes a commitment to broadly focused, problem-oriented policing.
3. It requires that the police are responsive to citizens’ demands when they decide what local problems are and set their priorities accordingly.
4. It implies a commitment to helping neighbourhoods solve criminal problems on their own, through community organizations and crime prevention programmes. (p.12)

However, an advanced Google Search of Sussex Police, GMP and Lancashire police websites using the search term “community policing” yields either single digit returns or broken links (Google search GMP, 2019, Google search Lancashire, 2019, Google search Sussex, 2019). In 2018 the Police Foundation noted, “Front line practitioners consistently report that the number of staff available for core neighbourhood work has diminished substantially during the period while the demands on local policing have intensified and changed.” (Higgins, 2018, p.2). The report cites cuts to budgets which have in turn led to a focus on reactive policing. We might therefore legitimately question the extent of community policing as practice in each of these forces, and this is returned to in the sections looking at framing (section 4.10 and 4.12). Here we do find reference to community throughout the analysed news-text, by all actors and agencies, not just the police. The argument might be that the police, whilst not wishing to use the phrase ‘community policing’ remain aware of its apparent needs.

In this study the uses of community policing and its synonyms are certainly observed as rhetorical positions – statements made by the police about its work - although they may well also be the honest intention of police officers of any and every rank. However, the practice of these goals is challenged by the political and state-bureaucratic context which endangers the legitimacy of law itself. In examining this, the study looks at the way police frame their action using the law as its primary rationale – they also use moral, safety and community framings. The law becomes a kind of procedural framing for action and this is studied further in the chapter looking at legitimacy (chapter 6) as a form of legal positivism. The term legal positivism “…has come to stand for a baffling multitude of different sins.” (Hart, 1958, p.595). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a full discussion of those ‘sins’, but the term will be used to reference what Hart also refers to as legal ‘formalism’; the ‘mechanical’ and ‘automatic’ application of law. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy states: “Legal positivism is the thesis that the existence and content of law depends on social facts and not on its merits.” (Green, 2018). It is used in this thesis as a way of describing the police’s nominally ‘blind’ application of the law. Framing is linked to legal positivism through the *procedure* of the state in policy-making and policy-action – in planning law, economic policy, political activity and, finally, policing. Procedural framing is the logic and rationale behind police legal positivism, and this thesis draws heavily upon Habermas’ concepts of validity and legitimation through norms of governmental procedure (Habermas, 1996) to analyse it. For instance, the police often argue that drilling is ‘lawful business’ because it has been made so by government action. However, if this government action is itself made invalid, by for instance the work of political lobbyists, then the primary rationale for such positivism is challenged as invalid or illegitimate, particularly by protestors. This is central to Hart’s discussion

“Bentham had in mind the anarchist who argues thus: “This ought not to be the law, therefore it is not and I am free not merely to censure but also disregard it”. On the other hand, he though…[a]…reactionary who argues: “This is the law, therefore it is what it ought to be.” (Hart, 1958, p. 958)

Police use procedural framing - and therefore legal positivism as defined here - extensively (see chapter 5). Moreover, activists also challenged police action – and its rationales – on the basis of procedure and its legitimacy claims. There is substantial extant literature on this subject with Habermas, Weber and Beetham dominant in the Academy’s discourse. An outline of the literature from these authors is given in the literature review, and is discussed at length in the chapter on Legitimacy.

To conclude then, the policing of protest is normally conducted at Gold Commander level and seems to be standardised across police forces. It is normal for communications functions to be embedded to some degree at this level. Higher levels of command are not evident in the data or expected in the literature. It is reasonable to expect that normative expectations of community-based consent, and procedural law-based propriety will inform policing policy, decisions-making and actions.

**1.3 A description of the police forces studied in this thesis**

Bearing this in mind, a brief review of management of policing in the case-study areas may prove useful.

Sussex Police

Sussex Police serves an area of 1460 square miles, with a population 1.68 million (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2019c). It has a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC); this was Katy Bourne at the time of protests. She was cited in the Brighton Argus as ‘grilling’ the Police Chief Constable on matters relating to the protest at Balcombe Down. Sussex Police’s workforce has fallen by 20% since 2010 (ibid). The current Police and Crime Plan (Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, 2017) contains no reference to ‘fracking’ or ‘public order’, although it references ‘community’ throughout.

GMP

Greater Manchester Police serves an area of 496 square miles with a population of just over 2.5 million. Since 2010 its workforce has been cut by 20% (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2019a). Its Police and Crime Commissioner is the Mayor of Manchester, although this is currently delegated to one of his deputies (Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 2018). In its 2018 planning document ‘*Standing Together’* the PCCO does not mention the words ‘fracking’, ‘protest’, or ‘public order’ although it does mention ‘community’.

Lancashire Police

Lancashire Police serves an area of 1187 square miles and has a population of approximately 1.5 million (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2019b). Its workforce has been cut by 20% since 2010. It differs from the other two police forces in this study in that fracking is ongoing. However, a review of its PCC Police and Crime Plan (Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner, 2019) shows that it too dwells upon ‘community’ without mentioning ‘fracking’, ‘protest’ or ‘public order’.

It might be argued that this section reveals something of the strategic or management orientation and objectives regarding the protests. Certainly, there is an accent upon policing as community service. Additionally, there is a necessary implication of the need to uphold the law. These will be addressed comprehensively later in the thesis.

**1.4 Definitions**

**Defining PR**

Working technical definitions of public relations are very broad – the CIPR dedicates a page to *The Definition Debate* (CIPR -The Chartered Institute of Public Relations -, 2015), comparing its definitions with those of its contemporaries in Canada and the USA, before settling upon -

*Public Relations is about reputation - the result of what you do, what you say and* what others say about you.  
  
*Public Relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.*

This definition is too broad for the purposes of this thesis, and it does not provide a description of everyday practice. It also fails to address public relations’ place in societal power structures. In this thesis public relations will be taken to include: media relations, lobbying, event management, social-media management, websites, community relations and corporate social responsibility (Fill, 1995). Public relations will be taken to be strategic in outlook and as well as tactical, and as informing both small- and large-P politics at a meso- and societal level. According to *PR Week* (PR Week, 2014), the lines between management functions - not only between marketing, advertising and PR, but also between Human Resource and Information Technology management – are becoming increasingly 'blurred'.

For the purposes of this thesis the term media-relations is used when referring to all communications directly and solely aimed at print and broadcast media. Where necessary lobbying directly is referred to directly. I will use the term PR to refer to the entire range of activity listed above and specify individual activities where otherwise necessary. I will also use the term 'promotionalism' to describe a societal mode of rhetoric in post-modernity (Wernick, 1991) – this will be further addressed later in the text. The degree to which public relations has become a dominant societal force is addressed in the literature review (3.1), and subsequently throughout this thesis.

**Defining Police and Police-PR**

For the purposes of this thesis, and for the sake of brevity, the term 'Police' and 'police services’ are used as neutral terms to refer to those organizations which undertake day-to-day policing activity as it is commonly understood. Where individual police services are cited I will use their preferred nomenclature i.e. Sussex Police, Lancashire Police and Greater Manchester Police (GMP). While it is true that such organizations refer to themselves in a number of different ways, this approach to the identification should leave little room for misunderstanding. The term police-PR encompasses all public relations activity that is the formal practice of police communications departments. Informal public relations is referenced – the unauthorised and unofficial actions of individual officers (such as Plebgate (Halliday, 2014)) - but it does not form the primary dataset for this study. For much of this thesis Police-PR will reference media relations, but it may on occasion include social media activity, lobbying, community liaison and internal communications. Where this is the case, it will be made clear in the text.

**Regional vs Local**

The research methodology defines regional press as those based outside London but circulating to an area greater than a town or city. On occasion I use the term ‘local’ as synonymous with regional but describing closer physical proximity. This is particularly the case with reference to ‘localism’ which is used in the existing literature on local media to refer to an editorial focus upon localised ‘news-sense’, i.e. a focus upon news stories whose ‘news-value’ is heightened by is physical proximity to the target audience.

**Other Definitions**

Camp (protest camp) – Defined for the purposes of this study as a body of semi-permanent dwellings constructed in the environs of the Fracking site, the purpose of which is to house protestors against the site. The Camp may also form a part of the protest by its presence.

Journalist(s) – Defined for the purposes of this study as those newsroom actors whose primary role is to research and write news-copy, both for the print and digital versions of the newspaper.

Judiciary - The word judiciary is used here as it appears in the English translations of Bourdieu’s work (Bourdieu, 1987), which was of course originally written in French. Mistranslation is of course possible, but if this is the case then the error has been repeated by a number of respected and widely-cited authors. Moreover, this translation fits well with the implicit and explicit scope and direction of Bourdieu’s study, so an error seems unlikely.

So, the term judiciary is used in this thesis as an umbrella term for not only the courts themselves but also the function of law as both agency and capital in a field of practice. This element is addressed at length in chapter 7, Bourdieu and Field theory. It is noted in that chapter that such practice has both doxic and orthodox elements and is nested in superior and inferior fields of practice.

However, and in addition, when reviewing the case study material, it may be useful to the reader to note that both magistrates and police can post bail (Hanna and Dodd, 2012, p.440), and make associated bail conditions. Indeed, this has become a contentious issue in fracking court-cases, with police bail conditions being criticised by academics, international commentators, as well as laid aside by magistrates. This too, is discussed later in this thesis (see section 6.2).

Protestors – Defined for the purposes of this study as those people opposing the Fracking at its site. This opposition can take the form of direct action, media activity, and verbal opposition voiced on site which does not take the form of action. Protestors include local people and those who have joined the protest from outside of the immediate area.

**Dates and Abbreviations**

For the purposes of coding, dates within the text, when referencing newspaper articles will follow the following format Year-Month-Day e.g. 2014/12/25 for Christmas Day 2014. This was so the data could be sorted easily in Nvivo. For ease of reference each article is listed in this format in the Contents Tables for each Paper listed in the appendices. Other text items – such as police statements – are cited by the reference dates given by each police press office – and are listed as such in the appendices.

Abbreviations –

Manchester Evening News – MEN

Brighton Argus – BA or Argus (The abbreviation BA appears in Nvivo files, Argus is used throughout the text)

Lancashire Gazette – Gazette

Greater Manchester Police – GMP

(Sussex Police and Lancashire Police are not abbreviated)

**A note on language and idiom used in this thesis**

Some American-style spelling is used in this thesis alongside stand British English spellings. American idiom is used when the accepted term, e.g. mediatization, appears in the dominant literature in the American form.

**1.5 Timeline**

This is a brief timeline of the events surrounding the three sub-case-studies used to form the larger case-study in this thesis. A fuller account is included in the appendices.

**Balcombe Down – Sussex Police – Brighton Argus**

2013 – Summer. Anti-fracking protests begin at Balcombe. This is the first time such protests had met with a police response.

2013 – July 26th – First arrests.

2013 – September 5th – Protestor Jamie Spiers blocks main road with tripod. Section 14 order put in place by police in response.

2013 – September 13th – Sussex County Council applies for a court order to have the protestors removed.

2013 – September 16th – application rejected.

2013 – September 20th – police officer tweets on a private account that protestors are ‘scum’. Reported in the Argus. Officer receives ‘management advice’.

2013 – Late September – Cuadrilla withdraws from the site.

**Barton Moss – GMP - Manchester Evening News (MEN)**

2013 – Late October – deliveries begin to the site at Barton Moss.

2013 - January 7th – ‘Flaregate’. GMP execute a search warrant at the camp in response to alleged firing of a flare at a police helicopter.

2013 - January 14th – ‘Teagate’. Steven Peers is arrested for submitting to a breathalyser test. A widely circulated video shows an apparently ‘trumped-up’ charge.

2013 – April - IGas completed its operations in April, and the protest camp held its leaving party on April 12th.

**Preston New Road – Lancashire Police - Lancashire Gazette**

2016 October – Local council decision to reject plans for exploratory drilling at the Moss site are over-ruled by Communities Minister Sajid Javid.

2017 – January - Equipment starts to arrive at the Preston Road site.

2017 – February – first arrests made

2017 – June - North Wales police refuse ‘mutual assistance’ following the intercession of Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales Police - Arfon Jones - as Fracking is banned in Wales.

Protests are ongoing at Preston Road at the time of writing. This study samples data up to October 2017.

**2.0 Literature Review**

**2.1 Introduction**

The following review will look at the existing literature as it addresses the actors, agencies and their practices. Police PR professionals, regional newspapers’ editorial employees and anti-Fracking activists are all involved in media practice. There are other involved actors and agencies, notably the Fracking companies which have retained considerable public relations expertise – and their role is underlined in the Blackpool case-study in which industry groups offered extensive PR outputs. In addition, Political actors, at national and local level, have been vocal in the field to varying degrees – although largely not present at the point or moment of protests. Caroline Lucas MP is a notable exception to this, as are the local Councillors at the Blackpool protest, but in these cases, it is appropriate to view them as protestors. The three primary groups of actors each have an associated body of existing literature, and, as a result this review is extensive.

The first section (2.2) looks at the growth of PR across society in the last 100 years and its wider effects as a precursor to the study of PR in this thesis. It focusses upon the early pioneers of public relations such as Bernays, before moving on to the work of Habermas, Miller and Dinan, Brooke, Lewis et al amongst other to show how public relations has become a dominant societal force.

The second section (2.3) presents an overview of the literature addressing newsroom practice, its relationship to PR outputs and to societal power as expressed primarily by critical theorists. It focusses upon the work of Aldridge and Franklin, it also looks at the apparent demise of local journalism.

The third section (2.4) looks at community perceptions of news media focussing upon Anderson, before re-examining Aldridge, and moving on to briefly address the Leveson enquiry’s assertion that local press are less sensationalist than their national peers.

The fourth section (2.5) looks at the history of environmentalism as it is presented in the news-media, and environmentalists as news-media PR actors. It cites a wide range of authors to describe the history of global and UK environmentalism, before moving on to the relationship between the movement and the news-media. Wyn Grant’s insider/outsider typology is found to be an idea in describing this relationship.

The fifth section, section (2.6), will look at police-PR, its growth and changing nature. This section will also place police-PR and media relations in the context of the news-coverage of protest using authors such as Ericson, Mawby and Chibnall to show how the relationship between police and news-media has evolved. The section goes on to present Marxist and structuralist arguments for policing and police-PR as elements of dominant or hegemonic control – these are highlighted as key themes to be addressed later in the thesis.

The sixth section (2.7) examines the work of Habermas. Habermas is used extensively later in this thesis – notably his discussions of legitimacy and refeudalization.

The seventh section (2.8) looks at the work of Bourdieu. This lengthy section looks at symbolic power and field theory. It too is used extensively later in the thesis.

Section 2.9 examines legitimacy as a central concept, returning to Habermas and Weber, but also looking at Beetham and White in order to place legitimacy claims as made by police and protestors (as well as others) in an analytical context. It describes a proposed crisis in legitimacy.

**2.2 The Growth of 'PR' and Media-Management in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries**

Public Relations has its roots in the practices of Propaganda (Bernays, [1928] 2005, 1947). Bernays argued:

“The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society.

“Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.

...We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of.” (P.9)

His ideas, formulated during and immediately after WWI, became dominant during the 1920s and informed Goebbels’s work during the rise and rule of Hitler. Bernays later, recognizing that Propaganda had become a pejorative term, coined the phrase public relations to describe its practice (Curtis, 2002).

The growth in the number of PR practitioners over the last hundred years, and the commensurate growth in the societal influence of PR practices, is well-documented (Marlin, 2013; Miller and Dinan, 2007, 2008, 2000; Brooke, 2011; Curtis, 2002; – to name a few). Precise figures for the number of public relations practitioners are not available, which is unsurprising considering that it is a global industry with its presence in every branch of the private, public and third sectors (PR Week, 2014). However, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations claimed to have more than 10,000 members (CIPR, 2015a. The CIPR no longer says how many members it has), and according to the latest government data at time of writing 54,000 people working in public relations in August 2017, there were 45,000 people work in public relations in the UK in 2015, and 27,000 in 2001 (ONS, 2018). The UK is the second largest public relations sector in the world after the USA – but the global market is expanding rapidly (PR Week, 2014).

Authors, academics and commentators have expressed a range of critiques and anxieties regarding the impact of such large-scale, and increasing media-relations outputs (Davies, 2008; Lewis 2008a; Lewis et al 2008b; Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Their concern is that, as newsrooms contract and media-relations activity increase, the news is being dominated by the output of PR actors specializing in news-media relations.

PR actors might argue that media-relations provides an 'information subsidy' which allows resource-challenged newsrooms to function. It can facilitate transparency within organizations, and can, through such activities, provide an internal moral compass to an organization by drawing upon societal mores as expressed in the mass media. Authors such as Heath (2004) argue for a positive role for public relations that is guided by such moral practice. Finally, PR specialists can free other staff and managers of an organization from PR duties, so they can concentrate on their own functions – or at the very least train them to deal with news-media competently (CIPR, 2015).

Our society is increasingly mediated, and its constituent actors and agencies mediatized (Lundby, 2009; Couldry, 2013). That is that the needs of media create dominant discourses of presentation that have led to societal change, and organizational change at a meso-level (Pallas, 2013).

Societal power as operated by elites, now informs and is informed by public relations practice such that the two are coterminous (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 1987; Benson et al 2005). Power, politics and Public Relations practice are now so closely inter-related as to be effectively the same thing – with organizations like Spinwatch showing how there is a ‘revolving door’ between these centres of power of government, business and public relations (Spinwatch, 2017). A situation made more acute by the neo-liberal project which has made business or corporate interests coterminous with the political field. Habermas for instance argues at length for a series of crises tendencies in advanced capitalism due to the tensions resulting from the demands of business (Habermas, 1988, pp.33-92). He also argues for the detrimental role of PR on the public sphere (Habermas, [1962]1989), and PR has become closely intertwined through its practices with corporate interests as expressed in the political field (p.181-222). Take for instance the case of Fracking where considerable PR resource has been retained and employed to present and argue for Fracking to political elites.

The fear expressed in the literature is that the volume of PR practice is in some way overpowering newspaper practice and the practice of the state (Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Lewis et al, 2008; Davies, 2008), and that this is skewing news values, editorial decision-making and public discourse.

Each of these arguments is revisited in greater depth later in this review, but here we can note that public relations practice has grown in both size and effect across society.

That said, it is also reasonable to argue that society-wide growth in PR practice and promotionalism would be reflected in police practice (Schlesinger, 1994, p.106; Wernick, 1991). Wernick argued in *Promotional Culture* (1991) for a post-modern societal dominance of PR and advertising that goes beyond commercialism and mere propaganda and makes such promotional practices co-existent and necessary to the way we construct our understanding of the world. In his analysis promotion has become more than a mere genre of communication, it has become its accepted societal mode of rhetoric. This is itself a theme taken up by Habermas in which he identifies public relations as a subset of advertising in which it is made political in ‘character’ (Habermas, [1962]1989, p.193).

Wernick argues: “The range of cultural phenomena which...serve to communicate a promotional message has become, today, virtually co-extensive with our produced symbolic world.” (p182)

He continues: “…it is ramified by socialization practices, psychological strategies and habits, and cultural/aesthetic norms and values....it is mode of communication, a species of rhetoric. It is defined not by what it says but by what it does, with respect to which its stylistic and semantic contents are purely secondary and derived.” (p.184). Promotionalism is used as a concept within this thesis that moves the discussion beyond news-media relations and shows how society – its actors and agencies – talk to each other. As such, promotionalism is acknowledged as a mode of rhetoric that, by its centrality to the public sphere and public discourses, has developed its own logic and rationales.

Promotionalism is a version of mediation and even mediatization which is useful for the purposes of this thesis because it necessarily extends our understanding beyond merely the news-media environment and allows a discussion of police-PR, and that of other actors, as players in a societal construction of ‘truth’. ‘Truth’ is a problematic term in a post-modern discussion. The thesis does not engage with the philosophical elements of such a discussion, as it would be beyond the scope of this work – i.e. the question ‘what is truth’ is not directly addressed here. It does however identify truth-claims as central to legitimacy claims and as the dividing line of definition between public relations and propaganda. In the latter, it is argued that public relations as an act of persuasion avoids the elision or falsification of fact, in contrast to propaganda. This theme and discussion is revisited at length in section 6.0.

**2.3 Regional newspapers**

Regional and local media are addressed far less in the literature than their national counterparts (this thesis does not primarily address alternative or digital media). Their potential role in sustaining dominant discourses is also largely unexamined with the exception of Bob Franklin's and David Murphy's *What news? The market, politics and the local press* (1991) which looks at election coverage (Franklin, 2004). Those, such as Franklin & Murphy, Meryl Aldridge (2003; 2007) Cole and Harcup (2010) who have looked at regional media find the lacunae anomalous. Each cites statistics that warrant regional and local media as potentially powerful actors in societal discourse - widely read and well-trusted.

In 2016 the News Media Association employed Deloitte LLP to produce a report looking at the impact of news media (Deloitte LLP, 2016). It states – “The UK has a vibrant regional and local media sector, with more than 1,000 print and 1,700 digital titles. Across print, online and digital apps, local news-brands reach 40 million people a week. Regional and local media reaches 95.5% of GB postcodes. Printed local and regional newspapers are the second most popular medium through which local news is consumed.”

Interestingly in 2014, the albeit biased Newspaper Society (from which the News Media Association subsequently was formed), had argued there are 1,100 local newspapers - including weeklies and free papers – and 1700 'associated websites'. The society had said 11 million people read a regional paper but not a national one and 58% of adults (30 million) read a regional paper. Amongst others it had cited the IPA, “local papers are more than twice as trusted as any other media channel' (Newspaper Society, 2014). While methodologies for the two sets of data may differ – a decline in the fortunes of regional and local papers is notable. During this period the Press Gazette recorded falling circulation figures (2015), nevertheless, they do remain impressive. Franklin and Murphy's 1991 observation that they had a monopoly news position remains largely true – although very much challenged by new and social media, as well as radio and television news – and as such gives them an important role in the local polity. This is an ongoing issue which will be addressed tangentially in this research.

Claims that regional news media are less sensational in the news coverage than their national counterparts (Aldridge, 2007) were supported in the Leveson Enquiry (Marsden, 2013). Finally, the contention that local and regional media provide a training ground for future national journalists (Franklin & Murphy, 1991; Aldridge, 2007) still seems to be in some part true – although challenged by accounts of direct entry for those with access to dominant social networks (Aldridge, 2007).

In the light of these claims it does seem odd that regional print newsrooms are given so little attention. It is perhaps that their study might seem less relevant with the rise of new media, or a fear that it might not yield interesting results, or perhaps that commentators believe that studies of national media are more directly transferable or open to academic generalization, or simply that they regard the local and regional press as less interesting than the national press. Nevertheless, this thesis will go some way to fill the gap in academic study.

The fortunes (and functions) of regional print newsrooms are changing (Guardian, 2009b), and not necessarily for the better. It is however, true that the imminent demise of regional papers has been forecast for some time (Preston, 2008) – and yet they remain in production. The challenges facing regional print newsrooms are well-rehearsed in the existing literature which characterises regional newspapers as being in crisis: with falling circulations; reduced, overburdened and underpaid editorial staff; the rise and needs of digital media; newsrooms exiled to the edge of town or even beyond; economies of scale leading to attenuated deadlines; 'churnalism' leading to a PR-dominated news agenda; and newspapers closed by profit-seeking corporate bosses which place share-holder values above 'the news'. Indeed, add these factors to the growth of citizen journalism, and online advertising eating away at advertising revenue and the picture is of a moribund regional press (Franklin, 1997; Aldridge, 2007; Cole & Harcup, 2010).

The tale of the regional papers’ assumed imminent demise will have some bearing upon this thesis. Overburdened newsrooms are increasingly reliant on the information subsidies produced by PR; and police-PR and activist PR will be part of this. It is reasonable to expect research to reflect this – it will certainly be highly noteworthy if it does not.

The News Media Association’s report also argues that regional media are a ‘glue’ for social cohesion (Deloitte, 2016, p.21) and play a watchdog role in civic life (ibid, p.4). Meryl Aldridge looks at this issue in *Understanding Local Media* (2007) with an examination of Habermassian theory in the regional context, arguing that a 'social situation', theoretically necessary of a public sphere, is presented by a readership's shared locale. This thesis will return to Habermas later in this literature review and it is central to the chapter on Legitimation, but for the present it is useful to note that regional print media have a central role in a public sphere as posited in his work *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society (1992 [1962]).* It is possible to argue that this role is equal to that of national or international media, and that regional media – newspapers, radio, TV and others – are not minor or insignificant players in a functioning public sphere. For instance,Aldridge argues that much of the people's everyday experience (life-world) is local, and that much of the system-world with which they interact is local too. Police services are regional, and environmental activism is local too in as much as it addresses the wider questions of ecology and biosphere in the form of local action. This is where regional newspapers should theoretically be at their strongest and most relevant with their USP (unique selling point) of local news and campaigning (Aldridge, 2003; Birks, 2011; Franklin, 1997). A local protest, policed by a local force, involving local issues and local people, and requiring local contacts to become news, is *prima facie* aperfect crucible for regional news. It provides ready-made case study material for the role of police-PR in, amongst other things, source credibility, newsroom practice and the role of regional print media in the wider field of power (see the discussion of Bourdieu in this literature review).

**2.4 Community and its perception in news**

Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (Anderson, 2006) is used on a small number of occasions within this thesis. It is not used as a mainstay of this thesis’s argument. The bookaddressed nationalism and its formation across a range of states and their associated cultures. It has become a widely-cited source and authority in discussions surrounding the anthropological and social foundations of a perceived community between its members. It has also become popular amongst those studying media – with both the title of the work, and its notion of print-capitalism, proving a rich source of academic endeavour.

Indeed, much of the book’s popularity is founded in the theorising of its opening chapters in which Anderson identifies ‘print capitalism’ as a driving force in formation of communities as nations. The work moves onwards from this argument to describe the foundation of nationhood in a number of states, but these later chapters are not widely addressed in subsequent scholarly work (Castelló, 2017) – with the exception of those directly addressing Nationalism and nation formation. Anderson’s argument that nationhood was not merely an ideological construct was ground-breaking in acknowledging anthropological, linguistic and social factors in societal self-perceptions of nationhood.

Anderson argues: “I propose the following deﬁnition of the nation: it is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” (Anderson, 2006, p.6).

This central concept has been extended in a range of subsequent academic literature to include any community that imagines itself separate, and, additionally, that the media have a central or even necessary role in this (Castelló, 2017). As a result, much of Anderson’s work has been ignored in favour of the theme expressed in the book’s title. Begholz quotes Ernst Haas: “The best thing about Anderson’s Imagined Communities,” Ernst Haas wrote, “is the title.” He did not, however, elaborate why.”” (Bergholz, 2018, p.524).

Media scholars have dwelt upon the theoretical role imagined communities might play in the creation and maintenance of media-audiences. Anderson succeeded in ‘reorientating the reader’s analytical gaze’ (Bergholz, 2018) away from structure and elites, and towards the ‘cognitive processes’ of national and community members. Anderson argues that the successful business growth of the print-press industry, as well as newspapers, necessitated the rise of vernacular language, and a sense of nationhood to support it. His conception, that ‘print capitalism’ might be a driving factor in the construction of nationalism and nationhood, has attracted the attention of media scholars, and allowed a synthesis of Anderson’s ideas that has led to the notion that most, if not all, media form imagined communities. There is evidence to support a correlation between news media and the creation of communities – after all regional print media do address regions i.e. The Birmingham Mail is read by people from Birmingham. However, a causal link is far harder to prove particularly in modernity. Consider that Anderson sees nationhood as a “cultural artefact” (Castelló, 2017) an “imagined political community, being imagined as both limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 1991, p.6). The Argus, the MEN and Gazette may all have an imagined community of locals, but it is problematic to argue such an audience be labelled as limited or sovereign. As Aldridge argued, “Contemporary regional daily papers are, then, [are] operating in a more ﬂuid and fragmented social landscape with diminished news-gathering and news-processing capacity” (Aldridge, 2003, p.497). The theory that, regional newspapers are an ‘imagined community’ was addressed by Aldridge, and found largely wanting because of rapid change (and the subsequent decline of) key audience groups.

That said, one of the Frames proposed by the actors and agencies in this thesis, and adopted by the quoted news sources, and so featuring in the news-texts is a claim to community support. Thus, ‘Community’ is a frame used in the subsequent analysis. Indeed, this analysis could propose several imagined communities e.g. newspaper audiences, police culture or groups of activists. In doing so these communities could arguably fulfil Anderson’s criterion of shared temporality, common language or idiom and ‘high-centres’ of elite control. With this in mind, this omni-presence makes it possible to reject Imagined Communities as a useful analytical tool – particularly as others present themselves. For instance, Cohen quotes Geertz “…man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he has spun for himself…” (Cohen, 1995, p.17) in a discussion of how community as meaning is found in symbols.

That is to say, the fact that Anderson uses the word community in the title of his book does not mean that all conceptual pathways of community theory necessarily lead back to his work. When media-activists or police-PR or other actors adopt a community framing – that is draw upon paradigms of community support to justify or legitimise their actions – they are not necessarily summoning Anderson’s ideas of print capitalism. While it could be argued that a doxic understanding of print capitalism, existing as media logics (Altheide, 1979), might influence PR actors, it is also arguable that, for instance, police actors are influenced by paradigms of community policing or Peel’s principles that could only be linked to Anderson’s work in a tenuous and tangential way.

So, in this thesis, *Imagined Communities* (as a book and concept) is used as place-holder for an appreciation of the logics of print capitalism as understood primarily by the regional print news-media. While, it cannot be sensibly denied that media-relations actors and agencies may share that appreciation (and may utilise it) it is not necessary to the frame-analysis to prove that the adoption of community frames is driven by Anderson’s or indeed any of his derivatives.

Indeed, a closer examination of newspaper practice in relation to these two USPs – localism and campaigning – reveal a nuanced terrain. The obvious reader interest in the locale, is being undermined by increased geographic mobility, globalised media channels and increasing social disintegration which in turn could lead to decreasing mutual identification and solidarity across audiences. This is made worse by horizontal integration across media, the removal of 'Slips' (Cole & Harcup, 2010, p.56) addressing local areas, and a shrinking youth audience which has left papers chasing an over-45s 'golden market' (Aldridge, 2007). So, it could be argued, that the imagined community of regional papers has become a fantasy.

Campaigning, the ability to research and take up a cause, is also presented in the literature as a regional paper’s USP (Aldridge, 2003; Birks, 2011). However, Jen Birks in *The politics of protest in newspaper campaigns: Dissent, populism and the rhetoric of authenticity* (2011)*, a* study of campaigning in the Scottish regional press suggests that 'populist impulses dominate', driving the campaigns towards 'manipulative populism' rather than 'legitimate protest’. The Scottish regional papers are a special case (because of their quasi-national role), but further analysis underlines the point. The website Hold the Front Page lists regional and local newspaper campaigns. A review of these (Hold the front page, 2016), shows more than 140 campaigns in a 12-month period – none of which addressed issues of environmentalism. Campaigns included those against legal highs, thoughtless parking and loneliness. No campaign has so far addressed the issue of Fracking – the case study used later in this thesis - or environmental issues of similar import. Indeed, Franklin and Murphy's (1991) study looked at 14 local papers and 865 stories and showed 1.5% of them were from local protests, a further 1.5% were from political parties and pressure groups (undifferentiated in this study). The police (11.5%) and the courts (12%) combined to have more than one in five of all stories, while local councils took 23%. Business gained 8.5% of the coverage. The study is dated, but its figures are broadly in line with Cardiff University's 2007 study of national newspapers (Lewis et al, 2008). Authors such as Aldridge (2003) and Franklin & Murphy (1991) agree as to the regional media's innate conservatism. Birk's findings evidence perhaps how regional newspapers' need to please all audiences leads them to be uncontentious, seeking consensus and using restraint for fear of alienating audiences (Aldridge, 2007).

There is a substantial body of literature that attempts to place news-media practice within wider discourses of societal power and these issues are discussed in chapters 6, 7 and 8. However, it may be useful to note here that regional and local media are described in the above cited studies – and in for instance Hall (Hall et al., 1978) and in the Leveson Enquiry (Marsden, 2013) - as uncontentious and less likely to adopt overtly ideological editorial positions than their national counterparts. As a result, the literature notes that regional media, may not play the same role as national media in societal discourses of power. This is a curious position, given the centrality of local newspapers to local community life. The News Media Association may describe the local papers as the ‘glue’ holding communities together, but they do seem to have the same position in political discourses as their national peers.

**2.5 Environmental protest and media management**

**2.5.1 A brief history of the global environmental movement**

The nature and practice of the environmental movement as sources of news will now be examined. This is useful to this thesis as both a context to police-PR, and as a means of understanding the wider field of conflict of practice.

The environmental movement – and thus its PR practices - is young compared to police services. While there is considerable debate as to the birth-date of the environmental movement, there is some agreement that the movement has its foundations in the 1960s and the growth of the student movements. There is literature describing and analysing the growth of protest movements generally during this period (Gitlin, 1980; Halloran, 1970; Hollingsworth, 1986) which will be discussed later in reference to power and images of deviance. Different commentators cite different birth-dates for the green movement. Anderson (1993) cites Rachel Carson's *The Silent Spring*, Lester (2010) cites Al Gore in saying Earthrise as photographed from Apollo 8 in 1968. The New York Times appointed its first environmental reporter in in 1969 (Lester, 2010, p.29). The Don't Make a Wave Committee first sailed the Phyllis Cormack into a nuclear-bomb test site in September 1971 – the committee later became Greenpeace (Mulvaney, 2003). During the 1970s the Green movement became increasingly part of the political landscape and 'institutionalised', and by 1980 115 countries had 'environmental management institutions'. (Anderson, 1993).

**2.5.2 A brief history of activism in the UK**

Protest in the UK forms a central part of societal political discourses and a more wide-ranging account of protest would require a history of the suffrage movement, the General Strike, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the women’s peace camp and Greenham Common, the miners’ strike and the anti-Poll Tax movement. No attempt is made here to offer such an account, but rather the focus is upon environmental protest movements that grew in the 1990s. Seel et al (2000) argues that the ‘provocation’ to the birth of a new environmental radicalism came in 1989 with Conservative Government plans to build new roads. It led to the setting up of a Transport Activists Roundtable which encompassed a range of agencies which included the Ramblers, wildlife trusts, the WWF, Friends of the Earth (FOE) and Greenpeace. The newly formed EarthFirst! (EF!) also became part of the group; it was an offshoot of the radical US group of the same name. In the early 1990s direct actions took place against the importation of rainforest timber, and in 1992 the Twyford Down M11 extension, and similar works to M11 into London drew direct action from EF! and similar groups that were loosely affiliated with its aims, “…lots of different groups of people – green direct activists, urban anarchist, punks, leftist groups like Class War…” (p.9). In 1994 the road protests at Solsbury Hill overlooking Bath (Monbiot et al, 2009), and Newbury (Vidal, 2016) became well-known for their ‘Crusty’ protestors – a condensing symbol of protestors revisited in the chapter on Bourdieu (chapter 7). In 1995 Greenpeace boarded the Brent Spar - a drilling rig due to be scuttled at sea as a means of disposal – it too involved direct action with activists boarding and occupying the rig and forcing its owner to abandon its sinking plans (Szersynski, 2002). Greenpeace continued to be a central, and increasingly institutionalised actor on the green protest scene – into the 2000s it staged protests against Esso when it shut down its petrol stations, various organizations involved in genetic modification, targeted old-style incandescent light bulbs and deforestation. The anti-aviation group Plane Stupid was set up in 2005 and staged a number of protests at airports, with Climate Camps for Action taking place throughout in 2006 through to 2009. This brief history of environmental action does not consider the range of other protest activity in the UK that targeted environmental issues. What is evident is that that the groups involved became effective, if not always competent, media managers.

**2.5.3 Environmental groups and media-management**

In analysing the media-management activity of environmental groups, it is necessary to understand the differing organisational forms taken by those groups and the differing ideological positions they exhibit.

Broadly these can be split into two typologies. The first includes such organisations as Greenpeace, the WWF, and Friends of the Earth which have adopted organizational and branding positions similar to that of large corporations. These have well-resourced and highly professional communications functions. The second includes groups such as Climate Camp, Reclaim the Streets and Earthfirst! which reject hierarchical organization structures. These tend to distrust the media and, while they may engage in media-management do not have highly professionalised communications offices (Anderson, 2000, Anderson, 2003, MacKay et al., 2012). The latter grew, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as new social movements engaged in DIY politics (Anderson, 2000). During this period, as insider groups became more established, outsider groups emerged from a counter-culture (Grant, 2004) which drew upon influences as varied as anarchism and paganism, while staging locally-based protests against such things as the building of new roads and the expansion of airports (McKay, 1998).

To illustrate this line of divergence Lester & Hutchins (2009) analyses two anti-logging protests in the Australian Tasmania. The first was a one-man protest in which Neil Smith occupied a tree and used a solar-powered laptop and internet connection to broadcast for more than two weeks before being evicted. The second was a joint action by Greenpeace and the Wilderness Society which set up a ‘Global Rescue Station’ - a protest site which constituted an occupied tree and base camp visited by rock stars and celebrities in an attempt to publicise the felling of the surrounding forest. Both protests seemed successful, but Lester makes two points. The first is the 'DIY' nature of Neil Smith's protest, in stark contrast to the professionally project-managed NGO protest. The second is the use of new technologies (laptops and satellite links) in giving traditional media access to the story (Anderson, 2003) – i.e. in increasing its 'real-time visibility' – but not in bypassing traditional media. This point is worth underlining - ‘The internet is a tool targeted at gaining news media attention for activists...' (Anderson, 2003, p.589). Here Anderson maintains that new media was being used solely as a way of gaining coverage in traditional channels – although this is being increasingly challenged.

This professionalization of protest is a key characteristic of insider groups as characterised by Wyn Grant (Grant, 2004). For instance, Peter Wilcox, a Greenpeace captain, said: “… I remember saying in the early 80s that we had to get as disciplined and organised as IBM or Exxon, or we weren't going to matter.” (Ells, 2014). Indeed, NGOs such as Greenpeace and WWF are accused by many of the smaller environmental actors of becoming part of the dominant discourse in their own right, citing such things as the Duke of Edinburgh's patronage of the WWF and David Cameron's photo-call at Greenpeace's headquarters in London (Benjamin, 2007). The latter photo-opportunity, for the then opposition leader, was an example of how 'mainstream' Greenpeace had become, how accomplished a media-operator it was, and how it had moved beyond mere media-relations and into highly sophisticated public affairs practice (Hutchins & Lester, 2006; Whitten-Woodring, 2012).

Compare that to Tootill’s polemical account to the fracking protests in this study. He attacks the Express for its reactionary reporting, but also the Guardian’s Tom Burke who recommended an “effective political fightback” and a ‘professional’ traditional and digital media strategy. Tootill responds

“Like all aloof commentators, and media navel-gazers, he didn’t see that for ordinary people these were not the mechanism of implementation of any strategy. Their strategy was not media based. He also didn’t take into consideration that what had started in Balcombe…was the practical expression of how into [sic] the “environmental community” but the “community” was waking up and taking action.” (Tootill, 2016, Kindle location 3462)

Here, there is early case-study evidence for Wyn Grant’s insider/outsider strategies (2004), because, while Tootill rejects media-targeted activity as either impractical or not useful, Kathryn McWhirter was carrying out precisely this kind of PR-focused action.

Indeed, the line of definition between the so-called insider and outsider typologies (Grant, 2004), constitutes a major fault line in the environmental movement and its media strategies. For instance, Anderson, cites large media budgets and the professionalised staffing adopted by groups like the National Trust, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (1993). These insider groups work with and within the system (although Greenpeace is well-known for doing both) of government and media. Outsider groups – grassroots movements - (Anderson, 1993) – are 'profoundly ambivalent towards the mainstream media' (Anderson, 1993, p.101). While acknowledging the media's usefulness in promoting a cause, journalists are seen by many activists as '...an opportunity, a target, a gatekeeper, the enemy, a game and an arena' (Lester), 2010, p.37). Anderson also quotes Gamson and Wolfsfeld analysis of media activist internal politics states 'Movement activists tend to view mainstream media not as autonomous and neutral actors, but as agents and handmaidens of dominant groups whom they are challenging'. (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993, p.119. Quoted in Anderson, 2000, p.102).

This division can lead to some interesting effects. Contradicting Wyn Grant, Taylor (2013) has argued that activists adopt one of three positions in accessing, or attempting to access, the media. The first is under-determination, when activists reject the mainstream news media as irredeemably biased. The second, over-determination, leads activists to believe that if they play by media-rules they will get coverage. The third, conditional approach, leads activists to believe that they can get some favourable coverage, and should attempt to do so. It seems reasonable to argue that, in practice, all three positions can be present, but subject to the individual agency of the actors involved. However, the result for police authority public relations is that they – at one extreme - can face a media-savvy competitor for the news agenda, or at the other extreme (of a continuum) face no competition at all in framing protest activity.

**2.5.4 Deviance and Adoption of Activist Positions**

Todd Gitlin's (1980) study of the US student protest movement in the 1960s examined how protest movements were forced to adopt a media agenda or find themselves forced out of the mainstream consensus.

It is apparent that protest movements are faced with a choice. If they wish to gain coverage and gain traction with mainstream media and decision-makers, they must move closer to the Consensus – transferring themselves from David Hallin's (Hallin, 1989) circle of deviant positions into an area of legitimate discourse where they will be quoted 'for balance' (see section 3.5.2 for a fuller discussion of Hallin’s theory). Unfortunately for them, this does not mean they become primary definers (unlike police authorities), Lewis et al's (2008) study showed “releases from NGOs and charities are occasionally used as the basis for a story, but more often a quotation from one of these groups will be used to provide contextual or opposing viewpoint to the main focus of the piece”. (2008, p.23).

While it is true that Anders Hansen ((1993), p.164) refers to Greenpeace as a 'primary definer' of news, 'a legitimate and authoritative source of information', he acknowledges how unusual this is; and illustrative of the high levels of media professionalism adopted by the large established NGOs. In the context of the Hallin model Greenpeace was no longer a deviant group, it had become an emergent cultural force which had joined the mainstream. Interestingly, this is a criticism levelled at Greenpeace by grass-roots movements who accuse them of selling out (Beder, 2002; Hasselberger, 2012). For grass-roots or DIY movements such deviance-to-the-norm is a badge of honour flaunted in the face of dominant hierarchies, hegemonic forces, global capitalism, police and mainstream media (McKay, 1998). It is no surprise then that societal perceptions or models of deviance prevent many protestors from gaining the level of coverage they think they deserve.

It is evident then, that it is difficult for most protest movements to climb further up the hierarchy of credibility (Becker, 1967). Not only does Becker provide an interesting model for journalist/source relations, but also for societal interpretations of real events. For instance, the death of Ian Tomlinson following an assault by a police officer (Carey, 2008; Guardian, 2013) was initially blamed on protesters by MET media relations personnel; a false account recounted by the news-media without question until a video of the event came to light. Kent police blamed protesters at a Climate Camp for multiple injuries to officers, a story retold by news media, until a FOI request revealed it to be a fabrication (Guardian, 2010; Vidal, 2008).

These are examples of how hierarchies of credibility – an unquestioning attitude to authoritative accounts – could bias coverage against protest groups and in favour of police services. It could also be argued that this illustrates how structures, processes and agencies of Power are reproduced in media coverage. Of course, it could also be argued, that these case studies demonstrate how powerful forces, and their place in Becker's hierarchy, can be challenged over time. An observation which leads to a discussion of power and its influence.

**2.6.1 Police PR and media-management**

The projection of image is seen to be vital to the function of police services – in maintaining the trust necessary for policing by consent, and in meeting with Peelian principles (Lentz & Chaires, 2007; Mawby, 2010a; Mawby, 2010b; Mawby, 2012; Reiner, 2003); they have '..a continuing concern with constructing and maintaining, a favourable image of policing as benign, honourable and helpful service' (Reiner, 2003, p.259). This is what Reiner (*Ibid*) refers to as 'police fetishism' that police services are the sole 'monopolistic' bulwark against criminality and society-wide chaos. While at the same time, Ericson et al (1989, 1989a, 1991) observed that the police were *Patrolling the Facts* as much as the streets in an attempt to maintain the liminal power of this Fetish (Couldry, 2003b).

Commissioner Sir Nevil Macready had - in October 1919 - set up a 'press room' in Scotland Yard (Mawby, 2012, p.273) in an attempt to stem a flow of leaks and scandals. Crime news had filled the pages of newspapers and their forebears (broadsides, pamphlets, posters and ballads) for centuries before this with clerks of courts making money from lurid accounts of crime and punishment in the seventeenth century (Curran & Seaton, 1997; Rowbotham, Stevenson and Pegg, 2013). Macready's attempt to set up the first British police press office can be seen as the first step towards the kind of communications functions we see today in the police. Mawby (2002) argued that this was the second in four ‘historical phases’ – the first of informal image work, the second, heralded by MacReady, establishes press relations, the third, in the 1970s embeds the role in practice, and the fourth, from the 80s onwards professionalises it (p.6). This is not to say that, after MacReady, information flows followed only official channels. Interpersonal contacts between police officers and journalists have been, and to some extent still are, a ready source of news-media stories – although Leveson has had a ‘dampening effect’ on such relationships. Steve Chibnall's oft-cited and highly influential *Law and Order News* (1977) describes a 'golden age' of crime reporting in the 1950s and 1960s (pp.63-68) in which a journalist 'pack' of national crime correspondents chased or accompanied a few famous Scotland Yard detectives. Schlesinger and Tumber (1994) also write about this era, emphasizing the ramified camaraderie, not only between journalists, but also between them and the detectives and their entourage. Off-the-record briefings were given and relations between newspapers and police were cordial with reporters seeing it as their role to support the police (Chibnall, 1977). In the late 1960s and early 1970s a growing anti-authoritarianism threatened this ‘cosy’ relationship. This was the result of several factors: the late 1960s saw a society-wide challenge to authority; regional forces took over the investigation of major crimes; national newsrooms redeployed crime correspondents with wider home affairs or legal affairs briefs (Schlesinger, 1994); a growing self-perception of the media in their role as deliverers of justice post-Watergate; a trail of stories of police corruption and malpractice (Rowbotham, Stevenson and Pegg, 2013); and the corresponding change in normative fictional portrayals of police officers (Kidd-Hewitt & Osborne, 1995).

News-values also changed as broadcast media – which lacked the traditional links with the police – became increasingly influential in setting news agendas. In addition, the abandonment of the death sentence took the sensational news-value out of trials (Rowbotham, Stevenson and Pegg, 2013). Indeed, Schlesinger reports correspondents as saying readers were bored with crime news as it had become commonplace (1994, p.145) – only the 'unusual or bizarre' would find its way into the paper. News increasingly addressed the politics of crime and law-enforcement -

“From the 1970s on, crime intelligence in the tabloid press has increasingly relied upon commentators reflecting upon crime events rather than items written by specialist crime reporters …. figures like Littlejohn for the Sun and Daily Mail and Tony Parsons for the Mirror effectively transformed crime news in political opinion columns on crime policy, merely illustrated by particular cases.” (Rowbotham, Stevenson and Pegg, 2013, p.173)

This, says Rowbotham, Stevenson and Pegg, led to an increased politicisation of crime news: “Crime news has always been political of course, but this is the first time that it was, on a sustained basis, relayed for public consumption through the lens of political allegiances” (2013, p.176).

At the same time, police-PR grew and became increasingly professionalised (Mawby, 2010b). The rate of change is not fully documented, but Schlesinger and Tumber's *Reporting Crime: The Media and Politics of Criminal Justice* (1994) gathered its data between 1986 and 1993 and noted a 'wider innovatory current' (p.120) in police-PR with large police services such as Liverpool and the West Midlands taking a lead from not only the Metropolitan Police Service (MET) but also from the USA. However, by 2007 Mawby felt able to say communications functions had become 'an integrated part of policing' (Mawby, 2012, p.274). In fact, this growth and its effects are widely noted by commentators critical of police PR (Brooke, 2011), but the causes and motivations remain contested – there are, after all, many reasons why a police service might build a PR function. After all, the police have many stakeholders to communicate with – the public, interest groups, politicians and criminals, as well as media. To each of these groups we could anticipate the assignment of reasonable communications goals or objectives such as, continued generic support, funding, societal power, or legitimation of action and intent.

Hall et al (1978) argue the need for professional police communications was the result of the politicization of the police and the abandonment of the ‘Butskellite consensus’ (see also Hollingsworth, 1986, p.1). This led to the breakdown of policing by consent and the need to build public support. Sullivan agrees, but also emphasises the society-wide rise of Managerialism as part of the wider neo-liberal belief that 'all state services do better when re-conceived and restructured in terms of the business community's values...' (Sullivan, 1998, p.307). A point strongly reiterated by Mawby (2002).

But the managerial need highlighted by Sullivan and Mawby is largely ignored by those commentators who adopt a more critical position. The propaganda effects of police-PR are emphasised by critics who see a failure of communication that aids dominant elites. For instance, journalist Heather Brooke argues in *The Silent State* (2011, pp.43-44) that increased police PR expenditure is evidence of a culture of spin which suppresses public understanding and produces '...an Alice in Wonderland fairy-tale [which] neither solves crime nor makes us safer, because as long as police are concentrating on PR they are not actually dealing with the root causes of crime – criminals'. Of course, police can undertake PR activity and fight crime at the same time, but Brooke addresses how PR can be used to mask failure – a point made by Ericson in *Patrolling the facts: secrecy and publicity in police work:*

With this focus we tend to forget that the police are also out to patrol the facts, to reproduce various symbolic orders. They guard the facts about their coercive operations. They shield aspects of their deployment strategies, including their priorities, and whom they are targeting as threats. They are protective of facts about their investigations, including how they respond to calls, the decisions they take on whether to write reports and how to formulate them, and the choices they take on whether to prosecute and how to make the case. They gloss the facts of their effectiveness, including their success in deterring crime, and in clearing crime by arrest. (1989a, p.206)

In such a mediated society the expansion of police-PR is as predictable and necessary as PR's expansion elsewhere in society. Without adopting the modes of promotionalism the police could not function in a society dominated by it. For instance, in 1988 the Metropolitan Police Service (MET) under Commissioner Sir Peter Imbert hired a consultancy Wolff Olins to examine problems of image and bad press. The result, *A Force for Change,* led in turn to *The Plus Programme* which identified the public as consumers and sought to change the ethos of the police from 'force' to 'service' (Schlesinger, 1994, pp.108-109). The resulting adoption of these marketing principles seems to fly in the face of traditionalist or normative images of the police – this is not the paternalism of Dixon of Dock Green. However, it does lay out the ground for a field of conflict between a semi-autonomous pole of traditional power and a heteronomic pole of economic power in the form of promotionalism. So, present in these processes is a mixture of societal change, managerialism and promotionalism impacting upon normative expectations of organizational communication. The police are – nominally at least - attempting to adopt the tenets of promotionalism, but from a cultural base of secrecy borne of *esprit de corps* and operational necessity. These two forces pull in opposite directions and provide a context for police ideology and crime news reporting – I will examine this in greater detail in later chapters looking at Legitimacy and the application of Bourdieu’s Field Theory.

Whatever the motivations of increasing police PR, there is now an uneasy relationship between it and journalists. Mawby also cites an unnamed journalist: “’Every crime reporter has had, at some time, a stand-up row with the press office. They are a wall, a filter. Reporters battle against it, wanting as much information as possible’.” (2010a, p.1070.).

An account of day-to-day police-PR practice is not presented in these works. Beyond the existence of growing communications departments (data concerning personnel rolls and expanded budgets) there is little information available at all regarding their everyday functioning, or their place within the police hierarchy, or its tactical or strategic functions. It is as though whilst PR itself is endeavouring to make police-work more transparent, the work of police-PR practitioners remains opaque – although this may not be their intent. Authors such as Ericson, or Crandon's 1997 work on Avon and Somerset police PR, touch a theoretical surface, but do not reach down into practice. After all, as noted by Mawby (2007) PR offices have evolved to encapsulate other functions and have so been renamed as communications offices, corporate affairs or corporate communications; as such it is not necessarily the case that all staff are involved in news-management. Take for instance the case of a graphics designer employed laying out the internal newsletter or coding a website, can that person be reasonably counted as proof of an increased media-management function? Here again the failure to properly define PR can lead to a poor analysis.

This has led to an understanding of police-PR, in the literature of Davies, Brooke and others, an empty cypher for everything that is wrong with policing. These authors describe police-PR as hugely influential in crime news-reporting, but here too the evidence is contested. There is no discussion within their analysis of individual agency within PR offices, shifts in internal politics or policy within forces, resourcing issues, societal context or even contingency in the form of luck. It is as though they perceive police-PR to be a black box into which crime news enters and spin comes out. B**y** contrast to that perception take David Miller's (1993) account of state organizations in Northern Ireland as they attempted to manipulate media coverage of 'the Troubles':

Chibnall for example looks at PR techniques in terms of the perceived aims of the 'control agency'. He then refers to 'harassment and repressions' as being a control agency technique (Chibnall, 1977, p.182). However, while journalists and photographers are often harassed or indeed have been shot with plastic bullets by the army or RUC, it seems clear that the role of the press officer is not to co-ordinate such harassment but to deal with the fall-out should the harassment be publicized. (1993, p.8).

A similar process and dynamic may be present in modern-day police-PR, but the necessary ethnography is not available. For instance, during the 'Plebgate’, the MET press office played no role other than to try to help the organization survive the controversy (Halliday, 2014). It was not a MET press officer that contacted The Sun, but rather a relatively low-ranking uniformed officer.

That scandal, together with Elveden (Guardian, 2012a) and Weeting (Guardian, 2012b) has led to a radical reappraisal of the relationship between police and news-media and a 'dampening effect' on personal police officer/journalist relations (Campbell, 2013; Policespecials.com, 2012). It remains to be seen if this may have the effect of strengthening the role of police PR offices.

However, in conclusion to this section, it is important to note how little of the available literature addresses regional police/news-media relationships. Crandon (Crandon & Dunne, 1997) is a notable exception. Once again, it might seem as though regional newspapers are beneath serious academic study. And yet, the effect of increasing police PR and decreasing newsroom resourcing is a subject area worthy of further study.

**2.6.2 Public relations and propaganda**

Public relations, in particular news-media relations, is discussed in an extensive body of literature as being in many ways synonymous with propaganda (Bernays, 1947; 2005; Bonnett, 2001; Ellul, 1973; Gramsci, 1971; Hall et al, 1978; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Marx, 1974; Williams, 1963; 1977). These authors are drawn primarily from structural or cultural perspectives that see, primarily state propaganda, as a tool of hegemonic forces used to create false consciousness, and conditions favourable to elite or dominant societal discourse – whatever that may be at the time. Some commentators, notably Miller and Dinan (2007; Miller, 2008; Miller & Dinan, 2000), Herman and Chomsky (1988) and Bernays (2005) have seen propaganda and PR as forces which support the functions of capitalism through a media-ecology of promotionalism, political economy and, to some extent, mediatization. As such discussions have focussed upon either ideological or institutional need in which way the media ecology reflects the workings of a hegemonic system – often characterizing capitalism and political elites as sharing goals and objectives. Other commentators have shown how propaganda (as synonymous with PR) is used by other sub- dominant actors – notably, for the purposes of this thesis, environmental and other campaign groups (Anderson, 1991; Gitlin, 1980; Hansen, 1993; Hasselberger, 2012; Hutchins & Lester, 2006; MacKay et al, 2012). In doing so they opened the discussion of propaganda/PR beyond the discussion of dominant discourse as false consciousness, and showed how it can be a means of campaigning. As such, campaigners’ work is an expression of Media Logic (Altheide, 1979) or a form of capital in a field of communicative conflict.

**2.6.3 Societal power in policing and its place in news as cultural production and reproduction.**

There are counter-arguments and the police see themselves as less empowered as the above do argue. Reiner (2010, pp.178-179) proposes four ideological frameworks through which the police might view themselves as news actors. The ‘hegemonic view’ holds that the media are 'propagators' of a dominant ideology and so 'fellow travellers’ with the police. The second framework involves a Subversive narrative in which the media would support the police, if marketing needs such as the need for sensationalism did not drive them towards undermining the police services. The third is a Jester model which argues that, not only are fictional and non-fictional portrayals of the police frameworkless and reliant on contingency but are unimportant anyway. Reiner favours a fourth – cultural - approach that critical analysis is attempted by the media, but structural constraints, deadline pressures, police control of information, the tendency to report cases at time of trial, resourcing, news-values and contingency, come together to construct an apparent framework which is all but identical to the hegemonic one. In this model the media are a 'cultural cockpit, a centre for ideological struggle', in which decisions of news-worthiness are made from news-gathering imperatives and that ideological effects are 'unintended consequences' (1997, p.179). This taxonomy is addressed extensively in this thesis.

For instance, returning to Chibnall's (1977) analysis of crime reporting. His focus is upon key actors – crime correspondents and their sources – and as such he produces an enlightening and well-regarded study of the cultural forces at work. He shows how personal contact between Scotland Yard detectives and the national 'pack' of crime reporters created an *espirit d'corps*. He argues that newspapers continued to support the dominant discourse even as societal deference waned in the 1960s and 1970s - that in this period crime correspondents 'generally adopted the perspectives and understandings of their police sources' (1977, p.106), which in turn found 'the behaviour of political deviants profoundly bewildering' (1977, p.107). As a result, journalists adopted the conservative police ideology and reflected it in their reports. Thus, says Chibnall, crime reporting remained linked to a ‘right-wing order fantasy’ lying at the root of ‘sensationalism’ that provided a structural focus to crime reporting, and informed reporting of all social deviance – including protests. His further discussion of social deviance and protest cites the violence of mods-and-rockers, the terrorist acts of the Angry Brigade, growing student protest (See Halloran et al, 1970), the murder of police officers, a 'mugging crisis' (See Hall et al, 1978), and picket line clashes as being conflated into one media narrative of a 'Violent Society' (Chibnall, 1977, p.75).

The Vietnam demonstrations in London in October 1967 and March 1968 and the events in Paris in May 1968 were instrumental in the formation of the violence image. The press saw representatives of the New Left fighting running battles with the police in the streets and it was this, rather than the reasons behind the protests, that made an imprint on the news. Stripped of any real motivational or behavioural context the remaining image of violence in the streets was in no fundamental respects different from that evoked by the Shepherds Bush police killings[[2]](#footnote-2). In both the police, as representatives of order and normalcy, were menaced by the forces of anarchy and chaos. (Chibnall, 1977, p.92-93).

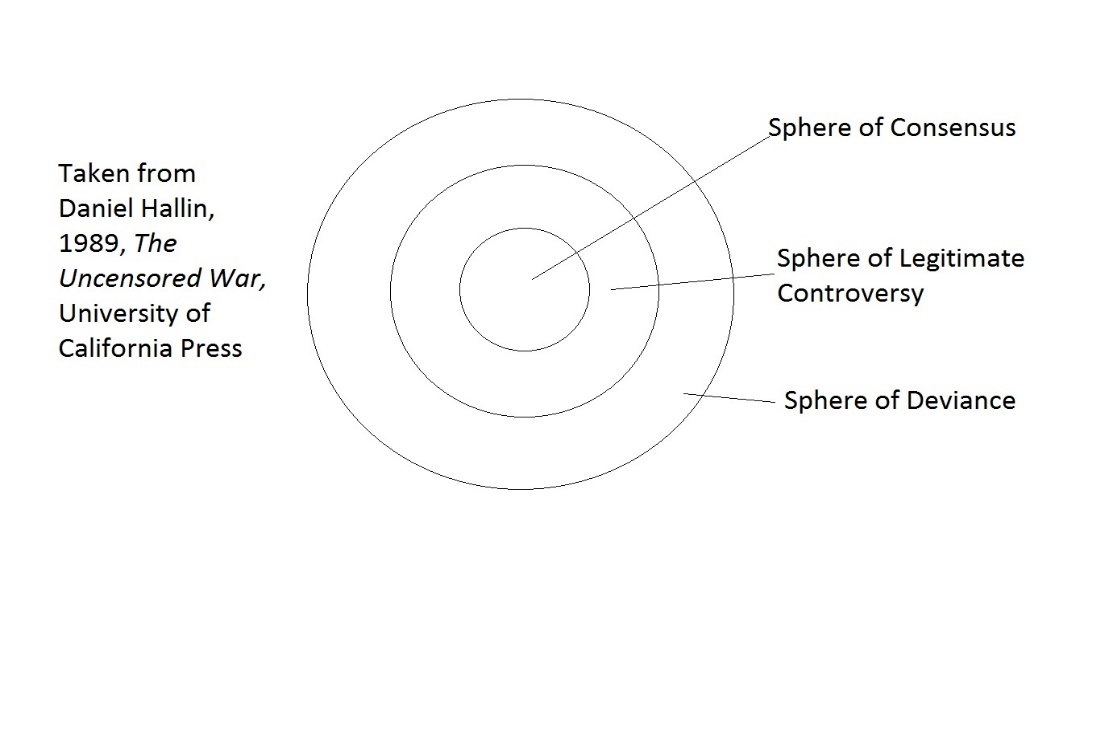
He argues that, as a direct result, journalists failed to discern between activity which was purely criminal, and activity which had a political dimension.

This position is supported by similar ethnographic studies which focus upon news-reporting culture and the way it is reflected in practice. Later works, such as Gitlin (1980) *The Whole World is Watching*, and Halloran et al’s (1970) *Demonstrations and Communication: a case study*, have also attempted to show how news reporting adheres to a paradigm of protest as criminal deviance (see also Hollingsworth, (1986)). In this analysis news-reporting of protest – and its apparent failures – are not a conspiracy, they are a cultural accident produced by a range of factors, not the least being an evolution of practice based upon newsroom norms and traditions.

Reiner also cites Halloran et al's (1970) account of the 1968 anti-Vietnam war protest in London, in arguing that while this bias is most apparent in the 'handling of explicitly political issues with law and order dimensions' (Reiner, 2010, p.182), it is still unintended. Decisions of news-worthiness are made from 'news-gathering imperatives' and that ideological effects are 'unintended consequences' which 'bolster a law and order stance' (Reiner, 1997, p.179). He continues that the core elements of news-values (he lists immediacy, dramatization, personalization, titillation and novelty) drive the news-agenda towards an apparent or nominal ideological - seemingly pro-hegemonic - position that he says exists only as a by-product of news-value drivers.

For protest and protesters this could have significant implications – highlighting the existence of extensive and well-established barriers to their representation in the media, which are intrinsic to the habitus of those media. Chibnall cites the then-MP Anthony Benn from a speech in Bristol in October 1968:

But the only thing we shan't get, either before, during or after is any opportunity to hear, first-hand, at length, and in peace, the views of those who are organizing these demonstrations...In part they are protesting against the very denial to them and others of any real access for their views on the mass media. All they can be certain of is that their demonstrations will be fully covered on the mass media and undoubtedly that knowledge itself stimulates the demonstrations. If law and order were ever to break down, in part or in whole, in Britain, the policy of restricted access and unrestricted coverage would have to bear a very considerable part of the irresponsibility. (Chibnall, 1977, p.38).

In other words, according to the socialist Benn, a fair hearing is impossible for protest movements which sit outside the normative core of political debate (See also Cottle, 2008; Ericson et al, 1999) as they sit outside of the dominant discourse antipathetic to protest (as Benn, and the fracking protestors in the case-study, would have it). Similarly, David Hallin (1989) argues for 'spheres of political discourse' (Diagram One – Hallin’s spheres of consensus and controversy) in which, public debate centres upon a sphere of 'consensus', outside of this sphere lies a zone of 'legitimate controversy', where journalists will seek objectivity and balance, beyond this there is a zone of 'deviance' which will either not be given a voice or be condemned without analysis.

**Diagram One – Hallin’s spheres of consensus and controversy**

Hallin uses this model to address the US TV coverage of the Vietnam War – he did not extend it to a wider discussion of political deviance. However, the model could be extended to describe how political protest against an established or dominant paradigm will constantly struggle to move from the established sphere of deviance into the sphere of legitimate controversy – a place where their arguments will be taken seriously within the public sphere. On the other hand, it could be argued that police services will conduct their communications from a position with the sphere of consensus, or at least from within the sphere of legitimate controversy.

Implicit here, and in the work of other authors (Schulenberger et al, 2014; Ericson et al, 1987; Hall et al 1978; Hollingsworth, 1986; Franklin, 2011) is what Becker (1967) refers to as a 'Hierarchy of Credibility'. Becker says, “In any system of ranked groups, participants take it as given that members of the highest group have the right to define the way things really are”. (1967, p.241). It is possible to argue that, in the news coverage of protest this is reflected in police sources (or other societal elites such as politicians or business leaders) being cited with greater implicit authority and assumed veracity than, for instance, protesters or non-elite publics (i.e. 'the man in the street') (Reich, 2011). This 'over-accessed' use of some potential sources over others is accented, according to Ericson *et al* (1987, 1989), using 'performative' sources – spokespeople – over other sources of knowledge such as databases, academic papers, surveys or statistics. In other words, these news-values work together to strengthen the position of elite organisation’s spokespeople.

In *Policing the Crisis* (1978) Hall *et al* present a similar analysis in which stories are 'coded' into a language-form in order to 'translate into a public idiom the statements and viewpoints of the primary definers' (1978, p.61). In other words, news media translate the ideology of the dominant hegemony for the masses – into a language they will readily understand, and speaks to a pre-established consensus which assumes, according to Hall et al (1978), that there are 'no major cultural or economic breaks'. However, the process by which these ruling ideas are disseminated is not a simple conspiracy – or indeed a mere derivation of base-and-superstructure - rather that the ruling, dominant or elite class are Primary Definers (1978, p.57) of the 'routine structures' of culture. It is an attempt to step away from simplistic structural models and emphasise the role of culture. The media are subordinate in this process, they are Secondary Definers who re-produce the 'definitions' of the powerful. In so doing – Hall argues - they accept and reiterate the frameworks through which stories are coded in what Lang and Lang (1955) refer to as the *Inferential Structure of Political Communications* in which (unintended) frames of reference and interpretation were seen to introduce bias in US political television coverage (1955, p.171). While engaging as an evolved structural/cultural theory Hall et al's account has been critiqued by Schlesinger and Tumber (1994, pp.17-20). To them, primary and secondary definition fails to take into consideration a range of 'real-world' influences such as: disagreement between hegemonic groups, or hierarchies of credibility in, primary definers; off-the-record briefings; the theory's assumed passivity of the media; and finally, the longer-term shifts in relative power between primary definers. Their analysis, while not without its flaws, highlights the weakness of any structural/Marxist model.

**2.6.4 Defining propaganda as a review of the existing literature**

Propaganda has a long history that can be traced back millennia (Jowett & Donnell, 2012); (Corner, 2007). However, for the purposes of this study, its development shall be considered in late modernity over the last 100 years in British and other westernised societies. This will allow the discussion to focus upon Anglo Saxon culture. Public relations practice over the last 100 years has grown from the work of early propaganda pioneers such as Bernays (known as the father of public relations) and his book *Propaganda* (Bernays, 2005), and Harold Laswell who saw the ‘Engineering of Consent’ (Bernays, 1947) as necessary to the proper functioning of democracy. Joseph Goebbels based his propaganda on the work of Bernays. After WWII, despite the successful work of the British Milner Group and the US Creel Committee in challenging US isolationism, the term propaganda fell from favour to be replaced by the term public relations (Briant, 2015; Curtis, 2002). The link between wartime communications and peacetime public relations is well made in the literature, but it is sometimes overdrawn. For instance, in their critique of Herman & Chomsky’s *Manufacturing Consent* (1988), Lang & Lang (2004) argued that the book’s Propaganda Model failed to differentiate effectively between everyday communicative acts of promotion or persuasion, and propaganda i.e. that every communicative act was propaganda. Unsurprisingly, the term propaganda has become pejorative – associated with fascism, ‘spin doctoring’ and political deceitfulness - and largely abandoned by communications practitioners in all but its warfighting uses (Briant, 2015). There is considerable ‘baggage’ attached to the term, and its use as a nuanced descriptor for practice has been undermined. Habermas (1996; Habermas, [1962]1989) identifies both PR, and propaganda as its fellow, as threats to rationale discourse in which ‘participants must mean what they say’ (Corner, 2007, p.673).

Many definitions of propaganda therefore focus upon some level of deceit. Compare, for instance, Jowett and O’Donnell’s:

Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist. (2012, p.7)

to Marlin’s:

The organised attempt through communication to affect belief or action or inculcate attitudes in a large audience in ways that circumvent or suppress an individual’s adequately informed, rational, reflective judgement. (2013, p.22)

Marlin places greater emphasis upon deceit in communications, and in doing so finds a line of definition between PR as persuasion and PR as propaganda. Terms such as ‘organised’ or ‘systematic’, ‘affect belief’ or ‘manipulate cognitions’ could easily be applied to many attempts at persuasion; but the aim to ‘circumvent or suppress…judgement’ lends to a nuanced discussion of truth in communicative action that is in many ways sympathetic to Habermas. Corner (2007) provides a useful taxonomy of deceit; lying, withholding information, strategic selectivity, exaggeration, appeals to fear (covert or explicit), rhetoric display of linguistic structure (pp.674-5). In fact, Corner expresses profound concerns with the value of this model, and joins commentators such as Herman & Chomsky (1988), and Ellul (1973) in seeing propaganda as a societal phenomena rather than instrumentally the preserve of individual or organizational agency. For the purposes of this discussion, such commentators would see police-PR as part of a wider domination of all discourses by elite groups, and so place much less value in or upon individual propaganda acts.

This forms the core of the debate between those who see propaganda as a society-wide ‘manufacturing of consent’ - a position consistent with a Marxian ‘false consciousness’, and those who see individual propaganda acts as discrete moments of practice within a field of culturally-embedded discourse – albeit strategically planned or culturally-rooted in some cases. That is, that in the examples of this thesis we can see police-PR as either part of an Althusserian Ideological State Apparatus, or one set of actors, alongside others, in a conflicted field of activity.

For instance, Ellul’s *Propaganda, The Formation of Men’s Attitudes* ([1965] 1973) provides a full discussion of propaganda as an ‘existing phenomenon’ – that is, being individual propaganda acts necessarily situated in context of existing propaganda, dominant myths and ideologies. In other words, he argues that successful propaganda must be embedded in pre-existing society-wide discourses. Given that he was writing during the Cold War (and immediately after WWII) it is unsurprising that he sees propaganda this way (and as a modern technique). Ellul focuses on practice and attempts a taxonomy: he argues propagandists may hide their identity or declare themselves creating black, white and grey (anonymous, fully credited and mixed) propaganda; that propaganda may aim at Agitation or Integration; it may be Sociological or Political; and he argues, most usefully for this study, that it relies upon ‘fundamental currents’ in society, ‘knowledge of psychological terrain’ and continuity with societal myths. As addressed in the earlier discussion of policing imagery, police-PR can draw upon a stock of imaginary images of policing stemming from police fiction, as much if not more than, police fact. So, police-PR is practiced from a platform of pre-conceived notions of policing in British society. The degree to which police practitioners consciously draw upon these mythic structures is arguable.

However, the media ecology in which PR actors practise, or indeed the propaganda field, has moved on apace since 1965. Briant’s *Propaganda and Counter-Terrorism* (2015) shows this in first using Ellul and others in her argument, before showing how PR agencies and government actors are crossing many of the boundaries of traditional propaganda practice. Later developments in new and digital media have further emphasised the blurring of lines between persuasion as a two-way process of open discourse, and propaganda as a process of deceit.

The issue of propaganda as a societal phenomenon rather than an individual practice was taken up at length in Herman & Chomsky’s much cited *Manufacturing Consent* (1988). Their propaganda model offered a five-part of taxonomy which drew heavily upon structuralist thinking. For the purposes of this thesis three of these ideas may be useful: flack, the aggressive critique of news coverage by PR-actors in an attempt to influence editorial decision-making; the journalistic or editorial desire to retain the goodwill of dominant sources; and the role of ideology (anti-communism in the book).

The position of propaganda as tool in a base-and-superstructure model of society lends itself well to a discussion of a societally structural role for police-PR. This will be discussed at length in chapter 5 of this thesis.

**2.6.5 Marxist and Neo-Marxist positions on state violence**

In his discussion of police and collective violence Mansley (Mansley, 2014) argues “… that democracy and policing are today connected as strongly as ever to the level of violence in society.” (p.3). He then introduces a range of theorists who have argued the case. For instance, such themes are central to Weber’s work and widely discussed. Weber’s theory voiced in *Politics as Vocation* (Weber, 2009), is that the state exerts ‘the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force’ – arguably, in the case of this thesis, through the police. The problem with using this theory in this thesis is that Weber does not discuss the police, nor does he discuss public relations. He does, however, argue that legitimacy comes from four sources; tradition, affectual attitudes, ‘rational belief in absolute value’ and legality (Weber, 1968, p.12). This oft quoted taxonomy has served as a starting points in a number of subsequent works. He also developed a theory of rationalisation and bureaucracy, in which

Formal rationality is essentially a procedural concept. It is a property of economic, legal and bureaucratic systems that allow for calculability and predictability. (Elster, 2000, p.22)

Policing is an expression of that formal rationality; that is, it requires general rules, hierarchy, full-time officials who act in an objective rule-dependent way in order to be ‘substantially rational’. It is executed out of duty of value-rationality or a fear of professional censure (Elster, 2000). To Weber, holding office is a vocation and is one of the social structures that is hardest to destroy, but is an essential phenomenon of democracy in creating stability, and the predictability needed by economic actors amongst others (Weber, 1968, pp. 66-81). This legitimacy is readdressed using Habermas in chapter 6.

The monopoly of violence is necessary, argues Weber, because the state is founded on force and would cease to exist without its foundation (2009). This is because politics is men dominating men, an essential part of the human condition (Turner, 2000, Weber, 2009). This domination is justified or made legitimate by the four sources cited above, and their acceptance by those being ruled, ‘that human conduct be conditioned to obedience towards those masters who claim to be the bearers of legitimate power’ (Weber, 2009, Weber, 1946 [1918]).

Weber discusses the routinisation of charismatic authority ‘by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men…’. The theme of charismatic authority is not stretched to the police in Weber’s work, instead, he chooses religious or prophetic leaders as a model. However, charisma is an interesting way of looking at police public relations, but other theories develop this area of analysis with greater potential as analytic models. This thesis dwells upon the symbolic power of the British police, particularly in ‘bobby myths’ and ‘police fetishism’ (Loader, 1997, 2003, Reiner, 2003) in the sections looking at Bourdieu (section 3.8 and chapter 7). In doing so this thesis argues for the charismatic power of policing within societal norms, but uses theories of societal myth within a field of journalistic practice. This allows for ‘charisma’ to be discussed as cultural capital, and so placed in its wider contextual field of capital, doxa, habitus, practice and power.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that Weber’s work does not address public relations (nor do the majority of his theoretical structuralist peers). How could it? Public relations was not a noted area of practice - as we know it today - during his lifetime (1864-1920). Some authors have attempted to apply his theories to public relations. For instance, Waerass (2007) makes such a case stating “Weber's concepts of legitimacy and legitimation have a clear relevance for understanding and analysing public relations theory and practice.” (p.285). This work is not without merit, and it is quite possible that Weber would have something to say about public relations were he alive.

Indeed, Mansley (2014) in his discussion of collective violence and policing offers a brief review of a number of theorists from a similar school. Weber, of course, comes from a structuralist school that sees the State as party to a social contract between it and citizens in which freedom is traded for security. The Marxists perceive this contract to be loaded towards control as a means to maintain social control in which Althusser’s Repressive State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatus become embodied in police communications practice. Gramsci presents us with a more nuanced approach in which ‘coercive apparatuses in modern societies, such as the police, courts and armed forces, operate with a high level of consent’ (Jones, 2007, p.170). His theory of Hegemony proposes that ‘organic intellectuals’ lead and organise consent and a ‘common sense’ shared by both dominant and sub-dominant actors and agencies (Gramsci, 1971, Jones, 2007) in a ‘war of position’. Organic intellectuals in this conception have remarkable similarity to public relations professionals who use symbolic power as a force of ‘moral and intellectual leadership’ (ibid). Symbolic power is revisited in Bourdieu’s theories, and to greater effect and theoretical utility. However, ‘hegemony’ is a central concept in describing how Reiner’s police-fetishism and Loader’s ‘bobby myths’ can have such dominance in societal discourses of law and order. Thus hegemony is a conflict for position, in which coercion, whilst present as a threat, is avoided in favour of a manufactured consent.

Mansley also records a movement from actual violence to symbolic violence – he also cites Bourdieu (Mansley, 2014, p.4) – as does this thesis (section 2.8 and chapter 7). Durkhiem (Lukes, 1975) argues for the reduction of violence being largely due to growth of democracy, and Arendt (Arendt, 1970) argues that failures in democracy create greater violence in society. Mansley himself argues for the work of Tilley in *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Tilly, 2003) who adds value to the discussion by arguing that violence and politics are entwined in the struggle for power and that ‘capacity democracies’ are able to tolerate protest without resort to outward violence. To Tilley protest and some level of violence – notably against property as a form of expressive violence – is business as usual for a democracy, rather than something exceptional. All of which said, there is little discussion in the literature to argue against Mansley who says:

It is the job of the police to manage protests on behalf of the state, whether by defending state institutions or by defending one non-state group from attack by another. The art of protest policing lies in maintaining the balance between liberty and order. In theory the police is required to protect both the democratic rights of those wishing to engage in the democratic process by protesting, and the ‘peace’, rights and property of those wishing to continue their lawful business. (2013, p. 10)

To be clear, this thesis adopts the position that police use violence on behalf of the state, its functions and practices. A position justified in the literature. However, the thesis attempts to find a nuanced basis for analysis which places policing *within* its presentation to and in the regional print news-media. The above theorists, while providing an interesting and thoughtful discussion of policing as collective violence do not provide a model for doing this.

Fortunately, the work of other theorists is available and useful - Habermas and Bourdieu amongst them. Habermas’ work directly addresses public relations (Calhoun, 1992, Habermas, [1962]1989, 1987) and issues of legitimacy (Bohman and Rehg, 2017, Edgar, 2006, Habermas, 1972, 1987, 1988, 1996). Habermas also addresses structural considerations, and so sits in a similar school to Weber. He has written extensively about public relations and its effect upon the ‘public sphere’, and his work is widely cited as authoritative, or at the very least informative. Bourdieu places communication and power within a field of practice (1977, 1986, 1987, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1998 [1996], 1998, 2005) and thus enables both policing and its presentation as context to each other, as well as being in the context of wider social forces. The thesis uses these, not because it rejects Weber’s monopoly of violence premise or Hall’s theory of primary definition, but because Habermas and Bourdieu provide more useful, nuanced, ways of describing the material.

**2.7 Habermas - The public sphere**

**This thesis draws upon four central concepts found in the works of Habermas – refeudalisation, communicative action, validity and legitimisation crises. They are each concerned with the workings of the public sphere as a theoretical and idealised space for societal discourse. There is not enough space in a thesis of this sort to fully describe or analyse the works of Habermas; that would be the work of separate thesis, and it would not directly address the research questions expressed here. However, it is possible to use some of his key ideas without exegesis.**

Refeudalisation is used as a unifying concept throughout this thesis. The idea proposed by Habermas (Habermas, [1962]1989) is that private interests have been able to place themselves into the public sphere such that “…the relevant exercise and equilibrium of power now takes place directly between the private bureaucracies, special-interest associations, parties and public administration. The public as such is included only sporadically in this circuit of power, and even then, it is brought in only to contribute its acclamation.” (p.176). Habermas argues that public relations is the ‘political character’ of advertising (p.193), which ‘transmutes the principle of publicity’ (p.198) in order to ‘woo’ the public into an ‘acclamatory consent’ (p.200) such that it transforms the public sphere’s political function (pp. 181-235). Refeudalisation is used in this thesis to refer to Habermas’ theory in which the public sphere is dominated by private actors by means of public relations (including media relations and lobbying).

Habermas describes the growth of bourgeois public sphere as a period of rational critical discourse as an ideal, subsequently subsumed as the public sphere. Refeudalization was accomplished by mass media, PR actors and 'politics as theatre' (Stevenson, 2002). Habermas' work is criticised for its idealisation of the political discourse during this period, its implicit disenfranchisement of those not drawn into the bourgeois sphere (women, proletarian classes), and its failure to address power relationships, structural and cultural factors in news production (Calhoun, 1992). Some of these critiques may have been unfair at the time or were addressed by Habermas in later work. Nevertheless, the public sphere remains a robust model for debate and analysis, with relevance and reference to the rise of the PR industry, and has more recently been re-theorised as a series of public 'sphericules' (Gitlin, 1998) or a 'public screen' (Deluca & Peeples, 2002). Habermas has developed his original position considerably (Edgar, 2006; Lunt & Livingstone, 2013) – with an accent on the nature of communication, theories of ethics and morality that embrace plurality, and an acceptance of the role of institutions in civil society.

His work then and subsequently has argued for an idealised normative model of 'communicative action' (1987), as opposed to strategic action in which “…actors are not so much interested in mutual understanding as in achieving the individual goals they each bring to the situation” (Bohman & Rehg, 2017), as being vital to the functioning of a liberal democracy. Communicative action is a second theme heavily drawn upon in this thesis, where it is used as an idealised position from which to critique propaganda acts. Habermas' basic premise is useful; that communicative action is a necessary part of liberal democratic societies, but that this action requires a transparent flow of information, informed debate and appropriately constituted media and civic institutions (Lewis, 2006). His work identifying the necessary criteria in such a sphere is also enlightening. Effective communicative action he argues requires: an aim to speak the truth, to be comprehensible, to say only what one is entitled to say and to express what we are sincere about (Lunt 2013, p.93).

In *Between Facts and Norms* (Habermas, 1996) he continues his critique of public relations and its negative impact upon the public sphere and communicative action. He also takes the discussion of law formation (beyond the legal positivism of Hart (1958) and Green (2018) (he does not cite them)) into a sociological discussion of law. He argues for the incorporation of power into the normative role of institutions as a positive and necessary part of civil society and its public sphere. Habermas looks at the role of the judiciary as a part of the public sphere; a notable development for the purposes of this thesis as judiciary and law-enforcement can be seen as closely allied societal functions. In it Habermas discusses at length the need for *validity* in the legal system and the sources of it. He argues that validity or credibility comes from the presence of procedural norms, embedded in, and to some extent embodied by, State administrative and judicial practice.

This issue is readdressed in *Legitimation Crisis* (Habermas, 1988) in which Habermas discussed the crisis in government legitimacy produced by the competing claims of corporate power and the electorate/public on governmental activity. This work is revisited at length in the chapter looking at Legitimacy (chapter 7.0) and is used extensively in the analysis.

**2.8 Bourdieu and Field Theory**

Bourdieu's Field Theory attempts to close the gap between positivist, critical and structural arguments (outlined above) – as well as traditional ethnography - in order to combine them in one conception of social practice (Calhoun et al, 1993). He does this by acknowledging the role of Power, while at the same time acknowledging the roles of individual agency and culture. In doing so he embraces the theoretical analyses of Power – to the point of being accused of being Althusserian (Benson & Neveu, 2005), but attempts to show how these are related to the acts of individuals – the practice of everyday life as it is motivated by society's rules, cultural norms and mores, and traditional ways of acting.

Bourdieu uses the idea of *Field* as a conceptual or analytical space bounded by the practice of those involved such that it becomes semi-autonomous – with the level of actual autonomy informed by its relationship to other Fields. A Field is a site of struggle, nested within (and around) other fields. Power comes from economic, social and cultural capital, with individual agents attempting to use their capital to maximize their position. These three forms of capital are transferable between each other and between fields (Bourdieu, 1986), and as such become the basis of class structure. Fields characterised by high levels of economic power are strongly influenced by society's dominant forces (and are termed heteronomous), those characterised by their own internal rules and cultural practices have higher levels of autonomy. *Habitus* is everyday practice formed from the dynamic confluence of these forms of capital and the material conditions of actors within the field. *Doxa* are the unspoken rules that underlie and provide the basis for the continuation of practice that may restrict the possible uses for the capital actors possess.

In *On Television* (1998 [1996]) Bourdieu attempted to address the journalistic field directly (he had already addressed the consumption of news media in other works). He argued that the journalistic field was of central importance to societal nest of fields – i.e. it was part of the field of power, albeit part of the dominated field of cultural production (Benson, 2005, p.5; (Garnham, 1993). It is highly heteronomous, and its centrality brings higher levels of heteronomity to those fields it touches. In other words, the logic of the marketplace[[3]](#footnote-3) – the need to sell advertising and maintain circulation figures – not only creates its own gravity within the field, dragging journalistic practice towards economic objectives, but also produces similar forces in adjacent fields (Bourdieu, (2005), p.43).

“It is clear that the authorities, the government in particular, influence the media not only through the economic pressure that they bring to bear but also through the monopoly on legitimate information - government sources are the most obvious example. First of all, this monopoly provides governmental authorities (juridical, scientific, and authorities as much as the police) with weapons for manipulating the news or those in charge of transmitting it. For its part, the press attempts to manipulate these "sources" in order to get a news exclusive." (Bourdieu, 1998, p.69).

The potential implications of such an analysis for a police press office (within a strategic communications function) are considerable. The police 'Field' can be seen as largely autonomous, because it is highly encultured and largely held independent of economic forces. But its activities are increasingly held up to scrutiny by actors and agencies within the journalistic field and the wider field of power. As such, the police press office can be seen as sited at the convergence of these two fields and the forces acting within them. The Habitus of practice within those fields is informed accordingly and becomes part of (a factor in) the contest within those fields – or even the new field created by it. There is a clash of doxa and habitus, capital is spent and exchanged.

Similarly, it could be argued, activists find themselves affected by the heteronomous nature of the journalistic field. As we have seen, some reject the mainstream media entirely, viewing it as implacable; others try to co-opt these forces either by creating stories that will sell newspapers (and other news media) or by appealing successfully to a cultural, homogenic pole within the journalistic field i.e. the mores and values of journalistic integrity.

**2.8.1 Bourdieu and Symbolic Power**

Bourdieu draws heavily upon the work of Emile Durkheim in defining cultural and social capital as sources of symbolic power arguing that they form a mask for the brute use economic capital. In so doing he examines the societal use of ritual. In *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991) Bourdieu redefines rituals of legitimation as 'rites of institution' in order to emphasise the role of ritual:

To speak of rites of institution is to suggest that all rites tend to consecrate or legitimate an arbitrary boundary, by fostering a misrecognition of the arbitrary nature of the limit and encouraging a recognition of it as legitimate; or, what amounts to the same thing, they tend to involve solemn transgression, i.e. One conducted in a lawful and extraordinary way, of the limits which constitute the social order and mental order which rites are designed to safeguard.... (p.118).

The theme is taken up by Nick Couldry in *Media Rituals: A Critical Approach* (2003b) who drew on Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, to* highlight the 'transcendent role' of ritual. Ritual is more than habitual action or normative forms, it informs and is informed by the accepted societal structures. Ritual reinforces the Doxa and Habitus of practice by masking their presence while at the same time making them implicit and accepted. Take for instance the Royal Weddings and Coronations (Dayan & Katz, 1992) in which the societal position of the monarchy is reinforced by broadcasting these events as though they are important in their own right, that is, with an implicit assumption of monarchy as part of the doxic, even Gramscian, consensus.

Moreover, James Carey makes the following point:

Under a ritual view, then, news is not information but drama. It does not describe the world but portrays an arena of dramatic forces and action; it exists solely in historical time; and invites our participation on the basis of our assuming, often vicariously, social roles within it. (2008, p.21)

Perceiving news-as-drama-not-information allows protest-reporting to be analysed within its societal context as a statement of societal values – and, supports an argument beyond Durkheim's functionalist understanding of ritual being necessary to societal cohesion, or Dayan and Katz's (Dayan & Katz, 1992) similar conception of the media's central role in society's big events. Couldry describes ritual as liminal or liminoid in its nature. The media mark a boundary as metaphorical 'priests' between the sacred and the profane. This rite of institutions bestows or confirms symbolic power on both the media as 'priests' and validated news sources as 'the consecrated'. This is what Couldry refers to as “the myth of the mediated centre” (p.44).

The idea that society has a centre helps naturalise the idea that we have or need, the media that 'represent' that centre; media's claims for themselves that they are society's 'frame' help naturalise the idea, underlying countless media texts, that there is a social 'centre' to *be* represented to us (p.46)

Bourdieu defines symbolic power thus;

A power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization. (Bourdieu, 1982, p.170)

Within this theoretical framework we can see actors - news sources, journalists, police press officers - as all playing within a field which is of itself a place of ritual (Lukes, 1975; Turner, 1995). It is here that liminal statements are made that bestow or anoint credibility (in keeping withBecker), as well as the right to allow some sources to frame or name news reporting. Now Couldry is careful to restrict the term ritual to specific media actions, not 'banal acts of social ordering' – but then lists those circumstances in which people act in 'formalised ways'. By doing so he does not follow through the logic of his original position in highlighting the transcendental role of media ritual. This too has interesting implications for the role of police-PR.

The impact of this ritualistic role is made greater by the police’s societal status, that is its position as state spokesperson. This effect is made worse by an image with the public that goes beyond the rational perception of its actions and acts as a condensing symbol, and is in many ways liminal in that it helps mark a boundary between legality and legal deviance.

For instance, Loader (1997) describes the symbolic power of the police, arguing that police fiction is one of its primary sources. Amongst others, the avuncular *Dixon of Dock Green*, the fictional police figure of the 1950s, has become, Loader claims, not only an icon or archetype of British policing, but also of Britishness. He argues how this symbolic power – the uniform, the language, the societally-accepted archetype - is part of societal perceptions of real-world policing. Dirikx et al (2012) add to this, referring to the police as ‘‘Prototypical Representatives of Society”, while Brunger (2014) cites Sir Robert Mark, Metropolitan Police Commissioner in the 1970s who stated the art of policing was in 'winning by appearing to lose'. Here we can return to Peel’s principles, the ostensible bedrock of British policing, which states the ‘The police are the public and the public are the police’ as source material to the ‘bobby’ archetype – not only the mode of policing, but also as a perception of their societal power, and by extension dominant societal power in general. It is beyond the scope of this study to reference other national police forces, but noteworthy that British police are exceptional in not being routinely armed. Loader cites Gorer (1955: 310) “The policeman has been for his peers not only an object of respect, but also a model of the ideal male character, self-controlled, possessing more strength than he ever has to use except in the gravest emergency,” while making the argument for a ‘'paleo-symbolic' and “affective” attachment policing.

The police - like the monarchy, a powerful condensing symbol - provide an enduring and affectively appealing means by which a certain strata of English society is able to imagine 'England' as a community... . (Loader, 1997, p.16)

It is interesting that Lentz (2007) challenges the historiography of Peel’s Principles – labelling them ‘invented’. The iconography of policing is, it seems, created, rather than actual. Indeed Loader begins his work with the statement that the “... burgeoning body of criminological research [which] has emphasised the rather limited role the police can play in reducing crime and maintaining social order”. In other words, the police’s claim to fight crime is empirically questioned, but its role in the imagined communities (Anderson, 1983) of Britain remains in some normative or functional sense. Thus, the salience of the iconic ‘British village bobby’ is also visited by Brunger (2014) as an icon of British morality, that has attained the strength of myth i.e. that it is functionally *necessary* to the policing’s societal role. This then is *arguably* the root of doxic authority of police communicative action. It is possible to argue ‘symbolic power’ is the primary source of police-PR’s domination of the news - not the competence, professionalism or probity of any police actors, including its PR professionals. Its doxic strength is drawn from the way it is embedded in British perceptions of self, of Britishness, placing the ‘bobby-myth’ at the core of common sense, and those that are opposed by them, e.g. activists, more firmly in an area of deviance as expressed by Hallin (1989). In support of this position, we can recall Chibnall in *Law and Order News,* describing the Paris riots of 1968 said that crime reporters 'generally adopted the perspectives and understandings of their police sources' (1977, p.106), finding 'the behaviour of political deviants profoundly bewildering' (1977, p.107).

Of course, much has changed, but it remains possible to argue, that Dixon of Dock Green vs the hippies of the summer of love no more fits with normative representations of order, or with the ‘police fetishism’ of Reiner (2003), than do the protests and protestors of Balcombe Down, Preston Road and Barton Moss.

This mythic status, doxic acceptance, that makes the symbolic power of the police all but unassailable – despite multiple failures of policing such as the unlawful killing of Ian Tomlinson, the scandal of Hillsborough, and the multiple malpractices highlighted by the Elveden and Leveson enquiries – amongst many other examples. The apparent failures of policing noted earlier at Balcombe and Barton Moss e.g. Teagate, are remarkable because there is no larger public outcry, impact upon policing practice or diminution of the police’s symbolic power. It is as Loader argues, quoting Durkheim; “When collective ideas and sentiment are obscure or unconscious, when they are scattered piecemeal throughout society, they resist any change.” (1997 – Durkheim, Professional Ethics and Civic Morals, London: RKP. 1957: p.87)”.

A consideration of Bourdieu, as he might be applied to the case studies in this thesis, forms the final analytical chapter in the second part of the thesis. It has been presented in this literature review ‘out-of-its-chapter order’ for ease of narrative flow. This is because a consideration of Bourdieu fits well with a consideration of structuralism, culturalism and positivism. To separate it to its own chapter would risk losing the thread of that narrative. Some further discussion of Bourdieu’s literature is also found in chapter 8 where it helps the construction of the argument, and/or aids narrative flow.

**2.9 Legitimacy in policing**

**This thesis draws upon several academic schools and their approaches to legitimacy. It does not adopt any of them in particular, but rather challenges them with the data and findings discovered in the case studies. Broadly the academic literature says legitimacy is a vital concept in policing**[[4]](#footnote-4)**; it is identified as such by a range of authors (Ericson et al., 1987, 1989b, 1989a, 1991, Reiner, 1997, 2010, 2003, Mawby, 2002, 2007, 2010c, 2010d, 2012, Chibnall, 1977, Hall et al., 1978, Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994). In pursuit and maintenance of legitimacy, for instance, Ericson argues the police are ‘patrolling the facts’ as much as the streets in maintaining a public persona that is different from the behind-the-scenes practice. Hall argues for a culturally-centred practice of information control, Mawby presents data, ethnographies and studies showing the centrality and growth of police communications, while Chibnall, as well as Schlesinger and Tumber document a history of close relations between media and police which evidences a perceived need for mutual support**

In *Why People Obey the Law* (1990) Tyler argues “Across all types of organizations the core argument of legitimacy theory is that legitimacy provides a “reservoir of support” for institutions and authorities.” (p.281). Indeed, Tyler creates a cogent argument for the role of legitimacy in policing practice. Tyler’s core theme is that, while coercion might gain compliance, it does not necessarily gain deference. British police do not routinely carry firearms; ‘policing by consent’ takes place, in agreement with *Peel’s* Principles (Lentz & Chaires, 2007), and remains the dominant policing discourse (although it may be challenged by critical analysts, as well as the changing policing context). It was Sir Robert Mark, Metropolitan Police Commissioner in the 1970s, who stated the art of policing was in 'winning by appearing to lose’ (Brunger, 2014), thus desribing British policing’s apparent rejection of force as a source of police authority, as well as policy and practice. Within this discourse, policing is obliged to be undertaken with minimal instrumental force (i.e. coercion), if it is to maintain its legitimacy, and legitimacy is required if it is to avoid the use of coercion. So it could be argued that the police attempts to gain and maintain consent are central goals in the police’s representations of their activity – as well as in their day-to-day activity.

**2.9.1 Taxonomies of legitimacy**

Within the literature there remains considerable discussion as to the definition and/or measurement of legitimacy. Weber (Weber, 1968) argues for a four-fold taxonomy and the obedience of the masses as proof that legitimacy is present, and that, “validity is externally guaranteed by the probability that deviation from it within a given social group will result in relatively general and practically significant reaction of disapproval”. (Weber, 1968, p.12).

Beetham (Beetham, 2013) makes a number of claims in order to reject structuralist approaches. For instance, he produces a lengthy critique of Weber’s position noting his version of the ‘Weberian’ argument that “If people believe in the legitimacy of power, is this not because the powerful have been successful in public relations…” (Beetham, 2013, p.9), before giving a *reductio ad absurdum* argument that these definitions ‘would imply that the reason for the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989 lay in a deficiency of public relations’. This is a weak argument against a role for public relations in creating legitimacy; after all, just because PR had no role in one circumstance does not mean it had no role in another. Moreover, he provides no evidence that PR (which he does not define) was not a contributing factor, even if it was not the main one. In addition, as previously noted, Weber makes no reference to public relations in his work. Beetham is concerned with rejecting ‘false consciousness’ as a key structuralist claim – but in doing so he does away with PR as a key societal activity. However, PR can be usefully added to his taxonomy in the formation and maintenance of rules and justifications.

Instead Beetham offers a three-fold taxonomy of Legitimacy. The different dimensions of authority are:

1. It conforms to established norms,
2. The rules can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both the dominant and subordinate, and
3. There is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation. (p.16)

He characterises these as – in turn - rules, justifications and action. He explains “On its own, legal validity is insufficient to secure legitimacy, since the rules through which power is acquired and exercised themselves stand in need of justification. This is the second level of legitimacy: power is legitimate to the extent that the rules of power can be justified in terms of beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate (p.16).” The police reliance on the law for validation of its actions is hardly surprising, but here, Beetham indicates a potential weakness. The validity of the law itself can be undermined if the processes of law-making are rendered in some way invalid.

However, Beetham’s conception of legitimacy is context driven and he is far from ‘absolute’ in his approach. He goes on to talk about not only the collapse of legitimacy, but also its erosion, the lessening of legitimacy rather than its failure; arguing this leads to a growing need for coercion or an acceptance of non-deferential action by dominated groups (he cites working to rule or feigned incompetence).

**2.9.2 Legitimacy, human rights and promotional society**

Short et al (2015) and Gilmore et al (2017)explore the human rights implications of the policing (focussing on Balcombe and Barton Moss) and consider the erosion of the right to freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly (amongst others) as undermining legitimacy. These themes are revisited in the Legitimacy chapter (chapter 7), because it speaks directly to the foundations of legitimacy in agreed law and norms of behaviour. There are agreed norms of policy and practice found later in this study – in substantial agreement with Habermas’ theories which addresses a legitimation deficit in policy and practice (Habermas, 1988). Habermas describes these moments as a ‘crisis’, referencing the medical definition - the moment a body is no longer able to heal itself without external intervention. Here the government lags behind the demands made upon it by the electorate such that it is unable to legitimate itself. This, Habermas argues, results in a crisis in the ‘steering systems’ of legitimacy – a direct result of the loss of autonomy between the government and the economic systems of capitalism. To this extent Habermas might be seen to predict the heteronomic action of economic actors such as the Fracking companies and the government elites. He also predicted a resultant legitimation crisis. To him this ‘displacement’ is necessitated by the contradiction inherent in the failure of ‘the bourgeois ideology of fair exchange’ which leads to a ‘structurally depoliticised public realm’. (He lists the Ecological Balance as one of the ‘Problems Resulting from Late Capitalist Growth’ (pp.41-3) but does not develop this theme.) To summarise, it is possible to quote Habermas in writing, “This structural alteration of the bourgeois public realm provides for application of institutions and processes that are democratic in form, while the citizenry, in the midst of an objectively political society, enjoy the status of passive citizens with only the right to withhold acclamation.” (p.37).

In his much-cited and much-critiqued earlier work *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* ([1962] 1989) he discussed this at length. Habermas himself has challenged some of this seminal work (Calhoun, 1992), but discussions of the ‘proper’ functioning of the public sphere, particularly his theories of communicative action, highlight the potentially negative role played by PR which in turn undermines the legitimacy claims made by police-PR generally.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, Beetham also rejects Habermas’s structural approach, arguing that:

…there is nothing to suggest that liberal democracies cannot zig-zag indefinitely between a market-orientated solution to the problems of the state, and a governmental solution to the problems of the market, with a shifting point of balances struck between the two. (p.170)

In fact, this is a subtle misrepresentation of Habermas’s position – who does not argue that the legitimation crisis is a result of failed government intervention, but rather that the government is structurally no longer able to intervene in its normative role. Moreover, Habermas himself argues that he does not “… exclude the possibility that that economic crisis can be permanently averted.” (p.40.). Legitimacy then, for policing actions, is undermined by failures in state legitimacy and the essentially procedural or bureaucratic justification for police action. This is a central theme to the thesis, which is revisited at length in later chapters.

**2.9.3 Legitimacy and legal positivism**

Developing this position, White (1988) argues that there are two ideological positions from which actors can view this crisis – one is the rational, which is strategic, the other is social which draws upon values (this, latter, White refers to as ‘contextual’ motivation). It is possible to argue that the effect of these two positions is for protestors and police (and other involved actors and audiences) to have two quite separate understandings of what the protest is about, and the validity of associated legitimacy claims. White argues legalistic, rules-driven interpretations of the legitimacy, (of which Fracking policy and policing policy can be seen as an example) drawn upon by police, do not acknowledge the social-motivation of the protestors as a form of validation. This is a form of legal positivism. Legal positivism “…has come to stand for a baffling multitude of different sins.” (Hart, 1958, p.595). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a full discussion of those ‘sins’, but the term will be used here to reference what Hart also refers to as legal ‘formalism’; the ‘mechanical’ and ‘automatic’ application of law used by police officers to justify their acts. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy states: “Legal positivism is the thesis that the existence and content of law depends on social facts and not on its merits.” (Green, 2018). It is used in this thesis as a way of describing the police’s nominally ‘blind’ application of the law. Framing in media-relations is linked to legal positivism through the *procedure* of the state in policy-making and policy-action – in planning law, economic policy, political activity and, finally, policing. Procedural framing (found in chapter 5 and section 8.9) is the logic and rationale behind police legal-positivism, and this thesis draws heavily upon Habermas’ concepts of validity and legitimation through norms of governmental procedure (Habermas, 1996) to analyse it. This is central to Hart’s discussion (repeated here from the introduction to this thesis):

Bentham had in mind the anarchist who argues thus: “This ought not to be the law, therefore it is not and I am free not merely to censure but also disregard it”. On the other hand, he though...[a]…reactionary who argues: “This is the law, therefore it is what it ought to be.”. (Hart, 1958, p.598)

Here again it is possible to cite Short et al (2015) who argue argues that the law-making function of government has been usurped, even ‘feudalised’ (although he himself does not reference Habermas). That said, the police also do not acknowledge the challenge to an accepted procedure which has been ‘feudalised’ by PR action. In other words, the non-contextual non-values-based argument of legal positivism ignores the power structures that gave rise to it. It does not answer the second-level ‘why?’ question raised by an event or decision influenced by power elites and their politics. The legal positivism of the police position does not acknowledge those cases in which law-making is a product of power as expressed by political and societal elites – and their PR actors. On the other hand, contextual-motivation is subjective and so precludes a ‘universalist’ explanation, but also more importantly for the purposes of this study, in a profoundly practical sense, creates a potential ‘blind-spot’ for police actors who may not share this subjective view. White’s account of ‘twin motivations’ and their application to the matter of subjectivity in protests provides a framework for understanding the legitimacy crisis illustrated in the protests.

**2.9.4 A legitimacy crisis - discussion**

Habermas, despite his earlier contention of ‘refeudalisation’ does not argue this in his discussion of legitimacy crises. As White argues in his discussion of Habermas -

A normatively secured consensus on the other hand, is one which blocks in some way the process of critical, communicative dialogue.

Understood this way, Habermas’s position is not blind to a whole range of forms of domination in modern life, which are significant but are not adequately understood simply as pathologies emerging from the clash of the two principles of sociation, forms such as racism and the oppression of women. However, it is one thing to say that Habermas’s position is not blind to such phenomena; it is another thing to say that it proves the grounds for a sufficient comprehension of them. (White, 1988, p.102).

In fairness to Habermas, he does not present his theories as complete, but rather as a starting point for further research, and the data analysis in this thesis has been able to put some empirical and contextual flesh on the bones of these theories. White’s phrase ‘sufficient comprehension’ begs a central question – ‘what is sufficient?’, or indeed ‘sufficient to what?’. These questions become important in a sphere of communication in which legitimacy claims are not absolutely successful but are continuously contested.

Legitimacy, based upon the literature for the purposes of this thesis, is based upon a perception of rightness by a range of parties or stakeholders. This perception in based upon a combination of factors. This includes the law and the perceived correctness and probity of the policy and procedures upon which it is founded. It includes the accepted norms of application by policing – such as policing by consent rather than coercion, as well as largely symbolic norms described by Loader (Loader, 1997, 2003).

The literature points to a danger that public order policing, in the context of failed legitimacy, becomes a blunt instrument of coercion forcing through state-sanctioned decisions of dubious legitimacy.

**2.9.5 Public relations as legitimacy in rhetoric and management**

This thesis also examines public relations practice as a source of legitimacy in its own right is also considered as a motivator for its own practice. This may seem a circular argument, and some extent it is i.e. public relations practice, becomes a societal norm, and so begets public relations practice as a societal norm. The argument accepts that premises of mediatization, PR-isation and promotionalism as societal meta-processes which have informed, and are informed by, the growth of societal public relations practice in the last century. These will be discussed at length in section 6.9.2. They have been reflected in the growth of police-PR. As such Media Logic (Athleide, 1979) and Media Capital (Couldry 2003) form a communicative rhetoric that is necessary to the successful application of police managerialism (Mawby, 2002, 2010, 2007). Necessary, that is, in terms of both the wider agenda of applying the processes and procedures of the private sector to the public sector, but also necessary to justify, through the mass media, the adjunct changes to police practice to its audiences. In addition, the effect has been to make PR necessary to the functioning of almost any organisation in post-modernity – no less the police, and arguably more so than most.

A central question must focus upon the extent to which the police are ‘mediatised’ (Couldry and Hepp, 2013, Lundby, 2009). Couldry’s review of meditization as a concept describes its evolution into several strands, touching upon several different areas such as society-wide effects. This thesis concentrates upon the effects upon organisations while acknowledging societal influence – i.e. police forces and to some extent activists operating in a mediatised environment. It assumes such an environment exists – leaving that argument to Hepp, Couldy, Lunt and other academics (Block, 2013, Couldry and Hepp, 2013, Deacon and Stanyer, 2014, Hepp et al., 2015, Lunt and Livingstone, 2016, Pallas and Fredriksson, 2013). The thesis adopts Couldry & Hepp (2013, p.196) in arguing that mediatization is the ‘adaption’ of ‘social fields or systems’ to the media as an institution with its own rules – in which Althiede’s media logics (1979) become a ‘formats and forms of staging’.

As such the thesis looks at, primarily, the police’s organisational and managerial response to a mediatized society – asking the extent of response in terms of its media-orientation.

In his study *Corporate Media Work and the Micro-Dynamics of Mediatization* (2013) Pallas argues, “A number of studies have pointed out the importance of media for organisational legitimacy and reputation”. He quotes meso-level institutional reforms as having three levels; collaborative structures, depth and scope interactions, and information flows (see also Hepp et al, 2015). In this study it is also evident in other actors and agencies that seem motivated by societal as well as organisational-mediatization (Hjarvard, 2013) and this activity is particularly notable in the practice of Green MP Caroline Lucas, whose arrest is as much propaganda of the deed as public relations. Activists too adopt PR-practice, although the division between insider and outsider typologies of Wyn Grant has been examined at length in this literature review.

In this thesis professionalised police media-communications functions are recognised as essential management functions in their own right. They are addressed as such in later chapters.

**2.10 Chapter summary**

This literature review has addressed several areas of study relevant to the thesis. The growth of societal PR has been reflected in the growth of police-PR and in the practice of protest. This has led to a sense of disquiet that public relations has produced its own logics in terms of mediatization, promotional cultures and rhetorics, and media logics. More than this structuralists have argued that the PR-practice forms part of the superstructure of the state as a hegemonic force. These theories have developed from their Marxist roots to find form in the refeudalisation of a nominative public sphere, as well as a theory of PR as a source or form of cultural capital.

So, the literature leads the study to several areas of further study. In the first instance, the study should consider police public relations as a dominant hegemonic force; as a means of state elite control. In so doing, it could be theorised as a means to legitimise the state’s monopoly of violence by fostering false consciousness. In the second it is possible to theorise that police-PR is a channel for legitimacy claims necessary to maintain policing. The third is that policing and its associated public relations must be viewed in a societal context of conflicting agents, agencies and their interests. These three positions will provide the initial context and focus for this thesis’ analysis.

**3.0 Methodology**

In summary, this thesis will utilise multiple data sources – content analysis, interviews and document discovery – in order to analyse by triangulation ‘fracking’ coverage in regional print newspapers as a case study of police-PR practice, with special reference to the news-discourses associated with environmental protest. The methodology used in this thesis is designed so as to take advantage of the news-coverage of protests as case studies. In order to do this it uses the newspaper coverage – the news-copy – as a primary data-source for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies that attempt to triangulate upon – and answer - a series of research questions. These research questions are drawn from the existing literature, but are refined by the data itself.

Case studies allow the researcher to ‘retain a holistic and real-world perspective’ and ‘to understand complex social phenomena’ (Yin, 2014, p.4). A case study is not a methodology of itself (Yin, Ibid; Thomas, 2011; Stake, 2005), but rather a choice of what to study, as well as an approach to methodologies. Yin, in *Case study research: Design and methods* (2014) argues for a two-part taxonomy:

1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that

* Investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when
* The boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.

1. A case study inquiry

* Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than the data points, and as one result
* Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
* Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (pp.16-17)

This case study of the influence of police-PR on fracking coverage in regional print media fulfils these criteria; it is a ‘contemporary phenomena’ and an empirical enquiry. The complexities of these defy simplistic or unnuanced separation from its context. The variables are extensive, and data points are elusive and ill-defined – and at times subject to the prescriptions of state-level operational security. For instance, there are a number of actors and agencies which may influence the news-copy, and some attempt must be made to evaluate which is the most influential. Thus the need for multiple sources of evidence and their triangulation, in the expectation of c*o-variance* (Gerring, 2007) i.e. agreement (or disagreement) in findings that aid a meaningful analysis.

The definition of ‘case’, that is, the choice of subject unit, is not unproblematic. Case studies as a research-choice are subject to, what Gerring (2007) referred to as the ‘N question’ – the number and range of relevant data points. Halloran’s *Demonstrations and communication: a case study* (1970) is a good example of this. It provided a much-cited study of one demonstration that informed the wider conversation about policing and reporting of demonstrations. Other examples include Lilly Canter’s thesis *Web 2.0 and the changing relationship between British local newspaper journalists and their audiences (2012)* which made use of two individual cases of local papers. Canter’s research makes much of the case study as a form (if not method) of inquiry, identifying at length the challenges of such an approach. With this in mind, the ‘three-N’ found in this thesis provides a relatively large dataset for a study of coverage, and an acceptable dataset for the larger study of regional environmental protest coverage.

The choice of case inevitably finds itself nested within other case studies. In other words, a case study ‘includes adjacent fields’ (Gerring, 2007, p.345). The case-study in question here is a good example. Three cases – the Gazette, the MEN and the Brighton Argus – are subsidiaries of the main Fracking case study, itself a potential case-study of environmental protest, and a potential case-study of protest in society. Each of these are varying indices of police-PR – which show high levels of co-variance.

Gerring also highlights considerations of changes over time in case study design. In this case study, these considerations are assumed to be negligible. That is to say that, the case studies span four years, it could be argued that during that period there may have been changes in the practice of the parties involved – these are addressed but considered to be sufficiently small as to not radically undermine the value of the case-study . The study assumes that these will have a minor effect on the overall result. This is a potential weakness for two primary reasons – the growth of digital media as a communications channel, as well as the potential wax and wane of societal concern with environmental causes which, given the taxonomies of news (for instance Galtung and Ruge, 1965 as well as later discussions), might lead the news-value of protests to rise and fall.

The assumption made is that these changes are not material, or at least not extensively material, to the study. However, it is reasonable to state that Lancashire Police used social media, notably Twitter, (in 2017) to a greater extent than Sussex Police (in 2013) (see appendices Interview with Nick Evans). This thesis does not dwell on social media as a media source. There are several reasons for this. First, the pace of rapid change in social media does not compare like with like across the three case-studies. Secondly, given the extant literature dwells upon traditional news media, focussing upon print news coverage allows this thesis to build upon those studies. Third, social media datasets are harder to come by – and the available search engines do not make datasets beyond a few months easily accessible. Further a consideration of the public sphere, particularly with regard to political influence and social legitimation makes traditional media a far more relevant data-source. Indeed, the expansion and change in social media use over this period might well be a useful subject for a different study particularly given recent scandals in which social media has been used – it is claimed – to introduce undue bias into elections (Guardian, 2019). Social media is used where it illustrates a specific point with relevance to the news coverage, or police/protestor reaction to it as traditional media-relations actors.

Problems with the generalisation of case study results is raised by several authors (Thomas, 2011). “Rather”, argues Yin, “than thinking of your case study as a sample, you should think of it as the opportunity to shed empirical light about some theoretical concepts or principles…” (p.40). In other words, there is no claim made in this methodology for statistical significance, but the data coverage is used to shed light upon theoretical concepts in both a qualitative and quantitative way. Yin defends case studies against Thomas’s trenchant position that generalisation is not possible from case studies by arguing that while they are too small to be considered sampling units *per se* they can act in:

“Corroborating, modifying, rejecting or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts that referenced in designing your case study, or (b) new concepts that arose upon the completion of your case study.” (2014, p.41)

He goes on to argue for the qualitative interpretation of data, rather than raw numeric quantitative tallies. That is to say that the challenge facing researchers is to ‘develop strong, plausible and fair arguments that are supported by the data.” (p.167).

That is how this case study, and/or its subsidiary cases, are used in this thesis. The three broad-brush propositions outlined earlier in this section are based upon the three main positions extant in the literature. They are given more detail here, alongside their accompanying research questions.

* The first is a structuralist, Marxist or neo-Marxist position that assumes that police-PR fulfils a propagandist role in support of the dominant or hegemonic discourse. This is addressed in the chapter (6.0) on police-PR as propaganda which attempts to answer:

**Research question 1 (R1): To what extent can police-PR as found in this case study be characterised as propaganda?**

* The second looks at legitimation claims as a central function for police-PR using the work of Weber, Habermas and Beetham.

**Research question 2 (R2): To what extent can it be argued that legitimacy claims are the primary objective of police-PR?**

* The third question is based on a managerial or constructivist position which shows police-PR as a necessary part of a mediatised organisational structure in the face of a mediated or promotionalized society. This is addressed in the chapter on Legitimation which attempts to answer:

**Research question 3 (R3): To what extent can police-PR as found in this study be characterised as a managerial or organisation response to mediation and/or mediatisation?**

* The fourth looks at the cultural aspects of police-PR as actors and agencies in a field, or fields, of societal conflict. The section primarily uses Bourdieu and his field theory, is discussed under that heading, and attempts to answer the question:

**Research question 4 (R4): To what extent can police-PR as found in this study be characterised as activity within a field of conflictin agreement with Bourdieu?**

**3.1 Research methodologies**

**3.2 Overview**

Using the case studies as indicated the research is designed to answer these research questions. In order to do so the research analyses news-stories as they have appeared in regional newspaper websites, and as they appear on the Nexis database. In the case studies it will seek relevant documentation through means such as freedom of information requests and conduct semi-structured interviews with the relevant key actors such as journalists, editors, police press officers and communications managers, as well as activists involved in media relations.

**3.3 Research Sample**

The research sample is formed by the regional newspaper coverage of Fracking in those cases in which police are active at protests against it.

Regional media are defined for the purposes of this thesis as those media sited outside of London but covering and circulated to an area equal to or greater than that of a city. Such newspapers provided daily coverage of the protests, with similar newsroom resourcing and editorial approach. They provide a large enough dataset to be able to yield useful and meaningful results. In this case, the Argus, the MEN and the Gazette as they are the only three titles covering the areas of protest. These titles were identified by Google searches of the three protests found in the study period. They are in each case the only titles that meet the requirements of the data in being regional media as defined above. To be clear, there are no other titles covering these protests that meet the necessary criteria. There have been three major sites of Fracking exploration in the England within the study period. They are in Lancashire, Sussex and Manchester, although Department of Energy and Climate change licences have been granted for drilling at many other sites. The latter were, at the time of research also attracting local and national protests but they were not attracting police intervention and so were not suitable for this research.

Drilling (rather than proposed drilling rights) has attracted vociferous protest, an active police response, and extensive media coverage, and so constitute a convenient set of case studies illustrating media relations techniques as employed by police services and activists in which the relevant news-processes and coverage can be analysed and compared across regions.

The research does not seek to examine alternative media and new-media (such as blogs and social media) for the following reasons -

* Traditional regional newspapers occupy an established position within their local 'public sphere' (Aldridge, 2003; 2007; Franklin & Murphy, 1991). I do not claim that non-traditional media are not increasingly encroaching upon this position, but rather that traditional regional print newsrooms provide a convenient research sample illustrative of wider themes of media influence and societal power. I will leave it to other studies to review these themes in alternative and new-media.
* Traditional regional newspapers provide a convenient and easily accessible dataset in which shared normative processes and procedures allow simplified coding opportunities.
* Traditional regional newspapers are present in all regions in identical or at least similar formats, and so allow for cross-regional analysis.

This provides two potentially covariant datasets for each of the three case-studies. The news coverage as it appears in newspapers and the police public relations statements as they were issued or written by the police PR workers. However, it should be noted that when reviewing the police statements, some were made ‘for offer’ that is sent out to the media, and some were written as reserve statements to be used ‘on request’. All datasets are provided in the appendices as is a listing of those documents showing where statements appear to have been used in news-coverage. This has been done to identify as clearly as possible the organisations and actors involved – and reveal their agency in the case studies.

These lines of definition have important implications for the study in placing the police as individual and autonomous PR actors, and by contrast, as actors within societal practice. This informs our view of police power and influence. If all three datasets exhibit high levels of covariance this will indicate high levels of influence – and *vice versa*.

The research was conducted in two phases. The first was a textual analysis. As will be discussed, the definition of this term remains a subject of debate but will serve as an umbrella term and be elucidated later in this methodology. However, it was expected that this first stage would serve as a data source which would inform the second stage, as well as give the interviews appropriate (semi-) structure. The collection of documentation, which was expected to be largely the result of freedom of information requests, took place, throughout stages one and two. In fact, these phases became mixed as different case study fracking locations were abandoned due to legal and planning decisions and then re-addressed due to waxing and waning political support.

**3.4 A brief description of the Argus, MEN and the Lancashire Gazette**

The Brighton Argus

The Brighton Argus – the Argus - was chosen as a result of preliminary web search based upon the terms “Sussex” and “Fracking” date-limited to 2013. In this search the Argus was the only regional daily paper to yield results.

In 2013 the Argus had a circulation of just under 20,000 and was owned by Newsquest. Its circulation fell by 19.6 percent in 2013; the largest fall in circulation of any regional daily in that year, according to the Press Gazette (Ponsford, 2013). There followed a reorganisation at the Argus, a relocation of its newsroom and a number of job losses (McNally, 2008). The paper was in some difficulty in 2013, although at the time of writing it remains a going concern. In 2013 it had no rivals and was distributed on a daily basis to the area covered by the camp – although there are a number of weekly papers and a small-circulation daily, The Brighton and Hove Independent, which distributed approximately 5,000 copies within the urban areas. The Argus’ then editor Michael Beard resigned in 2014 after further falls in sales (Turvill, 2014). He was an Accreditation Panellist to the National Council for the Training of Journalists in 2009 (NCTJ, 2010), and so may be reasonably expected to have adopted and maintained normative journalist practice at his paper.

The paper serves an area of mixed political affiliation. The local MP at Balcombe was a Conservative, indeed Sir Nicholas Soames has retained a large majority in recent elections (BBC, 2017b). However, it is notable that Caroline Lucas, the country’s only Green MP, has her seat in Brighton (Brighton Pavilion) – doubling her majority in recent elections (BBC, 2017a). The latter features heavily in both the events surrounding drilling at Balcombe and the resultant coverage.

Manchester Evening News (MEN)

The Manchester Evening News – MEN - was chosen as a result of a preliminary web search based upon the terms “Barton Moss” and “Fracking” date-limited to 2014. In this search the MEN was the only regional daily paper to yield results. The Salford Star, which also gave strong regional coverage is a weekly magazine delivering 20,000 copies to Salford homes, thus not meeting the criteria laid down in the methodology statement.

The Press Gazette cites the MEN as the ‘Leading UK Regional Daily’ (Ponsford, 2016) – it is the second largest regional in the country after the Evening Standard (Mayhew, 2018b). Its circulation fell by 1.7 percent to 70,458 in 2014. The paper is and was owned by Reach (formerly Trinity Mirror) under the editorship of Rob Irvine who retired in 2018 (Mayhew, 2018b). The paper’s circulation has been in steady decline, but its online operation has enjoyed growing success following a decision by Irvine to introduce a ‘digital first’ policy in 2013.

Manchester is largely a Labour stronghold (Guardian Newspapers, 2017), with some Conservative seats in outlying areas. While there are areas of deprivation, the area served by the paper is large and varied, both socially and economically.

The Blackpool Gazette

The Blackpool Gazette newspaper was chosen as a result of preliminary web search based upon the terms “Preston Road” and “Fracking” date-limited to 2017. While two returns for the Lancashire Evening Posts were returned, there were more than 50 potential returns for the Blackpool Gazette

In 2017 the Blackpool Gazette had a reported circulation of 8,187, a fall of 14 percent (Mayhew, 2018a). It was owned by Johnston Press which, since going into administration in 2018, is now operated by JPIMedia. Its current editor Gillian Parkinson took over in 2015 (Turvill, 2015).

Blackpool and Preston seats are both held by Labour, while the Conservatives hold the rural constituencies (Guardian Newspapers, 2017).

**3.4 Textual analysis**

While it is true that terms such as content analysis, framing analysis and critical discourse analysis are used in descriptions of textual analysis throughout the literature, there is considerable discussion and disagreement as to their definition (Asa Berger, 2014; Ericson et al, 1987; Hall et al, 1978; Hansen et al, 1998; Hansen & Machin, 2013; Krippendorff, 2013). As a result, there is notable crossover in their epistemological use. What some researchers call content analysis, others call frame analysis, what some researchers call frame analysis, yet others would label critical discourse analysis (CDA). For instance, Hall et al (1978) conducted a content analysis of the mugging crisis which drew heavily upon both frame analysis and CDA producing a theory of primary and secondary definition which could be reasonably labelled a critical discourse analysis. Ericson (1991) also refers to framing, but not explicitly as part of his five-part model of order representation. Hansen et al (1998) refer to both, in a chapter titled Content Analysis without referring explicitly to framing at all. Hansen and Machin (2013) use Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis as separate chapter headings – but place framing under the heading content analysis. Carregee and Roefs (2004) lament the *Neglect of Power in Recent Framing Research* in favour of studies in 'gate-keeping, agenda-setting, organizational studies of news work and analyses of news bias' – again, a discussion which could be reasonably argued to fall under the ambit of critical discourse analysis, although it should be noted the latter is an approach to the data – i.e. “Critical” – rather than a methodology in its own right. As a result of this ongoing discussion it would seem prudent to attempt to define these terms in order to avoid later confusion. In doing so the methodology statement does not reject out of hand other definitions, but it is hoped that by clearly adopting one definition over another greater clarity will be achieved, and it will be possible to use these working definitions for the purpose of this study.

The textual analysis of regional newspaper coverage yields evidence that might indicate the role for police-PR. The analysis focuses upon content analysis, which draws upon elements of frame analysis and critical discourse analysis in subsequent chapters that, in turn, pursue the research questions outlined above. A process of triangulation from their results constitutes a process of mutual cross-check with the intention of mitigating the limitations inherent in each individual methodological approach and substantiating their findings’ internal validity.

In this thesis the term textual analysis will only be used to describe a quantitative approach to the dataset. Qualitative approaches will come later. This decision is informed by established literature as presented in the research questions, and the case-study material provided by regional newspaper media and environmental activism. This reference to academic and real-world context is in keeping with best practice (Krippendorff, 2013). Content analysis is perhaps the least abstract of these methods providing a 'systematic and quantitative analysis of media output/content.' (Hansen & Machin, 2013, p.85). (See Krippendorff, 2013, for a brief history). It attempts to distil material communication acts as observed data into a quantitative data-language capable of further inferential analysis. In other words, the researcher derives a set of indices from the academic and real-world context, and applies these to the observed data - in this case regional newspaper coverage. The dangers of these processes are well-rehearsed in the literature (Hansen & Machin, 2013; Krippendorff, 2013; Hansen et al, 1998). Much depends upon the skill of the researcher in first identifying the indices to be analysed, then completing the analysis in a competent and valid way, as well as finally gaining an appropriate range of inferences from that analysis. Hansen and Machin (2013) question the validity of early assumptions that useful results could be derived by counting the frequency of 'textual symbols' – and mindful of these reservations the initial textual analysis draws only a few *prima facie* conclusions, relying instead on subsequent chapters for nuanced analysis. In addition to the potential failures in coding and presentation and the contextual-stage in which indices are defined, this later inferential-stage - in which the derived data is used to draw real-world conclusions - is fraught with the danger of the naïve assumption that the presence of a word or a phrase necessitates a certain understanding in any given audience (much less in multiple audiences).

This research does not attempt to analyse the media-effects of newspaper copy on readerships, but rather the 'prominence or absence of key characteristics' (ibid, p.89) within the copy as indices of news source-utilisation decisions. To put this another way, we are not interested in whether the audience believes the messages, just in the choices journalists appear to have made in transmitting them.

It is not uncommon for indices to emerge from the data and this research allowed that to happen, and so the research also looked at other news sources where appropriate, not just activists and police-PR, in order to examine their role in the wider societal discourse. It was expected that the low level of abstraction yielded by such an analysis would form the basis for subsequent discussion of source credibility in the research-interview phase, and indeed interview approaches were found in the data and subsequently utilised. In order to do this the research selected from Hansen and Machin's approach (2013, pp.115-152) which offers a differentiated taxonomy based on lexical analysis and looked for those that yielded the highest results. However, as will be described in the textual analysis this was not unproblematic, primarily because of the masking influences of journalistic writing norms. A number of quantitative approaches were considered but rejected at an initial phase of first inspection of the datasets. For instance, it was quickly found that there was no correlation between primacy of position and news-source. That is to say, the police were not always cited first in the news-copy, nor was their side of the story always put first. There was no ‘hierarchy of credibility’ (in line with Becker, 1967), nor was an obvious bias in the reporting apparent.

However, a number of indices were apparent in the text as well as proposed in the literature, and these were studied further, they included:

* Nomination. The naming of people and events;
* Nominalisation. The use of verb as noun;
* The way in which sources are identified. The way sources are named;
* Narrative structure, i.e. how blame is apportioned;
* Hedging, adjectival and modal usage;
* Comparative numerical superiority in the number of and length of quotes used from various sources.

These are drawn both from observation and a number of academic sources (Asa Berger, 2014, Hansen, 1998, Hansen, 2013). To be clear this list does not pre-exist in any one text, but draws upon a range of texts, and is drawn from an initial analysis – Krippendorf (2013), amongst others, proposes this approach. For instance, Hansen et al argue

Thinking up appropriate content analysis categories is as much a question of immersing oneself in the textual material to get a general ‘feel’ for its content and structure prior to the construction of categories, as it is a case of deriving category ideas from the theoretical framework and question which guide the research. In other words, the researcher needs some familiarity with the content, structure and general nature of the material to be analysed in order to be able to set up categories that will be sufficiently sensitive to capture the nuances of the text. (1998, p.107)

Finally, the research analysed the text for narrative schema (Hansen & Machin, 2013; Machin & Leeuwen, 2003). Machin and Leeuwen quote Foucault in describing discourse as a form of socially constructed knowledge and “if knowing is based on doing, the 'activity sequence' must be key to discourse analysis”. In other words, news stories, like all stories, (see Vladimir Propp's the *Morphology of the Folk-Tale* (1968) or Joseph Campbell's (1993[1968]) *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*) are organised into a narrative, a schema that provides a structure. These can take several forms – for instance Campbell and Propp both draw upon Jungian archetypes as universal template for heroic myths. Reiner (1997) highlighted 'police fetishism' as another. To some extent it could be argued that, in story-telling or copy-writing terms - narrative schemas start where framing stops. A frame provides an approach to a story, a set of unwritten rules applied before writing begins, whereas narrative schema are used (again doxicly or unconsciously) as stories are written. Compare the following structures: Disorder breaks out – police intervene – protesters are injured; or, police intervene – disorder ensues – protesters are injured; or Protesters are injured – disorder ensues – police intervene. A choice of narrative schema is taking place.

While some attention has also been paid to the semantics and semiotics of the language used, this has been limited by the lack of audience research and the masking effects of newspaper writing norms. This is addressed in greater depth in the textual analysis (chapter 4). The potential weakness in these approaches is inferring a causal link with the text as presented in coverage, and police-PR activity. While it is possible that this link will be apparent in the text, it will also be necessary to compare the text with police media statements and press releases.

**3.5 Frame Analysis**

Frame analysis is another methodology which is often cited within the traditional content analysis (Hansen et al, 1998; Hansen & Machin 2013). In this methodology it is presented as a separate epistemological discipline for clarity although it is - as Reece states in his preface to *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and our Understanding of the Social World (Reese et al, 2001)* - a discipline with a 'cross-over perspective'. He later defines frames as:

“Frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.” (2001, p.11).

He goes on to show how frames organise and provide structures of understanding through abstract principles, that are shared and persistent, and revealed symbolically.

Robert Entman’s definition of framing is also useful:

“Framing entails selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution.” (2003)

Frames perform a similar role to ideology in discourse as they present *prima facie* positioning from which events are understood. In critical theory they form a basis for what is defined as 'common sense' or hegemonic truth (Gitlin, 1980; Gramsci, 1971), or indeed the proposition of emergent framings from sub-dominant groups. That said, postmodern conceptions view frames as a historical pastiche in which they are used by journalists as a way of navigating the professional and positivist demands of objectivity – without necessary reference to any hegemonic project. This too will be examined with elements of CDA, in the chapter using Bourdieu’s Field Theory.

The academic literature proposes many relevant frames (Borah, 2011; Entman, 1993; 2003; 2004). Hall et al in *Policing the Crisis (1978)* induced frames as presented by primary and secondary definers – with the police (and others) acting as primary definers, and the mass media acting as secondary ones (see the literature review for Schlesinger's critique of this position). Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) deduce five frames; conflict, human interest, morality, responsibility and economic consequences – which they claim were representative of the extant literature. Ericson et al, while not using the term frame, use textual analysis to show how the news is defined by looking at the number and types of sources, the context they are presented in, and the knowledge they are allowed to provide (Ericson et al, 1991. See also Hansen et al 1998). Shanto Iyengar (1996) shows how two frames - episodic and thematic – can bias news broadcasts against depth analysis of ongoing stories, in favour of event-focussed stories. Entman (2003) offers a model of cascading activation in which frames are passed down through a heuristic system of mass communication in which the flow is, as it were, *gravity-driven* from elites, through the media, to sub-dominant groups*.*

For the purposes of this research frames are evaluated as used by all actors. Particular attention is paid to those frames that place police within a societal, dominant and hegemonic discourse of law and order, although other, arguably sub-dominant frames, produced by activists, are also examined. The research will look for those frames that characterize this process, and the role of police-PR, in promoting them. It will also look for those frames which challenge this discourse. I will look for evidence of frames that offer justifications and legitimacy claims. These include claims to economic and environmental credibility, as well as claims to moral superiority. In addition, Habermas's theory of norms validity – process and procedure – will be examined as key framings. However, research will also seek other frames – as an inductive process – while reviewing the data.

Using these forms of textual analysis, it is intended to produce valid and credible data that will be self-checking – in terms of triangulation across codings and methodologies - for both reliability and validity (Krippendorff, 2013). This is particularly necessary because, in a thesis, the coder is forced to work alone.

Proposed frames are:

* Community consensus, where actors seek legitimacy through identification with the perceptions and desires of the local populace. It is used by a number of actors. It may speak to the needs of print capitalism of a newspaper in its *Imagined Community* (Anderson, 2006), as well as directly to local audiences in having them fear ‘the outsider’. This is a Media Logic (Altheide, 1979), a media-savvy act. However, community framings can also result from Peel’s Principles (Lentz and Chaires, 2007) or a consensus in the Gramscian sense (Gramsci, 1971, Jones, 2007).
* Moral framing draws upon societal norms where the actors attempt to discuss the events in terms of morality. Beetham refers to this as ‘natural law’, drawing upon both religious teachings and enlightenment doctrines (Beetham, 2013, p.73). “The morality frame interprets an event or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions” (de Vreese, 2005)
* Violence/non-violence frames also draw upon a moral framing. They are also used to undermine the validity claims of the police in making arrests, and as a means to reject protesters claim to non-violence, as well as a nuanced form of conflict framing. The narrative role of conflict and responsibility framings has already been discussed to some extent; the question of ‘who threw the first punch’ becomes central to any conflict narrative in establishing narrative agency, and thus responsibility. It also speaks directly to conflict framings, and arguably allows for a more nuanced analysis of it.
* Procedural or process framing is used by all actors, where events are discussed in terms of societally-agreed processes i.e. planning law, environmental regulations etc and the legal rights and obligations they create (Habermas, 1996, 1998). The police normatively claim their actions are in defence of legal decisions made ‘upstream’ in democratically supervised and approved governmental processes. Activists challenge this interpretation of the frame by pointing to the failure of these processes. To quote Beetham (Ibid, p.67), “the most readier access of the powerful to the law, and the fact it provides both the sources and protection of their power, makes appeal to the law as grounds of legitimacy a particularly favoured strategy for dominant groups”. This frame is important and revisited at length in the later chapter on legitimacy.
* Economic and environmental framings are used where actors attempt to discuss events in terms of their environmental or economic impact. These both draw upon scientific or rational discourses as sources of legitimacy. The frame is primarily used by activists, never by the police. This frame is often used as a means to undermine the procedural legitimacy of a position by stating that the decision is not rational – and therefore motivated by non-legitimate sources. It too references the wider nested fields of power in which policy-makers have summoned economic frames, and to a lesser extent environmental frames, to justify their decisions. It is not revisited by the police at the place or moment of protest.

**3.6 Semi-structured interviews**

The above is supplemented by semi-structured interviews, based upon the findings of the textual analysis, extant literature, relevant news-discourse, and on findings from document discovery (Asa Berger, 2014; Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interviews met with the University of Sheffield’s ethical procedures; all interviewees were advised verbally of their rights and sent a form detailing these rights. As a result the identities of some interviewees have been withheld – and used as background material - upon request. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and used as qualitative data which provided context for other data sources.

It was hoped that the textual analysis phase of the research would serve as a data source from which to create interview questions

Semi-structured interviewees included

1. Communication managers and officers: Including those police service personnel with nominated media-management roles; police officers who have been quoted as spokespeople.
2. Journalists from regional newspapers: including, news-editors, chief reporters or those of similar seniority; correspondents whose beats include the protests; general reporters who have worked on the story.
3. Environmental activists involved in media-management: Including activists who have been quoted as spokespeople and those who self-identify as media activists

This phase was largely successful, and the information gained from these interviews has been used to place the textual analysis and document discovery in context. A wider body of interviews was considered, but given the availability of the coverage as a primary dataset, a focus upon it (rather than wider political discourses) seemed sufficient. Further interviews could have been sought with Chief Constables, or other senior officers, but given the thesis’ stated focus upon coverage and news-production not on police policy (which is after all the subject of another thesis) this was rejected. Moreover, securing interviews with press officers and their like was difficult enough without trying to find time in a Chief Constable’s diary, with no guarantee to a set of non-politicised answers. The textual datasets allowed the interviews to be focussed on those databases as empirical fact. Any interview with other actors, peripheral to communications decisions, would have addressed a range of issues that sat outside of main thrust of the analysis. It is not that some useful data could not have been found, but rather that focussing upon media actors was the most likely to yield useful analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen over questionnaires because it allowed for greater flexibility and for themes to emerge and be followed through. Unstructured interviews would have allowed greater flexibility, but would have made it much harder to make comparisons between interviewees. Semi-structured interviews allowed for a middle-ground between these options. Ethnography was rejected because of the practical difficulty in securing access, and in being present for those exact moments when Fracking was discussed; this is true for both police and newsrooms, as well as for activists.

**3.7 Discovery of documentation**

Throughout the period of research relevant documentation was sought.

Documentation was gained from three sources:

* Internet searches for such items as press releases and statements;
* Informal requests for information following interviews These occurred by chance during the development of interviews in which interviewees volunteered information that would not otherwise have been sought. For instance, Sussex Police offered a PowerPoint presentation given to other forces about their experiences (see appendices);
* Freedom of Information Requests and Environmental Information Regulation Requests. (The advantage on focussing on environmental protests is that EIR regulations have greater strength and scope).

Documentation was also sought in the following areas:

* Police service strategic and tactical communications plans;
* Media relations material such as press releases and statements;
* Media training policies;
* Police service communications personnel rosters.

The data provided by the documentation was used in the textual analysis and the interview phase as background material and research context. It also proved useful in comparing language choices in the press material with how it appeared in the news-copy.

**3.8 Qualitative methodologies and approaches.**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides a deeper level of abstraction by examining the way discourses reflects societal power structures. In this thesis CDA concentrates upon police-PR outputs as artefacts in their own right, as well as inputs to the news-ecology. In other words, the news copy and press statements are analysed as separate pieces of data supporting critical positions. CDA as a proposed methodology, is not without its critics for the apparent arbitrariness of the indices chosen (Widdowson, 1998). Nevertheless, it is widely used (Fairclough, 2000; 2003; Hansen & Machin, 2013; Van Dijk, 1990) in various forms – although it is sometimes undifferentiated from content analysis (see Hansen et al 1998).

This thesis will adopt Tuen A Van Dijk’s definition:

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and revisited by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. (van Dijk, 2003, p.352).

The dangers of this approach are obvious. The explicit assumption of ‘social inequality’ and the adoption of ‘dissident’ positions leaves the unwary researcher open to positive confirmation bias. Triangulation of data, combined with a careful analysis, provides some defence against this. To this end two subsequent chapters, looking at Propaganda and Legitimation will take a critical approach, whilst drawing upon some elements of the textual analysis. A further chapter will use the findings of earlier chapters in application of Bourdieu’s Field Theory.

In order to achieve this, and avoid some ‘arbitrariness-critique’ of CDA, this study draws upon existing approaches found in the literature. In other words, the thesis draws upon the positions of other academics and attempts to test and develop them by applying them to the case studies. As identified within the literature review there are broadly three positions used to describe the influence of police-PR. The first is a Marxist or neo-Marxist structural position characterised by Weber and Gramsci or Brooke. In this model, police-PR is part of an elite or hegemonic discourse that would attempt to subdue protest by a process of ‘information warfare’ (MacKay et al., 2012). The chapter looking at propaganda uses a range of approaches to examine this proposition. The analysis actively looks for information warfare as propaganda – an attempt to manipulate the news-coverage – that goes beyond the mere presentation of a position, that is an attempt to persuade. Implicit in this approach is that, an attempt to persuade rather than manipulate places the media-relations activity into a discourse-paradigm that is not hegemonic, but rather one of many voices competing. This position cannot be definitive, and the analysis is not expected to prove the structural position, rather than to use it as a sounding-board for analysis. This should be emphasised, there is no intention here to disprove a hegemonic argument – that would surely be impossible because of the range of variables – but there is an attempt to use the structuralist position as described in propaganda theory, as a tool in critical discourse analysis; as a framework to a particular aspect of analysis and discussion.

The second position, that of liberal discourse, is one or indeed several steps removed from the Marxist position – but many of its key proponents draw heavily upon structuralist positions. It is found in this thesis in a discussion of legitimacy – a theme found in the literature and in the textual analysis in which legitimacy was found to be a key frame. To a large extent then, this part of this approach was a paradigm discovered in the data. Legitimacy is a core claim made by police-PR, and it is discussed in the literature. In this thesis these claims are observed and critiqued, they are then discussed as a multi-faceted part of police practice – this is an approach that removes some of the arbitrariness from the methodology. Again, it is not intended to prove or disprove legitimacy claims in general, but rather to use them as a framework for critical discourse analysis.

The third position places police-PR within a societal context in which it is one of a number of actors and agencies each with its own voice. In this section the thesis uses the work of Bourdieu and his Field Theory. Field Theory combines cultural and structural approaches, while also using habitus as a mainstay of its analysis. A key feature of the theory is in the idea that fields of practice are nested within and without other fields, and are connected via forms of cultural and economic capital. Field theory is used here as a framework for analysis, again, as a means to structure the analysis and subsequent discussion. It is adopted here because of its presence in the existing literature, and because of Bourdieu’s.

This is essence of triangulation in case-studies as a methodological approach. It is not intended that any of these chapters be definitive, but rather the dominant theories be tested, and the primary themes and threads be drawn out. By doing this, it is intended that conclusions can be made regarding the influence or impact of police public relations upon regional print news coverage, with regard to fracking.

**4.0 Textual Analysis**

**4.1 Chapter overview**

This chapter takes data from the regional print coverage of environmental protest and attempts to evaluate the presence of police-PR outputs in the Manchester Evening News (MEN), Brighton Argus (Argus) and Blackpool Gazette (Gazette). There were three regional print news titles providing coverage on the three anti-fracking protests that occurred in the study period. They were rendered by a Google search against each individual fracking protest. No other regional daily papers yielded data for these searches. In other words, these were the only available regional newspapers for these protests. Local weekly papers also covered the protests, as did some alternative media, but these three regional papers – as defined in the methodology - were the only ones available to this study, i.e. they are daily regional papers, covering an area larger than a city.

This analysis attempts to identify through quantitative analysis the influence of police-PR in editorial decision-making and copy-writing. In this chapter it does so by comparing police-PR outputs to the concurrent news coverage. It also examines the coverage as a stand-alone dataset to look for patterns in word use and occurrence. Data-discovery methods were as similar as possible in each case. Searches were instigated on Google, on newspaper websites, using the search term ‘Fracking+Police’. A similar search was instigated on Nexis. The two search sources were combined, duplicate data was deleted and the remaining copy was filtered for relevance. They were then imported into Nvivo. In addition, document discovery was achieved by Freedom of Information requests – and the press releases and press statements found in that discovery are also used in this chapter. This dataset is found in the appendices on the compact disc, and summarised in paper-copy appendices in this thesis (chapter 9).

This chapter has, where possible, brought all three cases together, so that they can be analysed side-by-side. However, the actors and agencies involved in the Gazette/Lancashire Police study are markedly different to those in the Argus/Sussex police and the MEN/GMP studies. This is largely due to two factors – the relatively small outputs of the Lancashire police press office, and the presence of the Lancashire for Shale, a localised pro-fracking lobby group set up by drilling companies. This ‘astro-turf’ public relations entity is discussed at length in both the chapters six and eight. There is no similar group in the other two case studies where drilling companies speak on their own behalf.

**4.2 Police Media-relations and their relationship to the media**

The Literature Review described the history of police/news-media relations, as well as the relationship between activists and news-media. Both relationships were shown to have evolved over time.

Police/press relations have evolved over a number of years. Harcup (Harcup, 2015, p.60) describes the decline of ‘the calls’; the practice of contacting the police, fire and ambulance press offices every morning to get a briefing of current or overnight events. [[5]](#footnote-5) Over time this has changed. First telephone voicemail was used, and this has been subsequently replaced with a variety of online and digital formats. The apparent failures of this relationship was highlighted by Nigel Green, a freelance reporter based in the North East. He was frustrated with the Northumberland police PR voicebank which has replaced the press briefings. He made an FOI request which allowed him to compare the actual roster of crimes and police activities to those posted on the voicebank – the difference was large with many serious crimes going unreported to and in the news-media. (Green, 2014). Moreover, relationships between police and news-media have become increasingly strained post-Leveson (Campbell, 2013), and even before that, press offices were not necessarily well-regarded by journalists who often see them as a ‘barrier’ to news-reporting (Mawby, 2010b).

The MEN’s crime reporter at the time of this case-study, John Scheerhout, cites himself on the company website as “keeping an eye on the villains in and around Greater Manchester *and the machinations at GMP*.” (Manchester Evening News, 2017. My italics). The interview in the cited in the appendices Floar Thompson at the Argus also indicates substantial dissatisfaction with the Sussex Police. While Tim Gavell at the Gazette states how little he received from the Lancashire Police press office.

However, all three press offices did supply press statement material in answer to study’s FOI requests (although Lancashire Police took nearly a year to do so). Interestingly, some of this material was revealed as ‘for offer’ and some was ‘if asked’ – meaning that some PR was proactive, and some reactive. Nevertheless, all the press officers interviewed said they had generally good relationships with the newspapers studied. The Content Tables in the appendices show media statements to have been widely used.

In interviews with the relevant press offices it was found that each had structured methods of communicating with the news-media in order to distribute their messaging (see appendices). GMP primarily used emails and its website – before posting on digital media. Sussex Police has a ‘media centre’, a web-based resource that allows journalists to access and ‘self-serve’. Lancashire Police indicated a much greater reliance upon social and digital media, although it was also stated that press releases might be emailed where relevant and in a targeted way. In each case a variety of unsurprising formats were used. It will be reiterated here that while this thesis focuses upon print media, it also uses digital media where it is either a tertiary source, or appears in print media.

Interviews with media-activists showed a much lower level of organisation and resourcing, but there remained an intent to communicate with media on the part of those questioned. However, it is noted that those activists that reject the media (as indicated in the literature review) are not addressed by this research, because it focuses upon the regional print media as its primary dataset.

**4.4 Nomination - how actors are named**

What follows is a description of the naming of news-actors within the news-copy. This coverage from the Argus, MEN, Gazette and is used for the purposes of comparison. This quantitative data should be analysed with care, there are a number of elements to the analysis, notably the single-researcher coding, which render it unreliable as a purely statistical approach; thus, the data should be treated as indicative rather than absolute. That is to say that, as this is a thesis, and thus a solitary activity, cross-checking in coding was not possible. However, word-searches are an automated procedure in NVivo – thus largely eliminating human error or bias in those elements of this analysis.

The tables (Tables 1, 2 and 3) below detail terms used to describe police and protesters in the Argus, MEN and Gazette. In each case, the corresponding data from police press releases are given so that comparisons can be made. Correlations between the three police-PR agencies and the corresponding regional news coverage might indicate high levels of influence in the editorial decision-making and copy-writing, if present. Conversely, low levels of correlation, might indicate low levels of influence.

The tables give the number of entries for each word and the percentage of the total text. It also gives the percentage of that term in the nomination type, i.e. the number of times that term was used to describe either police or protester over other available terms.

When reading the data, it should be noted that these terms are not always nouns within the text. For instance, the word police is also a verb and an adjective. However, for the most part a review of the texts finds that the word police is used as a noun, although sometimes in its adjectival form i.e. police car, police van. In each case, columns give first the total number of times that term is used. However, the absolute count figures are deceptive as the number of press releases and news-articles differs from case study to case study, as does the word counts within each release and article. For this reason, and to enable comparison, the column ‘% of nomination type’ shows how often that term is used compared to its alternatives – how often the word police compared to words such as officer or officers.

**4.5 Difficulties in understanding the semiotic role of words**

It is tempting to draw immediate conclusions regarding the impact of words on audiences. However, that would require the acceptance of a range of assumptions about the subjective semiotic meaning of the words used. Take for instance the journalist choice made between the words ‘protester’, ‘activist’ and ‘campaigner’. As signifiers they are synonyms; they have similar meanings which could be interchanged to achieve – amongst other things – elegant variation within a corpus of prose. By which it is meant, that a writer may feel that they have used protester 10 times in the last three paragraphs and must now seek a new nominative term to make the sentence read or sound better. There is an *a priori* case for the choice between these words having no semiotic meaning, in that such a choice might signify nothing beyond its nominative role as a sign.

However, there is also an argument that each word has a distinct semiotic role – it is a sign, signifier and signified. It could be argued that the word ‘campaigner’ implies a professional, with longer term goals, that is working not only *against* something, but also *for* something. By contrast protesters stand against something, they are reactive. Like a campaigner, an activist has long-term goals, but these lie in an ideology of discontent and subversion; an activist rejects campaigning by refusing to engage with a system. The problem with this analysis is that it quickly moves into an audience effects model that sits outside of the scope of this analysis. This study lacks the empirical data to say what readers believe is signified by each of these names. Moreover, there is no way of knowing why or how journalists chose their use of nominative term. While it is true that some newspapers have ‘style-guides’ for journalists, there is large variation in nominative terms – which would indicate that style-guides if present, were not consistently used. In some cases, even the spelling of the term protestor/protester is not consistent. So, it is reasonable to argue that even if such style-guides are present, their influence has been limited.

**4.6 Comparison of nominative terms**

The same analysis could be applied to descriptors of police actors: police-officer, constable, chief-superintendent (normally abbreviated), police-woman, officers; never bobby or cop (bobby is used once by the MEN to describe a fancy-dress hat). The needs of elegant variation may also apply, but it could be argued that each of these terms lies within a sphere of consensus – this argument will be returned to in the section of the chapter looking at Field Theory which dwells upon the police’s symbolic power. The term does not have significance in the semiotic sense, in the way protester or campaigner does, but does reference the symbolic power of policing. One approach to this problem might be to look for dictionary definitions and use them as a guide to their use in the text. However, the assumption that journalists check dictionaries as they write copy – much less the same dictionaries - is questionable.

For this reason, semiotic approaches are largely avoided in this study. For instance, much is made in the literature of the use of passive and active voice in verb-use (Machin, 2012), but while it is of course possible to determine the objective and subjective position of actors in relation to a verb, or indeed their elision from the verbal construct, it actually tells us very little about the audience-effect of that construct. For example, the subject of the verb is used differently in these sentences…

Police have arrested further protestors on Saturday morning (27 July) at the Cuadrilla site in London Road, Balcombe.

Two women have been arrested, one for assault on police the other under the Trade Union Labour Relations Act. (Sussex Police, PR43002/2013 27/07/2013)

…but arguing that agency is denied to protestors by making them the object of the verb seems problematic. Equally, arguing that the elision of police in sentence two denies their agency seems an over-extension of rational analysis. One might question the effects upon audience understanding (particularly given that the primary audience is journalists who might rewrite the copy anyway).

**4.7 Nominalisation - the semiotics of police and policing**

With the above said there are several semiotic norms that it could be argued do have an impact upon the normative portrayal of policing – they will be noted here and returned to in the later sections on symbolic power. Police make ‘Arrests’ – a verb nominalised into noun form. A person ‘arresting’ is stopping the action of an object or subject either already in motion, or about to begin motion. The verb ‘to arrest’ describes a passive action in which the subject is reactive to the movement of the object: compare “the mountaineer arrested his fall…” with “the police officer arrested the man…”. In each case the verb’s subject is not the initiator. Moreover, the arrestee is denied agency: an ‘arrested’ protestor is made passive and denied agency. In the form “…arrests were made…” both subject and object are made passive in both syntax and action. These observations have important implications for the telling of the story – its narrative structure i.e. an arrested protestor made an action which was stopped.

With this in mind it is possible to turn to the word ‘uniform’. A uniformed officer is ‘in-keeping’ with both his/her colleagues, but also with the symbolism of policing itself. A thing rendered uniform is orderly, and carefully constructed in-line with established norms. Pictures are not examined in this analysis, because they seldom result from police-PR practice, but in the news-copy the police appear in uniform – that is orderly – in the face of protestor ‘disorder’. A disorder represented in the pictures in terms of bright colours, scruffy or unkempt clothing.

‘Police’ is also nominalised as both noun and verb. ‘To police’ is to establish and maintain boundaries, ‘the police’ are the agents in this. Those ‘policed’ are, by extension, the ones intent on stepping outside of boundaries. Protestors are again placed in the narrative as those stepping outside of the norms, they are the instigators, with the police reactive in the story structure.

The potential effect of this is to place the protestors as the cause of the event, the protest. Granting them (or forcing upon them) the position of provocateurs, while eliding the primary agency of other actors such as politicians or business-leaders, in making or influencing the policy leading to fracking. Moreover, the agency of the police is potentially elided because they are nominally ‘uniform’, active (policing) within established boundaries and ‘arresting’ motion undertaken by others.

It is perhaps worth a note that none of this is caused by the police. It has its root in linguistic development and, to some extent journalistic practice. However, it is, arguably, indicative of societal *mores* of hierarchy expressed in cultural language. This growth of societal cultural mores is returned to in the chapter looking at Bourdieu.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Brighton Argus Copy | | |  | | Sussex Police Press Releases | | |
| Term | Count | % of total nominative terms |  | | Count | | % of total nominative terms |
| Police | 200 | 45 |  | | 274 | | 42 |
| Policeman | 3 | 1 |  | | 0 | | 0 |
| Officers | 62 | 14 |  | | 119 | | 18 |
| Officer | 62 | 14 |  | | 55 | | 8 |
| Sussex police | 72 | 16 |  | | 92 | | 14 |
| Superintendent | 13 | 3 |  | | 40 | | 6 |
| Supt | 5 | 1 |  | | 11 | | 2 |
| Commissioner | 10 | 2 |  | | 12 | | 2 |
| Constable | 15 | 3 |  | | 21 | | 3 |
| Commander | 0 | 0 |  | | 19 | | 3 |
| Inspector | 0 | 0 |  | | 12 | | 2 |
| Total | 442 | 100 |  | | 655 | | 100 |
|  |  |  |  | |  | |  |
| Term | Count | % of total nominative terms |  | | Count | | % of total nominative terms |
| Protesters/Protestors | 133 | 65 |  | | 102 | | 94 |
| Protester/Protestor | 3 | 1 |  | | 6 | | 6 |
| Campaigner | 8 | 4 |  | | 0 | | 0 |
| Campaigners | 21 | 10 |  | | 0 | | 0 |
| Activist | 5 | 2 |  | | 0 | | 0 |
| Activists | 28 | 14 |  | | 0 | | 0 |
| Demonstrators | 6 | 3 |  | | 0 | | 0 |
| Total | 204 | 100 |  | | 108 | | 100 |
| **Table 1 – Brighton Argus nomination word counts, comparison with Sussex Police statements** | | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | MEN copy | |  | GMP press releases |  |
| Term | Count | % of total nominative terms |  | Number | % of total nominative terms |
| Police | 318 | 51 |  | 59 | 40 |
| Policeman | 16 | 3 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Officers | 96 | 15 |  | 49 | 34 |
| Officer | 72 | 11 |  | 6 | 4 |
| GMP | 81 | 13 |  | 16 | 11 |
| Superintendent | 10 | 2 |  | 9 | 6 |
| Supt | 5 | 1 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Commissioner | 9 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |
| Constable | 7 | 1 |  | 6 | 4 |
| Constables | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Insp | 7 | 1 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Inspector | 7 | 1 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 628 | 100 |  | 146 | 100 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Term | Count | % of total nominative terms |  | Count | % of total nominative terms |
| Protesters | 190 | 57 |  | 31 | 78 |
| Protestors | 21 | 6 |  | 8 | 20 |
| Protester | 55 | 17 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Protestor | 0 | 0 |  | 1 | 3 |
| Campaigner | 7 | 2 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Campaigners | 56 | 17 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Activist | 4 | 1 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Activists | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 333 | 100 |  | 40 | 100 |
| **Table 2 - MEN nomination word counts, comparison with GMP statements** | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Blackpool Gazette Copy | |  | Lancashire Police Press Releases | |
| Term | Count | % of total nominative terms |  | Count | % of total nominative terms |
| Police | 218 | 70 |  | 29 | 54 |
| Policeman | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Officers | 46 | 15 |  | 14 | 26 |
| Officer | 7 | 2 |  | 3 | 6 |
| Lancashire police | 30 | 10 |  | 5 | 9 |
| Supt | 0 | 0 |  | 2 | 4 |
| Commissioner | 0 | 0 |  | 1 | 2 |
| Constable | 8 | 3 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Constables | 2 | 1 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 311 | 100 |  | 54 | 100 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Term | Count | % of total nominative terms |  | Count | % of total nominative terms |
| Protesters | 163 | 50 |  | 1 | 6 |
| Protestors | 21 | 6 |  | 8 | 50 |
| Protestor | 0 | 0 |  | 3 | 19 |
| Protester | 28 | 9 |  | 1 | 6 |
| Campaigner | 7 | 2 |  | 2 | 13 |
| Campaigners | 76 | 23 |  | 1 | 6 |
| Activist | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Activists | 32 | 10 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 327 | 100 |  | 16 | 100 |
| **Table 3 – Gazette nomination word counts, comparison with Lancashire Police statements** | | | | | |

Nomination terms for police have greater presence in the MEN and Argus than those for protestors. Indeed, the incidence of terms for police is approximately twice that of terms for protestors. However, this is reversed in the Gazette, although not by quite so large a margin. There may be a number of reasons for the dominance of police nominators in the text –

* The intentional primary news-angle chosen by journalists is police action.
* Police action is not the intended news-angle, but they were the most news-worthy part of the action. This would sit within normative journalist frames of conflict.
* Linguistically - in terms of syntax, grammar and available language - it is impossible to tell these stories without over-reliance upon police descriptors. This would indicate that the dominance of nomination types is not a matter of intention or its lack, but rather an artefact of language. A full study of this artefact would reside beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is hard to see how the structural elements would not equally emphasise protestor action.
* However, it is notable for the purposes of this thesis that the Lancashire Police press office was under-resourced. It is acknowledged as such by the Gazette reporter and the Press officer interviewed for this study (see appendices). Moreover, the police share of voice, analysed in a later section reinforces the relative lack of presence in the text.

Moreover, MEN uses the words officers or officer as a way of referring to police more often than the Argus, while the Argus uses the term police more often than the MEN. Similarly, the MEN uses the term protester more frequently than the Argus, which uses the words campaigner and campaigners more often than the MEN. It should be noted here the importance of house-style differences. In many cases the Argus named protesters in the copy via their affiliation – “a spokesperson for No Fibs said…” rather than by their practice “a protester said…”.

However, the position in the Gazette/Lancashire police study is once again remarkable, if not necessarily enlightening. In both the Argus and the MEN the police are mentioned more in the news copy than in the press releases (in percentage terms), but officers are mentioned less (the term officer is also negatively related, but broadly neutral). This is reversed in the Gazette, where the term police is used more in press releases than in the paper, while the term officers is used more in the paper. These may be artefacts of the data, and essentially meaningless for the purposes of this thesis. What is notable is that the presence or absence of a pro-active police-PR response seems to be producing anomalous or outlier data. In other words, something seems to be going on, although it is difficult to establish precisely what.

For completeness the following table (Table 4) shows how events are named and makes the same comparisons as the tables given above.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Brighton Argus Copy | |  | Sussex Police Press releases | |
|  | Count | % of total nominative terms |  | Count | % of total nominative terms |
| Protest | 111 | 67 |  | 149 | 65 |
| Protests | 39 | 23 |  | 43 | 19 |
| Demonstration(s) | 9 | 5 |  | 6 | 3 |
| Event(s) | 7 | 4 |  | 31 | 14 |
|  | 166 | 100 |  | 229 | 100 |
|  |  | |  |  | |
|  | MEN Copy | |  | GMP Press releases | |
|  | Count | % of total nominative terms |  | Count | % of total nominative terms |
| Protest | 201 | 69 |  | 54 | 74 |
| Protests | 60 | 20 |  | 7 | 10 |
| Demonstration(s) | 27 | 9 |  | 7 | 10 |
| Event(s) | 5 | 2 |  | 5 | 7 |
|  | 293 | 100 |  | 73 | 100 |
|  |  | |  |  | |
|  | Blackpool Gazette Copy | |  | Lancashire police Press releases | |
|  | Count | % of total nominative terms |  | Count | % of total nominative terms |
| Protest | 188 | 70 |  | 21 | 64 |
| Protests | 69 | 26 |  | 5 | 15 |
| Demonstration(s) | 6 | 2 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Event(s) | 6 | 2 |  | 7 | 21 |
|  | 269 | 100 |  | 33 | 100 |
| **Table 4 – nomination of events all titles all police statements** | | | | | |

**There are high levels of agreement found in event nomination between press releases and news-reporting of those events. The major difference is not revealed by these figures, because it lies in the Gazette coverage of Lancashire for Shale, whose statements are vociferous. This is discussed in greater detail in the following sections looking at Share of Voice.**

**4.8 Who is allowed to speak?**

Bearing in mind the issues of nomination and nominalisation described in earlier sections we can turn to the question of who speaks in the text. Journalists interview or otherwise interrogate sources or source material to write stories (Franklin, 2011). In doing so they make choices as to who is allowed to speak, how they are shown in the text, and which parts of their speech are featured – specifically how their framing is represented. As already noted actors and agencies vary between the case studies, and so the ‘voices’ heard in the news-copy are not constant, but police and protestors are always present. Political actors vary in their impact. For instance, Caroline Lucas is a vocal and impactful protagonist in the Argus news-copy – she has no equivalent in news-copy found in the Gazette or MEN.

The following tables (Tables 5 and 6) describe police and activists as spokespeople quoted in the three newspapers.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Coded instances of speech | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Police | 48 | 51 | 35 |
| Police anon | 4 | 14 | 13 |
| Police attributed | 8 | 31 | 11 |
| Police commissioner | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Police federation spokesperson | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Police spokesperson | 33 | 23 | 11 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Word count in coded speech | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Police | 3742 | 2861 | 2132 |
| Police anon | 311 | 635 | 645 |
| Police attributed | 258 | 803 | 377 |
| Police commissioner | 161 | 0 | 328 |
| Police federation spokesperson | 274 | 0 | 0 |
| Police spokesperson | 2848 | 1761 | 764 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Words per coded instances | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Police | 78 | 56 | 61 |
| Police anon | 78 | 45 | 50 |
| Police attributed | 32 | 26 | 34 |
| Police commissioner | 54 | 0 | 109 |
| Police federation spokesperson | 91 | 0 | 0 |
| Police spokesperson | 86 | 77 | 69 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Police sources by percentage | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Police anon | 8% | 20% | 30% |
| Police attributed | 7% | 25% | 17% |
| Police commissioner | 4% | 0% | 15% |
| Police federation spokesperson | 7% | 0% | 0% |
| Police spokesperson | 74% | 55% | 35% |
| **Table 5 – Police sources SoV and their associated word counts** | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Coded instances of speech | | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Activist | 38 | 42 | 60 |
| Activist anon | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Activist attributed | 12 | 20 | 13 |
| Activist spokesperson | 24 | 21 | 24 |
| Local person | 8 | 11 | 19 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Word count in coded speech | | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Activist | 2543 | 1993 | 4322 |
| Activist anon | 238 | 137 | 306 |
| Activist attributed | 271 | 491 | 455 |
| Activist spokesperson | 2202 | 1398 | 2089 |
| Local person | 767 | 720 | 1472 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Words per coded instances | | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Activist | 67 | 47 | 72 |
| Activist anon | 79 | 34 | 77 |
| Activist attributed | 23 | 25 | 35 |
| Activist spokesperson | 92 | 67 | 87 |
| Local person | 96 | 65 | 77 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Police sources by percentage | | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Activist anon | 7% | 5% | 7% |
| Activist attributed | 8% | 18% | 11% |
| Activist spokesperson | 63% | 51% | 48% |
| Local person | 22% | 26% | 34% |
| **Table 6 – Activist sources SoV and their associated word counts** | | | |

The above tables (5 and 6) give a representation of the way police and protestors as sources are treated in the texts by their Share of Voice (SoV) (used here to mean the percentage of total quoted source-text). In the first table-section the police are featured first as an absolute count of sources broken down into spokesperson types. In the second table-section the total word counts are given, in the third table-section the number of words per quote is given. Finally, the spokesperson types are shown as a percentage of their use. The second table repeats this process for activists.

In other words, it gives an answer to the question, how much space are their voices given – and offers some comparison. Some notes of caution should be sounded. The Argus’s coverage includes long-form interviews with some protagonists – but, these too could be indicative of reporting bias. There are, for instance, two feature-length interviews with individual senior police officers, one shorter but still feature-length interview with Caroline Lucas MP, and one page-lead focusing solely on campaigners. To a lesser extent the same is true in the MEN. It should also be noted that the comparisons between papers can be equally problematic in that editorial styles differ, subbing decisions vary, and space considerations are contingent on pagination, news-cycles and other factors.

However, broadly we can see that the police get more editorial space as expressed in word counts than other actors, notably activists – with the exception of the Gazette. This is highlighted in the tables below (tables 7 and 8).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Comparison of coded instances of speech | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Activist | 38 | 42 | 60 |
| Police | 48 | 51 | 35 |
| **Table 7 – Comparison of coded instances** | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Comparison of activist and Police SoV by word count per quote | | | |
|  | Argus | MEN | Gazette |
| Activist | 67 | 47 | 72 |
| Police | 78 | 56 | 61 |
| **Table 8 – Word count per quote** | | | |

It shows that the police are quoted more often, and at greater length in the Argus and MEN. In the Gazette they are quoted less often, but still at greater length. It is apparent, that those who are organised in terms of media-relations outputs are more likely to be quoted at length. This is an important observation, someone quoted at length has more time to develop their argument, they are granted the editorial authority of the newspaper in being given greater prominence and they simply fill more space, which potentially means that those ‘grazing’ or scan-reading the paper will see them more readily. In addition, search engines may give them greater prominence – dependent upon search criteria.

There are several potential reasons why the count ratio might be so high:

* The conscious decision of journalists/editors to introduce bias;
* The role of organised PR in presenting usable ‘quotable-quotes’; an artefact of organised PR and journalistic norms;
* Cut-and-paste journalism, so-called ‘churnalism’ (see Davies, 2008); an artefact of organised PR and newsroom contingency.

The latter two of these three is consistent with the stated or normative practice of actors, given the lengths gone to get activist quotes (as evidenced by their numerical superiority) and the dominant use of campaign organisations amidst other campaigners. In Brighton, Kathryn McWhirter who led the PR effort of local campaign group No Fibs (No Fracking in Balcombe) was a Times journalist (she is the subject of an interview in this thesis). In addition, politician Caroline Lucas MP was able to bring her own PR organisational skills to bear – she is interviewed at feature length, and her arrest at the protest features heavily in the Argus coverage. (The figures given for anonymous activist coverage is an artefact of one long anonymous quote.)

In Lancashire, at Preston Road, Lancashire for Shale was a vocal and vociferous voice in the news-coverage – a point returned to in the comparison share of voice made below in section 4.9. They too provided an example of a highly-organised, well-resourced and professionalised media-relations function. Martin Porter, a media activist at Barton Moss (see appendices), had less professional experience, and did himself express doubts as to his own effectiveness.

There is evidence then, for a marked role for public or media relations, in which experienced PR actors – such as police-PR professionals – have an advantage, and would at least have more authority with a newsroom. After all, the role of PR – particularly media relations – is in the presentation of self and group in news-media.

**4.9 How spokespeople are introduced**

There is an important and notable difference between how police spokespeople and other spokespeople – notably protesters – are identified in both the MEN and Argus text. It is less notable in the Gazette text where spokespeople are introduced as either part of a particular campaign group, or as living locally. Over-nomination or over-lexicalization is said to occur when an actor is named, and additional information is given beyond that which is essential. Journalistic norms forbid over-nominalisation – particularly in form of adjectivisation. In fact, very little over-nomination is exhibited in the text, but, there is one recurring theme. When a police officer is quoted their name and rank are given. When a protester is quoted it is often the case that their name, age, occupation and place of residence is listed.

Coding for this data included all instances when age, occupation or residence was included – even the number of children they had. There were eight occasions in the coded text for the MEN, and similarly four for the Argus. There were occasions where activists were named, and their occupation or group allegiance were listed – this was not coded for.

For instance

* Olive Gong, 27, who works in education and has been staying at the camp for the past three months, said: "It's the way the police are being within this situation. Their behaviour has been a real eye-opener for me."
* Anette Wright, 44, from the Manchester Trades' Council said: "It was a really big demonstration and is a great indication of the strength of opinion.”

There are several reasons why this may take place in news copy:

* The first is positive identification to avoid mis-identifying someone and so libelling them by accident – this is particularly so in court cases;
* The second is simply in journalistic norms, or house-style – although the source of this norm is questionable;
* This information helps with human interest frames, particularly when identifying local people.

However, the fourth is more interesting for the purposes of thesis. For police spokespeople, their licence to speak on the subject comes from their professional status and is unquestioned as ‘common sense’. For activist spokespeople, their licence to speak is more arbitrary – this is discussed at greater length in the chapter looking at Bourdieu (chapter 7) and the associated literature review. The licence is granted by the journalist as a newsworthy source. By contrast, the police’s licence to speak resides within their societally-acknowledged professional position. Their statements are framed as an ‘ordinary person’. This theme could be characterised as a liminal practice (Couldry, 2003), and is revisited at length in the chapter on Bourdieu. In this case, the news-media seem to present the societal elites with authority to speak without needing licence. Non-elites gain that licence by a different naming and descriptors as actors in the text. The police are the voice of societally-acknowledged authority, the protestors are not.

**4.10 Comparative discussion of Share of Voice which incorporates other PR actors**

Pie Charts 1, 2 and 3 present the percentage of copy given over to various sources (not just police and protestors) in the Gazette, Argus and MEN. In each case police and pro-Fracking sources account for approximately 50% of the copy. Note that in these charts anonymous and named spokespeople have been amalgamated, as has social media activity when quoted in the copy. This yields interesting findings which suggests an inverse correlation between pro-Fracking sources and police sources in the copy. It is as though an editorial judgement has been made that, in line with Tuchman and indeed Davis (2008) that ‘both sides of the argument are given’ *if* one side of that argument includes either/or police and pro-Fracking sources. A closer examination of this breakdown on a paper-by-paper case yields the following.

**4.10.1 Brighton Argus**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sources – Brighton Argus | Percentage source use |
| Activist anon | 4% |
| Activist spokesperson | 29% |
| Total of Activist and Local | 33% |
|  |  |
| Police anon | 5% |
| Police spokesperson | 26% |
| Total of Police | 31% |
|  |  |
| Green party | 18% |
| Politician – not Green | 0% |
| Total of Politicians | 18% |
|  |  |
| Cuadrilla anon | 6% |
| Cuadrilla named | 1% |
| Local pro-Fracking | 3% |
| Total of Cuadrilla and Pro-Fracking | 10% |
|  |  |
| County Council | 4% |
| CPS | 2% |
| Court | 3% |
| Total of Others | 8% |

**Table 9 – Share of Voice – Brighton Argus**

In this pie chart one ‘Others’ is composed of the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts and the County Council. While it is true the CPS and the County Council were largely speaking against the Fracking protestors, they were not wholly in favour of Fracking and so it seems reasonable to place them in their own segment. Cuadrilla, and its local supporters, have been placed in their own segment for the purposes of comparison with the Gazette. The Green Party were active in the Argus coverage largely because of the activities of Caroline Lucas MP – and were supportive of the anti-Fracking stance. However, again, for the purposes of comparison, I have given them a separate segment. The number for other politicians who were largely pro-Fracking – then Prime Minister David Cameron amongst them – were given less coverage. Although one feature-length article does give him highly favourable positioning in the copy. I will argue here that, for the purposes of this analysis this cancels out at zero, and is largely irrelevant to the core of the discussion made in this section of the use of astro-turf groups, although it is revisited later as a source of societal bias and political capital in the wider field of discussion, macro-political discourse, court rulings and Country Council action are not of themselves ‘astro-turfing’ as they do not result directly from Cuadrilla-led PR activity.

Activists and local people (who support the anti-fracking protests) constitute about a third of the total.

For the purposes of the comparison introduced in this pie chart, and referred back to when analysing the MEN and Gazette copy, pro-Fracking groups (largely notable in this copy for their silence) and police-PR are combined. This is a decision that requires a justification, and this justification is found by comparison with the Gazette coverage, but first a similar analysis of the MEN coverage will be made.

**4.10.2 Manchester Evening News**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sources | Percentage source use |
| IGas & Cuadrilla | 5% |
| Local pro-Fracking | 0% |
| Cuadrilla+IGas+Pro-Fracking | 5% |
|  |  |
| Activist anon | 3% |
| Activist spokesperson | 26% |
| Local person | 4% |
| Activists+local support | 33% |
|  |  |
| IPCC anon | 2% |
| IPCC spokesperson | 3% |
| IPCC | 4% |
|  |  |
| Police anon | 12% |
| Police spokesperson | 27% |
| Police | 39% |
|  |  |
| Green party | 2% |
| Local politician | 3% |
| Politicians | 6% |
|  |  |
| Third party spokesperson | 14% |

**Table 10 - Share of Voice – MEN**

In this news-copy pro-Fracking voices in the form of the drilling companies and local pro-frackers are largely silent. The police take 39% of the total. In combination these two groups constitute 44% of the total. Again, this becomes an important observation in comparison to the Gazette copy, and serves here to reinforce the observation made in the Argus copy that these voices constitute about 41% of the total in that case.

Before going on to a comparison with the Gazette a review of the other voices seen here is useful. Political voices were largely supportive of the anti-Fracking cause, and the IPCC was largely critical of the police. Third party spokespeople were often critical of policing or neutral – notable amongst these was a local solicitor who ‘compiled a dossier’ of human rights abuses by the GMP.

**4.10.3 The Blackpool Gazette**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sources | Percentage source use |
| Netpol | 1% |
| Business | 2% |
|  |  |
| Cuadrilla anon | 4% |
| Cuadrilla attributed | 1% |
| Cuadrilla named | 6% |
| Cuadrilla | 10% |
|  |  |
| Local attributed | 1% |
| Local person named | 15% |
| Local person | 16% |
|  |  |
| Police anon | 6% |
| Police attributed | 3% |
| Police named | 5% |
| Police social media | 1% |
| Total – Police | 14% |
|  |  |
| Politician local (Cllrs) | 8% |
| Green Party | 4% |
| Politician national | 1% |
| Total – Politician | 12% |
|  |  |
| Pro Fracking attributed | 1% |
| Pro Fracking groups anon | 14% |
| Pro Fracking named | 2% |
| Total - Pro-Fracking | 16% |
|  |  |
| Protestor attributed | 1% |
| Protestor anon | 5% |
| Protestor named | 22% |
| Protestor social media | 0.34% |
| Total – Protestor | 28% |

**Table 11 – Share of voice – Blackpool Gazette**

The Gazette coverage is interesting for a number of reasons, but primary amongst these is the presence of ‘astro-turf’ pro-Fracking groups. These are groups set up by pro-Fracking actors to imitate local support. The case for this is made by the website Powerbase (2017) which shows how these groups are supported financially by groups such as Cuadrilla and one of its retained PR agencies Westbourne Communications. Powerbase quotes the Lancashire for Shale website:

Lancashire For Shale receives funding support from a range of people, businesses and organizations including Cuadrilla Resources and Centrica, WJF Technical Support, Abbey Telecom, Stay Blackpool and the Onshore Energy Services Group. We thank them for helping us to position Lancashire to make the most of the jobs, opportunities and investment that shale gas could one day bring. Our activities and views are independent of our financial supporters. (Lancashire for Shale, 2017)

Pro-Fracking groups constituted 17% of the total voices present in the coverage, to these could be added comments attributed to Cuadrilla itself (10%). This is notable in comparison to the figures in the Argus and MEN. The share of voice in the Gazette for pro-Fracking groups is far greater than that of the MEN or Argus. One might argue that this combined 27% is the product of pro-active public relations activity from a number of retained organizations such as Westbourne Communications. This is yet more evidence for a substantial role of public relations practice in regional coverage in this study.

What is also notable – and very interesting - is the concurrent share of voice given to the police in the coverage – 14%. This is far less than that found in the coverage of MEN and Argus – 39% and 31% respectively. It should also be noted that, if the coverage of pro-Fracking groups is added to that of the police then it is 41% (if we added business voices the figure is 44%). This combined figure is equivalent to that found in the MEN and the Argus for police voices alone.

It is possible then, to make an argument that Gazette journalists are citing pro-fracking groups for balance (in agreement with Tuchman), and so quoting police sources less than their peers at the MEN and the Argus. Police are quoted less in the Gazette than in the MEN or Argus, balance has been achieved elsewhere. Without the police-PR material from Lancashire Police it is impossible to know whether PR material equivalent to that of GMP or Sussex Police was made available and rejected by journalists, or whether this material was never made available at all. (The latter view is stated in the interview with Gavell at the Lancashire Gazette.) However, this data suggests that editorial decision-making:

1. Has led to a trade-off between various pro-Fracking PR voices and those of the police;
2. The use of police-PR actors in the Gazette is dependent upon editorial choices and the availability of other voices to cite;
3. While it is true that pro-fracking voices, as voices critical of protest, were cited more in the Gazette, they did not achieve more coverage for the anti-protest position. What they succeeded in doing was taking share of voice away from the police.

Subsequent interviews with both Tim Gavell of the Gazette and Nick Evans of Lancashire Police combine to shed some light on these findings. Gavell is insistent that very little of his copy comes from Lancashire Police, and that the police are so heavily over-burdened as to make them largely ineffective as a PR resource or news source. Moreover, this under-resourcing goes some way to explaining the slow response to Freedom of Information Requests, despite the apparent willingness to do so in informal conversations.

This means that the apparent relative prominence of Lancashire for Shale and the apparent relative absence of Lancashire Police may be coincident as much as covariant. Lancashire for Shale’s relatively large PR output is the product of increased resourcing over and above that available to pro-Fracking groups at Sussex and Manchester. Lancashire Police PR is, at the same time, reduced in its outputs by under-resourcing – according to interviews with both Lancashire Police and the Gazette (see appendices). Covariance is apparent in the news-text as a result of news-production norms of objectivity which requires balanced quotes from both sides.

**4.11 Framing**

Framing theory remains a ‘fractured paradigm’ (Entman, 1993) which has been summoned to a number of academic causes (psychology, sociology and media studies) and lacks, of necessity perhaps, an accepted definition. News-actors and agencies compete for a story, its account of events, and their actions in them, in order for them to be framed in a certain way (Matthes et al, 2012). Frames are adopted by a range of different actors to serve a variety of purposes and can be seen as both a process and effect, and as being used in a number of stages in the communications process (de Vreese, 2005). To some extent, given in particular the role of sources in the news (Franklin and Carlson, 2013), it is the means by which discourse is routinised, themes are identified, meaning is found, and values and judgements are proffered.

In this study frames are identified as preferred interpretations of the events; as the way in which protests are given meaning by actors to imagined audience groups. This study looks at media-actors and the impact of their work on news-coverage, so frames are seen as implicit or explicit (as well as conscious or sub-conscious) media-relations messaging which have the intention of societal effects – whether or not these are achieved beyond the inclusion in the news-copy. There is no claim made here that journalists, by including a frame in news-copy, agree or disagree with it (or of audience agreement). This also becomes an important component of the later discussion in which journalist rituals of objectivity are cited as motivating inclusion in news-texts.

Frames are induced from the analysed copy, as well as being drawn from the extant literature. For instance, Procedural Framing as used in this thesis draws upon the work of Habermas, and Moral Framing from Semetko and Valkenberg (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Environmental framing seems implicit in the analysed material. Violence and peaceful protest framings are an attempt to disaggregate conflict framings (ibid), which were rejected as they are implicit in the nature of the material. That is to say, conflict is unavoidable in protests, and blame is unavoidable when arrests are made. Analyses of these frames were attempted, but did not yield useful results, not because the frames are not present, but rather because they are omni-present. All stories involving ‘clashes’ between police and protesters have conflict frames. They are the primary *raison d’etre* for the story being news-worthy (Harcup & O’Neill, 2001, 2017). This is further evidenced by the way in which some elements of the protest events are emphasised over others – stories regarding police-bail are ignored, stories regarding violence are not. This means for the actors involved, that they are not struggling to get the story into papers, but rather struggling to influence how that story will be told.

Universal conflict framing also has an effect upon narrative structure, because the primary causal factor of conflict is seen as protest, not drilling or the political decision to allow drilling to take place. The latter would require narrative structures based upon other frames. This is addressed further in the sections examining both Legitimacy and Propaganda (chapters 6.0 & 7.0). The causal role of politicians is largely elided from the news text, and the police become the primary voice of state action – a theme revisited in later chapters examining legitimacy claims and the application of Field Theory. In the MEN and the Brighton Argus, the drilling companies are also largely elided from the text – there are differences in the Gazette where the pro-fracking lobby groups give voice to their position. The Gazette, MEN and Argus give primary causal agency to the protestors in the dominant narrative. This narrative structure consistently attributes blame for the protests – in which a conflict frame is omnipresent - to the protestors (most notably in the Gazette because of Lancashire for Shale). Thus, the protestors are, albeit implicitly, blamed for the conflict. However, this is largely because of editorial norms of newspaper practice in the form of conflict framing, not necessarily because of police-PR practice. Indeed, there is an argument that in stating the need to balance rights – a theme revisited by all three police organizations – they are attempting to avoid this narrative structure. On the other hand, there are cases where blame is explicitly attached to protestors; this is revisited in the chapter looking at Propaganda (5.0).

However, because the conflict framing is omnipresent there is little to be gained by coding for it. For this reason, the framing analysis looks at potential frames as sources of legitimacy, places of propagandist action and discussion of societal positioning that attempt to maintain doxic understandings of the police’s role in the field of practice.

**4.12 Framing by actor and/or agency**

Framing, as is it appears in the Gazette, while identical in frames used, is very different from the MEN and Argus in terms of its agents. The following tables offer a comparison of framing between the actors across all three coded papers. It presents a nuanced analysis of framing by the various spokespeople, and must be viewed in the light of the ‘share of voice’ section given previously because the effects of this framing will be modulated and mediated by whoever is doing the speaking, and the skill with which the messages are presented – a theme revisited in the chapter on legitimation (chapter 6).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frame community | Frame economic | Frame environmental | Frame legitimacy | Frame peaceful protest | Frame violence |
| Igas & Cuadrilla | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Activist | 20.51% | 9.64% | 28.09% | 31.63% | 2.64% | 7.5% |
| Local person | 9.52% | 0% | 52.38% | 31.75% | 6.35% | 0% |
| Local pro-fracking | 0% | 0% | 34.48% | 37.93% | 0% | 27.59% |
| Police | 0% | 0% | 0% | 81.98% | 0% | 18.02% |
| Political | 6.31% | 34.38% | 34.88% | 14.78% | 0% | 9.66% |
| Third party | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| **Table 12 - Brighton Argus – Actors and agencies frame promotion** | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frame community | Frame economic | Frame environmental | Frame legitimacy | Frame peaceful protest | Frame violence |
| Igas & Cuadrilla | 39.58% | 0% | 0% | 60.42% | 0% | 0% |
| Activist | 8.64% | 2.94% | 17.99% | 38.29% | 6.77% | 25.38% |
| Local person | 13.85% | 0% | 0% | 66.41% | 0% | 19.74% |
| Local pro-fracking | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Police | 26.79% | 0% | 0% | 47.63% | 0% | 25.58% |
| Political | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Third party | 13.85% | 0% | 0% | 29.49% | 0% | 56.67% |
| **Table 13 - MEN – Actors and agencies frame promotion** | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frame community | Frame economic | Frame environmental | Frame legitimacy | Frame Peaceful protest | Frame violence |
| Cuadrilla | 22.37% | 16.65% | 0% | 41.68% | 0% | 19.31% |
| Protestor | 22.89% | 0% | 33.37% | 22.5% | 3.36% | 17.87% |
| Local people | 53.67% | 0% | 11.54% | 29.61% | 0% | 5.19% |
| Pro-fracking groups | 26.23% | 1.63% | 12.58% | 26.06% | 0% | 33.5% |
| Police | 19.13% | 0% | 0% | 80.87% | 0% | 0% |
| Politicians | 68.17% | 1.23% | 4.83% | 19.71% | 1.75% | 4.31% |
| Third Party | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| **Table 14 Blackpool Gazette – Actors and agencies frame promotion** | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | IGas & Cuadrilla | Activist | | Local person | | Local pro-Fracking | | Police | | Politicians | | Third party |
| Frame community | 0% | 79.56% | | 15.09% | | 0% | | 0% | | 5.35% | | 0% |
| Frame economic | 0% | 23.08% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% | | 76.92% | | 0% |
| Frame environmental | 0% | 40.34% | | 24.88% | | 3.77% | | 0% | | 31.01% | | 0% |
| Frame legitimacy | 0% | 29.12% | | 6.27% | | 4.68% | | 45.59% | | 14.35% | | 0% |
| Frame peaceful protest | 0% | 50% | | 50% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% |
| Frame violence | 0% | 73.98% | | 0% | | 26.02% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% |
| **Table 15 - Brighton Argus– Frames by actors and agencies** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | IGas & Cuadrilla | Activist | Local person | | Local pro-Fracking | | Police | | Politicians | | Third party | |
| Frame community | 3% | 19.61% | 9.63% | | 0.00% | | 57.75% | | 0% | | 9.63% | |
| Frame economic | 0% | 100.00% | 0.00% | | 0.00% | | 0.00% | | 0% | | 0.00% | |
| Frame environmental | 0% | 100.00% | 0.00% | | 0.00% | | 0.00% | | 0% | | 0.00% | |
| Frame legitimacy | 2% | 24.67% | 14.86% | | 0.00% | | 34.14% | | 8% | | 6.60% | |
| Frame peaceful protest | 0% | 100.00% | 0.00% | | 0.00% | | 0.00% | | 0% | | 0.00% | |
| Frame violence | 0% | 26.61% | 7.19% | | 0.00% | | 33.15% | | 0% | | 33.05% | |
| **Table 16 MEN – Frames by actors and agencies** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  |
|  | IGas & Cuadrilla | Protestor | | Local people | | Pro-Fracking groups | | Police | | Politicians | | Business |
| Frame community | 9.92% | 17.26% | | 27.19% | | 14.54% | | 1% | | 30.09% | | 0% |
| Frame economic | 83.59% | 0% | | 0% | | 10.26% | | 0% | | 6.15% | | 0% |
| Frame environmental | 0% | 73.57% | | 19.37% | | 0% | | 0% | | 7.06% | | 0% |
| Frame legitimacy | 21.47% | 21.47% | | 17.42% | | 16.79% | | 4.89% | | 10.11% | | 7.84% |
| Frame peaceful protest | 19.09% | 29.39% | | 5.86% | | 41.41% | | 0% | | 4.24% | | 0% |
| Frame violence | 0% | 100% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% |
| **Table 17 - Blackpool Gazette – Frames by actors and agencies** | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Tables 12 to 14 and 15 to 18 require some explanation in terms of content and methodology as several aggregations of data have been necessary to achieve meaningful comparison. The percentages given are derived from quoted news sources; those quoted anonymously, named or attributed in the text. Not all quoted sources are counted here – so the percentages do not add up to 100%. The Legitimacy Frame includes procedural framing (claims made with reference to legal process) and moral framing (with reference to moral *mores* and norms). Violence and peaceful protest frames are divided here for ease of reference – generally those against fracking cited peaceful protest in terms of their own actions. All parties referenced violence undertaken by other parties.

It can be seen that there is considerable variation across the three newspaper datasets. IGas and Cuadrilla are active in framing in the Gazette coverage, but nearly absent from the Argus coverage, and have limited input into framing acts in the MEN coverage. Legitimacy claims and counter-claims are favoured by both police and activists – this shall be returned to in the chapter looking at Legitimacy (chapter 6). It is also noteworthy that environmental and economic frames are less favoured by all parties.

Of most interest for the purposes of this study is the absence of police framing activity from the Gazette in comparison to that of the MEN or the Argus. The focus of Lancashire Police is on legitimacy claims, with a small attempt at community focus, but the far larger share of legitimacy claims lies with other actors, including Cuadrilla and its supporters and activists. By comparison Sussex Police and GMP are coded as making between a third and a half of all legitimacy claims in their respective coverage. While other differences in framing activity are evidenced in the coding, this is remarkable. It is possible to make several hypotheses as to why this may be so:

* As already theorised, journalistic norms and rituals of objectivity (Tuchman, 1972, 1980) and balance may be leading to police sources to be ignored in favour of other pro-Fracking sources;
* The data may be an exceptional artefact of journalistic choices, context and contingency in the Gazette;
* Lancashire Police may have not offered these frames in the PR outputs – this seems likely given the interview data. Indeed, an analysis of the press material shows some reference to an intention to facilitate peaceful protest, and this is not quoted in the text, the word ‘violence’ is not used in the Lancashire Police press material.

A disaggregation of police legitimacy claims (table 18) confirms that no claims to moral legitimacy were made in the Gazette (nor was violence or intimidation referenced).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| MEN | Frame moral | Frame procedural |
| All sources | 5 | 17 |
| Police | 5 | 9 |
|  |  |  |
| Argus | Frame moral | Frame procedural |
| All sources | 3 | 17 |
| Police | 2 | 11 |
|  |  |  |
| Gazette | Frame moral | Frame procedural |
| All sources | 14 | 23 |
| Police | 0 | 4 |
| **Table 18 Disaggregation of legitimation framing by newspaper** | | |

* Lancashire Police confirmed they had received a complaint.

A spokesman said: "We have received the complaint and are in the process of looking into it." They added that a driver could be said to be committing an offence if they were "using a vehicle to cause unnecessary noise". But they could not confirm that was the case in this incident since they had yet to get an account from the officer concerned.

* Sgt Andy Hill said: “While we have a duty to facilitate people going about their lawful business we also have a duty to facilitate peaceful protest.”
* A police spokesman said: “A complaint has been made and we are investigating.”

What is not seen here is the discussion of morality or protestors ‘over-stepping the mark’ that is seen in the MEN or Argus coverage. That too should be viewed alongside the SoV data which highlighted the apparently covariant roles of Lancashire Police and Lancashire for Shale. That moralising role is fulfilled by the pro-fracking lobby, or the drilling company itself. For instance, in this quotation a Lancashire for Shale spokesperson is cited supporting moral framings and underlining the deviance of the protest from established norms. Note also the appeal to community by referencing farming and tourism.

A spokesman [for Lancashire For Shale] said: “We are appalled at what has happened at the Preston New Road site in Fylde, when dozens of mainly national professional protesters have chosen to trespass on a local farmer’s land, causing extensive criminal damage and laying siege to the family home. “Lancashire For Shale also condemns the cost to Lancashire tax payers of having to police disruptive, unlawful activities.

The time has come to say no to these sinister tactics. Our local communities and our vitally important farming and tourism economy stand to lose out if this sort of disgraceful behaviour is allowed to continue on the Fylde Coast. (2017 2 28 Anger rises as Fylde coast Fracking protests ramp up Anti-Fracking)

It is within this news-source’s statements that the protestors are critiqued at length and in acerbic terms:

A spokesman for Backing Fracking said: “Fracking campaigners have been joined by anarchist activists, many covering their faces with scarves in order to avoid identification, who have held-up deliveries to the shale gas site and are now simply standing in the road.

It illustrates how quickly local campaigners can lose control of protests to lawless elements.

(2107 12 2 Warning over four-hour road closure after anti-Fracking protest Fracking protesters hold)

And

And a spokesman from Lancashire For Shale said: "Enough is enough. Our patience is wearing thin, since repeat lock-ons are achieving nothing, besides disrupting the day to day activities of local residents and businesses, at a significant cost to the local taxpayer.

Tougher action is needed now. It is time for increased fines and judicial sentences for anyone arrested, particularly repeat offenders.

Lancashire For Shale condemns these ongoing, repeat lock-ons, which are associated with unacceptable aggressive behaviour towards the police. (2017 7 12 Road closed once more amid protests at Fracking site)

Note again the community framing. There is no equivalent in the quotations cited from Lancashire Police to GMP’s - *2014 2 23 Most Fracking protesters are there to 'intimidate the local community' and 'antagonise' the force, police claim.*

Or Sussex police, whose language was far more moderate:

Chief Superintendent Paul Morrison said: "This will allow a significant number of people to assemble in close proximity to the site to carry out their protest, but without causing obstruction to the road. We will review its use on a daily basis.

“Since protesters started to gather at the end of July we have facilitated peaceful protest and will continue to do so. However, over the last week we have seen a rise in the amount of unlawful activities and this has caused increasing disruption to the local community and to those trying to carry out their lawful business.” (2013 9 10 Liveblog: Balcombe anti-Fracking protest eviction.)

The apparent trade-off between pro-frackers and police is therefore underlined in an analysis of frames and even subject matter. This will be returned to in later chapters in which further qualitative analysis is attempted. Framing is returned to in depth in the chapter on Bourdieu (chapter 7).

**4.13 Conclusion to chapter**

This chapter has presented a primarily quantitative analysis, with some qualitative discussion summoned in an attempt to place the quantitative findings in some context. Qualitative analysis follows in later chapters in the broad tradition of critical discourse analysis as outlined in the methodology. The quantitative analysis highlighted that dominance of police nomination over activist nomination in the Argus and the MEN, but also noted that this was not shared to the same extent in the Gazette. However, an examination of share-of-voice showed a reversal in the Gazette against comparable data in the MEN and the Argus. In the Argus and MEN police were quoted more, and at greater length, in the Gazette activists gained greater SoV using the same measures. This result was, broadly speaking, replicated in a study of framing and in a study of share of voice. It was noted that of SoV showed lower share for the police in the Gazette. However, further study – taking into consideration the Lancashire for Shale and comparing combined SoVs with the Argus and MEN - yielded interesting results. There is an apparent covariance in SoV between pro-fracking groups and the police-PR: a finding supported by an analysis of framing. That is to say that police and pro-fracking voices are treated as, to some extent, interchangeable in editorial decision-making. This must be a tentative claim, given the restricted nature of the dataset. However, such a claim is consistent with Tuchman and Chibnall amongst others. This is returned to in later chapters on legitimacy, and sections on field theory (chapters 6 and 7). If true it shows that the presentation of the police in the news-media ‘sides’ with that of the pro-fracking lobby – whether or not it is in reality. It also implies that journalists are, at some level, intentionally or not, complicit.

**5.0 Police-PR as propaganda**

**Research question 1 (R1): To what extent can police-PR as found in this case-study be characterised as propaganda?**

This chapter attempts a nuanced account of propaganda through an in-depth analysis of the case study material. It draws upon the literature addressing propaganda described in section 2.6 of the literature review. In this section police-PR - as found in the study - will be discussed as potentially propaganda. This approach addresses the central contention of authors such as Ericson (1987, 1989b, 1989a, 1991) and Brooke (2011) who argue for police-PR as being essentially manipulative. It also addresses the structural, base-and-superstructure, arguments of the Marxists in which police-PR is both Ideological State Apparatus and a Repressive State Apparatus of Althusser (Miliband, 1977, p.55) or the organic intellectuals of Gramsci (Gramsci, 1971, Jones, 2007). Propaganda in this chapter forms both a point of analysis in its own right, and an index of a wider debate regarding the control of protest discourses by the state.

In order to do this the following sections attempt to delineate between persuasion and propaganda, dividing the latter into two broad analytical categories, which it will define as ‘weak version’ and ‘strong version’.

**5.1 ‘Strong’ and ‘Weak’ definitions of Propaganda**

**Diagram Three – Strong and Weak definitions of Propaganda**

This diagram (diagram three) attempts to illustrate and describe the relationship between public relations as persuasion, propaganda in its ‘weak version’ and propaganda in its ‘strong version’. While it is true that propaganda and persuasion have historically gone hand-in-hand, drawing upon the definitions of Marlin (2013) and Jowett and O’Donnell (2012) it is possible to practice public relations without practicing propaganda. In Diagram three, working from the left-hand side of the diagram (drawing upon Habermas’ idealised communicative action (Habermas, 1987)), it is possible for an act to contain truth, be comprehensible and to made by agencies and individuals who are entitled to speak. Such an act is not propaganda, it is persuasion.[[6]](#footnote-6)

In the literature review it was argued that propaganda takes place when deliberate untruths are spoken (Jowett and Donnell, 2012, Marlin, 2013) – through elision, exaggeration, affective communication, linguistic trickery or outright lying (Corner, 2007). In the ‘weak version’ the deceit or communicative act is not the result of strategic or meso-level intent. It is an isolated act reliant upon contingency or the agency of individuals. ‘Strong version’ propaganda requires strategic intent, as well as falsehood. It requires positive intent in decision-making at governmental level or at least organisational level, and collusion throughout the governmental system, including the police. It is also accompanied by a high degree of collusion with dominant economic groups.

These definitions – of weak and strong propaganda – will now be examined at length. Such lines of definition are similar to Ellul’s taxonomy in which he describes political and societal propaganda: the latter drawing upon myths to create an environment in which propaganda acts can be made; the former being acts of a more tactical and analytically obvious nature.

**5.2 Myth, pre-conceived discourses – strong version**

Ellul’s political propaganda - the strong version - is most commonly found in examples of war propaganda. In these cases information is used as a weapon of state-level conflict. There are multiple examples of this which can be found in such authors as Briant (2015), Hallin (1989) or Jowett and O’Donnell (2012). While it would be incorrect to argue that identifying propaganda in such cases is simple, it is often more straightforward than identifying it in domestic situations. In this thesis the discovery of war-fighting levels of propaganda would be extraordinary. It would require policy-making and tactical media activity to be coordinated in an intent to fabricate news-stories at a state level. As such, in order to describe police-PR as exhibiting the criteria for the strong version of propaganda, particularly in the case of anti-fracking protests, its communicative acts must be linked to state-perpetrated pre-propaganda. To make the case for this, it would be necessary to find evidence of state-level actors, or allied elite actors, creating such myths. There is certainly some evidence of the latter. For instance, in the Gazette there are considerable efforts on the part of pro-fracking groups – although not on the part of the police - to summon discourses of deviancy from societal or community norms -

[Lancashire for Shale said:] “This is yet another attempt by a bunch of professional protesters to intimidate and harass people who are legally going about their business.” (Blackpool Gazette 2017 6 30 Towers protest at Fylde Fracking site Anti-Fracking protesters built two towers at the site).

“She said: “It is quite wrong on all counts to intimidate, harass, bully and disrupt small, local firms who are simply getting on with their daily lawful business and keeping their employees in jobs.

“It is outrageous that such appalling intimidatory tactics being employed from a small group of coordinated cross border activists who come from outside our region are preventing local businesses from benefiting from the significant opportunities afforded from this industry.” (Blackpool Gazette, 2017 2 13 Inside the anti-frackers’ protest camp The Fracking camp near B&Q at the Whitehills).

The focus upon ‘outsiders’ is intriguing; not only does it allow those speaking to adopt a community framing, it also allows them to access the same ‘mythic’ themes adopted at Kingsnorth and in the run up to the Ian Tomlinson affair. Interesting it is also reminiscent of Ellul’s (Ellul, 1973) integrative and agitative propaganda in which one builds internal agreement and while the other attacks external actors.

Gilmore et al (2016) make a similar comment:

… GMP statements sought to distance protesters from the local community, portraying many of those involved as ‘regular’ protesters, unreasonable in both their demands and their behaviour…

This division reinforced the idea, suggested in earlier media reports on Barton Moss, that camp residents and visitors were ‘professional protesters’ who did not reflect the views of the local community. The idea that some of those involved were experienced protesters was highlighted in police statements that inferred a lack of real affinity with the local anti-Fracking campaign. (p.23).

There is evidence, from a number of sources including the interviews with protestors, that community support for anti-fracking protestors was substantial. Moreover, given the proposed global impact of fracking through climate change, national or even global support for local protests seems reasonable.

The ‘outsiders framing’ is repeated by Sussex police, but is not in the analysed text by Lancashire police – although as already noted, it is stated by pro-fracking groups. In the latter case one could argue that it reasonable, indeed wholly appropriate to start to see police communications practice as part and parcel of a larger propaganda effort. After all we can see dominant elites, PR-led astro-turf pro-fracking groups and police-PR producing concurrent and similar PR messages.

However, the problem with such an analysis is one of intent. One might ask what concrete unequivocal evidence is there for this collusion, beyond coincidence? In the absence of unequivocal evidence, what threshold should be set for acceptance, given the large body of supporting, but equivocal evidence?

**5.3 Myth, pre-conceived discourses – weak version**

Those commenters found in the literature who take a cultural approach to propaganda propose the necessity of pre-existing or mythic narrative structures in successful propaganda practice (Bernays, 2005; Ellul, 1973; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The presence of pre-existing narratives and discourses can play an important part in the police’s ability to successfully carry out propaganda. This is in keeping with Ellul’s analysis of the ‘myth’ as a necessary adjunct of propaganda:

“On the other hand, the propagandist tries to create myths by which man will live, which respond to his sense of the sacred. By “Myth” we mean an all-encompassing, activating image: a sort of vision of desirable objectives that have lost their material, practical character and have become strongly colored [sic], over-whelming, all-encompassing, activating image…” (1973, p.31).

For instance, in cases noted in the introduction; prior to the death of Ian Tomlinson, statements had been made by the police about the intended violence of protestors. In the case of Kingsnorth, activists had been similarly described, and in the case of Hillsborough there was considerable societal ‘moral panic’ regarding football fans and football violence. The presence of myths, which one might describe as *pre-conceived discourses*, prepare the ground for propaganda (pre-propaganda as Ellul would describe it). The ability to draw upon these pre-conceived discourses provides in the first instance a ready-made narrative, or narratives, upon which a propagandist may draw and refer. Ellul argues that without this, propaganda is unlikely to succeed. Herman and Chomsky’s fifth filter of their *Propaganda Model* (1988) could also be used here – anti-communism, or ideology in general, provides a useful pre-existing discourse to the propagandist. These narratives also inform journalistic practice as ‘off-the-shelf’ stories that might fit into a news-agenda (Davies, 2008). For instance, they provide the ‘consonance’ and ‘continuity’ predicted by Galtung and Ruge (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001); and satisfy ‘Rule Four: Select safe ideas’ and ‘Rule Eight: Give them what they want to believe in’ of Davies’ Rules of Production’ (Davies, 2008). Finally, of course, the state-level propagandist is able to create and maintain pre-existing discourses central to the maintenance of power - or at least this is how it might seem to critical theorists.

The presence, then, of pre-existing discourses in the texts analysed in this study, as well as in the accompanying material of interviews and documents, is proposed by academics and commentators as necessary for the purposes of this analysis. Without them, there can be no propaganda as Ellul defines it because the discovered police action will lack the ‘all-encompassing’ nature necessary to elevate it from tactical action, informed by event-level contingency, to strategic action, informed by state-level or at least meso-level intent. In other words, without the formation of these myths it is difficult to argue convincingly for propaganda in its traditionally defined forms.

Hall et al’s *Policing the Crisis* (1978) is one of the most influential studies in this area. It presents what could be characterised as the weak form of hegemonic activity in as much as, *intent* or even agency is not necessary for dominant policing discourses to be maintained. The study has relevance here, but only having noted the following important differences. Hall does not address propaganda directly and care will be taken here not to misrepresent his position, whilst drawing upon some of his key ideas. Mugging is an *ordinary* crime, according to Hall’s analysis, while protest is a *social* one – the differences ‘are important but extremely difficult to sustain in any definitive way’ (p.185). Ordinary offences are perpetrated without the additional defence of the human rights *mores* and laws attached to protest, but - it can be argued - the ‘legal positivism’ of policing at protests may miss this point, as may the subsequent coverage (a point also made in Chibnall’s *Law and Order* N*ews,* 1978). This is revisited at length in the subsequent chapter on Legitimacy (chapter 6).[[7]](#footnote-7) Here we can see that policing a fracking demonstration requires the police to appreciate the difference between the ordinary crime of blocking a public highway, and the social crime of preventing alleged environmental damage.

Indeed the police seem to understand this, note here Lancashire Police’s:

Our role is a supportive one to ensure that the democratic process can run smoothly. There will be officers in the area to protect and reassure members of the public. If anyone commits a criminal offence they will be dealt with fairly but firmly. (Appendices, Lancashire Police Statements).

Hall *et al* also dwell on a theory of primary and secondary definition in which different actors play differing roles in defining the dominant frames through which events are rendered important or meaningful and by which events are interpreted. One imagines that Hall would label police-PR a primary definer (although neither Hall nor Schlesinger address propaganda as themes in their work). Hall *et al’s* theory has been critiqued, notably by Schlesinger and Tumber in *Reporting Crime: The Media Politics of Criminal Justice* (1994). They argue that Hall has not satisfactorily established the mechanism by which primary definition is agreed or transmitted by dominant elites. This is a fair point, and one which must be overcome, or at least successfully addressed in an allegation of propaganda; primary definition, requires some level of intent.

However, it is possible to draw a useful parallel here in establishing agency in propaganda practice. Just because an actor is apparently powerful in a communications field, it does not mean that they control it; nor does it mean their propaganda is successful with their target audience (audience-effects are not analysed in this thesis). In addition, the apparent ‘over-accessing’ or dominating Share of Voice of elites and their favoured messaging – as found in the textual analysis (chapter 4) - does not necessitate the presence or practice of over-weaning power within that field. Rather it can be the result of range of factors that reside outside of their agency or influence, or indeed anyone’s individual agency or influence. In this case the presence of favoured messaging in the regional press, does not necessarily mean that the police are dominant actors – much less propagandists. This separation of apparent cause and effect becomes important in a study of propaganda in which intentional or planned practice can be incorrectly inferred from a textual analysis (Krippendorff, 2013).

Nevertheless, there is surely sufficient evidence here to support the weak version of mythic or pre-conceived discourses. A number of elite actors have been able to draw upon similar extant discourses which show ‘hardened protestor’, anarchists and environmental domestic extremists in a common discourse of deviance; in conflict with the forces of law and order, that is, police and state. Before continuing with this theme, the ‘strong’ version of propaganda, in which intent and coordination are found, shall be discussed.

**5.4 Intent and strategic coordination – the ‘strong’ version**

In this version there is evidence of strategic coordination at both meso- or organizational-levels, as well as at state-level. This section attempts to evaluate the evidence for, firstly, a state-level policy in favour of fracking and its advocates, and secondly, an attempt to practice propaganda by the police in support, as state-level actors. The former will be evidenced in summary.

The latter will be analysed on two levels. The first is that there might be intent to deceive – outright falsehood, selective representation or exaggeration – in keeping with liberal or post-modern interpretations. The second, there might be a constructed societal mode of representation which draws upon dominant power structures or cultural norms – in keeping with culturalist or post-structuralist interpretations. This does not require consent or active coordination of actions. In doing so the analysis will describe the strong version /weak version dichotomy in terms of intent and collusion.

This analysis is an important component in building or rejecting the argument for propaganda practice as policy of government aimed at supporting the interests or goals of dominant elites.

**5.5 Evidence for the construction of state-level pro-fracking policy, or anti-fracking protest bias or prejudice.**

This section outlines the considerable evidence for state-level commitment to fracking, and evidence that the state has adopted fracking as policy and is actively supporting it. It does so as part of an argument for propaganda – not as a discussion of police tactics or strategy. This may require emphasis and elucidation. As noted in the introduction the police action and police communications inform each other. Thus, it must be the case that both police actions at a strategic, operational and tactical level will inform public relations activity. In this section of the thesis, strategic intent is discussed and discovered as a necessary criterion in both Marlin’s and Jowett and O’Donnell’s definitions of propaganda, as discussed in the literature review (section 2.6.4). Thus, the descriptions of police activity used in this section are not a discussion of strategy or tactics, but rather their position in a discussion of propaganda as discussed in the literature. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that, in the past, protest has been aggressively targeted by the police both at an event level, and at a strategic intelligence level. In the case of fracking as detailed in this study there is considerable evidence for meso-level – i.e. intra- and inter-organisational collusion - between the police and drilling companies in terms of security and police action, as well as evidence for collusion in PR and communications practice.

The evidence for state-level support lies in stated government policy. Take for instance the Argus’s *Special report: Prime Minister's bold Fracking message as activists head to Balcombe (*2013 8 13) in which Prime Minister Cameron laid out unequivocal support for fracking. The decision by the Communities Minister Sajid Javid to over-rule Lancashire County Council’s edict which forbade fracking, is also effective proof of ongoing, practical central government support for the policy. That is to say, fracking was government policy, and it was pushed through against local democratic wishes by the government of the day. This, to the protestors at least, was proof of government intent, and bias against them.

There is also evidence for police-level activity, distant both temporally and spatially, from the protest events. This is important as it suggests strategic intent, which reaches beyond mere reaction to the tactical contingencies of public order policing. For instance, take the *Memorandum of Understanding* (Police, 2013), signed between and by a number of parties, including GMP itself and, amongst others, IGas and Peel Holdings. The MoU does not include protest groups as peers and is not signed by them. The MoU was an evolving document and shows that the police were not only policing the protest on a day-to-day basis, but also planning strategically alongside and with other state and business actors. It shows them to be actively liaising – or indeed colluding - with a number of state and business actors at the expense of anti-fracking protests and the benefit of pro-fracking actors and groups. It also shows that the police were drawing upon the experience gained in Sussex, as well as early protests in Lancashire; which is of itself evidence of national police collusion, if not coordination.

There are multiple examples of police action beyond the protests themselves that evidence a strategic intent to target potential protestors as well as those actually protesting. For instance, Tootill (2016) went to visit the New Preston Road site and recounts the following, “I liaised with a couple of Manchester Facebook friends...when we arrived at the site, within a minute or two a large police van drew up and the driver said to me “you must be Mr Tootill then.” The police followed him back to his hotel room. In other words, the police had been monitoring his Facebook posts. This again shows a level of engagement in which the police as state actors were keen not only to police the protest, but also police individual intent. If this story is true, it shows a level of action and practice which went well beyond merely ensuring the rights of all parties.

Note here that Nick Evans at GMP in his interview said social media were not monitored by his department – but this is evidence to the contrary; that social media platforms were being monitored by a GMP department. Sussex Police admits to this practice at a communications department level. Intelligence operations against protesters is confirmed by a number of sources. For instance, in this story in the Argus (after the protests were finished) - *“Police 'spied' on anti-Fracking protesters (2014 6 23)”* – in which a FOI response inadvertently revealed (“Sussex Police used covert surveillance to monitor the protests at Balcombe last summer, however it was supposed to be a secret redacted from published papers”) (Ibid). It further quotes the report “Once the operation moved into August it was apparent that an appropriate range of intelligence sources were being harnessed, including where appropriate European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) compliant covert means.” (Ibid).

This is supported by evidence for policing activity where, historically, and in a number of cases, police introduced undercover officers into protest groups – including those engaged in environmental protest. Guardian journalists Paul Lewis and Rob Evans, in *Undercover: the true story of Britain's secret police* (2013), detail a range of activity in which the state has targeted environmental protestors as ‘domestic extremists’ using undercover operatives.

So, in summary, it is possible to find evidence for A) state-level support for fracking which is B) supported by strategic police-level action i.e. beyond merely policing the protest. This is important as it is the necessary precursor to the next step; evidence of communicative action by the police that is propagandistic in having organisational intent.

Andy Freeman of Sussex police in his presentation (See appendices) stated that collusion had taken place between police-PR and drilling companies’ PR. “In parallel with Gold’s liaison with Cuadrilla, we had linked in with their in-house and external press and PR teams with the understanding that we would share press releases in advance of issue. This broke down for the first time on the second full day of the camp.” (See appendices interview with Andy Freeman Sussex Police). This is an important statement, as it links police-PR practice directly with that of pro-fracking actors. It is evidence of collusion in PR-messaging between police and drilling companies. By reasonable extension, by characterizing police actors as state-level actors by another name, this links communicative action between the state and corporate interests at both a meso-level, and at the level of dominant state elites. This statement is borne out in a number of areas and sources – including the lobbying of influential PR actors at state level (Spinwatch, 2017). Take for instance Lord Browne, who sat upon Cuadrilla’s board, and who has served as government advisor (See the chapter Bourdieu and Field Theory of a discussion of social and network capital). We could cite here Habermas’ contention (Habermas, 1988) that a neo-liberal crisis of legitimation exists in which government is caught between the needs of business on one side, and the needs of citizens on another. These arguments are addressed more fully in the chapter on Legitimation, but here it can be noted that state-level action - arguably the product of corporate PR activity – is favouring corporate stated-interests over those stated by private citizens.

Taken as a whole, this section has presented a strong argument for a structural account of practice that links police action with state-level intent. It is useful to recall that at protest level the sole state actor is the police. Thus, there is a *prima facie* case for organisational intent in core PR-messaging that would support the dominant elites, favouring fracking over anti-fracking protests.

This then is evidence for:

1. State pro-fracking policy;
2. Police strategic activity in support of fracking, and to the detriment of protesters;
3. Such activity in excess of that needed to police at a tactical or contingent level;
4. Communicative activity – at a strategic level – in support of fracking and in collusion with pro-fracking actors.

What is, arguably, lacking here is incontrovertible evidence of *organisational* and *organised* intent to deceive, exaggerate or elide the truth. It is possible that police have acted in good faith, in first accepting the direction of legitimate state decision-making, second, working with businesses and elites to enable their legitimate activity, and then finally using communications practice as a form of valid policing action, as well as justification. In each of these cases, they may have acted honestly, or at least, honestly as they perceived it. The ‘strong’ argument for propaganda requires conscious, deliberate, organised intent across fields of practice i.e. it requires a conspiracy. The evidence of this final step is missing.

In other words, just because the police are working with state and associated actors in PR-practice, does not necessarily mean they are colluding in propaganda *per se*, or even in acts of persuasion. In addition, it does not necessarily mean they are of themselves conducting propaganda *per se* even if they are conducting other activity, such as intelligence operations, which may be morally dubious.

**5.6 Summary of arguments for strategic intent in propaganda practice.**

There is some evidence for the existence of pre-existing discourses which are critical of protestors. In addition, there is evidence of strategic bias against these protestors. Some police statements – and other would-be allied actors – have drawn upon or repeated these statements. There is limited evidence of strategic intent to conduct propaganda.

With this analysis complete it can be seen, that while arguments for propaganda in the traditional mode may be made, they will remain inconclusive, unproven, and perhaps, unprovable.

**5.7 A revised definition of propaganda**

Having discussed propaganda as it appears in the literature and shown how it can be brought to bear upon this study, as well as how existing definitions can be problematic, this section will concentrate on a narrow definition of propaganda, that, adopting Marlin, it focuses upon manipulation of fact and truth. However, such an approach does not entirely avoid the problems identified above. First, it will not be possible to be certain of the truth of a matter in question. Second, in a nuanced analysis, it will not be possible to know whether the police-PR practitioners knew the truth as front-line officers knew it. In other words, the front-line officers *may* have been engaging in falsehood, but the press officers might not have known, or could not reasonably act upon their suspicions. Third, while a falsehood may be present in single instances, it is not necessarily ‘systematic’ in the words of Jewkes and O’Donnell – after all, a single falsehood is arguably not propaganda. This is because, as Corner notes, “… such a move would extend the idea of propaganda to cover virtually all of the many forms of publicity and promotional discourse.” (p.675).

For these reasons this study will offer a narrow definition of propaganda in police-PR practice:

Propaganda in centralised police-PR practice is where communicative action is undertaken in which key information is elided, exaggerated, makes appeals to emotion, is deliberately misrepresented or invented, with the intention of justifying tactical police action, or promoting police strategic objectives and the associated ideology of law-based legitimacy.

This definition differs from other definitions in key respects. While adopting Marlin’s emphasis on veracity, it places a low threshold on the term ‘systematic’ allowing for a small number of communicative acts in support of tactical activity. This definition does not draw upon pre-existing discourses for its activation. This latter decision will be revisited in case-studies in which an attempt will be made to find longer-term themes in communicative activity that resonate with the short-term themes presented in the proposed propaganda act. In other words, the study will look for patterns in police-PR that might be repeated in specific pieces of propaganda.

For the purposes of this study, the analysed data will be examined for deceit claims as identified by Corner (2007) and outlined above. This is problematic, as it is all but impossible to be sure – to prove beyond any doubt - when deceit has taken place, and the detection of exaggeration, or appeals to emotion, is largely a matter of subjective opinion. To this end the question will be asked:

1. In what cases can there be a ‘reasonable suspicion’ of false claims?
2. In what cases can there be a ‘reasonable suspicion’ of exaggerated claims?
3. In what cases might appeals to emotion be ‘reasonably held’ to be apparent?

This approach sets the standard of evidence at a lower threshold. However, it necessitates a case-by-case approach which is suitable to the low volume of data available. Indeed, only three statements (offered by GMP) fall into the above definition of propaganda – none of those offered by Lancashire Police or Sussex police fit this definition. In addition, it is noteworthy that this analysis is arguably highly subjective.

**5.8.1 Affective propaganda**

**Affective propaganda is propaganda that uses emotion as its central form of manipulation and deceit. As such it passes the first threshold of propaganda, in abandoning truth. In this section a potential example of this is analysed.**

MEN 2014 2 23 Most Fracking protesters are there to 'intimidate the local community' and 'antagonise' the force, police claim

“Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts said, "At the start of this protest the majority of

protesters were peaceful and law abiding but over the past couple of weeks local residents

and officers have seen a distinct change to this. It now seems that the majority of people

who are arriving at the site are not there to protest against fracking but are there to disrupt

and intimidate the local community and to antagonise police. We have seen offences of

assaults, damage, harassment of residents and workers a flare fired at the police helicopter

and threats to kill.

"l attended a residents' meeting last week and people there were close to tears and have

had enough of this daily disruption to their lives. Locals, who initially supported the

protesters, out walking their dogs and driving down Barton Moss Road have been

approached by protesters in balaclavas and have been questioned by them which has been

extremely intimidating. We have seen a huge increase in the calls to police from that area

and this is continuing.

“Officers are verbally abused on a daily basis, one has even been spat at and another

officer required stitches to his hand after trying to get a protester down from a fence. The

police are there to do a job and that job is to facilitate peaceful protest and to balance the

needs of all parties, the residents who live there, businesses who operate from there and the

protesters themselves. It is not up to GMP who operates on this land and who has access to

it, we are simply there to police it to ensure that everyone remains safe. We are

increasingly seeing protesters trying to jump in front of HGVs or jump down from trees on top of moving lorries, it is only a matter of time before someone is seriously injured if they

continue to act in a reckless manner.

The above statement contains multiple appeals to emotion that attempt to depict the protestors as immoral and distant from the community. The intent to summon pre-existing discourses of ‘hardened protestors’ is apparent – and links to discourses elsewhere that protestors who are not locals are merely ‘trouble-makers’ rather than national or global citizens concerned with the effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

The opening paragraph places the police on the side of ‘local residents’ claiming that it ‘it now seems’ ‘the majority’ of the protestors are there to intimidate the community rather than protest. In the first instance claiming to speak for the community is rationally questionable. One wonders at his base dataset – in other words, how does he define community? In the second, why would protestors simply intimidate the community, rather than protest, this too seems questionable. Interviews with protestors (see appendices) indicate strong support from the local community, many of whom were upset by the drilling taking place. The statement is unsubstantiated and elides those residents that supported protest. The term ‘reckless’ is used to describe attempts to stop deliveries to the site – the word ‘courageous’ could have been as easily used (and would have been used by the protestors themselves). No account has been given of why protestors may be wearing ‘balaclavas’ (perhaps to prevent police surveillance), or what questions were asked by them. As a result, this statement fulfils the ‘reasonable suspicion’ criterion outlined in the methodology.

Here we see police messaging that is activity well-beyond mere policing of protest. This is an attempt to reject the protestors as people, and by extension their cause. The intent is to place the police as morally ‘right’. This messaging decision elides the role of central government and speaks directly to the ‘local’ interests of the MEN readership.

While the primary message might target the feelings of the audience, there is also arguably exaggeration and elision. The environmental rationales for the protest are ignored, and thus the arguments of moral equivalency that might justify the protestor’s actions. Community support for the protests is also ignored. The questionable actions of police and Cuadrilla security are not mentioned.

The claim that the majority of protestors are acting immorally is hard to evidence at best, and an outright fabrication at worst – and, reasonably speaking an exaggeration that effectively elides the local community as protestors, as well as ignoring those protestors who are acting morally in all respects. This quote featured in the MEN on the February 23rd. On February 20th the Teagate scandal came to public attention in the paper. On February 21st a juvenile was arrested, and this too received negative coverage. While it is impossible to prove intent, a cynical observer might have argued for the need to shift the narrative from police malpractice to that or protestors.

**5.8.2 Exaggeration propaganda**

Exaggeration is another element that can be introduced into a communicative act as a form of untruth. As such it too passes the first threshold for propaganda.

GMP Press release 25 February 2014

FOR OFFER:

At about 7.50am on Tuesday 25 February 2014, police became aware that two protesters at

the Barton Moss site had locked themselves onto a drum filled with concrete.

Specialist Officers attended to free them and in the process an officer suffered a minor injury to his hand.

The injury was caused by barbed wire and glass that was concealed beneath some of the

concrete inside the drum.

The protesters - a man and a woman - were freed and arrested on suspicion of aggravated

trespass and section 47 assault.

They remain in police custody.

The injuries of the police officer are being exaggerated for effect. Barbed wire and glass were used in one ‘lock-on’, this was not common practice. As a result this meets the ‘reasonable suspicion’ criterion. In addition, given that the officers on the scene must have been aware that the injuries were minor, the decision to make so much of these would have been made on the ground and supported by the PR unit – who could have made the same judgement made here. One might argue that a PR officer is not in a position, realistically, to question the claims – this is not unreasonable.

The focus upon a single instance of activity is interesting, given the number of lock-ons that took place at the site. It is also interesting that, given the earlier focus upon non-local protesters the fact these were not local either is not mentioned. Had this fact been mentioned, it would be decreased the impact of this story, showing it to be exceptional.

It is possible to be reminded here of the actions of Kent Police at Kingsnorth Climate Camp, who claimed excessive injuries from protestors, and were later found to be exaggerating to the point of lying; such that they subsequently were forced to apologise.

**5.8.3 Fabrication propaganda**

In the following case it is argued that the evidence may have been fabricated. This is the argument made by protestors. Care must be taken here in making allegations of falsehood that cannot be substantiated. In this thesis this case is cited as a possible example. Fabrication in this case is not proven.

6 January 2014

FOR OFFER: Police are currently executing a search warrant on Barton Moss Road

following an incident in which a flare was fired at the police helicopter.

At about 12.15am on Saturday 4 January 2014 a flare was fired directly into the approach path of the helicopter as in came into land at Barton Airfield.

The aircrew have confirmed that it appeared to come from the site at the nearby protest

camp.

Chief Superintendent Mark Rubens said: 'This is was an unbelievably stupid act of

criminality which was extremely dangerous, not only for the police helicopter, but all other

aircraft that use the nearby Barton airfields and the wider public.

"Had this had caused an emergency situation it would not only have been catastrophic for

the aircraft and its crew but potentially for numerous homes near the airfield, the M62

motorway and a children's residential facility.

The protest camp appears to be a tight knit group who seem to be continually filming

anything occurring on Barton Moss Road.

If one of the protesters is responsible, I suspect their identity will be known to others and I

would expect these reasonable members at the anti-tracking campaign to provide any

information they have to the police.

"An attack on the police of this nature has nothing whatsoever to do with whether or not

exploratory drilling Is right or wrong. Whilst I recognise the genuine concerns of many of the

protesters in relation to exploratory drilling, it Is obvious that there is also an element of regular protesters from outside the Greater Manchester [area]- who seem more interested in seeking confrontation with the police.

"GMP continue to balance facilitating peaceful protest with the rights of others to go about

their lawful business, whilst minimising disruption to the local community and businesses.

"Because of the way the camp is set up we have to systematically search the site under a

warrant issued by a local court.

'We will attempt to facilitate this through dialogue with protesters but we have to take all

reasonable steps to ensure there is no repeat of this action near to the airfield and that we

identify those responsible.

"We have therefore had no option but to carry out this action.

There is no firm evidence that a flare was fired at the police helicopter and the ensuing search is queried by a number of sources, including an IPCC review, academic papers, the protestors and an FOI request in which the police could not supply the logs for the flight concerned. As such this alone fulfils the ‘reasonable suspicion’ requirement.

However, there are a number of elements to the story that are curious. The search was initiated 48-hours after the event. On one hand the protestors have argued this shows duplicity – why not search immediately? On the other, the police have argued it took 48-hours to conduct investigations and gain the warrant. Neither argument is convincing, but neither is unreasonable. If the police were looking for an excuse to search or ransack the camp, then they could have found a far easier rationale – for instance, threatening behaviour using a concealed weapon would have sufficed.

That said, the language used by the police is beyond that necessary to let the story tell itself. Language is adopted within the statement of language other than that necessary to tell the story, and demonstrates an intent to persuade beyond the simple fact of the alleged criminal offence. After all, a flare fired at a helicopter is not a story requiring substantial moral framing. This is a written statement, and it is reasonable to believe the content of the text was dwelt upon at length. The phrase ‘unbelievably stupid’ is not the result of an accidental outburst by a senior officer struggling to keep his temper, but rather the deliberate wording of public relations professionals. One should wonder if the media logic of the PR actors concerned led them to consider this wording useful to their overall intent.

The ‘outsiders’ frame is repeated. Which again draws upon the pre-existing discourse of ‘hardened activists’. The existence of ‘Hedging’, the use of language which allows a level of prevarication, is interesting here. Paragraph six begins “*If* the protester responsible…” (my emphasis). The word ‘If’, is hedging and allows the police to bridge from the dubious claim that a flare has been fired, into a general critique of protestor deviancy, without defamation (in fact, police statements are seldom subject to libel, some statement attract qualified privilege, in this case the police have not identified the alleged perpetrator, although one might wonder how many people are at the camp at this time. This is however, not the place for a discussion of libel law.).

**5.9 A discussion of other police statements as Societal and Political propaganda**

What is notable is that the above statements are exceptional in fulfilling the criterion for propaganda laid out in this chapter’s definition. After all, the threshold for this criterion was quite low; ‘reasonable suspicion’, and so there could have been an expectation that more police-PR would fulfil the criterion laid down. The case for these statements being propaganda is not proven conclusively. Indeed, care must be taken here to avoid potentially libellous accusations – this study has merely stated that it is possible to have a ‘reasonable suspicion’.

However, it may be more useful to consider those statements that did not fulfil the criteria, as this places claims for propaganda into the context of the wider analysed text. The decision not to identify these as propaganda is not unproblematic: it is largely due to the closed nature of the adopted definition. In fact, Jowett and O’Donnell’s definition would include many of these statements as it does not include a ‘criterion’ of veracity. All the police statements are ‘deliberate’ and ‘systematic’. All of the explanatory statements ‘attempt to shape perceptions’. It could be argued that they are not an all an attempt to ‘direct behaviour’ but rather an attempt to communicate rationales and justifications. However, we are returned to Corner’s (2007) argument that any promotional activity – and certainly any public relations – could fall under this definition. Jowett and O’Donnell also summon motive as a criterion, but this too becomes increasingly subjective when used in analysis.

Much of the study of propaganda has looked at its military or foreign policy uses (Briant, 2013), in which it is an instrument or weapon of war. While ‘black’ propaganda as described by Ellul does not identify its perpetrators, it has been generally possible to identify propaganda itself – albeit with considerable debate in certain cases. However, in this case, identifying propaganda is far more problematic, and arguably, as Corner argues, of little utility. Although it does help in rejecting the more simplistic offerings of structural thinkers. An unnuanced use of Althusser or Gramsci in this circumstance might expect to see propaganda as an obvious and overt function of police-PR. This is not proven to be the case, and it might seem that assertions to contrary are driven as much by ideology as evidence. Returning to Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda Model there is little evidence in this study that regional journalists bow to the police because of ‘Flak’ or defer to them as dominant sources. There is, however, evidence that the Lancashire Gazette was influenced by advertisers in this case. The interview with media-activist Claire Stephenson (see appendices) reveals that she was threatened by the Gazette when she criticised its sponsorship arrangement with the drilling company. The question of ideology is far more complex and is revisited below, and in the chapter looking at Bourdieu. There is considerable evidence of tension between journalists and police officers as cited elsewhere. In addition, there is a strong indication that journalistic practice is influenced by workplace orthodoxy and doxa, rather than arguing that structural elements play no part in this field of communication. The role of media capital, doxa and orthodoxy, societal myth and ritual, media logics, promotional rhetoric and mediatization are discussed later in this thesis in studies of legitimacy and field theory.

It may then prove useful to this discussion to examine more closely those elements of the copy that might be characterised as explanatory or factual, but may exhibit a bias in their implicit assumptions. Such discourses include costs of policing, safety, road closures and arrests. All three regional newspapers cite these stories to a lesser or greater extent. It is not after all unreasonable that the police should give accounts of these events in their day-to-day communications as they are part of their day-to-day practice. However, the assumption that protestors are the cause of the protest imply they are the source of increased police costs, breaches of safety, and the closure of roads.

**5.10 Police action as event amplifiers, and police communication as amplifiers**

Hall *et al’s* observations on ‘amplification’ are useful for the purposes of this section. In *Policing the Crisis* he states that the focus of policing resources upon muggings increases the number and likelihood of arrests. Hall also discusses how ‘Folk Devils’ are created and can of themselves paradoxically create crime – amplifying again police expectations, as well as public expectations of muggers and muggings. In the case of anti-Fracking protests, the presence and action of police amplifies the real and potential illegality of the protests.

In the case of the anti-fracking protests we could point to how expectations allowed protest action to ‘snowball’, as well as perhaps the need to make arrests once police were present. For instance, Gilmore et al (2016) maintain, through interviews, that police seemed to have a quota of arrests. However, it is difficult to argue that the protests should not have been policed at all given the public safety implications of protestors and heavy equipment, and the rights of the businesses concerned. That said the communicative implications of policing bear close analysis.

However – as noted by Hall et al – the presence of police, and the apparent need for police action, has effects of its own. Arrests, as a *de facto* statement of wrong-doing also serve to frame narratives of activity and practice. The textual analysis has already shown the centrality of police in the texts. However, a broad-brush analysis of the three sets of texts reveals –

Arrest/arrests/arrested:

* 21 of 32 coded texts in the Argus contained the word arrest/arrests/arrested;
* 9 of 24 coded texts in the MEN contained the words arrest/arrests/arrested;
* 15 of 46 coded texts in the Gazette contained the word arrest/arrests/arrested.

There is wide variation in the presence of key words in the texts. It is difficult to draw firm conclusions based upon this analysis, particularly when one bears in mind the necessary caution when dealing with raw quantitative data of this type. Finally, given the focus of the research question, there can still be no evidence of the agency of police-PR.

**5.11 Road closures and budgets**

Of the 20 coded statements by Lancashire Police, six mentioned road closures. Road closure is not mentioned once by GMP at Barton Moss, it is mentioned six times at Balcombe Down by Sussex Police. Budgets are a theme revisited in all of the analysed texts. Policing protests costs money, and these resources are drawn from normal operational budgets. Central government funding is available, and local police organisations have sought this funding using the rationale that anti-fracking protests are the result of central government policy. In the Argus the issue was addressed in several in-depth interviews with senior policing staff, as well as more generally in news pieces in which the cost of protests was addressed.

There are multiple examples found in the texts in which road closures and budget effects are blamed upon protests and the protestors by the police. The police never argue that government policy, or drilling attempts, might have had a role in provoking the necessity for road closures or budget overspends. This elision has the effect of placing the protestors as the aggressors in a narrative schema and a conflict framing.

For instance in the Gazette-

2017 21 8 Delays expected due to Fracking protest Drivers are being warned to expect delays -

A police spokesman said: "We have got protesters locked on in the area and this required us to close the eastbound carriageway. "There is general protester activity in the area."

And at Preston New Road

2017 7 12 Preston New Road closed after Fracking protest Preston New Road was blocked by campaigners

A spokesman for the police said: "A number of campaigners have locked on over at the Cuadrilla site in Preston New Road.

"Drivers should try to avoid the area while the incident is in progress."

In the Argus the issue of budgets was addressed in several in-depth interviews with senior policing staff, as well as more generally in news pieces in which the cost of protests was addressed.

2013 10 5 Your interview: Paul Sellings, Sussex Police Federation chairman

**PETER LATHAM, via email:** *Should the Home Office pay the costs of the Balcombe operation?*

**PS:** Fracking is a national issue which just so happens to take place in Sussex. I don’t see why Sussex should bear the brunt of a national issue.

I know [Katy Bourne](http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/special/policecommissioner/conservative/) has asked for reimbursement of the £4 million operational costs and we urge the Government to satisfy this request.

If fracking goes ahead then the whole country could benefit but at the moment it’s just Sussex that’s having to pay the policing costs and that’s unfair.

**TERRY RENFORD, Worthing:** *In Balcombe were the police effectively acting as security guards for Cuadrilla despite the largely peaceful protest?*

**PS:**”…The operation cost a lot of money but in order to keep the peace it was unavoidable.”

**RACY DUBOIS, Bevendean:** *If so many frontline cuts have been made why is there now a recruitment drive and overtime being offered? Doesn’t this defeat the point of the budget cuts?*

**PS:** Overtime is being offered because we haven’t got enough police officers to fulfil the shifts we need. With the protests we’ve had to have officers coming in on their days off. We simply don’t have enough officers so we need overtime to fill the gap.

The above version of the Paul Sellings interview is edited to only include those elements addressing funding. Sellings does address issues of budget, but he is careful throughout the interview not to take sides; “The rights and wrongs of fracking are not a matter for us. We are apolitical and are there to uphold the law and facilitate peaceful protest”. It is notable that he states unequivocally that ‘fracking is a national issue’, referencing the national debate on the subject.

This discourse is also offered by GMP, but GMP does seem to take sides -

2014 2 7 GMP chief Sir Peter Fahy slams fracking protesters for trying to 'provoke' police officers

BY KATIE STOREY

Sir Peter Fahy is dismayed by the amount of time and money his force have spent on patrolling the anti-fracking protest.

Greater Manchester's chief police officer is dismayed by the amount of time and money his force have spent on patrolling the anti-fracking protest at Barton Moss.

Chief Constable Peter Fahy has raised concerns that the costs of patrolling the protest, which already stands at £660,000 could escalate to £1M.

He claims his officers have been verbally abused and are stuck in the middle, unable to carry out normal duties with three months already spent at the site.

Chief Con Fahy said: "The cost of this operation is met from our normal budget and means that officers on duty at this protest are not patrolling their beats or carrying out operations to investigate crime.

This report conflates the abuse of officers with budgetary concerns. However, the press statements on these two subjects are separate, in other words the decision to conflate these stories was made by the MEN not GMP. However, Fahy characterises the protests, and by reasonable extension, the protestors as the cause of the drain on resources; adopting a community framing to show how these reduces police resources on other policing matters.

Simon Pook, from Robert Lizar Solicitors, who is representing Saffron, said: “…

“I’m also extremely concerned about the cost to the public purse - not only the policing cost at Barton Moss but the cost of cases being withdrawn and of solicitors and the CPS.”

This above quotation is included for completeness, showing how those opposed to fracking are also using a budget framing.

**5.12 Discourses of road closure and budgeting – Sociological propaganda vs political propaganda**

In order to properly analyse the data found in the previous section, it will be useful here to return to Ellul’s two forms of propaganda; sociological and political, as it helps in readdressing its key theme:

“Propaganda as it is traditionally known implies an attempt to spread an ideology through the mass media of communication in order to lead the public to accept some *political* or economic structure or to participate in some action.” (1973, p.63) (My emphasis).

In other words, it fits with the traditional models or definitions of propaganda offered by Marlin or Jowett & O’Donnell. It also fits with the definition offered in earlier in this section.

“But in sociological propaganda the movement is reversed. The existing economic, political, and sociological factors progressively allow an ideology to penetrate individuals and masses.” (Ibid).

Sociological propaganda builds upon a kind of *false consciousness* although Ellul does not use this term. “Sociological propaganda springs up spontaneously; it is not the result of deliberate propaganda action” (Ibid, p.64).

The recurring themes presented in the analysis above – the attempt to show the protesters as outsiders, and the decision to close roads etc. are the result of protestor rather than government action, fit into these definitions by generating a *sociological propaganda*. In fact, Ellul’s continued discussion on this theme introduces further useful concepts such as integration vs agitation propaganda, and vertical vs horizontal propaganda. The latter distinguishes between propaganda directed from above and down through a society, vertically, and messaging that attempts to place the propagandist within its peers, horizontally. Agitation propaganda is used by governments and revolutionaries to propose and foster conflict with opposing groups. Integration propaganda aims to build societal cohesion, “It is the propaganda of conformity.” (1973, P.74).

Messages of conformity and social cohesion occur throughout police-PR in this study, both consciously through overt messaging, and perhaps subconsciously through the narrative and journalistic norms of media logic. Here also perhaps, is a defence of Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model i.e. all communicative acts are *de facto* acts of propaganda.

It is useful here to return to the textual analysis offered in the textual analysis chapter, in which dominant framings included:

* Community framings in which actors claimed to be speaking for, or acting for the community;
* Legitimacy claims in terms of procedure validity;
* Morality framings, primarily in terms of violence vs peaceful protests and police action.

Frames such as environmental or economic framings were avoided or made sub-dominant to the above – even by groups such as Lancashire for Shale, who were, nominatively, pro-business. Only activists offered these framings, whilst still reliant and competing for primarily dominant framings.

**5.13 Conclusion**

In this chapter the analysis has sought evidence of propaganda in police-PR and found the claims for its presence to be problematic in its normative or traditional definitions. Only by presenting a restricted definition of propaganda was it possible to identify police propaganda acts with any level of certainty, i.e. identifying exaggeration, affective language and possible falsification in the case of GMP. It is not that there are no reasonable arguments in favour of police propaganda in these cases, but rather that they are not proven. There is substantial evidence of police practice in action and strategic practice which establishes them in collusion and planned alliance with a number of actors and agencies whose stated position is pro-fracking; these include corporate, state-level and dominant political actors.

In addition, there is substantial evidence for propaganda historically, or at the very least a capacity for exaggeration, elision and, on occasion, out-right lies in such cases as Hillsborough, the death of Ian Tomlinson, and the Kingsnorth Climate Camp. There are numerous examples – too many to list here. Moreover, recent revelations regarding the intelligence operations – spying – upon activists brings into question much of the police’s approach to protest, despite their insistence that they facilitate peaceful protest in keeping with current human rights obligations.

While in the dataset there are several examples of exaggeration, elision and appeals to emotion, these are not dominant within the text and could be discounted as merely tactical responses to particular contexts, rather than acts of propaganda. Only by adopting a particularly loose definition of propaganda can the case be maintained, and this might be open to substantial critique. The argument for the ‘strong version’ of propaganda is undermined by the impracticality of proving intent not only to fabricate accounts in individual cases, but also to do so systemically, in an organised manner consistent with traditional structuralist arguments.

To allow for the majority of the coverage to be included in a definition of propaganda, framing - “…*selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation*…” (Entman, 2003) - would have to be included. Such a decision would take the analysis closer to Herman and Chomsky’s understanding of the term, in which any government or establishment communicative act is thought of as being hegemonic. But in doing so a rationale for widening the definitions of propaganda was needed, because the available material did not fit with existing definitions. Ellul provides these with his work on sociological, integration and horizontal propaganda. Employing these the study was able to draw upon the framing research undertaken in the textual analysis chapter and show that, while it is true that overt propaganda was being undertaken, the more subtle forms were present. This is consistent with Ellul’s contention that sophisticated western-style democracies, particularly its educated classes, conduct sociological propaganda, rather than political propaganda. It is also consistent with Bourdieu’s contention in *Outline of Theory of Practice* (1979) “Once a system or mechanism has been constituted capable of objectively ensuring the reproduction of the established order by its own motion…the dominant class have only to let the system they dominate take its course…”. (p.190). The in chapter on Bourdieu will revisit this theme in order to argue that more nuanced accounts of structural influences as propaganda can be usefully included in an account of practice within a field of endeavour. However, before that, police-PR will be addressed as ongoing acts of legitimation – this will allow for the methodological triangulation through critical discourse analysis proposed in the Methodology chapter.

**6.0 Police-PR and legitimacy claims**

In the previous chapter police-PR as structural propaganda was discussed. Classical definitions of propaganda were shown to apply in a loose sense, and only in a weak analytical version; an understanding of propaganda that places it within constructed or pre-conceived discourses. As such the legitimacy of police action was founded in nominally hegemonic discourses – in the Gramscian ‘common sense’ of Ellullian ‘myths’. Even where propagandistic behaviours were exhibited these drew upon consensus or norms. Deceit as an essential part of propaganda was practised in the pursuit of some legitimacy claims. As argued in the literature review such claims are central to the self-presentation of police forces in the UK. Legitimacy could be argued to come from a list of sources; the law, from normative practice, societal definitions of deviancy, democratic norms of representation, and bureaucratic processes, as well as accepted norms of police behaviour. However, given the role of coercion ‘warranted’ by society to the police, effective legitimacy claims might seem to ‘warrant’ action in that they make that action valid. As such, legitimacy claims seem to be central to the reputation of the police. Legitimacy claims are – nominally – a presentational or public relations issue. All legitimacy claims are acts of communicative action; they are public relations as defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR):

Public Relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. (CIPR, 2015)

This chapter offers a discussion and further exploration of the concept of Legitimacy, with reference to how it might seem in the datasets in the textual analysis, semi-structured interviews and document discovery. The chapter uses documents discovered through FOI and information gained from interviews, to further discuss legitimacy claims, their place in police-PR and their impact upon news coverage in the regional press.

**6.1 Protestor attitudes towards legitimacy claims**

As previously stated, this thesis does not address audience effects, and so any analysis made here of the thoughts and feelings of activists must be treated with care. It is however possible to derive some tentative findings from the existing literature, as well as the interviews and news-coverage. Wyn Grant’s insider and outsider typologies (Grant, 2004) were highlighted in the review. Essentially, the idea that some protestors see the news-media as illegitimate members of a ruling elite and therefore see little point in engaging with them or media-relations activity, while others see themselves as engaging with a democratic process via, amongst other things, the news-media. Tootill is quoted in the literature review (p.41) in support of the outsider position with regard to the fracking protests. To such groups, all consensus claims coming from culturally dominant positions (in the Gramscian sense) are illegitimate – such positions include the news-media, the police and the state. To media activists such as McWhirter, Stephenson or Porter interviewed for this study (see appendices), media relations is possible and worthy of considerable time and effort; to them the news-media has some level of legitimacy.

However, there is, apparently, a shared belief that public relations generally (and to some extent media-relations in particular) has or is undermining the public discourse. This is shown in the protestors targeting PR-agencies hired by the drilling companies:

Campaign group No Dash For Gas said six protesters superglued themselves to the glass door of Bell Pottinger at 8am and deployed reinforced arm tubes to stop anyone else getting inside.

Another activist climbed the High Holborn building and unfurled a banner bearing the words: "Bell Pottinger - fracking liars". (2013 8 9 UPDATE Fracking protests target drilling company Cuadrilla's HQ).

It is also a position maintained by Spinwatch (Spinwatch, 2017) which, in a video called ‘Meet the Frackers’, tours London-based public relations companies associated with the fracking industry. The fear voiced is not only are these companies engaged in media-relations, but their lobbying activity and government contacts are dominating and undermining political policy-making and public discourse. There is a sense in the video that this is considered unfair or underhand, and so illegitimate; and thus undermining the legitimacy of fracking as policy and action in its own right.

The legitimacy of the police is also undermined; this is illustrated throughout the copy.

Environmental activist Nick St Clare, 53, said: “The British law has a duty of care that's imposed on every person in the country, including the government, which states it must take reasonable care to avoid acts you can reasonably foresee that will injure or harm your neighbour.

“If you damage or destroy the environment, then you're injuring your neighbour.

“The most serious threat to life and property on this planet, right now, is environmental damage and destruction.” (2013 8 1 Anti-fracking protest arrests in Balcombe up to 25 as two glue themselves together)

And –

The solicitor, based at the Moss Side practice, said: “I’m extremely concerned about the policing model at Barton Moss. I have never witnessed such aggression and overt violence being perpetrated by the state – and by the state I mean the police.

“I’m a solicitor and I was shocked when I went to Barton Moss because I feared for my safety. The police appeared to be out of control. I had to go and stand in a field when I went there because I was so afraid of what was going on.

“The last time I saw policing like this was during the miners’ strike in the 1980s. That’s why I’m asking the United Nation’s Rapporteur to revisit his report on peaceful protest in the UK.” (2014 3 25 Solicitor compiles dossier for UN on police).

Such legitimacy is also undermined by the apparent belief that human rights are being breached.

**6.2 Human Rights**

The solicitor’s threat, rejected by the GMP, may have been meant to remind all parties of their obligations in terms of political and human rights. It also speaks to a wider discourse of protest in response to state-level practice, rather than the protests as purely a criminal matter. This is reflected in the practice of the courts.

For instance, these comments by Lord Hoffman in a Court of Appeal judgment in 2006, were made in reference to a protest in which more than £1.5m of damage was caused to fighter aircraft:

“It is the mark of a civilised (sic) community that it can accommodate protests and demonstrations of this kind. But there are conventions which are generally accepted by the law-breakers on one side and the law-enforcers on the other

“The protesters behave with a sense of proportion and do not cause excessive damage or inconvenience. And they vouch the sincerity of their beliefs by accepting the penalties imposed by the law.

“The police and prosecutors, on the other hand, behave with restraint and the magistrates impose sentences which take the conscientious motives of the protesters into account. The conditional discharges ordered by the magistrates in the cases which came before them exemplifies their sensitivity to these conventions.” (Courts and Tribunals Judiciary, 2019)

The exceptional position of protest is emphasised here, and the requirement for rights associated with protest to be given special consideration is underlined in Kiai’s report. Gilmore et al (2016) make a similar point in their critique; “As a public body, Greater Manchester Police have a positive obligation under the Act to actively uphold and facilitate the rights and freedoms enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)21.” (p.11). In this regard, Gilmore argues, the punitive use of police bail conditions as a means to limit protest is particularly problematic when one considers that these conditions were often overturned when submitted to the scrutiny of the courts.

Police bail is not the same as bail granted by magistrates. Police bail is:

The system administered by police whereby a person under ongoing investigation can be released from arrest on conditions, including that they return to a police station on a later date, at which time they may be questioned again, charged or be told there will be no charge. *They can be arrested if they breach the conditions.* After being charged, they can be bailed by police to attend court, or may be taken there in custody. [My emphasis]. (Hanna and Dodd, 2012, p.440)

It should be noted here that both the Argus and the MEN ran reports after the protests had finished – and thus not analysed in this study – in which it was shown that many cases brought by the police to the courts were rejected’ that is it was found there was no case to answer, or the defendants were found not guilty. (2014 3 4 Special report Half of cases dropped against Balcombe protesters despite £4m bill; Gilmore, 2016).

It is interesting then, but a perhaps a subject for a separate study, that the courts seem at first glance to be at odds with the police’s judgement. There is a *prima facie* case for the courts rejecting the police approach – although this issue sits outside of the remit of this thesis. However, this apparent conflict has several effects, primarily in undermining the credibility and legitimacy of police action with protestors in using arrest and police-bail conditions as a means to reduce protest.

“Vanessa Vine, of Frack Free Sussex, deemed the policing at Balcombe “farcical”.

She said: “With so many charges quietly dropped and with judges and barristers asking incredulously why on earth others have even been taken as far as the courtroom, the policing of the Balcombe protests have become ever more farcical and ever more suspicious.

“Hopefully the taxpayers of Sussex and beyond are now questioning why their money has gone on such blatantly political policing of a peaceful protest.”

She added: “Something is very, very wrong here.” (Brighton Argus, 2014 3 4 Special report: Half of cases dropped against Balcombe protesters despite £4m bill).

This sense of unease with policing practice, because of arrest and police-bail decisions, has led some to argue that police were using arrest and bail conditions as a form of summary punishment (Tootill, 2016; Gilmore, 2106). The effect of this is to erode the police’s primary and preferred framing in justifying their practice; legal positivism. In forces them to fall back on other framings – such as moral framings - or to adopt communicative techniques which either ‘spin’ a story or become akin to traditional definitions of propaganda. These themes are addressed more fully in the sections looking at framing and propaganda.

**6.3 Discussion**

As noted in the literature review (section 2.6) it is reasonable to expect police-PR to play its role in the establishment and maintenance of legitimacy claims. It has already been discussed that substantial effort and resource is dedicated to PR by the police, in ‘patrolling the facts’ as Ericson (1989a) would have it. PR objectives, when they take the form of justifying police practice, reacting to attacks on those justifications, promoting images of legitimacy or maintaining public support are all informing and are informed by, both the society-wide image of policing, and coverage linked to specific events (such as the protests addressed in this study). These objectives will include an appreciation for, and a targeting of, audiences, messages and media. This is illustrated in the communications objectives detailed in the communications plans returned by both the GMP and the Sussex Police (see appendices); both of which listed audience groups and messaging.

These kind of PR objectives highlight the management role of PR practice, in the sense that it is planned and deliberate action. In this sense, the role of PR is to ‘manage’ the presentation of the police’s public persona. Legitimacy claims are central to the management of that persona. For the purposes of this research legitimacy claims will be viewed in terms of how police actions – such as the use of force, arrests, road closures and budgetary expenditures – are justified, and to whom those justifications are made. The latter question may be difficult to fully answer in practice. To this end, it is important to ask the question; ‘legitimacy with whom?’ and ‘legitimacy for what purpose?’. Or to put it another way, who are the key audiences for police communications and what are those communications trying to achieve? Who are police communications officers communicating with? These questions assume a rational link between legitimacy as key messaging, and audience.

For instance, this standing statement found in GMP’s media ‘Comms Strategy’ (see appendices on disc) which makes legitimacy claims

GMP respects everyone’s democratic right to lawfully protest and officers are monitoring the demonstration and working with partner agencies to ensure it it [sic] passes peacefully and safely.

Which includes the following listing of audience groups:

* NWAS;
* GMFRS;
* PCC;
* Public;
* Environment Agency;
* Highways Agency;
* Salford CC;
* Trafford MBC
* IGas;
* Trafford Centre;
* Peel Holdings.

It has been noted in an earlier analysis of the police communications strategies that protestors are at best considered secondary audiences for coverage. Media liaison was clearly considered a core activity, with the media manager meeting with Gold Commanders regularly and often (see appendices) and it is clear from the amount and range of police comment present in the coverage that considerable effort was made to maintain a ‘police voice’ in their coverage.

However, that said, it could be argued that the police stated wish to maintain their legitimacy with journalists is questionable i.e. PR actors might primarily wish to maintain legitimacy with those who read journalists’ work, rather than the journalists themselves. Once again, the analysis is drawn to the idea that police-PR takes place, not as an act of communicative action as argued by Habermas (Habermas, 1987), or even as an act of power (the monopoly of violence) as argued byWeber (Weber, 2009), but rather as act of cultural necessity in an organisational agency in contemporary society. In other words, the expectations ensuing from a dominant societal promotional rhetoric, or the needs of mediatization, make it necessary for PR action to take place. A necessity found at both a societal level, and a meso-level of management activity which produces the rationale for PR activity from within the organisation. One could further theorise that, given the demand for comment itself springing from the routines of news-reporting and arising from the news-media, that a police-PR response is necessary in a normative sense i.e. that PR professionals are the recipients of a normative and doxic expectation of action to which they respond (Mawby, 2002; Schlesinger & Tumber, 1994).

This can be contrasted with, and is different to, police-PR’s role as – Althusser might have it (Miliband, 1977) – an Ideological State Apparatus and a Repressive State Apparatus. While there are structural, or more accurately perhaps, cultural aspects to the normative expectation for PR practice, this is not the same as the classic Marxist interpretation voiced in *The German Ideology* (Marx, 1974). Althusser might argue police-PR is one of the few organisational operations that sits astride the two elements of RSA and ISA – but the level of intent necessary for this argument is, at best, unproven. Foucault and his adherents have made much of societal discourse in its role of discipline and punishment (Sheridan, 1990). This study will not visit this element in depth, other than to note the police-PR’s role in naming/identifying societal deviancy (see Ericson *Patrolling the Facts,* 1989; Chibnall *Law and Order News,* 1977; Hall, *Policing the Crisis,* 1978).

In this section the issue of Legitimacy in police conduct and its representations will be visited in three sections:

1. Police-PR as informed by, and as a response to, a societal crisis of legitimacy. The protests themselves are a product of irreconcilable tensions within society that are present in state level decision making;
2. Legitimacy claims are central to police practice and are necessary to it. Successful police action and police-PR requires successful legitimacy claims;
3. PR as a mode of rhetoric that is essential in maintaining legitimacy. This section will discuss the growth of PR across society and how ‘promotionalism’ (Wernick, 1991) has become the dominant mode of discourse. That is to say that, PR practice has become so widespread in society, that it has developed its own rhetorical voice to the extent that those not speaking with this voice are ‘de-legitimised’. As such, police-PR serves the wider policing practice by speaking for it in a societally accepted, ‘appropriate’ voice.

Legitimation is an important part of the work of police-PR. Tyler (2006) makes an argument for legitimacy as a “reservoir of support” and underlines the importance of its role in creating deference as well as consent (p. 281). Mawby too (2002), makes a strong argument for the centrality of legitimacy claims in police action and in police-PR. Indeed the Textual Analysis (chapter 4) of this thesis provides considerable evidence for police organisations seeking to justify their actions in terms of procedure, as well as in terms of morality or community consensus. While the wider PR remit of garnering general public support for all police practice sits outside the scope of this study, there is ample evidence supporting PR-practice that seeks to promote the police in their everyday role as positive actors for law and order within both the policed community and society as a whole.

Within this study, the role of police-PR, and that of other actors is shown as important, and the subject of considerable effort.

Not only are the PR outputs of the police revealed in their statements, but also in the associated coverage. As has been noted in PR practice by such groups as Pottinger (Argus 3 8 9 UPDATE: Fracking protests target drilling company Cuadrilla's HQ), it has been blamed by activists for the adoption and support of the government for fracking. Indeed, many of the arguments for fracking are deemed illegitimate by protesters precisely because the ‘rules’ - in terms of planning permissions and environmental regulations – are thought to have been improperly influenced by public relations actors in the form of political lobbying and to some extent, media relations (Spinwatch, 2007, Tootill, 2016). Justification for fracking has also been attacked as ‘PR’ by protestors. Moreover, there is considerable evidence that PR activity between police-PR actors and those of drilling companies was - nominally and to some extent in reality – carried out in concert when addressing protests at drilling sites.

The result (as discussed in chapter 7) is a field of contest centred around PR practice, and PR practitioners on all sides. As the frame analysis, given in the Textual Analysis (chapter 4), indicates, legitimacy claims are a core component of police-PR activity when it is involved in justification, and they refer to administrative/state decision-making in arguing that the police are duty-bound to allow business to ‘go about their lawful business’. Beetham does discuss ‘legitimacy in context’, but his highly theoretical discussion of legitimacy is tested by the available data found in this study and found wanting.

**6.3.1 The role of legitimacy in preventing the need for coercion**

The failure to establish and maintain legitimacy with the protesters leads to a ‘downward spiral’ towards coercion. In the case of the anti-fracking protests, weakened ‘legitimacy claims’ are central motivations to acts of civil disobedience (Tootill, 2016) - which are being met in turn by various forms of police coercion; arrests, the use of ‘pressure points’, search and seizure and some violence. Examples of this perception can be found in Gilmore *et al’s ‘That is not facilitating peaceful protest. That is dismantling the protest’: anti-fracking protesters’ experiences of dialogue policing and mass arrest* (2007). Short et al’s (2015) exploration of the human rights implications of the policing of Balcombe and Barton Moss considers the erosion of the right to freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly amongst others. They argue that neo-liberal ideology has made the needs of capitalism coterminous – with particular reference to fracking protests:

For example, in the UK much of the public fracking debate has been conducted in a context which involves a government wanting to ‘go all out for shale’ while at the same time having a ‘lead non-executive director’ at the Cabinet Office, Lord Browne, who is also the Chairman of shale gas company Cuadrilla Resources. There have been illuminating ‘freedom of information’ requests in the UK that have demonstrated collusion between key politicians and industry figures on such matters as how best to ‘manage’ public perceptions and manufacture consent in order to ‘fast track’ fracking development. (Short et al, 2015, p.720)

They go on to cite this as potentially ‘malfeasance in public office’. The commensurate collapse in legitimacy claims with the protestor groups has required a more coercive response ‘on the ground’ at protests. For instance, Gilmore *et al’s* (2017) paper is equally damning in showing how these and other recent policing failures and a report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Assembly and Association “have triggered a haemorrhaging of public confidence in public order policing” (p.1). The result, they argue, is that what starts with a ‘velvet glove’ of ‘liaison and dialogue’ (p.5) quickly becomes ‘an iron fist’ of ‘mass arrest’ (p.8) when protestors - denuded of trust in police practice because it is perceived as aligned with state/capitalist malfeasance – refuse to partake in dialogue.

“Thus, under a dialogue model, the resort to violent policing is not necessarily repressive; rather it is a rational response to non-rational forms of protest. Yet the police maintain the monopoly to decide which groups fall outside of the parameters of the dialogue model. Crude characterisations of protest groups, who often encompass a range of political perspectives and experiences, as radical, militant and ‘anti-police’, delegitimise their activities and exclude them from the possibilities of a more consensual policing response. In the case of the Barton Moss protesters, this framing enabled GMP to claim to ‘work hard to build relationships at the camp’ whilst at the same time deploying a heavily equipped, militarised policing…” (Gilmore et al, 2017, p.13)

The failures of legitimacy claims in policing action are voiced in the PR practice of framing in which they are contested by a number of different actors e.g. police, protestors and other interested third parties such as pro-Fracking lobbyists (see Textual Analysis chapter 4). The central legitimacy crisis of public order policing is not resolved at the protest, it can’t be, but is apparently attempted in the PR practice that accompanies it.

Jurgen Habermas in *Legitimation Crisis* (2007) identifies the same issue noting that, in very real terms, decision- and policy-making has been taken out of the hands the community and other campaigning parties, and placed in the hands of either administrative technocrats or the political elites of central government (see for instance Argus, 2013 8 13 Special report: Prime Minister's bold Fracking message as activists head to Balcombe). This is most apparent in the data in the over-ruling of local councils by central government, but it is – as already seen - also a central claim made by the protesters; it is to some extent supported by a police claims that the protests are national in nature and so their policing should be funded by central government.

**6.4 Police public relations as a steering mechanism in legitimation crises**

The very act of protest, and the refusal to comply with, or defer to, police instructions is evidence of a lack of practical action-based consent. It shows a failure of belief in legitimacy outlined byWeber (Weber, 1968), and a rejection of Beetham’s (Beetham, 1974) third level of legitimacy on the part of the protestors. Police-PR’s response to this is both context and agency based. The central crisis of governmental legitimacy (if it is truly a crisis) is beyond its effective agency – it cannot, via police action, affect the way in which policy or law is made. It has some latitude in action, and has duties under Human Rights legislation to facilitate ‘lawful’ protest. This is referenced by the police throughout the coverage.

It is worth restating that, in terms of the protests, other state actors and agencies are largely not present in the coverage, so the secondary role of justification at the point of protests is undertaken by the police; a contention supported in framing choices as found in the analysed coverage. However, the presentation of these claims - either by the police, or by the news media – is not the same as their acceptance by any parties, actors or agencies.

Police-PR, and for that matter police action, finds itself placed in the middle of this ‘crisis’ activity, without necessarily having made any conscious, planned or executive decision to do so (although of course it is impractical to try to prove intent). As the sole state actor at the scene of the protests it becomes one of the subjects of the systemic contradiction highlighted by Habermas and discussed at the different levels by Beetham’s taxonomy. Whether or not this gives police a central role in the ‘steering mechanisms’ for this crisis is debatable. Indeed, identifying any of the Habermassian societal ‘steering mechanisms’ is not a facile task as Habermas does not give examples as a guide. One might assume that, in this case, they are centred upon the democratic, administrative and legal processes of the state – and if so, there is no obvious way in which the police can influence elite actors or their policies. The fact of the protests themselves should normatively have some effect upon democratic representation, and legal challenges are made by protestors with variable success. While it is true that the act of arrest places the protest before the courts, they appear primarily as a series of criminal offences, arguably denuded of their implied critique of government policy and politics. Politicians do have some role in the protests – local councillors and MPs have been arrested at the protests – and Labour has adopted an anti-Fracking position in its Manifesto. However, it is difficult to convincingly argue a police role in these processes.

The police role is purely legalistic, take, for instance

LH [Superintendent LAWRENCE HOBBS]: THE right to protest is a valuable one and has our full support.

However, as with all areas of life, there are boundaries and when people elect to step over those boundaries and engage in unlawful and criminal behaviour, then that right is negated and they can expect to be arrested. (Argus: 13 8 18 THE BIG INTERVIEW: Sussex Police Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs on fracking and Balcombe).

In this ‘big interview’, which is 1,350 words long, there is no reference to government policy as a source of validity. The making of policy and the accompanying law is elided from the process.

In a separate interview Paul Sellings, Sussex Police Federation chairman, is asked directly by a reader if the police are acting as ‘security’ for the drilling company:

**PS [Paul Selling]:** “I reject that. Cuadrilla was carrying out lawful activity. The rights and wrongs of fracking are not a matter for us. We are apolitical and are there to uphold the law and facilitate peaceful protest.

All police will have different views but that’s academic. We have a duty to uphold the law. (Argus, 2013 10 5 Your interview: Paul Sellings, Sussex Police Federation chairman)

Here the police spokespeople are voicing, with some frustration, their position as enforcers of a decision made someway ‘upstream’ of them in state processes. But they are doing it without directly speaking to the core issues of – in agreement with Short et al (2015) – an apparently corrupted legislative and state decision-making system. Whether or not the police officers concerned have genuine sympathy with the protesters is debatable, but they argue that they perceive little flexibility in their policing duties subsequent to a policy decision. There is an internally coherent argument that the police cannot be allowed to decide which laws to enforce – although their choices on the ground, in enacting punitive public order choices (e.g. pressure points) and police-bail conditions that prevent further protest activity (Gilmore et al, 2017), suggest a higher level of agency than is admitted in these statements. However, this reliance upon legal positivism leaves their position liable to attack from socially-orientated positions which look to a wider context of power relations, notably found and voiced in political lobbying and other public relations practice. Given this difficulty it seems apparent that police action has a very limited role as a ‘steering mechanism’ in the face of an apparent Habermassian legitimation crisis. Public order policing in this paradigm becomes a blunt instrument of coercion forcing through state-sanctioned decisions of dubious legitimacy according to protestors. If so, the resolution of the crisis must occur ‘upstream’ in elite state mechanisms and procedures, or not at all. The options for police-PR are similarly limited. It can only reflect the limitations of the police role in the ‘crisis’, describe police activity, and seek justification, validity and legitimation in a debased currency of legal positivism. The other option, of questioning the validity of the political decision-making and overtly handing the responsibility to decision-makers may be theoretically possible, but hardly practicable. That said, one might wonder if a police investigation into ‘malfeasance in public office’ on the part of political actors might go some way to restoring public confidence.

**6.5 Police communications strategies as indicators of intent in legitimacy claims**

That said, the nominal objectives for police communication are laid out in the police communications strategies discovered through this study’s FOI requests. They provide evidence of intent, that can be compared with subsequent communications activity and the resultant coverage. (It is possible that there are other objectives not listed in the documents.) The objectives include the transparent expression of policing goals, communication with key stakeholders and the intent to embed police-PR practice in the overall policing of the protest.

For instance, police strategic communication documents described core audiences as the local community, local businesses, the drilling company, strategic partner agencies such as ambulance, and fire and rescue services as well as local authorities. Relationships between these groups fall outside the scope of this study, and large-scale failures in legitimacy claims with these groups are not noted in the copy – or in the interviews with police-PR actors. However, there seems to be a close liaison between many of the groups with Sussex Council working to evict the protest camp, Sussex Police-PR working closely with the drilling company, and GMP intending to do so in their communications strategy (although the actual practice is denied by the GMP interviewee). Interestingly, reviewing the target audiences detailed in the communications plans of the police services in this study, protesters are not listed. In other words, the acceptance of police legitimacy claims with protesters was never a stated or an implied police-PR objective. As such subsequent legitimacy claims were not – nominally – aimed at them (albeit that policing communications activity – through the activity of police liaison officers on the ground - may have been). This is interesting given that senior police officers have stated the intent to communicate with protestors in interviews with the mass news-media. Take for instance this statement released by GMP:

The protest group were approached on numerous occasions to try and gain some level of understanding between all of the groups involved. Police Liaison Officers were also at the protest site on a daily basis trying to speak to and work with the protesters.

However, as the protesters noted that they were leaderless and were all operating individually - they would not provide a representative so therefore any effective and worthwhile liaison was extremely limited. (GMP Press release 18/09/2014)

Or this statement made by Sussex Police:

In Sussex, we are well-versed in protest policing and one of the key elements in this is to engage as fully as possible with those taking part in them.

The sooner we can start to talk to them, the easier it is for us to understand what they are trying to achieve and to let them know what is acceptable within the bounds of the law. (Argus: 2013 8 18 The Big Interview: Sussex Police Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs on fracking and Balcombe)

The intention to communicate with protestors is stated in this material, but not present in the communications strategy as either a targeted audience group, or a communications objective – an apparent paradox. It is possible to theorise any number of reasons for this, suffice it to say here that the legitimacy claims made by the police were:

* not accepted by the protestors;
* not the stated aim of the police communications objectives;
* nor ultimately *necessary* to the policing of the protests given the level of coercion available to officers at the scene.

**6.6 Is legitimacy necessary?**

This is not to reject Beetham’s argument that legitimacy can be weakened without being necessarily broken, but rather that, given that drilling did take place without protesters’ agreement, and that legitimacy with these groups was not present, it could be argued such legitimacy was not necessary. The police successfully relied upon coercion, so it could be argued that legitimacy was not necessary to the police in securing the goal of allowing drilling companies to ‘go about their lawful business’. They might also argue that, given the extensive protests that took place, the police also succeeded in the goal of allowing lawful protest – again without the acceptance by protestors of police legitimacy claims. It is therefore further possible to argue that legitimacy claims were not necessary to the completion of policing goals at a tactical or strategic level – although there remains an argument that legitimacy is still necessary at a long-term or societal level. In other words, just because legitimacy was lacking or challenged at the protests, does not mean that legitimacy is lacking or challenged everywhere and always. Policing and its legitimacy claims continue elsewhere, regardless of its apparent failures here. Indeed, historically, it is possible to find multiple illegitimate police actions, that have not undermined policing legitimacy claims and actions on a wider nationwide scale. This is a weakness in a study such as this that dwells on one series of events – generalization is not necessarily possible (as addressed in the methodology).

Moreover, in terms of the news-media – the focus of this study - the police-PR professionals interviewed agreed that they had, for the most part, been ‘covered’ fairly. A ‘fair hearing’ is a reasonable goal in itself, and it should be noted, meets the third level of Beetham’s taxonomy of legitimacy as acceptance of, or deference to, police authority to act as spokespeople is found in the news-copy. In other words – police spokespeople are deemed by news actors such as journalists to have a *de facto* right to speak.

In this case ‘acceptance’ and ‘deference’ can be usefully split. The first is in being given a voice in the copy. The second is in preferential treatment within that copy. Both of these functions are evidenced to some extent in the textual analysis. Police statements and accounts are accepted into the copy as credible source material. That credibility is also, to some extent, extended into a superior position in the hierarchy of credible sources (Becker, 1967, Short et al, 2015). The police are given a voice throughout the analysed text, and their procedural-framing is often cited within the text at length and with greater per capita word-counts than other framings. The place of police within this text is doxic due to the societal place of police (see the chapter on Bourdieu), and orthodoxy as a result of Practice in news reporting (see Harcup, 2015). The textual analysis has shown that the police are given greater word counts to develop their individual positions – and as the chapter on propaganda has shown that, on occasion, police claims of questionable veracity are adopted as newsworthy, even if not necessarily as the truth. While it is true that news copy-writers might allow other sources to question the police version of events, the prominence given to police accounts fulfils a key communications objective – thus suggesting an answer to the question ‘legitimacy for what?’. From the above we can see that while it may be true that legitimacy claims with protestors may have been undermined, police legitimacy, at least that legitimacy *necessary* to accomplish at least some key police-PR objectives, is largely present with the news media studied here. In the light of this, the statement made by Lancashire Police’s media liaison is particularly interesting. He says that he was disappointed not to be contacted by the BBC in a report of police malpractice. The expectation is interesting. Normative journalist practice would have the journalist approach the cited third parties – it is not known why this was not done in this case, but the fact that the failure was noted as exceptional means that it is unusual. Given the parlous state of police/news-media relations as described in Mawby (2012) and in the semi-structured interviews, this ready acceptance of police statements is, at first glance, a further paradox.

Moreover, a further use of Beetham’s taxonomy of legitimation, when used in terms of the regional print media, is not unproblematic. There is little evidence that journalists agree with either the legal validation of the police, or share the beliefs underlying their justification – the first two levels of Beetham’s taxonomy. The societal justification based upon norms, doxa and habitus (see chapter on Bourdieu) may indeed create some shared belief structure, but the interviews found in this study and elsewhere question the automatic acceptance by journalists of police legitimation claims. In other words, while the coverage may lend itself to the apparent acceptance of police legitimacy in agreement with Beetham’s third level, the upper two levels may well be absent; the apparent acceptance at the third level is not causal, merely coincidental. This is key in judging the role of police-PR in the coverage of environmental protest – because it questions the level of influence wielded by police press offices. After all, it is reasonable to ask - as the legitimacy of the police is so questioned in newsrooms (as evidenced in interviews and in the literature on the subject), why are the police given such unchallenged prominence in news-copy?

It might seem that the role of legitimacy claims, in the cases of this study, are being overtaken or over-powered by the norms of journalistic practice such as Tuchman’ rituals of objectivity (Tuchman, 1972; 1980). The effect is an apparent editorial legitimation in the news-copy that defies the theories of legitimacy offered by Beetham and Weber, and to some extent Habermas. This being the case, the primary reason for the appearance in the news-copy of the procedural framing as a legitimacy claim is the not the implied validity or veracity of the claim itself – nor is it necessarily the credibility of the police as news sources (Franklin & Carlson, 2011; Ericson, 1989). The fact that it appears in the news-copy is not an acceptance of the claim, but rather the needs of the copy-writing itself as expressed in the norms of journalistic writing (Davies, 2008; Petley 2011).

For example, in the so-called Teagate incident a charge of drink-driving was made against a protester, apparently as a means of ‘slapping him down’ (See interview with Martin Porter in the appendices on disc). To be clear, this description of the event is supported by a review of the video taken at the time, the subsequent IPCC investigation (IPCC, 2016) and the interview made with a media-relations activist made in this study (See appendices). The MEN, despite these seemingly obvious facts, preferred to offer the video to its readers for their review without comment, and reporting the incident and the subsequent investigations as neutrally as possible. The editorial choice made, not to call this incident ‘a stitch-up’ - which is, interestingly, a stronger story-telling line – is, noteworthy in the context of legitimacy claims. The reporters concerned could not reasonably have accepted the police’s legitimacy claim at its first two levels – it was neither legally valid, nor based in shared beliefs (unless they believed in the law being used as a means to ‘slap down’ the protesters). Nevertheless, compliance – the third level of Beetham’s taxonomy – is present in the news-copy, and the police are quoted prominently. In other words, the effect of police-PR in this case has been to play a key role in neutralising – or at least ameliorating - a threat to police legitimacy. However, this could only be achieved with the *de facto* complicity of news-writing journalistic norms in agreement with Tuchman’s rituals of objectivity, made real through individual agency and doxic practice.

In another example, reviewed elsewhere in this study as an example of propaganda, GMP claimed that a flare had been fired at a police helicopter from the protest camp; a claim denied by the protestors. Flaregate, as it came to be known, was used as a pretext for a search of the camp in which protesters claim their bedding was deliberately thrown on the ground in order to make it unusable. Once again, the police account of their practice was at least questionable. However, the story ran in the MEN with the headline “'Unbelievably stupid' flare attack on police helicopter near anti-Fracking protest camp” – a direct quote from the police statement. Again, while protesters were allowed to refute the accusation and give their account of events, there was no obvious attempt to analyse or ‘fact-check’ the incident, which was later criticised as undermining police legitimacy by a report by the GMP Police Commissioner (Greater Manchester Police, 2014) and by academic research (Gilmore et al, 2016). The headline offered by MEN matches the claim made by GMP. It should be noted that the press release for this event was written ‘for offer’ rather than ‘if asked’ – this was proactive public relations which sought to legitimise the search of the protest camp, and delegitimise the protestors. In addition, it had the effect of including police claims prominently in the copy, arguably dominating it. The veracity of the police claims are at least questionable, and given that the current MEN crime correspondent claims to investigate the ‘machinations’ of GMP it might seem that questions could have been asked before the lead-line was taken into the news-copy directly from a press release. This then could be taken as an example of police legitimacy - at Beetham’s third level of taxonomy – being accepted by the media. However, accepting the legitimacy claim as valid or even credible is not necessary, because it is also possible that MEN journalists simply saw a good news-story, in agreement with any number of taxonomies of news-worthiness (Davies, 2008; Harcup & O’Neill, 2001, 2017; Galtung & Ruge 1965). In other words, the story was run, not in acknowledgement of police veracity or legitimacy, but simply because it made a good story. The effect of this is a *de facto* acceptance of legitimacy claims in the text.

In summary then, it can be stated that:

1. Legitimacy claims were not necessary to the police-PR approach to protestors;
2. Legitimacy claims, while made to the mass news media, did not definitively influence journalistic copy-writing decisions - although they were present in that coverage;
3. Legitimacy claims made by the police were used in the news-copy in coverage of protests, but were arguably present as elements of normative news-writing structures e.g. ‘quotable quotes’ or doxically necessary news sources;
4. These normative news-writing structures served to transmit legitimacy claims, without the individual journalists concerned necessarily agreeing with them.

Comparing these conclusions to the extant literature looking at legitimacy claims renders some interesting results. The first is that the nature of legitimacy claims as found in these case studies is not consistent with the main thrust of legitimacy theory. Legitimacy may be nominally central to policing intentions, and nominally central to intended police-PR practice, but it is not found to be necessary in either communications with protestors, or conclusively found (or necessary) in news media-practice. This is not what the extant literature of the subject would lead readers to expect. Returning to Habermas it is possible to see that the legitimation crisis (Habermas, 1988) formed by failures of democratic representation and the rationality crisis of market need, while not resolved in these case-study protests, has not constituted an existential threat to either policing or state authority. That is to say that:

1. It might be possible to see elements of a Habermassian crisis in the policies supporting Fracking and the protests against it;
2. That crisis has not been resolved, but;
3. The crisis has been averted, or at least weathered;
4. This has been helped by a combination of factors, notably in the case of this study, normative journalistic practice.

This point is worth emphasis - in this case the ‘steering mechanism’ is journalistic norms not police-PR practice. Habermas allows for this, and so does Beetham, but such things are not central to their claims. Beetham may argue that context is important, and, according to White (1988) Habermas argues that crisis can be continually averted. However, it would be fair to say that neither model accounts for the seemingly minor role or influence of legitimacy claims upon media coverage found in this study. Recall here White’s contention that “A normatively secured consensus…blocks … the process of critical, communicative dialogue” (1998, p.102). It is in this context that legitimacy claims may be seen as sufficient whilst not unchallenged or even generally accepted. In this case, the normative consensus has secured for the police a place for their legitimacy claims despite an apparent failure in legitimacy claims by virtue of legal positivism, or social *mores*.

With this observation made, this study will now turn to the processes by which legitimation is made present in the analysed news-copy. To more fully understand the role of legitimacy claims in this study it is necessary to dwell further on Habermas’s earlier work on the effect of public relations on the public sphere and look more closely at public relations practice as a form of societal-normative rhetoric in a promotionalized or mediatized society.

**6.7 Public relations practice as a legitimacy claim in a mediatized society**

**6.7.1 Introduction**

Having examined Legitimacy as a police objective – both in terms of action and public relations – this study will now look at public relations, notably media-relations, as a source of legitimacy in its own right. In doing so it will accept that premises of mediatization, PR-ization and promotionalism as societal meta-processes which have informed, and are informed by, the growth of societal public relations practice in the last century. They have been reflected in the growth of police-PR. As such Media Logic (Athleide, 1979) and Media Capital (Couldry 2003) form a communicative rhetoric that is necessary to the successful application of police managerialism (Mawby, 2002, 2010, 2007). Necessary, that is, in terms of both the wider agenda of applying the processes and procedures of the private sector to the public sector, but also necessary to justify, through the mass media, the adjunct changes to police practice to its audiences. In addition, the effect has been to make PR necessary to the functioning of almost any almost organisation in post-modernity – no less the police, and arguably more so than most.

In the first instance, it is useful to reiterate the widely documented growth of PR across society (for example - Habermas, [1962], 1989; Miller, 2000, 2008; Davies, 2008; Gitlin, 1980; Lewis, 2008; Brooke, 2011). This growth is largely lamented in the literature, but it is not denied. This growth has been reflected in police-PR staffing and practice (Schlesinger & Tumber, 1994; Mawby, 2002, 2010, 2007; Rowbotham, Stevenson and Pegg, 2013; Reiner, 2003, Leishman & Mason, 2003). Mawby (2002) traces this to the growth of managerialism in British police forces, whilst joining other authors in noting the police’s communicative roles and needs in variously communicating and justifying their actions (Ericson, 1989, 1991; Reiner, 2010, 1997; Crandon, 1997; Chibnall, 1977). As such, the presence of PR-practice by the police is effectively undeniable, although the extent of its influence remains in question – and is in part central to research question of this thesis.

**6.7.2 Police PR and mediation and mediatization**

At its most obvious level the impact of the mediation of society is revealed or illustrated by mistakes or *faux pas* in the etiquette of communication practice. For instance, “2013 9 20 Police officer disciplined for Twitter slur calling Balcombe anti-Fracking protesters 'scum'”. However, a less obvious comparison lies in the way the word protester/protestor is used universally in police press releases. Note, that this is not mirrored in the news reports where a considerable number of synonyms are used; terms like campaigner and activist. In other words, the police-PR actors are not merely utilising news-media formats or patois. Choices are being made that reflect purely the language of police PR-style and presentation. To underline the point, PR Media Logic can extend beyond formats and into a what can be termed PR-logics. Take for instance the well-worn method of media-interview techniques taught by most media trainers – the three-point rule. Media-training candidates are taught to make three points, and not to deviate from those three points, no matter the question asked by a journalist. This tactic is highly successful in most soundbite-interview situations where the interview will not last more than a few minutes. This is found most often in professional interviews, for instance, where the politician and then leader of the opposition Ed Milliband repeated the same answer to multiple questions in a pooled interview (Guardian, 2011). It does not work under sustained live questioning; for example Jeremy Paxman’s questioning of Michael Howard (BBC, 2011). The logic of this interview practice is to avoid being drawn away from a brief, and to hammer home by repetition key messaging. It is a practice largely despised by journalists (Guardian, 2011), but promoted by PR professionals. This is a case where media logic is not the same as PR logic. It is, however, an example of how mediatization extends beyond mediation and media logic. In this example the needs of promotion have necessitated a practice that is contrary to normative media principles.

Recall also the commitment to transparency of Peel’s Principles, that is nominally reflected in the presence of a communications office – sometimes seemingly at the expense of frontline policing. The expansion of which is cited as a grievance in *2013 10 5 Your interview: Paul Sellings, Sussex Police Federation chairman*:

“ESMERALDA KLEIN, Hove: *Is too much spent on corporate communications?*

“PS [Paul Selling]: This is a difficult question but what I would say is during the time that the number of corporate communications staff has gone from 12 to 26 we’ve lost 300 police officers. I think we’ve got to have as many officers on the streets as possible and if that’s at the expense of corporate communications then so be it.”

The decision to expand the communications function, at, it would seem, the expense of ‘front-line’ policing, is an interesting one; it is an indication of intent as well as action. Here a decision is made as to the importance of a mediated or mediatized police force, one that talks about policing as well as physically polices. As we have seen in the previous discussion of legitimacy this can be thought of as an appropriate prioritization of consent over coercion. It could also, by contrast, be seen as the meso-level championship of managerialism over other departments and processes of police services and forces.

**6.8 Are the police mediatized?**

To what extent then, can it be argued that the police are ‘mediatized’? In his study *Corporate Media Work and the Micro-Dynamics of Mediatization* (2013) Pallas argues, “A number of studies have pointed out the importance of media for organisational legitimacy and reputation”. He quotes meso-level institutional reforms as having three levels; collaborative structures, depth and scope interactions, and information flows (see also Hepp et al, 2015). The interviews show that each of these exist within and for police communications departments. The level of embeddedness is structurally very high. Take for instance Amanda Coleman at GMP:

I mean we're in a lucky position. As well, I always reported to the deputy chief constable. When he became the chief he kept comms, so I still report to the chief, which is quite a good position to be in when you've got things that need to be agreed and dealt with. It's having that access, but I sit on a Monday morning chief officer meeting, to go through various things that have come in and what's planned and things we're doing. I think it's invaluable to have that access.

Referring to the need for a PR input she adds:

You see it from a different perspective, because you see ... Yes, you see the police side of it, but you also see what's coming in front [of] the public, and you see some of the wider perspectives on some things.

I think you can't be doing your job as effectively as you should be, if you don't feel able to put forward, contribute.

At the end of the day, the gold commander, whoever's in charge, will make the final decision, but you have to give accurate tactical advice of, "This is the position, this is what's happening. These are the factors you need to be aware of." Particularly, obviously, factors that will impact on potentially how you're managing the communication around it.

Andy Freemen at Sussex Police also underlines the influential position of PR in the police organisation:

…is that a lead media relations officer, be there a senior, or a media relations officer because there's two levels, whoever is leading on that particular job gets embedded straight away with the team that's doing.

They are in with the gold commander, with the silver commander, whoever it may be, right from the start. We do the same with major crime jobs and it works really well for us. At one time the media relations, or the press office as it was known then, was very much, the force tended to look on them as "the media" or "the press" but there's much more understanding now about the value that we can add to an investigation, to an operation by being involved right from the start because we see things from outside that they don't so much.

It feeds both ways. It works really well for us. There was, as I said, Jill was embedded straight away with the command team for the operation. When I took over from her that's where I spent my time as well. Working from the Silver Suite, the command team operation, rather than directly from the news desk as I would do normally.

What is clear from these statements is that there is an expectation of high-level involvement of PR from all parties. For instance, as an indicator of the perceived importance of PR, all police interviewees agreed that senior police officers acting as a spokesperson should be media-trained where possible. Although several of those police-PR actors voiced anonymous concerns that they sometimes felt that frontline staff PR responses caused them to have a ‘sharp intake of breath’.

Take the case of Andy at Sussex Police, the press officer agrees that in the case of a police officer calling protesters scum on Twitter, a mistake has been made

“Richard Fern: I mean it's a curious story because it's one of those moments in which the average person in the street who probably does have a great respect for the police would look at that story and say "That's wrong."

Andy: Yeah.

Richard Fern: The police force, clearly Sussex police have had disciplined the officer will probably give him a bit of bollocking and tell him not to be such an idiot again. That's also the police kind of acknowledging this is not the way in which the police should act.

Andy: (cough), excuse me.

Richard Fern: That's obviously the report that's been made in the Argus. Everyone's agreed, hang on a minute. This police officer's being silly.

Andy: Yeah.

Richard Fern: What's interesting is the way in which the story is treated by everyone concerned. For instance there's an unnamed spokesperson for the police service that says "Sussex has received a report." Then they got to a Sussex police, who asked not to be named, said he and his fellow officers were aware of the incidents. "I'm really disappointed a colleague would do this. It is stupid to put it bluntly."

Andy: Yeah.”

He goes on to say that social media in particular was used as an intelligence source for police operations – and this was fed to Gold Command at regular meetings. It is the regular meetings with senior commanders that is interesting; it provides evidence of the importance given to communications functions by senior frontline officers.

Presented here is strong evidence for a high level of meso-level interactions which suggest a mediatized organisation which is influenced by and reactive to the communications context of society.

**6.9 – Has mediazation influenced the policing of fracking protests?**

Given this level of mediatization it might seem reasonable to ask whether police action was influenced by police-PR. Nationally, there have been case-studies when this is seen to be the case. For instance, in a now famous case, former Home Secretary Leon Brittan was investigated for accusations of sexual assault that were found to be groundless, but the MET refused to release these findings for fear of media reaction (Guardian newspapers, 2015). There is, however, no evidence in this study that news-media or PR considerations have influenced police operations. PR has been, arguably, used to attempt to justify or explain dubious actions, but it does not seem the dubious actions have been undertaken because of PR need.

So, in this study, there is evidence for substantial mediatization; in terms of media-field influence in which media logics are being given high status as tools in policing practice. However, there is little evidence that mediatization is a frontline objective in its own right in the same way as illustrated in the Leon Brittan case. It is however, given the commitment of resources (particularly) in the context of reduced or challenged funding, reasonable to argue that police-PR has a high strategic priority. However, the impact or effectiveness of that PR, in terms of legitimacy with core audience groups requires further elucidation.

**6.10 Promotionalism and its impact upon police-PR and activist media**

It has already been noted that the rhetoric of public relations, as a sub-set of Promotionalism, gives the appeal of authority through tone, content, and dominant, even hegemonic, discourses:

1. The tone and tenor of public utterances yields its own legitimacy or illegitimacy. This can be seen in case studies, such as the ‘twitter scum’ case, where the dominant rhetoric is abandoned;
2. The practice of PR logics as an extension of media logics gives greater effectiveness in the process of mediation. For instance, as is shown in the textual analysis, one advantage of PR-practice is that press statements are quoted at greater length. This was found in police statements, but also in statements issued by activist groups that had adopted PR practice;
3. In the next chapter on Bourdieu the voice of authority is explored further but suffice it to say here that these rhetorics allow actors to adopt the mask of players in societal authority roles and rituals.

It is within the latter field of activity that other PR actors – activist, drillers, politicians – can draw upon their own media logics. Cuadrilla, for instance, retained Bell Pottinger to manage its media relations, and enjoyed high levels of contact with police-PR units (see appendices). Politicians too, adopt the techniques that stem from mediatization (Hjarvard, 2013) and this activity is particularly notable in the practice of Green MP Caroline Lucas, whose arrest is as much propaganda of the deed as public relations. Activists too adopt PR-practice, although the division between insider and outsider typologies of Wyn Grant has been examined at length in the literature review. Suffice it to say here that there is less concerted or managed media-relations activity amongst activists. A point reiterated in the interviews

Martin, the *de facto* media coordinator, at Barton Moss said:

So, none of us knew each other. They didn't know me. The first two months were chaotic, basically because no one was really taking a lead on the media and I had done it before. I sort of actually took over doing it all.

Richard Fern: How was it being managed before then? What was ...

Martin: “Oh, chaotically. There was a mobile phone at the camp, but it wasn't always answered, or inconsistently. Rachel Thompson, who sets up Northern Gas Gala was sort of doing an awful lot of stuff. She was very active but not terribly organised or effective. She was always contacting people but not putting out press releases or getting the media stuff in a form that they could use.”

The ‘chaotic’ and ‘amateur’ nature of media relations is emphasised here. These actors are not practiced in PR practice. They do not have professional knowledge of media logic, although they do seem to have some idea of the role of mediation in protest.

Martin: “The other thing that's important, which we didn't do, was Reclaim The Power [inaudible 00:04:44] winter by locking the gates at the Fracking site by Christmas 2013 and that was when the national media at that point, took an interest. It wasn't just the camp that the media wasn't really aware of up until that point, also, we were kind of deliberately being ignored by the media.”

Richard Fern: So, you say that you have done media before. What was your background? What did you do before?

Martin: Well, 20 years ago this year I was involved in a media campaign around the second runway at Manchester Airport.

Richard Fern: Right.

Martin: Also, I had done local media for Greenpeace and of course I've been part of Greenpeace media operations, not running them and not doing the PR, but obviously I was involved enough to see how it was done.

Richard Fern: Yeah.

Martin: So I had skills and knowledge I could use.

Kathryn McWhirter at Balcombe Down was an experienced journalist, but also discusses the *ad hoc* nature of PR practice.

Richard Fern: How much time do you think you were chucking at media relations at that point? The height of it, 2013. Because you're saying that you were writing press releases. How much time do you think you were chucking at it a week or a day?

Kathryn: Dividing out how much I spent on press ... A lot of it was press queries coming in from outside as well and that could be international, it was quite often international. I would say a day?

While this study does not have access to the contract between Cuadrilla and Bell Pottinger, it seems reasonable to assume that it included more than one-day-a-week. And the police press officers are full-time employees. Returning to Pallas’s typology of meso-level activity, arguments of mediatization become problematic in application to activist practice. There are only loosely coordinated collaborative structures, the depth and scope of interactions is also *ad hoc*, and information flows are partial. Take for instance the action undertaken by Reclaim the Power and Martin’s contention “The other thing that's important, *which we didn't do*, was Reclaim the Power…” (my emphasis). It would be hard to imagine that lack of coordination by professional actors – it would be unprofessional. Take also, for instance the Tripod action undertaken at Balcombe Down (2013 9 6 Police take tougher stance on Balcombe protesters after tripod protest closes road). The public and media relations implications of that action were, arguably, disastrous. It damaged support amongst local people, it led to a toughening of police response, and poor headlines in the local news-media. An effect compounded by the one available ‘spokesperson’:

But commenting on the roadblock on social media, a group called Ifthetrees said: “Jamie is now up a tripod blocking the whole road. It’s a lovely sight.

“Class action this morning closes road, hero still up there. This is just the beginning… believe it.”

This failure of the rhetoric of PR is obvious and damaging to the presentation of the protests to audience groups whose expectations of PR rhetoric meet societal norms. McWhirter was abroad and unreachable. It is inconceivable that major activity of this nature would take place without planned PR support were it undertaken by actors such as the police, or drilling company or politicians – and one might observe that a professional risk assessment of the PR implications of this action would have precluded it.

Martin is also vocal on this point regarding an incident in which protestors put barbed wire and broken glass into a lock-on drum, injuring an officer:

Martin: No, well the people who did it were idiots. They weren't part of the regular protest. … But it was a silly, pointless thing to do.

Again, there is an emphasis on the *ad hoc* nature of the protest, the uncontrolled and chaotic nature of the campaign. This episode also illustrates the insider-outsider strategies of identified by Wyn Grant (Grant, 2004) and their impact upon campaigns. The impact of Mediatization of the organisation (if there is an organisation) is incomplete, and the use of media logics and PR logics entirely unstructured and incompetent. Outsider typologies may not be dominant, but they are sufficient to undermine insider PR-practice to a large extent. This leads to an ‘unlevel playing field’ in terms of PR-practice. And yet, equivalency was evident in the news-copy in terms of share of voice: again one might point to the role of journalistic norms.

**6.11 Conclusion**

In this section the role of PR as a form of organisational and societal legitimacy has been discussed. Elsewhere in the study, the role of PR is discussed for its outputs, here it has been discussed for its existence as its own rationale. The societal dominance of PR, makes its presence as self-evidently necessary to managers. Police practice takes place in a mediated and/or promotionalized society – that fact has informed practice and necessitated the presence of a communication functions within the police. This is arguably in keeping with Peel’s Principles and the perceived need for ‘policing by consent’. However, the importance of police-PR in management functions has increased, to the point that PR is now part of strategic, operational and tactical planning of actions.

There is no conclusive evidence of mediatization dictating police practice, although another section of this thesis ‘Police PR and Propaganda’ looks at some issues that bear some similarity to it.

The positive effect of mediatization upon police communications practice can be seen best in comparison to other actors such as protestors. The latter were unable to field a commensurate level of resource, and unable to manage practice effectively. The argument made here is that mediatization has become central to police legitimacy claims. As such its continued existence is not entirely contingent upon outputs, but rather also to its accepted management function in a mediatised society and promotional culture.

Earlier in this section and in the literature review, authors were seen to address legitimacy claims, and perhaps a crisis in the validity of those claims, as informing and being informed by police practice. The police wield the state’s monopoly of violence while at the same time trying to maintain the consent of those policed. This yields an apparent paradox, in that the subject of that violence are, or at least may be, the same people from whom consent is sought and maintained. This paradox has greater societal import in those cases where otherwise law-abiding citizens break the law in acts of civil disobedience as protest – such as blocking access to a site, locking-on to a gate, or refusing a police order. To this must be added the increased contradictions and import found when state-level decisions are perceived to be of dubious legitimacy because of their apparent failure to meet normative standards of competence and/or probity. In the case of these case-studies, probity is questioned on the grounds that business or corporate interests seemed to have had an inordinate influence on the decision to allow fracking: competence is questioned because of the apparent failure by policy-makers to see the environmental and ecological impacts of their decisions. Lancashire Police’s relationship with North Wales Police provided an interesting example of this, where support of that force was withdrawn because the Crime Commissioner felt that, given Welsh political opposition to fracking – in the form of a devolved government policy - their police could not support Lancashire Police in preventing Fracking protests (2017 7 24 Welsh officers 'will not facilitate Cuadrilla's business', Police and Crime Commissioner says). This is a fascinating example of political illegitimacy interfering with policing…it is not repeated elsewhere.

For the police, whose core legitimacy claim is in legal positivism stemming from procedural norms, that is validity through normative legal-bureaucratic process, this is problematic. This grants the protestors legitimate grounds to protest the decision, and defy the law by the same logics of legal positivism, in that the legal-bureaucratic foundation for the validity claim is radically undermined.

Turning to the case-studies in this thesis we can see that such events as Teagate, (police brutality, acts of questionable veracity, or even the courts telling the police they were wrong) while they do undermine police legitimacy claims, they do not prevent policing. One might recall that the shooting of Charles De Menzes, the unlawful killing of Ian Tomlinson, Hillsborough, the Guildford Four and numerous other occasions of failures of police probity have left any valid claim to legitimacy in tatters, and yet it remains able to police; and with its mythic, police fetishism intact.

For this reason it can be argued that the classical arguments regarding legitimacy are rendered of limited utility in these case-studies – at least in the short or medium term. While the police are making legitimacy claims, they are not robust in the Habermassian sense or the sense of Beetham’s taxonomy. Of course, one might argue that legitimacy claims need only be credible with certain audiences, and these need not include protestors or even those audiences that might agree with them. However, it seems reasonable to argue that those legitimacy claims are not necessary with other groups who might favour fracking. That is, legitimacy claims are not necessary for politicians, policy-makers, bureaucratic elites, or the companies undertaking fracking. Journalists do not seem necessarily to believe police legitimacy claims, although they still print them without comment – even when those claims are self-evidently false. Legitimacy claims may arguably be necessary for disinterested groups as a means to maintain baseline police credibility across society. There may also be an argument that legitimacy claims are useful to the police as a means of setting a threshold for its own actions. Although again, a review of Teagate indicates that GMP was largely unconcerned by the accusations. Similarly, when a Sussex Police officer was caught calling protestors ‘scum’ on a personal Twitter account the management response seems to have been minimal.

It is as though legitimacy claims are made without evidential effect or under-pinning. For instance, the role of Lancashire Police who made minimal press outputs (see appendix) had no more or less legitimacy that those forces that had made considerable effort. It is possible then to argue that while valid legitimacy claims may be the nominal goal of some police-PR, their actual impact upon regional print news coverage is minimal. The news coverage would take place whether or not the claims were made. That said, it is clear that proactive police-PR increases the share of voice in that coverage, whether or not it includes legitimacy claims. In other words, legitimacy claims are not news-worthy, but rather fulfil the news-normative need for a police statement – any police statement.

Finally, the mediatization of police practice has been brought into the analysis. Police have communications functions which address a mediated society, and there is evidence for some level of mediatization within police practice. The practices of mediatization have become embedded into senior levels of police management. In a mediated or promotionalized society, effectively managed communications is necessary – and given the growth of PR practice across society it is reasonable to argue that police practice follows that of most other large organisations. If PR-practice can be seen a management function – like Accounts, or Personnel, or IT – then it is possible to argue that a failure to have a communications function would be professionally questionable, or even incompetent (imagine a CEO of a large company running that company without an accounts department). To this extent then, it can be argued that police-PR – just like all PR – has its own ‘reason-to-be’ outside of actual need to communicate; and that this reason lies in management good-practice. When, in the late 1900s, Macready set up the first press office, he did so to stem the flow of leaks, i.e. to manage information flows. It is of course noteworthy that he failed in his primary objective. A comparison between the three case-studies shows that the heavily overburdened Lancashire Police Service, when compared to the Sussex and GMP press offices, while less able to gain share of voice, were not obviously viewed as more or less professional. On the contrary, considerable sympathy was expressed by the journalist at the Gazette (see appendices). There is very little evidence that the comparatively restricted PR service offered by Lancashire Police’s reduced its perceived professional legitimacy.

Having reviewed the main arguments for Legitimacy claims being a primary impact of police-PR practice on regional print news coverage they are found to be unconvincing in the case of these studies. However, the argument that police-PR maintains a wider societal support for police activity has not been fully addressed. In the next section, this will be examined in greater detail using Bourdieu’s field theory and his concept of symbolic power. By using this technique the thesis will place police-PR in its wider context of public discourse regarding public order policing and policing generally.

**7.0 Bourdieu and Field Theory**

**7.1 Introduction**

A societal and organizational role for police-PR practice has been established in terms of cultural and structural norms, as well as legitimacy claims. Norms of communicative action in terms of mediatization, promotional rhetoric, propaganda, and mythic forms in terms of preconceived discourses have been observed and analysed. In addition, the need for, and practice of, frames of procedural legitimacy have been examined. It is now necessary to seek a theoretical model that might help account for these complex, covariant phenomena. The necessary appreciation of nuance requires a model that accounts for a range of factors that are structural and cultural in outlook and allow some analytical space for context and agency.

Recall Reiner’s contention (described in section 2.6.3) that a range of pressures come to play in the construction of news. Bourdieu’s field theory model attempts to describe a wide range of variables. Indeed, in both the textual analysis, and in the chapter looking at police-PR and propaganda, it was identified that structural or cultural elements of practice while present were not the only causal factors present. It was, for instance, simply not the case that police dominance or hegemony of state actors was unchallenged. Sub-dominant frames were presented in the text, dissident protestor sources and their frames were given space, journalists openly challenged police sources, even if this was not always immediately apparent in their news-copy. That said, police sources seemed to have gained some appreciable statistical superiority in the news-texts in both the MEN and the Argus, while the Gazette presented an outlier case-study which illustrated the combined role of police-PR under-resourcing and the presence of media-active third-parties willing to speak for dominant framings and discourses. In the Argus and the MEN, the police were quoted at greater length, an apparent indicator of the value of professionalised PR practice – although the context of journalistic norms was also found to be important. Further, a critical discourse analytical approach identified a dominant narrative - that protestors were the *cause* of the confrontation with drillers (rather than government policy, third party action, or a commensurate crisis in democratic processes), and that protestor sources were over-nominated, that is the place of the copy as a source was based upon their community identity, rather than police rank. The very presence of police was seen as a cause for an over-amplification of protestor activity which focussed upon violence, conflict and community inconvenience – the latter discourse dwelling substantially upon the protestors as being from out of the area. Some limited evidence was presented in the chapter looking at police-PR as propaganda that questioned police veracity as evidence of propaganda-like activity. While nothing conclusive was found, it was possible to identify police-PR activity as sitting within pre-existing discourses of protestor deviance and police fetishism.

Additionally, agency was noted in the existence of Lancashire for Shale in media coverage of the Preston Road protests. Their presence seemed to fulfil some copy-writing requirements commensurate with Tuchman’s norms of objectivity (Tuchman, 1972). In other words, an accurate account of events examined in this thesis must offer a multi-variable explanation of the news-coverage. In addition, it should be noted and emphasised that any account offered here must acknowledge the contested nature of the news coverage.

What is clear is that a number of actors and agencies are interacting in these case studies. Dominant discourses (that appear to be hegemonic in the classic tradition), as well as political and state actors which inform the events and have arguably initiated them, have been subsequently been elided from the newspaper copy. Corporate actors are present as key influencers on state-policy having successfully used the norms of neo-liberalism and their public relations resources (lobbying as much, if not more, than media relations) at their disposal (Spinwatch, 2017). State actors such as planners, health and safety and judicial agencies have also played an important role in providing procedural legitimation. Journalistic actors’ practice has been informed by their own norms of news-sense and news-writing. Police-PR has played its role, as have protestors and media-activists in processes of mutually critical legitimacy claims, propaganda, the needs of a mediated society and mediatized organisations and groups.

This chapter will attempt to use Bourdieu’s Field Theory as a convincing model to explain these findings. Notably that the different actors noted above share a series of nested fields of practice.

**7.2 Applying Bourdieu to these case-studies**

The literature review dwelt at length on those aspects of Bourdieu’s work which, while relevant to this study were sufficiently generic in approach to sit aside from the main body of this chapter, and thus not crowd or confuse its analysis. To briefly reiterate, Bourdieu’s work attempts to combine the agency of individuals and organisations, with structural influences of accepted practice and established dominant power – as well as sub-dominant resistance. A *Field* is a conceptual or analytical space bounded by the practice of those involved such that it becomes semi-autonomous – with the level of actual autonomy informed by its relationship to other Fields. A Field is a site of struggle, nested within (and around) other fields. A Field is defined by the practice of its actors and agencies. His work has been discussed extensively in the literature with reference to journalism (Benson & Neveu, 2005), notably in Bourdieu’s *On Television* (1998), but much less so in relation to public relations (Edwards, 2006; 2009). The literature on PR-practice has focused upon functional, systems, managerial and to some extent structural or cultural models (Ciszek, 2015). This gap in Bourdieu’s literature is strange given that he was primarily interested in actors’ practice in relation to other actors. This focus upon the relationships within the field is, *prima facie,* well-suited to a study of public relations whose nominal goal is to establish good *relations* with the relevant stakeholders in a given field or domain. This thesis will go some way to filling that deficit.

**7.3 Does the practice in this study constitute a field?**

The application of Bourdieu’s work is not unproblematic; as well as the standard critiques of his model (Calhoun et al, 1993), the existence in this study of a ‘Field’ as Bourdieu would have described it, needs to be established. In *The Field of Cultural Production (1993)* he states “What do I mean by ‘field’? As I use the term, a field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and economy” (p.162). Also consider, “Bourdieu's central claim is that the judicial field, like any social field, is organised around a body of internal protocols and assumptions, characteristic behaviors [sic] and self-sustaining values—what we might informally term a "legal culture." (Tierdman’s introduction to Bourdieu, 1987, p.806). Here Tierdman has summoned Bourdieu’s theory to describe a ‘judicial field, like any social field’, to describe its organisation. Not only does Tierdman identify a field which will have bearing upon protestors when they appear before the courts, but he has indicated that central to Bourdieu’s theory is the idea that they will be found everywhere and defined by practice. So the core elements of Bourdieu’s theory are present in this study – there is an arena of conflict, capital is exchanged, there is both doxa and orthodoxy and both heteronomy and homology from surrounding fields.

Indeed, Bourdieu argues for the existence of a journalistic field in *On Television* (ibid) and, a field of power and a field of politics in other works (Bourdieu, 1991; 1998). However, additionally, posited in this thesis is a field of action in which journalists and PR practitioners from the police and from activism – amongst others - undertake practice and create a field nested within the field of cultural production identified in *On Television* (see diagram one)*.* In other words, it is understood that newsrooms produce coverage that is informed by, even dominated by, these two sets of actors (albeit amongst others)and as such form their own field of practice, and/or are subject to fields of practice that are nested in or around them. The consistent presence or these actors in a body of news-copy goes someway to establishing this field as a form of practice, as does the presence of other nested fields – state and political that exchange capital with this one, as well as others such as the field of power that embodies symbolic power relevant to the field being studied here. In other words, the story of Fracking protest is told week-after-week with the same actors, consistent themes and consistent narratives is itself Practice in a Field.

The complexity of this model, the variety and extent of nested fields of practice, can help to account for similarity and dis-similarity discovered in this study – first in the MEN and the Argus, and then the Gazette. The contests that are found in this case-study are fought and won in each of the locales, with victories and losses experienced by all parties on a daily basis, within each news-cycle. In combination the three case-study texts present a combined study of the way norms, doxa and capital are represented in the news coverage. Each newspaper draws not only upon the habitus of its own journalistic norms, but also upon the practice of the adjacent nested fields – and these sometimes act in concert, and sometimes as antagonists.

**7.4 Defining fields of practice**

In diagram four we see a variety of fields of practice adjacent to or nested around the field of journalistic practice. The field of power is placed rearmost in the diagram as a source of societal dominance for all actors with the political field and the state field, which overlap. Activist PR resides within the political field with no, or at best limited access to the state field. Police practice and its PR function draw power from the state field, and to some extent the political field. Each of these informs the journalistic field, which in the case of the regional coverage of Fracking is separated from the other fields by PR-practice and the norms of story-telling. Coverage of Fracking is a smaller field embedded in the journalistic field.

**Diagram four – Fields of practice active in this research**

While in some ways similar to the hierarchy of influences model proposed by Reese & Shoemaker (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016; 1996; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013), and also similar to Habermas’s norms and values in identifying state norms of practice as central, this model (diagram four) identifies the intersection of a number of fields, their actions and agents as dynamic and covariant – a point admitted by Reese and Shoemaker in their 2016 paper when they drew upon the ‘richer concept’ of *assemblage* as “…a contingent set of relationships to accomplish shifting social objectives not otherwise defined by formal institutions” (p.406).[[8]](#footnote-8) This level of complexity argues Shoemaker & Reese, represents a challenge to purely structural models that conceive of non-elites as mere ‘receptacles’ of dominant framings (Entman, 2003; Entman, 2004), but even such a complex model as this cannot fully represent the reality. The coverage found in the Argus, the Gazette and MEN shows wide variation in content, source usage and frames – although the habitus of news production seems to be consistent in regional press. Police-PR is influential: the MEN showing the effect of police propaganda PR receiving coverage. It is far harder to demonstrate similar propagandistic effects in the Argus. The Gazette, starved of police-PR by comparison to the other two, draws upon third-party actors (e.g. Lancashire for Shale) for pro-Fracking material – which is itself heavily propagandised. The differences between these three are notable, but not obviously accounted for without an understanding of the inter-related, covariant nature of the nested fields. The differences between the three regional titles lie in the practice of the relevant actors, their influence in and through associated fields as well as a range of contingencies which are only present in their news gathering contexts.

**7.5 Capital, cultural capital and public relations**

Bourdieu does not describe Capital in its Marxist economic form and argues for the existence of cultural capital and social capital. Economic capital is capital in its most obvious form – accumulated monetary wealth. Economic capital is notably available to the drilling companies, and to some extent other involved elites. It is not available to other parties such as protestors. In Bourdieu’s conception economic capital and cultural capital do not go hand-in-hand (Lin, 2001) – unlike those models which see the two capitals as essentially sharing a root as base and superstructure. Cultural capital is in the knowing of ‘how to do’, for Bourdieu, who actively critiqued the education system. It often takes the form of educational qualifications, and he described them as such as symbolic violence embedded in societally constructed pedagogy. Social capital is embedded in connections i.e. ‘it is not what you know, but who you know’. Lin (2001) splits these into Human Capital, Social Capital, and Social Network and attempts to show how hierarchies result from their use and action. This is useful for the purposes of this thesis because this taxonomy fits so well with public relations practice.

Social capital and social networks are present in the fields analysed in this thesis – for instance Lord Browne, is a member of the House of Lords, sometime government adviser and senior officer with drilling company Cuadrilla (as well as former CEO at oil company BP). No doubt both social capital as a Peer, and his network amongst social elites has served him well; he has cultural capital. Cultural capital can be converted into economic capital and vice versa. It exists in three forms according to Bourdieu (1986); embodied in the way a person acts, objectified in cultural goods and institutionalized in its educational forms. Cultural capital is bought, argues Bourdieu, with economic capital in the form of elite education, its qualifications and its social capital in the form of social contacts.

Public relations practice is a bought good with cultural significance and substantial capital in the field of Cultural Production highlighted by Bourdieu in *On Television* (Bourdieu, 1998 [1996]). Its pervasive influence upon society, as observed and analysed by a number of scholars (Wernick, 1991; Lundby, 2009; Block, 2013; Couldry and Hepp, 2013; Pallas and Fredriksson, 2013; Deacon and Stanyer, 2014; Hepp et al., 2015; Lunt and Livingstone, 2016), makes it a powerful force across a number of fields. Bourdieu does not discuss public relations – perhaps because its role was/is less pervasive in French society, perhaps because it was slower to form there than in the UK, or perhaps because of an oversight. It is discussed as social capital by a number of authors (Lin, 2001; Ihlen, 2002; Ihlen, 2005) who have in turn looked at how this form of cultural capital might be put to work to ‘minimise loss and maximise gain’ (Lin, 2001, p.135). Given the extent of its influence it is surely possible to argue that it is part of the field of power; the social space described in *Practical Reason* (1998) “the space of relations of force” (p.34). At the very least public relations forms its own capital which has informed the mediation of our society, mediatization across a number of organisations, and the promotionalization of culture to the extent that it has become the rhetoric of powerful elites. Each of these elements has been discussed in detail in the chapter looking at Legitimacy claims.

In the case of fracking extensive public relations activity has been bought by the fracking’s supporters (Spinwatch, 2017). Notably, there is little evidence for ethics in that practice *pace* Heath (Heath, 2004) and is far closer to Bernay’s conception of it as a secretive force in government. Its force has been felt in the political field, the field of state power, the journalistic field, the field of police action and police-PR and the associated field of regional print coverage of fracking. While it may be possible to imagine a field of societal practice in which PR does not play a role, one is not immediately apparent, and it is not obviously evident in this study. Public relations is, as Bourdieu argues of the field of power, “…a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it, and as a field of struggles in which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its structure.” (1998, p.32).

**7.6 Descriptions and analysis of the nested fields in this study**

**7.6.1 Field of Power**

Bourdieu defines this ‘field of power’ as the space in which relations and competitions between forms of capital and fields are conducted. It is the space in which capital is exchanged between fields. As such it forms the background to all other fields. Mythic doxic structures reside here in the forms of Symbolic Power – notably that of the police as discussed in the literature review (Brunger, 2014; Dirikx et al, 2012; Leishman, 2003; Loader, 1997). This, it can be reasonably argued, is the root of Reiner’s *Police Fetishism;* the idea that the police, and only the police, are the defence against criminality and anarchism i.e. it has symbolic power. Arguing, as the above authorities do, that symbolism attached to the police is part of the British image of self does provide an explanation for the enduring legitimacy of the police given its many failings.

There is also an argument for similar doxic or habituated forms in describing protestor activity. With the history of protest in the UK in mind, it is possible to identify protester archetypes that appear in discourses of news-media and have their own symbolic power (McKay, 1998; Vidal, 2016):

* **Swampy** (First found in coverage of the Newbury Bypass Protests) – the eco-warrior whose passions lead them to courageous if naive acts of protest. In its negative form naivety and reliance on state benefits is emphasised. (Vidal, 2016).
* **Black-bloc hardened-anarchist** (Found at G8/G20 Protests amongst others)– the violent threat to the established order, property and people. An archetype of deviancy. This trope has no positive form. They are always portrayed as the Shadow (Campbell, 1993 [1968]) of protestors’ hippy form. In the discourses displayed in the texts studied in this thesis they are the ‘outsiders’ cited by the police and pro-Fracking lobby.

“Speaking yesterday Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs said the order was issued in response to an “increase in the number of those intent on criminal or anti-social behaviour” which is “endangering everyone at the site and having a massive impact on the Balcombe community”.

He added: “This is unacceptable and we have now taken action to define an area where peaceful protest will be facilitated today.” *(2013 9 6 Police take tougher stance on Balcombe protesters after tripod protest closes road).*

[Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts said] “Whilst I recognise the genuine concerns of many of the protesters in relation to exploratory drilling, it is obvious that there is also an element of regular protesters from outside the Greater Manchester area who seem more interested in seeking confrontation with the police. *(2014 1 6 'Unbelievably stupid' flare attack on police helicopter near anti-Fracking protest camp).*

* **NIMBY** – an acronym for ‘not in my back yard’. People who live locally to the object of the protest and are in opposition – not because they oppose the development generally – but just don’t want it near them. In its negative form these people are portrayed as selfish and middle-class; more interested in the value of their homes than in the ‘real’ issues of environmental protection or economic growth. This is a complex form for regional media as the Nimby of this trope is also their local readership – (see Argus 2013 8 29 Balcombe villagers speak out against anti-fracking protesters). Contrast that with Juliette Harris, a Balcombe villager for more than 30 years, who said: "Eighty-five per cent of people don't want Cuadrilla in Balcombe. The majority of the villagers have been supportive of the protesters, and they have been down there in their hundreds.” (Argus 2013 9 16 Balcombe anti- protesters claim High Court victory.)
* **Hippy** – other-worldly and naïve, given to belief-based practice (often pagan styles of worship) in which pacifist or environmental ideologies are central. In its negative form this stereotype is not a realist, naive and is dependent upon state benefits. “[Spokesperson for Cuadrilla] He said: “…In fact, the noisiest thing around here is the protesters having their Sunday sing-along.” (2013 9 9 Fracking firm stops drilling in Balcombe after "rattling" noise complaints.)

The mythic or symbolic forms or archetypes for activists and police clash in acts of civil disobedience which go beyond the ‘lawful protest’ of banner-waving or speech-making. Of course acts of civil disobedience are also accepted in the guise of Gandhi or Martin Luther King. This acceptance is codified in law; in not only human rights obligations, but also in sentencing guidelines (Judiciary of England and Wales, 2016). Where these forms clash, journalists must make choices regarding the choice of narrative. Because of this, framing activity by PR-actors often attempts to establish one or the other as the dominant frame. Interestingly for the purposes of this analysis, the poles of the field are difficult to identify definitively as they are heavily contested. The idea of two poles in a field - one homogolous to the norms of journalism, and one heteronomic to the norms of political economy - goes someway to explaining the differences between case-studies. Bourdieu identifies the journalistic field as heteronomic, but strong arguments for homology in journalistic practice at regional level (in contrast to national journalism) will be made later in this chapter. Procedural, Environmental, Community, Economic and Moral frames all speak – in part at least - to this field in an attempt to establish control and use of the Capital therein. Bearing all of this in mind, it is easy to see here why some commentators have argued that Bourdieu’s work is structuralist (Calhoun et al, 1993), and there are certainly overtones here of the Cultural arguments of Williams (Williams, 1963; 1977), Gramsci (Gramsci, 1971) or even Hall (Hall, 1988; Hall et al, 1978). However, Bourdieu does not deny this, and his work nominally at least attempts to find a role for agency within the Practice.

**7.6.2 Field of State Power and Political Field**

It was in the field of political power that the decision to allow fracking (or exploratory drilling) was made, and in the field of state power that its procedural legitimacy was established. It is in these fields both judicial and bureaucratic power has been harnessed to the political will of the dominant political elites. Bourdieu describes this field -

“The state is the culmination of a process of concentration of different species of capital: capital of physical force, or instruments of coercion (army, police), economic capital, cultural or (better), information capital or symbolic capital…Concentration of the different species of capital (which proceeds hand in hand with the construction of the corresponding fields) leads indeed to the emergence of a specific, properly statist capital (capital étatique) which enables the state to exercise power over different fields…it follows that the construction of state proceeds apace with the construction of a field of power…” (Bourdieu, 1998a, pp.41-42)

It is also at this level that much of the lobbying highlighted by groups like Spinwatch took and takes place (Spinwatch, 2017), and in which authors such as Miller have argued the neo-liberal project, as expressed by PR practitioners, is most effectively active (Dinan & Miller, 2007). In the chapter on Propaganda earlier in this thesis extensive reference was made to the links between government and drilling companies, as well as the way in which police forces have worked with the latter at anti-fracking protests. This will be revisited in the next section looking at the field of police-PR and action. Suffice it to say here that the political field is heteronomic in that it is dominated by the needs of business given voice in lobbying and other techniques of public relations. Indeed, while Habermas may struggle to give a full account of the events and actions found in this study – his identification of a *Legitimation Crisis* (Habermas, 1988) in political practice clearly has bearing. State and political fields have, it seems, been refuedalised ([1962]1989). Add to this the observation that police action – and its legitimacy claims - are based upon legal positivism drawn and referenced from these fields. It is the basis for the claims such as:

What Cuadrilla are [sic] doing is legal and we have an obligation to ensure they can go about their lawful business. However, we have an equal duty to facilitate peaceful protest and our approach is always to encourage people to move voluntarily when deliveries are being made to site.” (Lancashire Police, 2017 5 12 Strong presence essential insist fracking site police chief).

GMP continue to balance facilitating peaceful protest with the rights of others to go about their lawful business… (GMP spokesperson, 2014 1 6 'Unbelievably stupid' flare attack on police helicopter near anti-fracking protest camp).

What we see in these fields is a level of agreement between police and other elite actors so great, that they are acting, effectively, in concert. Societal elites, through these fields, employ capital sufficient to force through the decision to drill in the face of large-scale opposition, and the stated wishes of local democracy.

The impact of these fields upon the protests and the coverage remained largely constant and consistent. However, the adoption of an anti-fracking position by the Labour Party in its Manifesto in the 2017 General Election (The Labour Party, 2017) points to some change in the way fracking is addressed, but this change has not yet been adopted by the ruling Conservative Party. This lack of change in these ‘superior’ fields, makes it reasonable to argue that the differences between newspapers in their coverage are based in the journalistic fields and the various fields of PR practice – both in terms of media relations and stakeholder relations.

**7.6.3 Field of police-PR and public relations**

The MEN coverage is subject to the highly competent PR outputs of GMP which are subject to the agency of a leading PR practitioner in the form of Amanda Coleman, who is also Chair of this Association of Police Communicators. Her PR background seems to have informed a highly proactive approach in which messaging is particularly robust, as the textual analysis has shown. Lancashire Police’s PR outputs were, apparently, limited by resourcing; “We don't get anything from the cops.” argued Tim Gavell of the Gazette (see appendices). Sussex Police, whose press officers were drawn from news-media rather than PR backgrounds, often played ‘a straight-bat’ in comparison to their GMP equivalents. While there are some adjectival slips it is possible to identify some remarkably unbiased statements, when bias might have reasonably been expected:

It is reported that protesters from the Reclaim the Power camp are moving their annual event from West Burton to set up near the village from 16-21 August.

They are formed from a wide range of groups and people from environmental, economic and social justice networks and although numbers are not confirmed, there could be a few hundred. (PR43095/2013 07/08/2013)

It is useful to contrast this with the robust tactics and language of the GMP that relied upon exaggeration, appeals to emotion, elision and falsehood in accounts which have been found to be similar to classical definitions of propaganda.

The impact of police-PR, as varied in type as it might be here, is conclusively present in the analysed copy. As has been previously established police spokespeople, where available, were given longer to express their views, and their views were given favourable placement. In the Textual Analysis chapter, it was shown these actors to be present in the text, with their comments and accounts recounted in direct and indirect speech, as well as, to a much lesser extent and with some variation, editorial comment or copy-writing choices. There is, therefore, not only a *prima facie* case for practice as defined by Bourdieu, but also for habitus formed of newsroom norms in the form of media logics.

However, the wider impact of PR goes beyond the Police and it is here that PR-capital can be seen to be transferred across a number of fields. It is present throughout the fields from the State and Political fields, and *cascades* (in some agreement with Entman (2003)) through to the journalistic field as a ‘dominated field of cultural production’ (Bourdieu, 1998 [1996]). In the chapter discussing propaganda it was argued that there was substantial evidence for collusion between state, business and police actors, albeit perhaps driven by the needs of operational policing. However, while the motivations behind this collusion may be debatable, the fact of the transfer of Capital between fields is not, and it is possible to identify PR-practice as a common factor between fields, and perhaps a vector for power transfer. That is to say that PR-practice is a form of capital that crosses fields throughout society. This will be readdressed in the conclusion to this section.

The role of PR is not addressed by journalists anywhere in the analysed regional news-text and one is reminded of Bernay’s contention that propaganda as PR (as it was then named) only works when people are unaware of it (Bernays, 2005). It has primarily been replaced by procedural framing as an artefact of political control of the state apparatus – judicial and bureaucratic – which became present in policing practice through processes of legal positivism. The primary goal of government policy and practice, fracking exploration, is being realised with the support of police action and its PR-practice. In the MEN, the Gazette and the Argus police give *de facto* support to the state-level policy decision to frack and *arrest -* that is ‘stop the action’ - of protestors. There is, after all, no suggestion that the police should challenge the legality or procedural correctness of the state’s policy. It is not possible to argue conclusively the police are the PR-voice of state action, but it is notable that the effect of their actions and their media statements are identical in the *de facto* sense. It is useful to briefly revisit the literature review of Bourdieu (1986) “…the political field in fact produces an effect of censorship by limiting the universe of political discourse”, (p.172). And in *Outline of Theory of Practice* (1979) “Once a system of mechanism has been constituted capable of objectively ensuring the reproduction of the established order by its own motion…the dominant class have only to let the system they dominate take its course…”. (p.190).

PR practice plays a substantial, even central, role in this. Again, it is useful to cite Lewis et al (2008), Miller (2000, 2008) and Davies (2008) amongst other who argue that professional practice within the fields of journalism (and cultural production) is profoundly affected by PR-actors such as press officers, PR-account managers, and media activists. PR-actors are carrying out media relations activity across the journalistic field, and for them, the habitus of journalistic practice are points of leverage in agreement with Althiede’s *media logic* (Altheide, 1979). PR professionals draw upon a knowledge of such things as news-sense and the orthodoxies of news production (Davies, 2008; Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Herman & Chomsky, 1988) to secure news-media coverage. This is true for the wider field, and equally true of both Police-PR and activist media relations. The understanding of the role of PR actors on news coverage is central to this thesis. If, as is suggested by these studies, news production is dominated by PR practice, then it is reasonable to form a hypothesis that PR actors will influence coverage of protest.

As has been shown in the literature review section looking at environmentalism, a number of authors have discussed how environmental organisations are competing with other PR actors for media coverage. Mackay et al (2012) described this as ‘information warfare’, whereas Hutchins (2006) cites Manuel Castells in describing it as ‘tap-dancing with the media’. Ericson (1989) described how the police are also ‘patrolling the facts’ and ‘Negotiating Control’ (1989a, 1989b). Each of these titles uses metaphors of conflict and competition for news space. The comparisons with competition within a field are obvious. That said, these actors are defining their practice as a field of action centred upon news coverage – but they are not journalists *per se*. This is an important point that deserves emphasis. Press officers and their ilk are often former journalists (Mawby, 2007), indeed the interviews quoted in this study (see appendices) show that the press officers at Sussex Police, Lancashire Police and the communications director at GMP all had media and extensive PR experience, and Kathryn McWhirter who led the activist PR effort at Balcombe Down was a Times journalist. However, they do employ what Bourdieu scholar and theorist Patrick Champagne refers to as "media capital" (*capital mediatique*) (Couldry, 2003) – a similar concept to Altheide’s *Media Logic* (1979).

As such, we can see, that the doxa and orthodoxy of media capital or media logics are not the sole preserve or property of journalists (and similar actors); they are also the stock-in-trade of a variety of actors, each of which draws upon capital from adjacent fields. One such field is the political field, but others include the bureaucratic and judicial state fields. Again, the extent of public relations practice as capital is noteworthy as present here as in all other fields. With this statement it is possible to invoke a wider discussion of symbolic power and see the journalistic field as either nested within the field of power or, as has been argued by Patrick Champagne (Couldry, 2003a) actually merged with it so that the two are inseparable.

**7.6.4 Journalistic Field**

A closer study of journalist practice shows how the norms of their profession (or trade) might come to bear on the field. There is a substantial body of literature examining the practice – doxa and orthodoxy - of journalism, and this has been addressed in the literature review.

Bourdieu’s *On Television* does not examine these orthodoxies and doxa, choosing instead to concentrate on the influence of the surrounding fields, adding evidence to the criticism that this work is – for all intents and purposes – structuralist, even Althusserian (Calhoun et al, 1993). However, the orthodoxies described earlier in this thesis are well-known within the profession and widely taught. It is also interesting that the idealised version of journalism cited by Randall – ‘comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable’ (Randall, 2011, p.3) – references the wider role of journalists as ‘the fourth estate’, as examiners of other societal elites. This conflict between economic necessity and cultural norms as two poles of the field of journalistic practice is revisited throughout the text. Tim Gavell at the Gazette is emphatic in stating the dominance of cultural journalistic norms in his practice…contrary to the claims of media activist Claire Stephenson (see appendices).

In the textual analysis a notable difference between the coverage in the MEN and the Argus, and the Gazette was the latter’s reliance on Lancashire for Shale as a source. This source material replaced the police as an anti-protestor source, apparently in support of the proposition that balance within the copy was a key journalistic objective. It is as though journalists working on the Gazette were looking for sources to balance the news-copy having used anti-fracking protestors as sources ‘for the other side’. A position consistent with Tuchman and the interview with the Gazette’s Tim Gavell (see appendices).

In any event, Bourdieu does not address these orthodoxies – a notable omission given he forswears structuralism in its pure form, attempting a sociological discussion which explicitly cites agency and limited autonomy. One might argue that the doxa and orthodoxy are not the same in the French news media – but this is a matter for another study. In this study of English regional news-media it seems that the practice of objectivity rituals are present in both the texts and the interviewee’s opinions.

Such habitus should lead to some discernible level of commonality within the field. Some elements of practice should be shared, and doxa and heterodoxy should be present, and some shared Capital from the field itself and some adjacent fields. It is stated in the interview with Tim Gavell at the Gazette

Richard Fern: I think it's because journalists thought of the same thing, and I'm a journalist too. It's you say, "I have to get the other side of the story."

Tim Gavell: Yes, indeed. You do.

Richard Fern: [crosstalk 00:11:33] And if the police aren't going to give it to you, you're going to end up going to the industry.

Tim Gavell: Yeah. Well you're coming at it from a crime point of view, whereas we're coming from it as a community point of view, and therefore it's okay to talk to the industries. It's okay to talk to the community. In fact, it's better than getting some bland PR quote from the police.

The latter reference to PR is interesting given the substantial evidence for its presence in the field (Davies, 2008, Lewis et al 2008), and the fact that PR outputs appear consistently throughout the analysed news-copy. One might question Gavell’s assertion that a commercial PR quote derived from ‘astro-turf’ organizations, is any better or worse than one derived from police-PR. Gavell’s comment is an aside, but by his own admission his does not challenge the veracity or credibility of Lancashire for Shale’s claims. It is hard to contest that the PR value of Lancashire for Shale is great indeed for the drilling industry, and the failure of the Gazette to recognise this fact is remarkable in the extreme. One can add to this the contention of media activists in Blackpool that they had been threatened with poorer coverage for critiquing the Gazette’s sponsorship relationship with Lancashire for Shale (see appendices interview with Claire Stephenson).

**7.7 The role of legitimacy claims - the uses of nested fields of state and political power**

As discussed in the literature review Bourdieu addresses structure at length and as a central concept; fields are nested within (i.e. subordinate and dominant) and adjacent to each other. As we have seen there is substantial evidence for consistent practice in the analysed texts and in normative expectations of journalistic endeavour. Police practice – both in action and in PR outputs – shares a number of elements, notably its reliance upon procedural legitimacy claims. These claims point to commonality in nested fields – the state field of bureaucratic process, and heteronomy towards the political field. Activist action and PR is also present in all case studies, and there are broad similarities of practice and habitus.

While the key arena of action for this analysis is the newsroom, it is possible, even necessary to the theory, that capital and to some extent orthodoxies will be imported into the journalistic field from those around it, as well as exported to them. This is equally necessarily true for police practice. As a result, for the purposes of this analysis, two other fields were identified as informing this study – the political field and the field of power. Suffice to say here that, these are described extensively in the Literature Review, notably *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), *Practical Reason* (1998), and in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977). In the case of this study these fields affect protests by the generation of political will and policy, and the application of the state apparatus in such matters as – for instance - planning decisions.

But what is noteworthy here is the central role of the bureaucracy and judiciary - both of which are primary actors and agencies in the legitimacy claims of procedural or process framing found in the textual framing analysis. This frame, when handed down from the agencies of the state, has a doxic sense; “…the quasi-perfect correspondence between the object order and the subjective perception such that the former appears self-evident to the latter”. (1979, p.164). In other words, for the purposes of this study, the state fields of bureaucracy and judiciary are dominant and form the main fields of power. The political field, in the form of pro-fracking politicians, draw upon and control this field as their own source of power. Pro-fracking policy becomes adopted by the state fields, and becomes policy via the political one – and thus becomes the dominant discourse. This means that ‘structuring structures’, forms of practice within a state, create a largely inflexible framework in which actions takes place. This structure, that came into being at the State’s inception, has subsequently become doxic. As a result, they become part of the maintenance system for that State and the continuing existence of the dominant societal elites. The judiciary and the bureaucracy each form their own fields of practice – which in turn informs the nested fields of power. This becomes the foundation of legal positivism as summoned by the police in the case of fracking protests as their primary legitimacy claim.

This – purely doxic explanation - is a far more convincing argument for legitimacy claims as practice, than those offered by Beetham, Weber or Habermas (although Habermas draws upon elements of it in his discussion of Norms) (Beetham, 1974; 2013; Habermas, 1988; 1996). The idea that such legitimacy claims are doxic and/or perhaps orthodoxy, rather than rational attempts at communication, allows the theorist to ignore or explain the apparent paradoxes and contradictions in behaviour and practice. For instance, it becomes far less important that the police’s legitimacy claims are accepted by any audience group, because that is not the primary motivation of the claim; indeed, rationality *per se* does not come into it. Thus the apparent fraudulence of Teagate does not undermine legitimacy claims because such claims are not rationale, nor is their acceptance. They are instead purely habitus. To put this in the plainest terms: when the police make statements regarding the legitimacy of their actions it is not necessarily because these statements are held to be true by them, but because these are their default positions. They are the societally-required normative rhetoric of police-PR actors. Thus it is possible to explain the – initial - police response to Tomlinson’s death, or the shooting of Charles De Menzes, or Teagate, or Flaregate, as a normative police-PR response that is only revisited once evidence undermines this default position.

Further, if as argued in the literature review of Bourdieu’s conception of state and political fields, policy is embedded through the processes and procedures in the field of state power, the implications are that protests are acting against political policy and its expression through State power. As we have seen government policy, as made apparent in drilling permissions etc, is the procedural backbone from which the police draw their legitimacy in taking policing action. To put this another way, the political policy of allowing, indeed encouraging, fracking is the *casus belli* for both the protests, and the subsequent police action, but resides outside of the journalistic field and – obviously perhaps – the field of police action and police-PR. The police frame their actions in terms of the drillers’ legal right to carry out their lawful business – which is, in turn, lawful because of political policy-making. This circular reasoning is central to the core messaging of police-PR, as it is nominally the societal source of their legitimacy. The important point here that *legal positivism* is no more a rational argument in this context than its concurrent claim to legitimacy – it too is doxic. This is illustrated by the case of the Welsh police which withdrew its support through mutual aid agreements as a reflection of the Welsh political opposition to Fracking. The fact this is not repeated elsewhere is strange, when one considers the local political opposition to Fracking in Lancashire. Not only did democratically-elected councillors oppose the drilling at planning stage, they were also prepared to be arrested at the protests – and they were, by Lancashire Police. While there are clear differences between the legal status of the Welsh national government, and the Lancashire County Council, we are returned to the logical inconsistency of the central legitimacy claim which is based upon democratically-derived bureaucratic procedures. These have been *‘feudalised’* by lobbying in nested superior fields of practice by ‘structuring structures’ which, to reiterate - Bourdieu (1986) “…the political field in fact produces an effect of censorship by limiting the universe of political discourse”, (p.172) – in a very real and practical sense.

**7.8 The Symbolic Power of the police**

As discussed in the literature review, the symbolic power of the police, expressed through its doxic or ‘mythic’ representation seems an unassailable and considerable asset to police-PR. However, while the textual analysis may support this position, the interviews, and the extant literature which discuss the issue of police relations with journalists does not. Recall Mawby’s interview-subject; “Every crime reporter has had, at some time, a stand-up row with the press office. They are a wall, a filter. Reporters battle against it, wanting as much information as possible'. (2010a, p.1070.). Interviews with the crime correspondent at the Argus reported ongoing problems with the press office such that personal and professional relationships are strained. John Scheerhout, crime reporter for the MEN, cites himself on the company website as “keeping an eye on the villains in and around Greater Manchester *and the machinations at GMP*.” (Manchester Evening News, 2017. My italics). Of course, these statements, evidencing conflict between police-PR and journalists, do not preclude a doxic societal leaning towards police symbolic power. Firstly, the orthodoxy of the newsroom objectivity rituals calls for a ‘police-quote’ such that copy covering a protest in which arrests are made, or at least police action taken, that did not include such a quote would be judged deficient and unprofessional. Secondly, the analysis made here questions whether the journalistic field is the primary target of police-PR framing. Suffice it perhaps to say, that the position of police-PR is far from unchallenged by the data or the existing ethnography, but that practice still includes elements of habitus that support a central position in ‘common sense’ formations.

It could be argued that, while one role of police-PR is in maintaining the mythic status of police fetishism, its work is also being done by a number of societal actors. Moreover, it is possible that police-PR is damaging the doxic knowledge behind this fetish:

…the dominated classes have an interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted; the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa or, short of this, of establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute ‘orthodoxy’.

Orthodoxy, straight, or *straightened,* opinion, which aims, without ever entirely succeeding, at restoring the primal state of innocence of doxa exists only in the objective relationship which opposes it to heterodoxy, that is, by reference to the choice – *hairesis,* heresy – made possible by the existence of *competing possibles* and to the explicit critique of the sum total of the alternatives not chosen that the established order implies. (Bourdieu, 1977, p.169).

The observation here is that once challenged doxa must make its case as orthodoxy. The unspoken rules of doxa, must now be spoken – and once spoken they can be challenged rationally. The *‘magical’* source of symbolic power is eroded, and the *‘implied’* order must now be made *explicit*, and so open to challenge by *‘alternatives’*. This then is the battleground upon which framing takes place. Procedural framing can be seen as the spoken orthodoxy of the doxic assumption. And the efficacy of its argument is undermined when police Twitter feeds call protestors scum (Argus 20/09/13) or in such episodes as ‘Teagate’. Of course, this is not necessarily the ‘fault’ of police-PR. Recall here Rowbowtham *et al’s* observation: “Crime news has always been political of course, but this is the first time that it was, on a sustained basis, relayed for public consumption through the lens of political allegiances” (2013, p.176). The doxa of *Dixon of Dock Green*, arguably belongs to another, ‘golden-age’, now passed because of a range of factors beyond the control of police-PR actors. Police-PR is now cast in the role of managing the arguments of orthodoxy in a period of substantial change across a number of fields. It could be argued here that the managerialism present in the rhetoric of promotionalism (Wernick, 1991) is undermining its own foundations.

The journalistic field, the political field and the field of state power have all been faced with almost ‘revolutionary’ upheaval in the last 40 years – with the latter doing what it should do in Bourdieu’s conception, be a field of power in which other actors compete to represent. What has been seen, in the work of Chibnall, to Schlesinger and Tumber, to Rowbotham, Stevenson and Pegg and Mawby, is a process of change from doxa to orthodoxy and hence (and throughout the period of these changes) societal change reflected in the journalistic and political field. The paradox stated here is worth emphasising. On one hand there are the widely stated opinions of journalists questioning the probity of police action, as well as the veracity of police statements. On the other hand, there is the empirical fact demonstrated in the content analysis of newspaper copy dominated by police statements and police framing. In the next section, framing as it occurs in the copy will be analysed in an attempt to place it within Bourdieu’s Field Theory.

Thus, the symbolic power of the police outlined by Loader (1997) and Brunger (2014) may seem palpable and extraordinary in its doxic strength. It seems unchallenged and is an observed presence in the analysed text. Indeed there are strong arguments made for the symbolic power of the ‘bobby myth’ or ‘police fetish’ being real. However, this may well be the result of newsroom objectivity norms, as ‘police fetishism’.

**7.9 Summary of arguments so far**

Summarizing the argument thus far; there are a number of active fields, nested within each other, acting independently but also influencing their neighbours. The field of power forms the base layer of influence, and is strongly affected by symbolic power and either a heteronomic pole of public relations, or a powerfully heteronomic nested field of public relations. The latter has influenced the field of Political Power, which has in turn dominated the bureaucratic field, which has in turn given procedural legitimacy to the field of police practice in the form of legal positivism. Public relations practice is evident throughout, but remains doxic, and arguably is the rationale for legitimacy claims, which are themselves doxic. Actors leverage their cultural capital in the form of media logics, media capital or acquired professional news-sense.

It is suggested by a number of commentators that journalists are not the only actors, or even primary actors, within the journalistic field and that PR actors have profound influence in the relevant fields. These actors are defining by their practice a field of action centred upon news coverage – but they are not journalists. This is an important point that deserves emphasis. Press officers and their ilk are often former journalists (Mawby, 2007). They employ what Patrick Champagne refers to as "media capital" (*capital mediatique*) (Couldry, 2003).

Bourdieu (1998) says as much in On Television “in a certain way, the journalistic field is part of the political field on which it has such a powerful impact” (p. 76). However, cultural considerations of journalistic norms make for a strongly homologous force in regional print journalism which acts to counteract the economic, heteronomic, considerations contended by Bourdieu. Homologous norms of objectivity and news-writing allow for sub-dominant voices to appear in the news text

This then, is the rationale (possibly unspoken) at the root of the framing attempts discussed in the next section. The protestors and their protest must speak back to political actors and demand a voice. It must also speak back to the doxa of the state field – even though in practice it can only be accessed, and its actions changed, by political elites.

However, until this is achieved activists sit outside of the accepted discourse as it appears in parliament – and so as it appears in the agencies of the state. This deviancy – as Hallin and Ericson tell us - is policed both literally and metaphorically. This is why the police’s acts of communicative action – police-PR - are central to the field of conflict as it is represented in the news-media. The police’s societal role is in guarding the facts of their activity, but also in guarding the borders of deviance.

The following section will revisit frame analysis as it exists within the three fields discussed here; how this media-relations work attempts to access this source of legitimacy by framing its response in terms of the field of power bureaucratic and legal pronouncements upon the working thesis that the others are nested within it, or at the least heteronomic to it. The political field is, in some cases as a proxy for procedural framing, and some of the work is aimed at the journalistic field – notably where the press office is giving information on arrests, budgets or court sentencing.

**7.10 Framing and Bourdieu**

In this section closer attention will be paid to Framing in the functioning of the fields described in the Textual Analysis chapter 4.

As previously stated in the Textual Analysis chapter, this thesis will adopt and return to Robert Entman’s definition of framing, “Framing entails *selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution.”* (2003). Its focus upon those building frames and setting them in their context (de Vreese, 2005) is particularly useful for this part of the study. The thesis will also adopt aspects of Entman’s cascading activation by equating his levels of influence with the fields already outlined above.

Framing is not employed in the extant literature on field theory and this is a departure from existing thinking on the subject. Framing comes from a largely structuralist/culturalist school, and while Bourdieu’s theory does draw upon some elements of that school, his work on individual agency does not. However, in this section frames will be shown to be a useful way of examining the workings and nature of the field – as well as illustrating how those fields work closely together. Frames work within fields and as a form of Capital between them – with public relations practice serving as a vector. For instance, the procedural frame is passed as cultural capital between the state and political field and is subsequently used by the police as a source of legitimacy. From here it is used in the field of cultural production as a narrative in news-discourse.

Turning first to the journalistic field, it has already been noted that conflict framing is omni-present throughout the analysed texts. This is because the ‘clash’ between police and activists already fulfils the doxic and orthodox criteria of newsworthiness as a necessary cause of its inclusion in the regional print news. This observation has interesting corollaries. First, the coverage of fracking as a subject might not take place if there were no protests. This is because the story of drilling per se might not have been deemed news-worthy. At the very least the coverage might have been relegated to the business pages. In fact, most of the coverage outside of the period of the protest camp was in either the letters pages, or the business pages. The second corollary is that because the coverage is focussed – primarily - on conflict, actors wishing to guide or influence the coverage towards other frames must make an additional effort in the form of news-source inputs – e.g. media-relations - to do so. The initial conflict framing favours whichever party is able to lay blame as a narrative. As we have seen the dominant news narrative structure lays this blame with the protestors, rather other actors such as politicians, business leaders, state bureaucracy or judiciary who have made or influenced decisions supporting fracking policy. As such protestors are portrayed as the antagonists, and it is their agency which is ‘arrested’ both literally and metaphorically by police actions. The societal validity of ‘arresting’ action in this case is addressed elsewhere but briefly it draws upon both procedural norms (Habermas, 1996) and symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991; Loader, 1997).

News-values are examined elsewhere in this study, but suffice it to note here Galtung and Ruge’s (1965) observations regarding such elements as threshold and frequency militate against a thorough coverage of issues that are ‘slow-boil’ stories; that is stories whose elements do not fit with the standard news-cycles (See also Davies, 2008; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Harcup & O’neill, 2017). As such it is noteworthy that framings offered by PR actors (police and activists) in this study meet none of the criteria of news values offered by Harcup and O’Neill or Galtung and Ruge - exclusivity, bad news, surprise, audio-visuals, shareability, entertainment, drama, follow-up, the power elite, relevance, magnitude, celebrity, good news, news organisation’s agenda. PR-actors’ framing activity attempts to either overcome the focus upon the immediate (in terms of time and location) or utilise it for tactical gain (Altheide, 1979; Hutchins & Lester, 2006). Protestors and other news actors might wish to overcome this news-cycle and news-agenda focus. It might allow the protests to be reported in their wider context – and the presence of frames such as environmental, economic and community, as well as procedural, point to attempts to introduce story elements that might otherwise be found to be not news-worthy. In so doing it may enable transfer of frames between fields in either a ‘cascade’ or ‘spreading activation’ (Entman, 2003). Competition between frames - across fields – provides a model through which they can be transferred across society and inform the relevant discourses. That is to say, some of the norms of journalistic news-sense – timing, sensationalism - are focussed homologously upon cultural production, and do not necessarily communicate with the adjacent fields. However, norms of objectivity and news-writing, which create the professional obligation to quote directly actors from all side of a news-story, do create a practice which informs the adjacent fields. This is an important theme because it indicates a central role for journalistic habitus and indicates that *pace* Bourdieu’s *On Television* (Bourdieu, 1998 [1996]) high levels of homology still exist within the journalistic field, and that cultural practices still dominate.

To this, the dominance throughout fields of practice of public relations should be reiterated; PR is a dominant force within our society and in the fields active in this analysis.

Given that frames such as procedural legitimacy or environmental concerns do not meet the doxic/orthodox understanding of newsworthiness, their presence in the copy is solely the result of journalistic decision-making informed, paradoxically, by cultural and news-writing norms of objectivity which in this case serve to mitigate the heteronomic norms of news-worthiness.

That said, the central role of conflict framing as a primary news-framing, is underlined by the word count presented in the earlier textual analysis chapter – in which terms such as ecology and environment were less present in word counts. The most commonly used word is ‘police’ in both the Argus and the MEN. ‘Police’ is the third most used word in the Gazette coverage – after ‘Fracking’ and ‘Road’. In a list of words used, the most used, are those that fit with news-based taxonomies and norms. An ordered list of words is very revealing. If one looks for words that might figure in non-doxic news-stories i.e. words like process, environmental, community, then the first word to feature in the framed used is ‘Process’ for the MEN (77th) and ‘Community’ for the Argus (78th) and Gazette (57th).

By looking at framing in the analysed news-copy we can see how frames are presented by each actor. The following four diagrams illustrate two main points; framing is heavily contested, and some dominant frames are not adopted or proposed by the police. Framing graph one illustrates how each frame is represented in the text. The second graph shows how activist frames have been represented in the text. The third contrasts this with police framings, and the fourth, for completeness adds the pro-frackers for Lancashire Police’s framing count.

**Framing graph one**

**Framing graph two**

**Framing graph three**

**Framing graph four**

What is obvious is that the analysed Frames – as they appear in the text – are not dictated or cascaded solely by the police. Some frames have no police-PR involvement at all. Frames exist in the news-copy far beyond those proposed by the police, or that matter by dominant elites – political or otherwise. This undermines Entman’s position (2003) (although he might argue that this is an example of reversed cascade) and reinforces the idea that, a field of conflict exists between the various actors in which they compete for preferred framing, and also for dominance of individual frames (such as legitimation). Of course, Entman’s study looked at foreign policy, in which there are fewer domestic media-actors at play, and his study, which focussed upon the presentation of a sub-dominant frame in the news-media, ignored the journalistic norm to offer contesting sides, rather than all sides of a discussion.

The tables given below reiterate and bring together frame analyses offered in the chapter on Textual Analysis (chapter 4).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MEN |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | IGas & Cuadrilla | Activist | Local person | Local pro-Fracking | Police | Politicians | Third party |
| Frame community | 3% | 20% | 10% | 0% | 58% | 0% | 10% |
| Frame economic | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Frame environmental | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Frame legitimacy | 2% | 25% | 15% | 0% | 34% | 8% | 7% |
| Frame peaceful protest | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Frame violence | 0% | 27% | 7% | 0% | 33% | 0% | 33% |
|  |  |  |  |  | 125% |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Brighton Argus |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | IGas & Cuadrilla | Activist | Local person | Local pro-Fracking | Police | Politicians | Third party |
| Frame community | 0% | 80% | 15% | 0% | 0% | 5% | 0% |
| Frame economic | 0% | 23% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 77% | 0% |
| Frame environmental | 0% | 40% | 25% | 4% | 0% | 31% | 0% |
| Frame legitimacy | 0% | 29% | 6% | 5% | 46% | 14% | 0% |
| Frame peaceful protest | 0% | 50% | 50% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Frame violence | 0% | 74% | 0% | 26% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Blackpool Gazette |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | IGas & Cuadrilla | Protestor | Local people | Pro-Fracking groups | Police | Politicians | Business |
| Frame community | 10% | 17% | 27% | 15% | 1% | 30% | 0% |
| Frame economic | 84% | 0% | 0% | 10% | 0% | 6% | 0% |
| Frame environmental | 0% | 74% | 19% | 0% | 0% | 7% | 0% |
| Frame legitimacy | 21% | 21% | 17% | 17% | 5% | 10% | 8% |
| Frame peaceful protest | 19% | 29% | 6% | 41% | 0% | 4% | 0% |
| Frame violence | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

**Table 19 – Framings as expressed by different PR actors**

To reiterate, the research question looks at PR inputs, so coding included the obvious and evident activities of PR actors – direct and indirect speech and social media as news sources. The figures given above (table 19) give a percentage count of which actors were most dominant in each framing. However, it has already been shown in the textual analysis that police voices dominate the copy in the MEN and the Argus generally. Here they dominate in the use of legitimacy frames. GMP were most active in a wide range of frames, with Sussex Police concentrating on legitimacy.

More interestingly perhaps, in the Gazette copy, framings were largely absent from police PR-spokespeople. Instead, these framings were voiced by Lancashire for Shale and similar groups.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MEN |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | IGas & Cuadrilla | Activist | Local person | Local pro-Fracking | Police | Political | Third party |
| Frame community | 39.58% | 9.68% | 13.85% | 0% | 25.43% | 0% | 10.33% |
| Frame economic | 0% | 2.90% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Frame environmental | 0% | 17.78% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Frame legitimacy | 60.42% | 37.85% | 66.41% | 0% | 46.70% | 100% | 21.99% |
| Frame peaceful protest | 0% | 6.69% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Frame violence | 0% | 25.09% | 19.74% | 0% | 27.86% | 0% | 67.69% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Brighton Argus |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | IGas & Cuadrilla | Activist | Local person | Local pro-Fracking | Police | Political | Third party |
| Frame community | 0% | 21.89% | 11.91% | 0% | 0% | 2.29% | 0% |
| Frame economic | 0% | 6.75% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 35.09% | 0% |
| Frame environmental | 0% | 37.02% | 65.51% | 34.48% | 0% | 44.40% | 0% |
| Frame legitimacy | 0% | 23.70% | 14.64% | 37.93% | 100% | 18.22% | 0% |
| Frame peaceful protest | 0% | 2.77% | 7.94% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Frame violence | 0% | 7.87% | 0% | 27.59% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Blackpool Gazette |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | IGas & Cuadrilla | Activist | Local person | Pro-Fracking groups | Police | Politicians | Third party |
| Frame community | 22.37% | 23.86% | 53.67% | 30% | 19.13% | 69.38% | 0% |
| Frame economic | 16.65% | 0% | 0% | 1.87% | 0% | 1.25% | 0% |
| Frame environmental | 0% | 30.68% | 11.54% | 0% | 0% | 4.91% | 0% |
| Frame legitimacy | 41.68% | 25.55% | 29.61% | 29.81% | 80.87% | 20.06% | 100% |
| Frame peaceful protest | 0% | 1.69% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Frame violence | 19.31% | 18.22% | 5.19% | 38.32% | 0% | 4.39% | 0% |

**Table 20 – Frames as used by each actor**

Table 20 makes the same framing analysis, but this time by actor. In other words, for each actor, it shows what percentage of their overall framing addressed each type of frame. For instance, for the Argus, 100% of Sussex Police quotes addressed issues that could be characterised as legitimacy claims. Again, the GMP is most varied in its framing claims. Lancashire Police, was largely notable by its relative absence from the text, but where it was present it focussed upon legitimacy and community. Note again how wide-ranging pro-Fracking voices were in their framings.

The story had already been deemed newsworthy, these framings are explanations of their actions to a range of audiences. Of course, it could be reasonably argued that newspaper readers (as found in the journalistic field as potential increases in circulation or advertising revenue) constitute a target audience for the messages implicit or explicit in this framing. However, given the desire by all parties to elicit either a change in policy e.g. the abandonment of fracking, or the status quo, it might be argued that these framings are ultimately targeted messages for elites present in other fields such as the political field or the field of state power.

**7.11 What is the inter-field impact of nested and adjacent fields**

The fields listed here do interact, most notably in state-orientated fields i.e. the fields of state bureaucratic power and political fields, as well as the field of police action and PR. The effects of the latter are represented in the journalistic field and the nested field of Fracking coverage – but their influence is limited, and in competition with other frames. While there is evidence which suggests protests against Fracking may have influenced the political field in changing Opposition party policy (The Labour Party, 2017), Government policy has not changed. Evidence for the impact of the primary field of power – where doxic and symbolic forces are arguably present – is harder to detect. However, the way in which doxic understandings, particularly those supporting the ‘bobby-myth’ (Loader, 1997) as symbolic power, seem to alleviate the impact of challenges to police legitimacy, represents some evidence of their effective presence.

This thesis has already identified that the police ‘patrol’ (Ericson, 1989) the lines of definition of societal deviancy and the facts of their own work, and has reviewed the nominalised semiotics of arrest, policing and uniform. The police have a role in enforcing – as the action of its central legitimacy claim of procedural framing – political, state-level and quasi-judicial decisions (Weber, 2009). While it is true that Bourdieu did not explicitly adopt Althusser, it is possible to briefly refer to his Ideological State Apparatuses to describe the work of police-PR – it too ‘patrols the facts’. At the point of protest, as it appears in the regional press news report, the police are the voice of the state, and as such the voice of the political field. It is as though there is no-one else to speak for, or act for, bureaucratic or judicial elites (or their fields). To this extent framing ‘cascade’ between these actors seems a facile assumption. However, the ‘superior fields’ of politics and state – and their elite actors - are elided from the discourse as it appears in the news-copy – even though their decision-making is a necessary cause of the protest. (Feature interviews with politicians and police elites such as those in Argus test this rule, although they are not themselves reports of protest events.) Thus, because the police’s primary frame is procedural and process driven, it is adopting this frame and in turn transferring capital from those fields to the practice of its own action. As such the transfer of capital between state fields, as well as those dominated by business elites, is clear and is the result of procedural framing. However, economic frames, and to a lesser extent environmental frames present in elite fields are not transferred to inferior fields such as that of police practice, and they are not heavily represented in the copy. Indeed, the procedural frame is the only frame to be transmitted through police-PR – which is the voice of state action at the protests.

This is a paradox, because procedural framing at once draws capital from the field of power, and at the same time elides the role of actors in this and the adjacent fields such as the political one (as well as the bureaucratic and judicial ones). This is achieved by drawing upon the results of competition within those fields as an accomplished fact. The decisions taken there, are presented as a *fait accompli* when policing a protest, the fact that those decisions may lack legitimacy in the eyes of the community or the protesters is not relevant to the procedural frame. This should be emphasised, the procedural frame is irrelevant to the protestors at the point of protest, once again emphasising that it is a product of superior nested fields.

Within a journalistic field as described in this thesis, and its commensurate conflict framing, it has been argued the state actors most often cited are the police when covering protest. However, this process does not directly summon the political protagonists or the state actors. Their agency is elided from the copy, and the police become the voice of a doxic ‘common-sense’ – the voice of the state. Note here that ‘elision’ as fabrication is an essential part of propaganda as described in chapter 5. This is not to say that political actors do not speak – the direct-action of Caroline Lucas MP was covered extensively in the Argus’s copy (9/25/13, 22/10/13, 21/4/14, 25/7/14) and there was a feature-length discussion of Prime Minister Cameron’s support for the exploitation of shale reserves (Argus, 13/8/13). However, within the coverage of protests themselves other state voices were largely absent. Loader cites Hall (1976) and Ericson in noting “… the importance and effects of what one might call the 'police voice'. It has long been recognised that the police occupy a privileged place in constructing representations of crime events” (1997, p.10). Bourdieu addresses this as the ‘right to speak’ in *Language and Symbolic Power* quoting Nietzsche in *The Antichrist* Bourdieu identifies first the Catholic church; “They make themselves synonyms. What of? Of themselves. ‘I am truth.’ They turn themselves into the sacred, they consecrate themselves and thereby draw a boundary between themselves and ordinary people. Thus they become, as Nietzsche says, ‘the measure of all things’.

“It is what I call the oracle *effect*, thanks to which the spokesperson gives voice to the group in whose name he speaks, thereby speaking with all the authority of that elusive, absent phenomenon, that the function of the priestly humility can best be seen; that the priest turns himself into God or the People.” (p.211).

Quoting Bourdieu in full helps make the esoteric argument that certain spokespeople become ‘anointed’ as the spokespeople for a particular order, which forms a kind of doxic ‘common-sense’. In the case of this thesis we can argue that the police fulfil this role – they speak for the established order, an order which is found in a bureaucratic and judicial fields of the main field of state power, which are in turn dominated and represented by the political field.

However, by contrast, in the Gazette the police are absent from framings because the press office is so over-stretched (see interviews with Tim Gavell of the Gazette and Nick Evans in the appendices). This function within the news-copy has fallen to pro-fracking groups which are free to frame police action in the most robust terms (see textual analysis chapter 2). Terms that could never be adopted by the police themselves. The result is that Lancashire Police, whilst still acting as the primary agents of the state, play little role in its defence or explanation of the state’s actions. This function is now undertaken by the corporations and their PR actors. However, the police remain present. acting as ‘amplifiers’ – by the presence and action (Hall et al, 1978), and are still serving as ‘policers’, ‘arrestors’ and ‘uniform’ actors as noted in the semiotics section of the textual analysis. And, as previously shown, pro-fracking spokespeople and police spokespeople combine in the Gazette to achieve a statistical equivalency with the solely-used police spokespeople in the MEN and Argus. While care should be taken with this purely numerical approach it is possible to see how commentators might see police and corporations as one elite, speaking with a coordinated voice. In fact, it is quite possible that this equivalency is due to rituals of objectivity which seek opposing voices - as well as the adoption of media logics by PR actors. However, the fact that the police might be seen by journalists as an opposing voice to the protestors, and as an equivalent voice to pro-fracking groups, speaks to journalistic perceptions of the roles in the news-narrative.

In all three regional case-studies, police spokespeople do not speak to environmental or economic concerns – this is not the locus of their power, (nor, they would no doubt argue, their business). As such, elite-state actors do not readdress the environmental or other arguments previously addressed in the political field or the field(s) of power. Thus, it can be argued, that one *de facto* outcome (not necessarily stated or consciously realised) of police-PR as state actors is to silence this level of discourse as voiced by the state within the journalistic field while it covers protest. Opposing views are not served or validated by state actors. We can also see that the police-voices were also dominant within the copy, in the number of times a frame is proposed. Once again, the police are used to over-power the text with dominant discourses and frames with references to the doxa and orthodoxies of the state field.

This is a possible solution to the paradox identified in the previous section. Journalists continue to cite police sources despite their reservations as a result of a doxic ‘oracle effect’. For instance, the so-called ‘Tea-gate’ incident presents an interesting study of procedural norms and what happens when the police are seen to abandon them. Sgt. Kehoe’s accusation seems groundless – a position supported by the IPCC. His failure to follow procedure is met with condemnation from activists and used as evidence that the police are biased against them – this is a recurring theme. Most curious of all perhaps is the MEN’s reluctance to say that the charges made by Kehoe are indeed fabricated – despite the evidence of the video, which seems incontrovertible. On one hand there is the stated intent of the MEN’s crime correspondent to monitor the ‘machinations’ of GMP. On the other there is a clear reluctance to identify ‘machinations’ when they occur – instead they are relying on the framing offered by Peers and the video itself – and give voice to the police’s reliance on procedural framing without questioning its legitimacy.

The police’s legitimacy claim is radically undermined. However, the police response to the accusations is to rely upon procedure in saying there is a complaints process, and they cannot respond while that process is active. For instance:

* A spokesman for GMP said it would not be appropriate to comment on the case while the IPCC investigation was on-going.” (2014 10 11 Police watchdog to re-investigate arrest of anti-fracking protester after GMP clears officers of wrongdoing);
* A GMP spokeswoman said: "Greater Manchester Police have received a complaint about this video which officers from the Professional Standards Branch are investigating." (2014 2 7 Anti-fracking protester to sue police over 'trumped-up' drink arrest caught on video);
* A GMP spokeswoman said: “Greater Manchester Police has received the recommendations made by the IPCC following their investigation into this matter;

We have responded to the IPCC with a number of observations in relation to their decision making and we are still awaiting a response from the IPCC to our representations. (2015 10 28 Police watchdog rules senior officer in fracking bust-up should face gross misconduct charge)

Peers on the other hand is clear that he believes the police have acted inappropriately, even immorally, by not following procedure;

It was a ridiculous, trumped-up charge. He wanted me arrested to take my video camera away. He told blatant lies. He was perverting the course of justice. I was shocked that he would do that on camera. When officers go well beyond the course of their duties and fabricate evidence, they should be removed. You've got to have some standards in the police. (MEN, 5/2/14)

It is evident from these statements that procedural framing is present in the story. Kehoe’s offence is in failing to follow procedure. GMP’s defence is that it is now following procedure – in waiting for the IPCC’s ruling. However, as Bourdieu has argued above (Bourdieu, 1998a, pp.41-42) procedure and process are central to the field of power itself.

By drawing upon a procedural framing police-PR attempts to speak to a doxic ‘common sense’ – but can only do so by drawing upon sources of that doxa – the field of power which, Bourdieu argues, is the source of capital for other fields. To put it another way, if police officers are members of the public in uniform – in line withPeel’s Principles – then the consensus discourse is they *must* represent the views and rights of honest citizens; otherwise the consensus is no longer a consensus. Indeed, we can argue that the police are *uniformed* in both a literal and metaphoric sense. They are ‘in keeping with’ expectations of statehood and police-hood. It is necessary to recall that these views and rights are – nominally at least – represented by the political process and embodied within the bureaucratic and judicial fields. It is this claim to consensus, and the legitimacy claim that goes with it, that is central to the framing work of police-PR, and the counteracting of framing work of activist PR. The resulting coverage – and the newsroom practice that produced it – is informed by this framing activity.

Legitimation claims appear as a frame in PR material, but whether they reflect a reality is far more controversial. In other words, are police legitimation claims, argued as doxic in the previous section part of police practice, or merely a response to the needs of a mediated promotional culture? Procedure is part of police-work, but there are occasions when procedures are ignored by police officers, and then summoned as a defence in PR action e.g. Teagate.

**7.12 Conclusion**

In this chapter an attempt has been made to apply Field Theory as an analytic tool. Citing Bourdieu extensively it has been shown that the ‘structuring structures’ of his work can be applied, and that his concept of nested fields is particularly useful. An analysis using journalistic and political fields shows they work closely together – so much so that they are arguably one field. Intriguingly, an analysis of framing attempts indicates reference to a third field – the field of power. Bourdieu theorised this field is played when the power of the state – the social space – is queried. And that is what can be seen in this analysis where both police, and to some extent, activists use procedural frames to reference the field of power.

A discussion of Bourdieu also highlights the doxic role of the ‘bobby myth’ as symbolic power, showing how it is intrinsic to the British sense of self and representations of nation-hood. This was offered as explanation for the strong position of police in discourses of deviance, as well as the continued reliance on police statements despite changing police/journalist relationships and policing scandals. However, it was also shown that journalistic norms and expectations challenge police action and practice, while at the same time being bound by norms of objectivity.

Bourdieu’s construction of a journalistic field in the extant field-theory literature was shown to be primarily structural, with little reference to the agency of journalists nor their norms of practice. However, these norms have been shown to be important in differentiating between national and regional news media case-studies. Moreover, it was possible to show how homologous forces of culture within the field – i.e. journalistic norms – could be brought to bear as part of the field analysis. In addition, despite a large body of literature identifying the role of PR in newsroom practice, it is largely ignored by the academy’s approach to field theory. It has also proved possible to bring PR-actors and their practice into an analysis of nested fields – showing them to have substantial capital which is heteronomic to the wider field of power. A discussion of symbolic power enabled a further analysis of the police’s position in British society, showing it to be central to both state coercion and communicative action. The police were shown to be the ‘voice of the state’ during protest.

Noting the role of PR in restating doxa and orthodoxy, and recognising that orthodoxy is a poor replacement for doxa, the role of PR was queried as a sustainable model to maintain police legitimacy. Nevertheless, PR practice was shown as omnipresent throughout nested fields of practice such that it could be argued that it forms, or at least heavily informs, the main field of power.

So, police public relations acts within several fields of activity and has several different roles within those fields of conflict. Notably it speaks for, as police action acts for, the societally dominant forces of state and business. However, news-coverage is pulled in a number of directions within those nested fields both heteronomically towards the pole economic capital, but also homologously towards the cultural pole of police practice in line with Peel’s principles and the *mores* and rules of human/political rights. In addition, police-PR speaks for its own practice and the actions of its officers in their policing of the protests. It is nested within a number of dominant and sub-dominant fields and the capital found in those fields pull its practice in multiple directions; it really is caught in the middle – a complaint made by a number of police commentators. In response to the challenges presented to police-PR actors, there is a habitus of PR-rhetoric which draws upon procedural framing, and the associated legal-positivism/formalism to justify police action. These form cultural capital. In addition, the symbolic power of the ‘bobby-myth’ gives police another form of cultural capital upon which to draw – although this may be overstated in its influence upon editorial decision-making. The combination gives the police a strong doxic position within the fields described in this thesis, which goes some way to accounting for the way the police are able to maintain their power in these fields despite their apparent failures.

**8.0 Conclusion**

This thesis has attempted to address the impact of police public relations in coverage of fracking in regional print media. It did this by attempting to address the gaps or weaknesses in the existing literature and thinking on the subject by the use of case-studies. This endeavour has been largely successful in producing a nuanced analysis of the police-PR’s role in that coverage, showing how it is both central and contested. The police were found to be an extension of state-action, a finding that is in keeping with structural accounts. However, while the influence of state (in terms of judiciary, bureaucracy and political actors (Bourdieu and Nice, 1977, Bourdieu, 1986, 1987)) – was dominant, it was not unchallenged. The challenges to that influence come from a number of sources; the outputs of media-activists are amongst them, but the greater effect is found in norms of journalistic practice and policing amongst others. Each of these effects is in flux and functioning within a rapidly evolving context.

This thesis has sought to unpick the threads formed by those inter-relating effects. It began by identifying and describing some of the key actors and agencies. It looked at the most recent history of policing in the introduction, before examining in the literature review, its history. These two sections combine to show the pace and scope of the changes in policing practice over the last 50 years. This change is echoed, and to some extent ramified, by the growth of public relations – as promotional rhetoric, management practice, and form of cultural capital (Wernick, 1991, Habermas, [1962]1989, Miller and Dinan, 2000)– which has been reproduced and reflected in the growth of police-PR (Mawby, 2002, 2007, 2010a, 2010d).

At the same time regional print newsrooms are also undergoing rapid change (Aldridge, 2003, Aldridge, 2007, Franklin and Murphy, 1991, Lewis et al., 2008, Cole and Harcup, 2010, Harcup, 2015) in which newsrooms are shrinking, whilst expectations continue to grow. There is considerable unease voiced in the academic literature cited above, and by other commentators (Davies, 2008, Brooke, 2011, Lewis et al., 2008) that their news outputs are being dominated by public relations, notably media-relations, practice.

Activist media-relations, as known today and as studied in this thesis, have not changed radically since its inception in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s. The spectacle of protest as a means to gaining media attention, first favoured by Greenpeace amongst others, remains central to news-media activism. However, there are two primary themes that deserve emphasis. The outsider/insider split described by Wyn Grant and others remains; media activists remain largely of the insider group, which retains a belief in the legitimacy of societal norms. That said, there is an obvious imbalance in resourcing between media-activists, and media-relations actors such as drilling company PR-agencies, government organizations and, importantly for this study, the police. The latter do not, as a matter of published strategy, view activists as a primary audience for their communications activity.

There now follows a chapter-by-chapter reflection upon the thesis which attempts to draw out the core themes under their research-question headings.

**8.1 Research question 1 (R1): To what extent can police-PR as found in this case study (or case studies) be characterised as propaganda?**

In the chapter looking at police-PR as propaganda, a number of traditional definitions of propaganda were described and elucidated (Jowett and Donnell, 2012, Marlin, 2013) and attempts were made to apply them to police-PR practice as found in the case study or case studies discovered in this thesis. It was found that their precise application was not possible when the traditional definitions which included intent, organisation and falsehood were used. In one case study addressing the MEN/GMP it was possible to make a case for propaganda in a few instances, but the case was not proven for lack of incontrovertible evidence, because it is impossible within the confines of this thesis to prove falsehood. In other case-studies – Argus/Sussex Police and Gazette/Lancashire Police - there was no reasonable case for propaganda to be present as police-PR practice. In the case where there was not, at first glance evidence for propaganda, a further taxonomy was offered in the form of ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ versions.

In the latter of these, there was some evidence for pre-meditated collusion to deceive as a pre-requisite of propaganda and it was possible to find evidence of collusion within the relationships between elite actors. However, it was reasonable to argue that a) the collusion was necessary for, or at least helpful towards, public order policing, and that b), the collusion did not extend to communications in the cases where deception was possible or probable. In addition, deception in any of the cases could not be proved, although it could be reasonably suspected in terms of exaggeration, emotional appeals, elision of fact and fabrication. Because of this the ‘strong version’ of analytical practice was described but not adopted as proven. Instead, the ‘weak version’ was used. In this analysis, propaganda, while still drawing upon elements of deception, did so from a position where deliberate collusion was absent, but actors drew upon dominant societal discourses of culture.

The case for the ‘weak version’ fitted better with the case study material in which deception was reasonably possible. It also reopened the discussion of the other case studies in which deception was not evident in the text, but that high levels of collusion amongst elites had taken place – most notably in the fields of communication. This definition of propaganda draws heavily upon cultural models of the hegemony of Gramsci (Gramsci, 1971, Jones, 2007), Williams (Williams, 1963, Williams, 1977) and Chomsky (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). However, the traditional criticisms of their works apply to this analysis (Lang and Lang, 2004). A model of hegemonic influence that includes norms and *mores* of culture runs the risk of including everything, and so having little practical or analytical value. In other words, in such a model, every act of communication becomes propaganda, or at least has the real potential to be considered so.

However, bearing these reservations in mind, this thesis places police-PR within a wider societal corpus of communicative action which informs and is informed by dominant or hegemonic forces. This runs the risk of begging one of the central but implicit questions of this thesis; the place of police action and police-PR within the societal power structures. This conclusion necessarily positions policing within power structures – and that becomes the subject of later chapters in which Bourdieu’s field theory (Benson and Neveu, 2005) is used as a theoretical tool.

So, the thesis identified a structural role for the presentation of the police, albeit with cultural underpinnings. As a result, it was possible to revisit the case studies and understand the role of policing itself, as well as policing-communication, as propagandistic – that is, tending towards propaganda. This finding was broadly in support of hegemonic discourses. Such an analysis does not require either intent or motive on the part of the police (although it may be present). Rather it was the police’s position in society - as ‘policers’ of societal boundaries, maintained as ‘uniform’ with those boundaries and given ‘warrant’ to ‘arrest’ the activity of those who transgress – that became important. After all, such things are arguably the reason-to-be of the police. The converse of which is that transgression is the rationale of civil disobedience, which is in turn enshrined in law and custom as a human right, as a ‘special case’ for policing – i.e. civil disobedience as protest is not just another crime (Courts and Tribunals Judiciary, 2019). However, as Chibnall and others have noted (Chibnall, 1977, Mawby, 2010a, Hall et al., 1978), this ‘special case’, while given some credence in public statements by the police, can easily appear to the police and others to be mere criminality. This can be seen in discussions of budgets and road closures which, by themselves, may seem to be factual accounts by the police made without framing, but are propagandistic. This is because the act of fabrication in this analysis (necessary to fit classic definitions of propaganda) is in the elision of the presence of the preconceived, doxic or mythic cultural structures that underpin policing. This argument comes dangerously close to arguing that everything is propaganda, which is not to say it is not correct. The ‘lie’ being told here is not a conscious act of deception by any one party – although this may happen too – but rather a socially constructed role for the police.

Propaganda in such a case, has far reaching implications for the actors involved in this case study. For activists, their role is necessarily sub-dominant and deviant to societal norms by being in apparent conflict with the police. For other actors such as pro-fracking groups they are, without apparent effort, placed in a position of consensus with societal norms. For the news-media, including regional print newsrooms, they seem to find themselves at once questioning the veracity and credibility of police claims, while at the same time repeating them under the guise of objectivity norms. For the police it places them in a dominant communicative position; which allows them ready access to the news- and other mass-media, and allows them a firm, almost unassailable position which supports their successes and effectively ignores their failures. This means that they can fabricate, exaggerate and elide with impunity, and that they have reference to mythic structures that lend themselves to affective narratives. We can think of examples such as the unlawful killing of Ian Tomlinson where the police were able to do all of these things, be caught, and face no long-term consequences. Adopting the weak version of propaganda allows for an analysis of police communicative action which can lead all of it, in its totality, to be described as propagandistic. Such a description seems non-sensical. It is surely unreasonable to describe every communication as propagandistic. At the very least, such a claim places those individuals working in police communication in a position of being unable to refute their role as propagandists - allegations which may, at first glance, seem defamatory. However, individual agency is important; even in the ‘weak’ version there is considerable variation in the nature of communicative action as propaganda. There was notable variation between GMP and Sussex Police.

At this point it is useful to return to the revised definition of propaganda:

Propaganda is centralised police-PR practice where communicative action is undertaken in which key information is elided, exaggerated, makes appeals to emotion, is deliberately misrepresented or invented, with the intention of justifying tactical police action, or promoting police strategic objectives and the associated ideology of law-based legitimacy.

Of course, this definition leaves out the element of strategic intent found in Marlin and Jowett and O’Donnell, but as we have shown this is almost impossible to prove, although there are grounds for reasonable suspicion based upon societal power structures and evidence of collusion between drilling companies and police. The latter might form the evidence for strategic intent between elites at a macro-level. At a meso-level intent is easier to find in terms of police organisational strategic communication objectives. These include the stated objective of presenting the police in the best possible light. This is not surprising or evidence of malfeasance, after all, there is nothing wrong with telling the truth in a transparent way. When does this tip into propaganda? This is largely a subjective judgement call in which the observer must decide where and when the contingent criterion is met. This thesis has attempted to weigh these matters with as much objectivity as possible, but it is clear that other perspectives are possible.

With these things in mind, the answer to research question one is, that loose definitions of propaganda allow for much of the police’s communicative action to be described as propaganda. Other individual acts may be more obviously propaganda or at least lend themselves towards such in accordance with classical definition. Some police organisations seem to be more propagandistic than others.

However, there is little evidence for police communicative action that meets the thresholds set by the Marxists. All that is not to say that it might not be found elsewhere, beyond the confines of these case studies.

**8.2 Research question 2 (R2): to what extent can it be argued that legitimacy claims are the primary objective of police-PR?**

**Research question 3 (R3): to what extent can police-PR as found in this study be characterised as a managerial or organisation response to mediation and/or mediatization?**

These two questions were addressed in the chapter looking at legitimacy claims. Generally, it has been argued in literature that legitimacy claims are of primary importance to the police as necessary to their continued effective action. However, a review of events in which police legitimacy claims have been successfully challenged – the deaths of Ian Tomlinson and Charles de Menzes, Hillsborough, as well as Teagate and Flaregate found in this study – reveal that failures in legitimacy are not fatal to police practice or communications. As such it can be said that legitimacy claims are important but not necessary, at least in the short- or medium-term. Both Beetham and Weber’s arguments were found to be unaligned with the reality of legitimacy claims found in this study. Such claims were found to be heavily contested by both the news-media and the protestors – such that there was a lack of acceptance or agreement either normatively or in practice by these groups. This lack of agreement strikes at the heart of both Weber’s contention and those of Beetham who argues that agreement is necessary at all three levels of his taxonomy. As it is, there is no generic agreement in principle, no agreement in the rules and certainly no agreement at the moment of protest.

Nevertheless, legitimacy claims were present in the press releases and statements of the police, and subsequently in the news-copy. Such claims form the major part of the news-framing offered by police communicators. This is entirely consistent with the theoretical approaches considered above, and with Habermas’ discussions of crisis navigated or mitigated by PR-tools. Police-framing is repeated in the newspaper texts. This is evident in both the GMP and Sussex Police press material and its subsequent use in the MEN and Argus. However, the lack of Lancashire Police output and the concurrent use of Lancashire for Shale outputs led to the legitimacy claims being made by the latter. This places legitimacy claims as central to the societal discussion of the protests, making police legitimacy claims part of far wider discourse, and not just a function of validity claims in terms of policing by consent.

Moreover, it is evidence which suggests that that not only are the police seen by journalists as being ‘the other side of the argument’ to protestors, but the police see themselves as such, a view shared societally. Thus it could be argued that the primary role in police-PR as it appears in the news-copy is to transmit or relay the state legitimacy claims – even if these claims are challenged or even radically undermined. The primary research question asks what role police-PR plays in regional newspaper coverage, and here it seems apparent that it is used in a wider discourse of legitimacy, but its absence is not fatal to those discourses, other voices are found by journalists to voice that discourse. This means that:

1. While legitimacy claims are central to police-PR, they are
2. not necessary to police action, and,
3. challenged to the point of failure, but
4. still present in societal discourses of police action, and
5. repeated in the media as a result of normative news-production practice.

As such, the continuance of legitimacy claims is a paradox until their doxic nature is fully appreciated. They are not present because of their rationally evidenced utility, they are present because they are practice or habitus – a discussion returned to in research question (R4).

Research question R3 touches upon the same issue. It was observed in the chapter on legitimation that any organisation functioning within a mediated society in which promotional culture is dominant is subject to the forces of mediatization. The police are no exception, and their growing use of PR has been commensurate with its growing use across society. However, PR practice has its own logics, and these PR-logics have their own managerial objectives. Indeed managerialism has been a driving factor in policing practice for some time. This means that the expectation that PR will become a driving force in policing, as it has become a driving force elsewhere, is entirely reasonable – although there may be mitigating factors that make mediatization lesser in influence, or slower to advance.

Public relations provides a professionalised model for the management of presentation of the public image of an organization. It draws upon societally accepted norms of practice and rhetoric. Failure to meet with these norms is incompetent management, and, wishing to present a façade of competence, policing organizations (like all of their societal contemporaries) adopt those norms. As such, these norms represent a source of legitimacy in their own right; both in terms of evidence of management competence, and in terms of meeting the societal needs of promotional rhetoric. From this follows such PR management practices as an appreciation of message and media, news-sense and media-logics, quotable-quotes and usable images, media-training for key actors, the use of framing, and the incorporation of public relations at senior levels of management. This leads in turn to an appreciation of the organization’s position in societal discourses and, for the police, legitimacy claims of the kind seen in these case-studies. This is because, for the police, other frames are simply not available; the only justification available to them for their action is legal positivism.

Having rejected legitimacy claims as presented in the literature as unrealistic in terms of these case studies, this thesis is able to offer two rationales for legitimacy claims that fit with the available data. The first is that such claims are doxic to societal representations, and thus have no rational basis given the undermining of those legitimacy claims by the way governmental policy-making has been manipulated by business interests. The second is that such claims are an artefact of professional PR practice and promotional rhetoric. The presentation of legitimacy frames is not necessarily because such frames are real in themselves, their only verifiable reality is in the presentation itself.

This places police-PR and police-action at the centre of a legitimacy crisis in which they have no agency. The validity, legitimacy or credibility of governmental decision-making is itself in crisis. The framings cascaded though state public relations is equally denuded of objective meaning, and only has credibility as a tool in and of promotional culture.

**8.3 Research question 4 (R4): to what extent can police-PR as found in this study be characterised as activity within a field of conflict in agreement with Bourdieu.**

The chapter on Bourdieu successfully applied field theory to the case-study (case studies) in this thesis. Field theory proved useful in describing the role of societal power structures, while incorporating elements of practice. It was particularly useful in describing the cascade of frames from one level of government to another, and as such gave surprising if narrow support to Entman’s cascading activation, although these frames were not found to be unchallenged in the media, which contradictsEntman. Most usefully it described public relations practice as a form of capital within the field of power, supporting Bernay’s contention that public relations constitute a form of secretive government, a position supported in this particular case by the work of Spinwatch and Fracking protestors.

As such Field Theory proved to be a successful tool for describing power flows in society. In this case, it has been possible to identify the way in which political power has taken control of the bureaucratic, state and judicial system, and employed the police as agents of their agenda. This is a large claim, and its rationale follows. Much of Bourdieu’s writing predicts this as a manifestation of state power in the state field constructed as societies’ statehood grew. This argument has been expounded at length elsewhere, but it is worth dwelling upon its structural elements here. While the differentiation of economic capital and cultural capital is central to Bourdieu’s theories – contrary to the Marxists who see them as one -the monetary expenditures of pro-Fracking actors have been able to buy considerable cultural capital. This exchange is expected in Bourdieu’s theories.

Moreover, the neo-liberal hegemony places capitalist power, in the form of drilling companies, within discourses of protest as agents of the normative consensus. A position maintained by networks and practised through the medium and vehicle of public relations. That latter itself being a form of capital, capable of being spent in all fields of practice. It is interesting that public relations does not form its own field in this study (although it may be the case that public relations forms its own field in other case studies). This is to say that, while its practice exhibits in a number of fields, it does not form its own field of practice. While public relations is heavily heteronomic in its use, and does have an orthodoxy, it does not have an easily identifiable doxa – there is no culture as such; no *mores* or values. There is nothing for public relations to be homogenic to, there is no *culture* to speak of, and, because of this perhaps, it is contrary to Heath (Heath, 2004) in being largely amoral.

Public relations’ influence upon journalists – through such practices as ‘churnalism’ or Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model – is well-rehearsed in the literature. But that influence, of PR voices in news copy is not the same as dictating its content. As we have seen in this study, while police statements are included in the text, they are contested within the copy by several other voices; that is, they are included as one set of arguments consistent with rituals of journalistic objectivity – a fact largely ignored by a range of studies who see the presence of PR-copy as evidence of its failure as an independent *fourth estate.*

This idea of contest within a field is central to Bourdieu and usefully describes the way in which newsrooms become ‘cockpits’ of societal conflict. They produce a rationale for objectivity rituals in which journalists must navigate the conflicting interests of the involved parties, often in situations where they themselves have limited expertise and time to understand all the issues. The problem of course is that these rituals become, as elements of media logics, tools by which media content can be manipulated. Media experts (such as police and media-savvy activists) know that journalists will look for the ‘other side of the argument’, they just need to present it in an easy-to-use, ready-to-use format.

**8.4 Discussion of key findings**

Having considered each of the research questions in turn, it is now possible to draw out some of the key themes discovered as an act of triangulation initially proposed in the methodology. As such the following forms a wider reflection upon the research questions**.**

**8.4.1 State power and its capital**

Those commentators such as Althusser who might see a strongly structural element in police-PR are to some extent vindicated by this case-study. The coercive and persuasive elements of police-PR practice are strongly analogous to the Institutional State Apparatuses and the Repressive State Apparatuses of his thinking, and the coordination of these two are part of the stated intent of this practice and its real-world application. That is to say, that the management functions of media-communications are embedded in the management of policing itself. Senior communications managers have access to senior front-line policing staff, and they frequently inform the practice of each other. The extent of this coordination varies from police force to police force – with its greatest extent in these case-studies being of GMP. However, some policing actions are strongly homogenic to police norms of behaviour in line broadly with Peels Principles. And the majority of police-PR action found in this study was not propagandistic.

Structure was most apparent in this study in the nature of nested *state* fields of practice where legitimacy claims were based upon expressions of legal positivism. The latter draw upon the political domination of the state’s bureaucratic powers, which includes both the judiciary and the various planning authorities at state level. Other democratic authorities at regional level have found themselves disempowered by the central governments’ ability to over-ride their decision-making. A fact that has apparently done little to undermine the police’s claim to validity of policing action.

The political field has been dominated by elite business actors who have successfully lobbied for the support of elite political actors. Lobbying, as a practice of public relations, is a primary act in the chain of state validity claims. In other words, public relations is part and parcel of elite practice at this top-level state power. The role of public relations in representing elite power is replicated throughout this study – at every stage of action and practice.

**8.4.2 The structural role of public relations**

Public relations has a central role in the case studies cited here and its influence is exhibited in policy-formation, presentation to elites, informing news-copy and contributing to its content, and defining deviancy and conformity in terms of societally accepted rhetoric. Rhetorics of promotionalism have established their own normative position in dominant discourses. As such, the presence of police-PR within police action, bureaucracy and communicative action places and maintains the police within that dominant discourse. This means that the powerful position of these rhetorics, as part of societal mediation, gives impetus to processes of mediatization. A failure to appreciate and operate within the normative strictures of this rhetoric has been shown in this study to be highly damaging to the interests of those involved. In such a context, mediatization can be seen as an attempt to avoid or ameliorate the threat of that damage.

As such this study suggests that public relations has become part of the structure of society and its power networks. Bernay’s contention that, “Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country” (2005, p.37) seems to hold true. Public relations practice in this study, first utilised networks of personal relations, then was able to operate the political system, then was able to access the bureaucratic system, and then the police communications system. It also influenced protestor behaviour. Ultimately, the PR logics of its own practice were able to influence local communities and, at a minimum, place its voice into the regional media. Its impact upon the public sphere is impressive indeed, having been found to be effective in all the fields studied here, commensurate with the social growth of propaganda.

**8.4.3 PR-practice as an arm of the neo-liberal agenda**

A more contentious claim is that public relations practice reinforces the neo-liberal model of society. This sees market-place economics and its accompanying managerialism as the most successful mode of resource-allocation and societal coordination. This is because PR-practice is heavily embedded within market discourses, in its relationship with promotional rhetorics (Habermas, 1988; Wernick, 1991), its reliance upon monied clients able to pay its fees, and its place within networks of power. Such things make it strongly heteronomic. However, it is also true that activists have accessed the techniques of PR practice, used PR-logics and understood the way the promotional rhetorics can be used to their advantage. While this certainly gives credence to claims that information wars have weaponised media-relations, the argument that there is an equal battlefield, or that agents have equal access to its weapons, is far less easy to prove. In the light of this Greenpeace’s Wilcox contention: “… I remember saying in the early 80s that we had to get as disciplined and organised as IBM or Exxon, or we weren't going to matter.” (Ells, 2014), is well observed. It is perhaps more accurate to argue that, given public relations dominant position, as part of a powerfully heteronomic fields of action, then the employment of PR-logics as capital is the best way to achieve environmental objectives.

**8.5 To what extent is police-PR politicised?**

This is a central question that speaks to structural interpretations of the role of police-PR. The fact that policing sits so prominently within the enforcement of state decisions, and they are politicised means it results from the decisions of politicians. Many of these seem to have been influenced by business-led public relations. In this case police-PR can be suspected of being part of this set of processes. However, this contention must be measured against individual commitments to best practice in the form of an ethos of public service in policing, and the ‘truth’ as a central ethos of many of those involved in both journalism and media-relations. This leaves police-PR in its own contested field of heteronomity and homogeneity. It is the last field left in the consideration of the research question. The police are heavily encultured, and we are as a society fortunate that public service is central to that culture. Police-PR sits within that cultural context, but is itself pulled towards the highly heteronomic field of public relations. Above all else police-PR practice takes place within a heavily contested set of nested fields in which political influence is inevitable, but not necessarily dominant.

**8.6 A summary of thesis findings**

Police-PR has been found to be present throughout regional print media coverage in these case-studies. It was used extensively by journalists, and was even found to be present where, in the case of Lancashire Police and the Gazette, the inputs were limited. The Gazette then used pro-fracking groups, in order to fulfil ‘rituals of objectivity’ described by Tuchman.

Some police-PR outputs are propagandistic in its use of affectation, exaggeration, elision and untruth, as well as its organised reliance upon pre-existing discourses i.e. mythic structures. However much of that activity must be placed in a context of cultural *mores* rather than proactive construction or use by societal elites.

Legitimacy claims are central to police framing, and this is consistent with existing thought on the subject. However, such claims were radically undermined by failures in political policy-making, what Habermas terms a ‘legitimation crisis’. As such, legitimacy claims, were easily challenged by protestors. Nevertheless, the claims maintained their doxic strength. This is remarkable. However, in the copy, the continued use of these claims may well be the product of ‘objectivity rituals’ rather than an editorial acceptance of their credibility or veracity.

Bourdieu’s field theory proved useful in placing police-PR and the news coverage in the context of wider political, cultural and hegemonic discourses. Bourdieu’s understanding of the role of doxa and symbolic power also proved useful in defining police-PR’s role in promoting or defending police action.

However, a thorough analysis of the case-studies showed contingency, agency and context to be important in understanding the events, and these were seldom fully accounted for in the theories proposed in the existing literature on the subject or those used here.

**8.7** **Limitations**

**8.7.1 A personal perspective**

I have a background in activism, journalism and public relations, and so I can’t claim to be unbiased. I have, however, attempted to follow the evidence and the literature – and I think I have been successful. However, the reader may wonder if bias has crept into my analysis, or if I have over-compensated by looking for incontrovertible evidence when reasonable suspicion would suffice.

**8.7.2 Methodological limitations**

These are addressed in the methodology (chapter 3.0). However, one should highlight here that the case study approach used in this thesis is generally held to be suitable for testing theories, but less useful for making new ones.

In addition, one should note the dangers of the ‘lone-coder’ in this analysis. This is to some extent mitigated by cross-coding between case-studies. However, a note of caution must be sounded in reliance upon quantitative data, although the cross-referencing of trends between case-studies makes for a more robust approach.

As such, and because of the limited dataset and scope of the case-studies, care must be taken in generalisation

**8.7.3 Suggestion for further study**

What follows is a discussion of those elements of study which were discovered by the study but fell outside its remit. Each of the following identifies as an area for further study:

1. The dataset should be extended to other Fracking protests, and further to other activist protests;

* The dataset could be usefully extended to other media channels such as social media and traditional broadcasting e.g. television and radio;
* It may prove useful to make international comparisons in police-PR practice;
* Closer inspection should be made of police use of data-driven intelligence techniques, particularly those using social media. Recent scandals have shown how big-data can be used in gathering information and influencing target audiences. Given the police’s history of spying on activists and military-style infiltration, as well as the labelling of activists as domestic extremists, one might reasonably wonder if there is a connection between police intelligence gathering, Special Branch, MI5 and GCHQ.

**8.7.4 A post-modern critique**

There is a rich vein of analysis to be tapped in the findings that rational positions posited in the major academic literature – notably that on legitimacy – are robustly challenged in this thesis. The extent to which practice can be considered an artefact of promotional culture or an artefact of journalist practice it interesting. It is possible to use Baudrillard here to remind ourselves that representations of reality are not themselves reality, but rather a simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1983). This points study in a direction that veers from the rationality constructs of modernity and towards the post-modern. Such questions would be a fascinating area of further study.

**8.7.5 A discussion of the role of ethics in the production of public relations**

There is some limited evidence found in this study that there is a difference between the norms and ethics of public relations professionals who have taken a marketing communications route to their careers, and those of journalists who have subsequently ‘gone into’ PR. This evidence found primarily in the chapters looking at propaganda and legitimation. The dataset available in this thesis is too small to substantiate this position authoritatively. In addition, other methodologies may be better suited to such research e.g. structured interviews.

**8.7.6 A further analysis of agency, context and contingency**

Having reviewed and analysed a number of key theoretical positions regarding police-PR, it may prove useful to further studies to dwell upon weaknesses at the core of theories so far described. These are their failure to perceive and describe real-world factors which introduce what Clausewitz (Clausewitz, 1973) describes as ‘the fog of war’ or ‘friction’, or his follower Moltke’s (the elder) much mis-quoted contention that “no plan of operations extends with any certainty beyond the first contact with the main hostile force” (Moltke, 1993).

In this case such frictions against both everyday practice, and the formation of ‘grand theories’ that might describe them, can be considered in terms of agency, context and contingency. Agency refers to individual action or inaction, the motivations and skills of those persons involved in practice. Context includes the changing nature of the field in which activity takes place – political, social, economic or technological influences that might take the form of a traditional PEST or PESTLE (if one included legal and environmental influences) analysis (Fill, 1995). Contingency, in the sense used here, refers to luck – albeit at the service of the best prepared (Moltke, 1993). A study of the impact of these upon journalism and public relations may well yield interesting results.

**8.8 Recommendations and observations**

* The police should never lie. This may sound obvious, even insulting to those working in police communications offices, but nevertheless, their public relations practice is not the same as that of their contemporaries – they must never forget this. Unpalatable truth must be told, rather than a convenient deceit. Imagine for a moment if, following the horror of Hillsborough the simple truth told had been – “10 officers blocking the central entrance to the stands, and directing fans to the two wings would have prevented the whole disaster” – the heartbreak would have still been terrible, but surely lesser than the 20-year battle relatives of fans faced to unearth the truth. This, and the loss of trust in the police that went with it. This is also true of protests, tell the truth, it’s easier in the long run.
* The police must investigate accusations of government malfeasance in public office as regards lobbying and public relations, and its impact upon the decision-making process that led to Fracking as policy. Accusations have been made, not only by activists, but also by academics (Gilmore et al., 2016). A full exegesis of the law in regard to the matter resides beyond the scope of this thesis. However, these accusations – which cover the conduct of civil servants and politicians – would seem to fulfil the guidelines for prosecution laid down by the Crown Prosecution Service (Crown Prosecution Service, 2019) This is not because there is necessarily evidence of it (although I believe there is), but rather that a transparent and rigorous investigation would allow the police to declare their neutrality with greater credibility. Moreover, every time a drilling company breaches planning law, or allows waste to be carried off-site without due care, or employs too much force, these too must be investigated vigorously.
* Rituals of objectivity remain a journalist’s best defence. The success of public relations; its all-pervasive power, its effect upon the way society sees itself, talks to itself, deceives itself, its post-modern amoral *raison d’etre*, are all elegant proof of so many unpleasant truths. These include the duplicity and naivety of humankind, the failures of the democratic project and the power of elites. There is a visceral irony in that public relations reveal these essential truths, while concealing – by design and by second-order effects – so many others. The best we can hope for is this – some media operators will have the skill to counter the messaging of the elites, and that journalists will, despite the odds, do a good job. Because, while the effect of ‘good’ media operators is to introduce voices giving the counter-argument, journalists are responsible for constructing those narratives into the news. Of course, it would help if some effort was made to check and elucidate the position of those voices. This is a tough call for our understaffed and cash-strapped newsrooms, but any journalists that fail to check an organisation’s website to see it is funded by a drilling company are lazy; they are ‘dialling it in’ and they should be ashamed of themselves. Sources should be clearly identified so that readers can make informed judgements regarding their veracity and position.

**8.9 A few final words**

Climate change continues to present an existential threat to its originators, humankind. The role of public relations is on one hand to present neo-liberal capitalism as a cure-all to this (and other ills) - those doing so are ‘snake-oil salesmen’ (and women). On the other hand, environmentalists and other campaigners summon media- and PR-logics to the cause with negligible success. As a result, we continue to rely upon fossil fuels; an act of criminal stupidity verging upon a crime against humanity. For my own part, as a witness to the debacle at Copenhagen, I fear the worst for our children’s future. Public relations – in this *Century of Spin* - has been central to this act. Police-PR plays a bit part in this catastrophe, but its role could be far greater and to the common good, in simply stating the police’s position as untenable in the face of the resulting crisis in legitimacy instead of covering it up with reliance upon the fraudulent morality of legal positivism. In other words, they must recognise the truth, and tell it…

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**Appendices**

**The impact of Police Public Relations on regional print news-coverage of Environmental Protest**

Appendices

In paper format

1. Content Tables, describing the content of each article.
2. Coding framework, showing the coding schema used in analysing the news-copy.

Formerly given in disc copy but given here in electronic/paper format

1. Analysed news copy
   1. Brighton Argus
   2. Manchester Evening News
   3. Blackpool Gazette
2. Interviews
   1. Activist – Balcombe Down – Kathryn McWhirter
   2. Activist – Barton Moss – Martin Porter
   3. Activist – Preston North Road – Claire Stephenson
   4. Police Communications – Sussex Police – Andy Freeman
   5. Police Communications – Greater Manchester Police – Amanda Coleman
   6. Police Communications – Lancashire Police – Nick Evans
   7. Journalist - Brighton Argus – Floar Thompson
   8. Journalist – Blackpool Gazette – Tim Gavell
3. Documents
   1. Media Statements – Sussex Police
   2. Media Statements – Greater Manchester Police
   3. Communication Plans and Strategies – Sussex Police
   4. Communication Plans and Strategies – Greater Manchester Police
   5. Andy Freeman – Sussex Police – Presentation on Balcombe Down Protests

1.i Brighton Argus Content Table - Analysis of articles

The table given below gives an article-by-article overview of the coverage and attempts link it to any associated police-PR

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The following table lists all of the stories in turn giving the date, title, byline, summary and discussion. The final column gives the commensurate press release where available. Those occasions where police statements are not used are also listed. On several occasions these contained newsworthy stories which placed the police in a positive light. | | | | |
| Date and headline | Byline | Summary | Text analysis | With official  Police PR? |
| 2013 7 25 UPDATE: Anti-fracking campaigners blockade Balcombe roads in drilling battle with Cuadrilla | K[imberly Middleton](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/40495.Kimberly_Middleton/), Assistant News Editor | Protests begin. Brake cables cut on a lorry. Police mediate. No arrests. | The headline leads on protest, but the front paragraph leads on brakelines severed, with the odd sourcing ‘according to protesters’. The latter seems clumsy phrasing given this is confirmed by police sources. A named ‘protester’ (a neutral noun use) adopts a moral and procedural framing, *“Why is it the police's business to assist a fracking company?”.* An anonymous police source adopts a process framing; *“Sussex Police fully support the right to demonstrate peacefully and within the law.*  *"Our aim is to provide a safe and secure environment for protesters and residents, to minimise disruption to the community and to prevent crime and disorder.”*  The police source uses the more neutral noun ‘demonstrator’.  Modality *“The Environment Agency has attempted to reassure people…”:* an implied critique of an anonymous non-local spokesperson… | PR43001/2013 26/07/2013  The indirect police quote stating the cables where mended quickly and without incident, is not given within this press release. This quote was probably given by an on-site police officer. |
| 2013 7 26 Anti-fracking protestors dig in as Cuadrilla drilling equipment forced to turn away from Balcombe | [Kimberly Middleton](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/40495.Kimberly_Middleton/), Assistant News Editor | Protests continue at the site. Lorries are turned back. Quotes locals and protesters extensively. | *“Activists and residents declared it Balcombe 1 – Cuadrilla 0*” – noun use is positive, grouping locals and ‘activists’ together. “Seasoned activist” used later in the copy: seasoned – older, practiced, experienced, earthy - a ‘crusty’, perhaps referencing earlier road protests.  Anon Cuadrilla spokesperson using process framing. | PR43001/2013 26/07/2013  “Some had moved a tree across the entrance…” not reported here, but later covered in the court report |
| 2013 7 27 Two more arrests at Balcombe fracking protest | No byline | More arrests as protests continue. | Headline leads on two arrests, front paragraph on ongoing protests. Process framing from both police and Cuadrilla. The verb *to arrest* is used in its passive intransitive form throughout – nominating the process, and eliding the role of police officers. | PR43002/2013 27/07/2013  PR43019/2013 27/07/2013  PR43003/2013 27/07/2013  There are three press releases issued for this day – supplied quotes are used throughout |
| 2013 7 31 Fracking protesters say police use 'excessive force' | [Gareth Davies](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41026.Gareth_Davies/), Reporter | This is a follow-on story from the arrest of Caroline Lucas and the pressure-point arrest of her son. Complaints of excessive force. MEP and local teacher say police use too much force. A police and crime commissioner spokesperson says balance must be struck. | Opening phrase makes police the passive object of the verb, whilst omitting the source of the complaints – arguably giving police victim status. At least one of the critics was a high-profile MEP who could have been the subject of the verb. However, paragraph three is directly critical of the police failure to respond to the paper’s queries. There are two lengthy quotes criticising the police use of force, with the final paragraph given over to a brief police commissioner response. Police is a group noun, but is referred to as ‘they’ rather than ‘it’ in the copy – giving it personhood. The source of the video is not named. | PR43019/2013 27/07/2013  The issue of police coercion is addressed in the press release, but not quoted here. |
| 2013 8 1 Anti-fracking protest arrests in Balcombe up to 25 as two glue themselves together | [Gareth Davies](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41026.Gareth_Davies/), Reporter | A follow-on story about ongoing arrests and protests. | Extended quotes from ‘activists’ and ‘campaigners’ – a noun use which leans towards positive portrayal. Named police spokesperson makes a process-framing defence of pressure point tactics. A moral framing presented by activists and campaigners attempting to access the wider, national fields of environmental action. An interesting choice of pictures – one illustrating a child’s involvement in the protest, another showing protestors sitting in a camp. Children were used in the protest, but why was the moment of their protest not pictured? Children are an icon of innocence…innocence misused to legitimately cited. | PR43030/2013 30/07/2013  Defence of pressure point tactics  The changeover of senior officers in charge is not reported. |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | PR43065/2013 02/08/2013  “Two police officers were assaulted as a lorry was taken into the Cuadrilla drilling site at Balcombe on Friday afternoon (August 2).  An officer was punched and kicked by a woman who announced she was 14.  Was not reported at all until the court case. | | | |
| 2013 8 9 UPDATE: Fracking protests target drilling company Cuadrilla's HQ | None | Cuadrilla, its PR firm, and an MP is targeted by protesters. Protests, including lock-ons and the Caroline Lucas at Balcombe site. | The nouns activist and protester are used interchangeably. The article uses a number of press releases and media responses. There seems to be no reporter present at any of the protests, including the one at Balcombe. The police statement briefly addresses traffic management. | PR43095/2013 07/08/2013 |
| 2013 8 13 Special report: Prime Minister's bold fracking message as activists head to Balcombe | [Finn Scott-Delany](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41293.Finn_Scott_Delany/), Business editor | A lengthy piece which attempts to address the full range of opinion. | The lead line gives prestige and high levels of credibility to the PM. This approach directly references the wider field of action. The use of the word ‘bold’ is a semantically interesting choice; brave, foolhardy, prominent – a sense of ‘sticking his head up above the parapet’? The choice of picture presents the PM in a very positive way. His statement has been used as a news-peg for a feature. He is used prominently and dominates the copy, his is used at both its introduction and in its sign-off. However, dissenting voices are heard within the body and a wide range of sources are treated equally, if with lower prominence. | Not applicable |
| 2013 8 17 Sussex Police rebuts claims it has allowed protesters to bring a halt to oil-drilling at Balcombe | [Anna Roberts](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/36701.Anna_Roberts/), Crime reporter | Police refute ‘allegations’ of being too lenient | An interesting piece as this is the first piece by the paper’s crime reporter – the person most likely to have day-to-day contact with the police PR unit. This may be a pro-active piece by Sussex police, reported as a rebuttal i.e. a reaction to an attack. | PR43190/2013  17/08/2013 |
| 2013 8 18 Hundreds gather in Balcombe for mass fracking | No byline | Large protest with direct action threatened. Reporter on site, although this report is not bylined. Caroline Lucas joining march. | Noun use – ‘protester’, ‘activist’ and ‘campaigner’ used in first three paragraph – an example of ‘elegant variation? Police described as ‘forces’ – not their preferred nomination. | PR43095/2013 07/08/2013  Police quoted throughout |
| 2013 8 18 THE BIG INTERVIEW: Sussex Police Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs on fracking and Balcombe | No byline | A Q&A on the protest given by the leading police officer. | Q&A places police within an hierarchy, and the Argus as the interlocutor. Unknown as to whether this is a live interview, or if these questions were emailed to the force and written responses given. The paper uses the adjective ‘hardened’ to describes G8 protesters. The protesters are not referred to at all as a group. Protest is, and process framing in dealing with that protest is used throughout. | Not applicable |
| 2013 19 8 Protesters to begin direct action at controversial Balcombe drilling site | No byline | Direct action begins | Protesters charged with ‘triggering’ event. Local and procedural frames used by activists and locals. Drilling company quoted extensively. | PR43199/2013 19/08/2013  PR43205/2013 19/08/2013  PR43210/2013 19/08/2013 |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | Press releases that received no coverage in their own right. Notably, some list protesters arrested bail conditions forbidding them attending the site. A controversial use of bail conditions which has been subsequently criticised as a means of preventing lawful protest – breaching their human rights.  PR43167/2013 14/08/2013  PR43189/2013 16/08/2013  PR43190/2013 17/08/2013  PR43192/2013 18/08/2013  PR43214/2013 20/08/2013  PR43216/2013 20/08/2013  PR43231/2013 21/08/2013  PR43244/2013 21/08/2013 | | | |
| 2013 8 22 Green Party MP Caroline Lucas insists Balcombe arrest not a publicity stunt | Ben Leo | An account of Caroline Lucas’s arrest, and its aftermath. | The source of the accusation the arrest was a ‘stunt’ is not given. It may have been the paper itself trying to create a ‘news-peg’ for the story – using a conflict or news framing. The final paragraph describes her as having been on ‘the wrong side’ of the law at a previous protest. She might argue she was on the ‘right’ side and that her law-breaking was a legitimate non-violent action (*pace* Gandhi or Martin Luther King). The phrase editorialises upon a moral framing, rejecting the argument of moral equivalence and adopting state-level legitimation. | No press quote – although the arrest is mentioned in PR43216/2013 20/08/2013 |
| 2013 8 22 Police Federation leader: "Sussex taxpayer should not pay for fracking protest costs" | [Anna Roberts](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/36701.Anna_Roberts/), Crime reporter | Quotes the police federation and the police commission asking for central funding for the protests | Police elites referring to the wider field of power in terms of funding. Other frames are not referenced. Local news frames, and conflict frames are used. Process frames are referred to but only in passing and as a means of justifying central government funding support. | Not applicable |
| 2013 8 29 Balcombe villagers speak out against anti-fracking protesters | [Gareth Davies](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41026.Gareth_Davies/), Reporter | Villagers state their opposition to the protests and the protesters, as well as criticising their neighbours’ support. | The letter is quoted directly and indirectly at length. The phrase ‘come out in force’ is justified by the large number of signatories. The contrast of the adjectival ‘sleepy village’ with the intransitive ‘come out in force’ produces a dramatic contrast; a conflict framing which sits within the wider normative news framing. | Not applicable |
| 2013 9 2 Musical protest blocks road at Balcombe drilling site | Gareth Davies | Protest with musical performance | ‘Campaigners’ blocked ‘busy’ road. Use of the words ‘stumped’ to portray disapproval. Evidence of editorialization. |  |
| 2013 9 5 Man on tripod causes traffic chaos at fracking camp | Anna Roberts | Protest holds up traffic | Police quoted. | PR43349/2013 05/09/2013 |
| 2013 9 6 Police take tougher stance on Balcombe protesters after tripod protest closes road | [Anna Roberts](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/36701.Anna_Roberts/), Crime reporter | Police have issued an order forcing protests in a particular area in response to a tripod protest which blocked a road. | Adoption of unattributed quote – ‘completely unacceptable’ – places the police opinion within editorialisation.  Campaigner is used as a noun in the opening paragraph. Normally used as a positive term – but not so here.  The following paragraph contains a number of unsubstantiated claims where the police version of events goes unchallenged. Where is the proof that he threatened to urinate on officers, similarly, where is the account substantiating the delayed and held-up children etc..  *“The man clambered up the tripod at 8.10am and*[*Sussex Police*](http://www.theargus.co.uk/search/?search=%22Sussex+Police%22&topic_id=630)*said he threatened to urinate on officers after super-gluing himself to the structure.”*  The use of the word clambered, rather than climbed or mounted, is perjoritive. Monkeys ‘clamber’.  *“Police officers said the hold-up meant about 60 children were delayed for their first day at school and a distraught mother was unable to reach her daughter at school after she suffered a seizure.”*  It seems highly unlikely that there was no-one available for comment – latter interview revealed that McWhirter was out of the country, but a twitter stream has been used for a comment.  *“No campaigners from fracking groups were available for comment yesterday.*  *“But commenting on the road block on social media, a group called Ifthetrees said: “Jamie is now up a tripod blocking the whole road. It’s a lovely sight."*  *“Class action this morning closes road, hero still up there. This is just the beginning… believe it.”*  There is a clear adoption of police positioning, framing and messaging in this article. | PR43349/2013 05/09/2013 |
| 2013 9 8 Sussex Police issue overtime to deal with ‘constant queues’ for 101 contact centre | [Finn Scott-Delany](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41293.Finn_Scott_Delany/), Business editor | 101 contact centre under resourcing pressures – police blame the Balcombe protests as a factor. | Contains a limited reference to the protests. | No press release |
| 2013 9 9 Fracking firm stops drilling in Balcombe after "rattling" noise complaints | [Bill Gardner](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/34664.Bill_Gardner/), Senior Reporter | Drilling suspended for breaking decibel limits. Report of arrest tagged-on to end of story. Quotes from residents, drilling company, protesters and finally police. | The story adheres closely to norms of reporting. Uses quotes to good effect. The adding of the arrest story to the bottom of the article is odd, but quite possible done for reasons of space, or at the subbing desk. Quotes are used to good effect, the fact that the drilling firm managed to get a jibe in to the comments is simply good PR. The quotes about shaking patio tiles are unfortunate for the presentation of the locals, but fair (if accurately taken). | Uses a partial quote from PR43359/2013 06/09/2013 which appears at the base of copy. The quote is not central to the story, and there is, if the rationale of the pyramid structure is adhered to, an expectation that this might have been subbed out. |
| 2013 9 9 Balcombe roadside protesters to be evicted | No byline | Council attempts eviction proceedings | Procedural framing from both council and activists. | Not applicable |
| 2013 9 10 Liveblog: Balcombe anti-fracking protest eviction | No byline | A live blog of the days events. | The live blog includes some clumsy phrasing:  ‘felt the long of the law’ means ‘arrested’.  The arrested man is described as being a poet, but the employment of other arrested people is not given. There is a perhaps an implication of otherworldliness, accessing stereotypes of hippies. The overall feel of the blog is of amusement – hence the reference to a policeman’s ‘fine set of chops’. The on-scene reporter is hardly used in favour of a set of media releases and statement. | PR43378/2013 09/09/2013  PR43384/2013 10/09/2013 |
| 2013 9 11 More than 100 now arrested at Balcombe | No byline | The threshold of 100 arrested is used as a news-peg. A review of arrests follows, with quotes from a number of sources. | Process-framing from police spokesperson which argues for an equivalence between the right of protest against the right to go about lawful commercial activity.  Story does not include police account of an attempt to set up a second tripod. | PR43391/2013 10/09/2013 |
| 2013 9 13 Council seeks eviction of Balcombe protesters in High Court | No byline | County council eviction application, combined with accounts of protests moved to an ‘agreed’ area. | The report of the court action is given factually. However, the accompanying photo is of a protester being arrested, which is not directly relevant to the story. The sentence - “An area has been agreed with police opposite the gates to the Cuadrilla site where people can lawfully and peacefully protest.” – elides the question of who agreed and under what process. Earlier reports indicate that this was dictated by police as their response to earlier protests. | Not applicable |
| 2013 9 14 Council aiming to remove fracking protest camp in Balcombe | [Finn Scott-Delany](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41293.Finn_Scott_Delany/), Business editor | An update on the story that the council applying for an eviction order with accompanying police justification for the corralling of protesters into a protest area. | The opening two paragraphs read - *‘…protest camp could be removed as early as Monday after a High Court hearing was scheduled.* [*West Sussex County Council*](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/)*is seeking a possession order for the verges along London Road, Balcombe, where anti-fracking activists have been camped for weeks.* (My emphasis). The highlighted phrases hint at impatience, a need for action in the face of ongoing intransigence.  The police spokesperson states: *“…we are more than happy to facilitate legitimate, peaceful protest and will continue to do so, but step out of line and you are liable to arrest.”* This is an interesting development of a process framing. Where is ‘the line’ and who decides? These Police decisions were/are later challenged successfully in the courts. This is, arguably, the outside extent of a process-framing. The police are citing decisions that sit outside of an established process, and sits – rightly or wrongly - within a professional judgement call.  What is interesting is the level of agreement between the police judgement call in the last paragraph, and the implied editorial one given in the first to paragraphs. | Quote used from PR43391/2013 10/09/2013 |
| 2013 9 16 Balcombe anti-fracking protesters claim High Court victory | No byline | Council application for eviction is defeated in court. | The court reporting is not bylined and may have been from syndication. Court reporting must be made under strict rules in order to retain ‘privilege’ and avoid contempt. Quotes from press releases and press interviews have been sought from a range of actors – including the council, protesters, local people. The police are not quoted. The council’s quote is introduced in an anonymous statement, the protesters’ spokesperson is named in an interview. Both adopt a process framing; the protester adds a competence argument to within frame i.e. that the process is being applied incompetently. | Not applicable |
| 2013 9 20 Police officer disciplined for Twitter slur calling Balcombe anti-fracking protesters 'scum' | [Anna Roberts](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/36701.Anna_Roberts/), Crime reporter | A police officer is uses the term scum to describe protesters in a tweet on his personal account. | The source of this story is not given. Neither is the name, or Twitter identity of the officer concerned. It may be that the story was given to the Anna Roberts, the crime reporter, by the police press office in an attempt to control the story. There is a great deal that is elided from this report. Who reported the matter, was it to the Argus or the service, how did the Argus hear of the story. How does the Argus know Sussex Police responded ‘immediately’? Both police and paper adopt a process-framing, rather than a blame-framing. For instance, there is no apparent attempt by the paper to get the name of the officer – an obvious approach if the paper was seeking a more sensationalist news story (combined with door-stepping?). The police officer was not ‘disciplined’, but rather given management guidance. The paper is once again interlocutor between the public and the police – and sympathetic to the police framing of the incident. | 961: 21/08/2013  Anna Roberts later became social media correspondent at PA |
| 2013 9 20 Sussex Police Chief Constable to face questions on Balcombe anti-fracking protest policing | No byline | Crime commissioner will question in the chief constable in an online interview regarding the anti-fracking protests | The source of this story is unclear. One wonders whether the crime commissioner and the chief constable share a press team. This could be characterised as another attempt to ‘get in front of the story’. | The press notification for this online interview is not part of the Sussex Police response to the FOI request. |
| 2013 9 21 Top policeman defends pressure point tactics used at Balcombe fracking protest | [Melita Kiely](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41273.Melita_Kiely/) | An account of the video Q&A between the police commissioner and the chief constable focussing on the use of pressure points, with comments from a protester | Process-framing is evidenced throughout. It is possible to argue that the entire session was an attempt to use process framing to put a positive spin on the entire story. A protester is quoted using a moral frame to suggest that there was no moral equivalence in using force at peaceful protest. | No press release for this event, but defence of pressure points present in other press releases. |
| 2013 9 23 Cuadrilla has completed exploratory oil drilling at Balcombe | Anna Roberts | Drilling work complete | Quotes from police and drilling company. | 993: 21/08/2013 |
| 2013 9 25 UPDATED: Brighton Pavilion MP Caroline Lucas to be prosecuted in relation to Balcombe fracking protest | No byline | Lucas to be prosecuted. Quotes from CPS and Lucas. | Story is now an active legal case…contempt restrictions now apply. The reporter needs to take care not to prejudice the forthcoming trial. | PR43489/2013 25/09/2013 |
| 2013 1 10 Anti-fracking protesters leave Balcombe | No byline | Protesters leaving | Use of the word campaigners and protesters. Sussex police quoted anonymously. Use of pluralised form of Sussex Police (they rather than it) | No press release |
| 2013 10 2 Eleven anti-fracking Balcombe protesters to stand trial | No byline | 11 to stand trial | First cohort. Court reporting rules apply. | Not applicable |
| 2013 10 3 Have your say: Was the Balcome protest worth the strain on Sussex Police? | No byline | Survey of readers’ views. | Presumption of dichotomy originating in ‘protest and police response’. The protest is proposed as the cause, the policing action as a response. No mention of wider field of power or environmental conflict. The ‘thin blue line’ as victims, with injured morale, and local costs. A process framing focussing on the police as agents of system-based normality. | Not applicable |
| 2013 10 5 Your interview: Paul Sellings, Sussex Police Federation chairman | No byline | A general Q&A with police federation chairman fielding readers’ questions. Addresses issues which include the fracking protest. | Places elite actor in position of heightened credibility, with paper acting as interlocutor.  *“Cuadrilla was carrying out lawful activity. The rights and wrongs of fracking are not a matter for us. We are apolitical and are there to uphold the law and facilitate peaceful protest.”* A process framing. A rejection of moral frames. Also a discussion of protest policing costs which refers to the wider field of discourse, but only in terms of budgeting. | Not applicable |
| 2013 11 5 Cuadrilla signs 30-year lease for Balcombe fracking site | [Finn Scott-Delany](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41293.Finn_Scott_Delany/), Business editor | Cuadrilla gains new lease for site. Comments from campaigners. Questions motives of land-owner. | Adjective use to describe ‘rural drillsite’, supporting ecological and localised framings. Noun use – ‘Campaigners’ - a more positive naming for protestors. | Not applicable |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | Not used – police use lessons learnt at Balcombe to deliver training to other officers. This is potentially a strong news angle – particularly as the police admit they were ‘caught on the hop’ by the arrival of more protesters.  PR44411/2014 14/01/2014 | | | |
| 2013 10 7 Anti-frackers told to quit Balcombe | Finn Scott-Delany, Business editor | Council urged to leave now Cuadrilla have left | Council quoted extensively. Activists quoted in reported speech. | Not applicable |
| 2014 1 10 Balcombe anti-fracking activists cleared of obstructing highway charges | [Finn Scott-Delany](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41293.Finn_Scott_Delany/), Business editor | Court cases quashed. | Court reporting so governed by the need to maintain absolute privilege. Protester comments at the bottom of the story added after the case and are an interesting addition, given that they are not needed. | Court reporting - Not applicable |
| 2014 1 8 Balcombe fracking protesters 'not given enough arrest warning' | [Finn Scott-Delany](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41293.Finn_Scott_Delany/), Business editor | An ongoing account of a court case. | Court reporting rules apply – (see above) | Court reporting - Not applicable |
| 2014 3 25 Police tried to negotiate with Caroline Lucas for two hours at fracking protest, court told | [Emily Walker](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/42927.Emily_Walker/), Chief reporter | An ongoing account of a court case. | Court reporting rules apply – (see above) | Court reporting - Not applicable |
| 2014 3 4 Special report: Half of cases dropped against Balcombe protesters despite £4m bill. | [Anna Roberts](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/36701.Anna_Roberts/), Crime reporter | FOI request reveals half of cases dropped | No mention within this quote of the drilling company. The protesters are portrayed as the cause of the problem. “*Last summer saw the quiet Sussex village of Balcombe play host to dramatic scenes as protesters, and then the police, gathered in the normally isolated village.”*  *“…leading people to wonder…”* – by choosing to use the word ‘wonder’ a modality is adopted of unstructured thought. For instance, the word ‘think’ could have been used with equal merit.  *“*[*Sussex Police*](http://www.theargus.co.uk/search/?search=%22Sussex+Police%22&topic_id=630)*told The Argus…”,* placing the paper as interlocutor.  The police were quoted in full. The second quote is introduced as *“A Sussex Police officer who worked extra hours during the protests…”,* highlighting the apparent sacrifices made by officers and attempting to engender sympathy.  Again evidence of adverse modality in the use of the work ‘deemed’ here *“Vanessa Vine, of Frack Free Sussex, deemed the policing…”.* The word ‘said’ would have sufficed. | There is no press release (featured in the FOI response) issued for this article. |
| 2014 4 8 Four anti-fracking activists guilty of blocking Balcombe highway | [Peter Truman](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/39835.Peter_Truman/) | A court report in which some defendants are convicted, but others given not guilty verdicts | The article is regulated by court reporting rules. But the headline does not mention the not guilty verdicts. This sits with a normative journalism practice, but does introduce an element of bias to the story. | Court reporting - Not applicable |
| 2014 4 21 Caroline Lucas: Why fracking should be banned | No byline. Written by Caroline Lucas | First person editorial by Caroline Lucas | An interesting counter to the police Q&As given earlier. It is interesting that this piece was not run in a similar format. One wonders if this was an agreement with the paper made to head of a complaint. | Not applicable |
| 2014 6 19 Police criticised for handling of fracking protests | [Gareth Davies](http://www.theargus.co.uk/author/profile/41026.Gareth_Davies/), Reporter | A peer review of the policing at Balcombe is critical. Quotes from the report, Sussex Police, and favourable quotes from a protester. | The choice of quotes from a protester is interesting. He speaks favourably of the police. Whether or not quotes were available is not known. | PR45889/2014 18/06/2014  The release claims that the report has been issued as a proactive measure. However, this article highlights criticisms of Sussex Police. |

1.ii Manchester Evening News Content Table - Analysis of articles

The table given below gives an article-by-article overview of the coverage and attempts link it to any associated police-PR

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| The following table lists all of the stories in turn giving the date, title, byline, summary and discussion. The final column gives the commensurate press release where available. Those occasions where police statements are not used are also listed. On several occasions these contained newsworthy stories which placed the police in a positive light. | | | | |
| Date and headline | Byline | Summary | Text analysis | With official  Police PR? |
| 2013 11 26 Fracking drills arrive in Salford, despite Irlam protestors efforts | TOM BROOKS-POLLOCK | Drills arrive. Arrests made. Twitter quoted. | Extended quotes from protestors. FoE using local/consensus framing and economic frames. | If asked. |
| 2013 11 27 Video: Salford anti-fracking demonstrations | JOHN SUTTON | A video-based article describing protest activity | Text leads on protesters, but second and subsequent paragraphs focus on police activity. Police make arrests (agency is with police), one protestor held face down on floor. However, protesters ‘clashed’ with police – the police are the object of the verb ‘clashes’, the protesters are the subjects – the initiators. The drilling company is elided from the text – machinery is brought onto site by unidentified parties.  No quotes used. | 27 November 2013  IF ASKED: |
| 2013 11 27 Arrests made at 'anti-fracking' demonstration in Salford | [PAUL BRITTON](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/authors/paul-britton/) | Arrests made | ‘Police made arrests’, agency lies with police. An edit of previous report with editions. Over-nominated protester quoted briefly. GMP quotes used. IGas reported speech. | As above |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | IF ASKED: Four people have been charged following anti tracking protests In Salford.  3 December 2014 | | | |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | IF ASKED: A man has been charged following an incident at Barton Moss  31 December 2013. | | | |
| 2013 12 16 Protesters blockade Salford 'fracking' test site with giant wind turbine blade | PAUL BRITTON | Site blocked | Extended quote from ‘campaigner’. No arrests. IGas quoted – although the same quote appears in multiple reports. | No corresponding media release |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | IF SPECIFICALLY ASKED ABOUT POLICE CONDUCT  Greater Manchester Police (GMP) respects everyones democratic right to peacefully protest…to ensure it passes safety.  Due to the nature of the protest, a proportionate number of police officers we required to  ensure the safety.  We are not aware of any complaints being made about police conduct.  21 December 2014 | | | |
| 2014 1 2 Anti-fracking protester glues herself to fencing at Salford site | TODD FITZGERALD | Protester glues herself to gates | Why mention the ‘Where’s Wally’ t-shirt – identification? Possible use of protestor archetypes of incompetence or childishness. | There is no corresponding police statement. |
| 2014 1 6 Unbelievably stupid' flare attack on police helicopter near anti-fracking protest camp | [PETE BAINBRIDGE](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/authors/pete-bainbridge/) | Police search camp after alleged flare attack on helicopter | Leading line of stupidity taken from press release which was for offer. This is normative news use, with the alleged attack being news-worthy in its own right. The more respectful ‘Officer’ is used. Two extended quotes are used from protesters. Police elided from the process of arrests. | FOR OFFER. Police executing a search warrant on Barton Moss Road following an incident in which a flare was fired at a police helicopter.  Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts said: 'This is was an unbelievably stupid act…” |
| 2014 1 7 Anti-fracking protesters arrested after gluing themselves into car blocking Salford site | [EMILY HEWARD](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/authors/emily-heward/) | Activists glue themselves to car. | Extended quotes from protesters. IGas quoted. Protester and Campaigner used. Quotes and positions illustrate the use of process-framing by all sides. IGas and Police indicate support from procedural elites, protestors claim processes illegitimate, producing a crisis in which they are forced to take action. | There is no corresponding police statement. |
| 2014 1 9 Anti-fracking protesters set-up camp outside Swinton police station | [AMY GLENDINNING](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/authors/amy-glendinning/) | Protests outside police station following arrests | A brief piece, with limited text. Photography not attributed. Brief quote from protester. ‘Arrests’ in passive voice eliding role of police. | There is no corresponding police statement. |
| 2014 1 12 Video: Barton Moss Anti-fracking protesters taking part in demonstration march | DENISE EVANS | A video-led piece looking at protests | Brief descriptor for video | There is no corresponding police statement. |
| 2014 1 13 Anti-fracking protesters arrested for obstruction after climbing on to lorries | PETE BAINBRIDGE EMMA FLANAGAN | Three arrested, protestors criticise tanker drive and thank police for saving them | Leads on removal. Later: “The protest was triggered by the arrival of three other delivery trucks to the iGas site. While the entrance to Barton Moss Road was clear, police officers waved the vehicles through.” Claims police asked for but did not give comment | IF ASKED: Six people have been arrested today, Monday 13 January 2014… |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | IF ASKED: Five people have been arrested today, Tuesday 14 January 2014, following anti-fracking protests in Salford.  The four men and one woman were arrested on suspicion of either obstructing the highway or obstructing police and one for the offence of drink driving.  Greater Manchester Police respects everyone's democratic right to peacefully protest,  Officers are monitoring the demonstration and working with partner agencies. in particular Salford Council, to ensure it passes safety.  Due to the nature of the protest. a proportionate number of police officers are required to ensure the safety at all sections of the public, | | | |

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| Unreported news worthy Press release | IF ASKED: Four people have been charged following anti fracking protests in Salford, charged with obstructing the highway and obstructing an officer  They were due before Manchester City Magistrates Court on 7 January 2014.  The charges relate to arrests made by officers monitoring a protest at Barton Moss by ant-  fracking groups on is December 2013.  IF ASKED: A man has been charged following an incident at Barton Moss on Monday 30 December 2013, during which a man chained himself to a tanker. has been charged with obstructing a highway and obstructing a constable in the execution of their duty. He is due to appear at Manchester city magistrates Court on Tuesday 31 December  2013. | | | |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | IF ASKED: Six people have been arrested today, Monday 13 January 2014, following anti-  fracking protests in Salford.  The three men and three women were arrested on suspicion oi either obstructing the  Highway or obstructing police and have been taken Into police custody.  Greater Manchester Police respects everyone's democratic right to peacefully protest.  Officers are monitoring the demonstration and working with partner agencies. in particular  Salford Council. to ensure it passes safely.  Due to the nature of the protest. a proportionate number to police officers are required to  ensure the safety of all sections oi the public, | | | |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | IF ASKED: Five people have been arrested today, Tuesday 14 January 2014, following anti4tac#ing  protests in Salford.  The tour men and one woman were arrested on suspicion of either obstructing the highway  or obstructing police and one person of drink driving.  Greater Manchester Police respects everyone's democratic right to peacefully protest,  Officers are monitoring the demonstration and working with partner agencies. in particular  Salford Council, to ensure it passes safety.  Due to the nature of the protest. a proportionate number of police officers are required to  ensure the safety at all sections of the public, | | | |
| 2014 1 18 Anti-fracking campaigners chain themselves to petrol pumps | YAKUB QURESHI | Protest at petrol station | Four arrests. The word ‘stunt’ used to describe the protest. | There is no corresponding police statement – although a statement appears in the text |
| The story attached to this release becomes ‘tea-gate’ as listed later | 21 January 2014 IF ASKED: GMP is aware of the footage relating to yesterday’s arrest and this has now  been passed to the Professional Standards Branch. Officers are also looking into allegations that a lorry attending the site had an unlawful number plate. Enquiries are ongoing. | | | |
| 2014 1 23 Video: Inside the Barton Moss Anti-fracking camp | JOHN SUTTON | Extended piece looking at the camp. | Gives a lot of space to the views of the protestors. They attempt a consensus framing in which they claim to represent the views of local people and the general populous. | There is no corresponding police statement. |
| Appears later on February 7th as GMP chief Sir Peter Fahy slams fracking protesters for trying to 'provoke' police officers | 21st January FOR OFFER: The total number of protesters arrested at Barton Moss has risen to 82. a  figure rising with each day of deliveries. 62 of these are from outside the Greater Manchester  area, many from the South oi England. Of these numerous have been previously arrested at  either this or other protest sites.  Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts said. “IN the start of this protest the majority of  protesters were peaceful and law abiding but over the past couple of weeks local residents  and officers have seen a distinct change to this. It now seems that the majority of people  who are arriving at the site are not there to protest against fracking but are there to disrupt  and intimidate the local community and to antagonise the police. We have seen offences of  assaults, damage, harassment of residents and workers. a flare fired at the police helicopter  and threats to kill.  I attended a residents’ meeting last week and people there were close to tears and have  had enough of this daily disruption to their lives. Local people. who initially supported the  protesters, out walking their dogs and driving down Barton Moss Road have been  approached by protesters in balaclavas and have been questioned by them which has been  extremely intimidating. We have seen a huge increase In the calls to police from that area  and this is continuing. | | | |
| 2014 1 24 Two protesters arrested at controversial Barton Moss fracking site | CHRIS JONES | Arrests. | “Daniel Evans, 23 and Tristan Woodward, 30, were arrested after a security guard was threatened and assaulted on Monday (January 20).” | 24 January For offer: |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | 27 January If asked: During the course of the operation officers have discovered a number of holes that have appeared alongside the road. We brought this to the attention of IGas. They assessed the holes and decided they could damage the structure of the road so they were therefore filled in. | | | |
| Unreported news worthy Press release | 28 January If Asked: Five people have been arrested today for breaching their bail. The five are currently on police bail following previous arrests and has [sic] part of their bail conditions are not permitted to be on Barton Moss Road. Some of those were arrested from a communal area following breaches. | | | |
| 2014 1 29 Anti-fracking protests: Number of arrests reaches 100 | LEE SWETTENHAM | 100th arrest used as news peg for brief overview. | Use of the word ‘campaigners’. | No accompanying press release |
| 2014 2 1 Fracking protestors glue themselves to the floor at Salford council HQ | NEAL KEELING | Also includes an overview of campaign, online petition, and accusations of police brutality | Highly discursive. A brief account of lock-ons and removal. | No accompanying press release |
| This is subsequently covered as “Anti-fracking protester to sue police over 'trumped-up' drink arrest caught on video “ | 4 February If Asked: Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts, “There have been a number of videos on social media questioning the actions of officers at the protest site and as per GMP policy any formal complaint will be looked at. There have not been any formal complaints made about the actions of any of the officers in this footage. The protester in question refused a roadside breath test after officers smelled alcohol on his breath and was subsequently arrested and charged with failing to provide a breath test. The CPS subsequently reviewed this and decided to take not further action” | | | |
| 2014 2 5 Anti-fracking protester to sue police over 'trumped-up' drink arrest caught on video | DAN THOMPSON | Officer filmed trumping up charges to have protestors anymore | Both protagonists using a legitimacy framing. Peers claims the arrest did not follow accepted procedure. The police attempt to regain legitimacy through a complaints procedure | No press release at this time, but see below. |
| No coverage – possibly ‘buried by Fahy’s statement given below. | 7 February IF ASKED: The recent complaint regarding the arrest of a man for failing to provide a breath test has now been voluntarily referred to the IPCC. | | | |
| 2014 2 7 GMP chief Sir Peter Fahy slams fracking protesters for trying to 'provoke' police officers | KATIE STOREY | Cost of policing operation, provocation of officers, Green party critique | A ’good quote’ is used to hang a story from in which police budgets are placed alongside the alleged over-policing. |  |
| 2014 2 13 Fifty arrested at anti-fracking protest could walk free after judge rules they can't be charged | TOM BROOKS-POLLOCK | Charges dropped amidst accusations of incompetence | Reliance by GMP on procedural framing. |  |
| 2014 2 15 Anti-fracking protesters refuse to move after being told to leave by land owners Peel | AMY GLENDINNING | Peel Holdings instruct protestors to move; a controversial act following yesterday’s ruling. Protestors refuse. | Slightly more critical of Peel than the protestors. Police are not mentioned although the preceding magistrates case is. | There is no corresponding police statement. |
| 2014 2 20 Fracking protester lodges formal complaint, says police acted 'like a pack of wolves' | DAN THOMPSON | Complaint against police. | Police use process framing to respond. Protestor uses moral framing in critique. Her framing also addresses matters of legitimacy through proper use of force. | 15 February IF ASKED: |
| 2014 2 21 Police watchdog to investigate arrest of anti-fracking protester | NEAL KEELING | Investigation into police fabrication of charges against protestor | Police officer uses fabricated charges to detain protestor. Video made public. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 2 22 Girl, 15, charged with obstructing police officer at Barton Moss anti-fracking site | WAYNE ANKERS | Arrest of 15-year-old girl. | Report used to ‘hang’ a review of story. Girl is object of action, but police are elided as agents. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 1 23 Most fracking protesters are there to 'intimidate the local community' and 'antagonise' the force, police claim | No byline | Statement by police | Claims to local consensus made by police. Lengthy quotes from protestors, account of police illegitimate violence. An interesting departure from procedural framing. | 23 January 2014 |
| 2014 2 23 Teenage girl held and charged at anti-fracking demo should never have been arrested, say family – with video | EMMA FLANAGAN | Account by parents of arrest | Story focuses upon family and not protest. GMP use process framing – the right to complain – as legitimacy frame. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 2 25 Barton Moss protesters lock-on to 'booby-trapped' concrete drum filled with barbed wire and broken glass. | EMMA FLANAGAN | Lock-on filled with barbed wire criticised for injuring officer. | Police crime commissioner quoted “It undermines the principles of protest and undermines the argument of those who are raising an issue of legitimate public interest.” Referencing legitimate protest and its limits. An explicit legitimacy claim. | 25 February 2014  FOR OFFER: |
| 2014 2 25 Protester pulled to ground after climbing on lorry at Barton Moss taken to hospital | EMMA FLANAGAN | Account of protest in which police accused of injuring protester | Equal time given to all sides of incident. Police quote used alongside activist quote. | No corresponding statement |
| 2014 2 27 M.E.N. survey: What do you think about fracking? | DAN THOMPSON | Survey | A fairly even-handed introduction and overview | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 3 Independent panel to discuss policing of Barton Moss protest | JOHN SCHEERHOUT | Panel set up from ‘big hitters’ from union and activist movements | An attempt to reinforce legitimacy through independent observers. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 4 6 Anti-fracking campaigners face Barton Moss eviction hearing | LEE SWETTENHAM | Eviction hearing | ‘Campaigners’, ‘demonstrators’ and ‘protestors’ used. Peel labelled ‘corporate giants’. Review of wider story hung of this news peg. Cost to taxpayers cited. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 7 Fracking protestors wait to hear if they will be evicted from Barton Moss | DAN THOMPSON | Account of case. Also panel members announced. | Court reporting. Account of new members at base of copy. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 8 Fracking protester, 82, 'shocked to the core' by Greater Manchester Police's behaviour at Barton Moss | DAN THOMPSON | Protestor account | Extended account - a case where over-nomination is important to establish credentials. “Retired teacher Anne Power is an 82-year-old former councillor and Green Party activist who lives in Chorlton…” | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 8 Fracking protesters prepare to march through Manchester on Sunday | [EMILY HEWARD](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/authors/emily-heward/) | Protest planned | Protestors quoted extensively | 9 March 2014 |
| 2014 3 8 Police boss: Fracking protesters are 'overstepping the mark' | DAN THOMPSON | Account of officers being baited by protestors. Unfounded complaints. | Legitimacy of the protest and morality framing also. Drawing upon the ‘hardened activist’ archetype. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 8 Video: Manchester Evening News reporter goes undercover at Barton Moss anti-fracking camp | DAN THOMPSON | Account by journalist. | Takes largely protestor’s viewpoint. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 9 1,000 take to the streets for biggest ever fracking protest | [CHRIS SLATER](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/authors/chris-slater/) | Account of march | Quotes from protestors used extensively, | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 11 Barton Moss anti-fracking protesters celebrate last-minute reprieve | CHRIS SLATER  EMILY HEWARD | Protesters win eviction reprieve | Multiple quotes from over-nominated protestors. Multiple consensus legitimacy claims. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 11 Barton Moss protesters wait to see if they are granted appeal to avoid eviction | [AMANDA CROOK](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/authors/amanda-crook/) | Awaiting appeal result | Multiple quotes from over-nominated protestors. Multiple consensus legitimacy claims. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 17 Fracking protestors gather at Swinton police station after 13 arrests made at Barton Moss | [EMMA FLANAGAN](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/authors/emma-flanagan/) | Protest at station following arrests | Account uses protestor quote, with the usual over-nomination | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 3 20 Fracking protester who complained about GMP charged with assaulting an officer | DAN THOMPSON | Protestor arrested pending bail. Solicitor’s and journalist’s account of arrest | The police are not quoted. Solicitor quoted extensively. Video used by journalist to give account of arrest. | 19 March 2014  IF ASKED: |
| 2017 3 25 Solicitor compiles dossier for UN on police 'aggression' at Barton Moss fracking protests | DAN THOMPSON | Solicitor preparing file on aggression | Police response based upon legitimacy of complaints procedure. It is interesting that the reserve statement “if asked” is written four days before the article appears in the MEN. The press office clearly knew this was on the horizon. | 21 March 2014 IF ASKED: |
| 2014 3 26 GMP apply for Home Office cash to cover cost of policing Barton Moss anti-fracking protest | EMILY HEWARD | Application for central government funding for operations | Citing procedural legitimacy as a rationale for central payment of policing bill. | No corresponding press release |
| Barton Moss anti-fracking campaigners set to leave camp 'within days' 10 APR 2014 | DAN THOMPSON | Protestors set to leave site | ‘Campaigners’ and ‘protectors’ used. | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 4 7 Barton Moss anti-fracking protesters in urgent plea – for GAS | [EMMA FLANAGAN](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/authors/emma-flanagan/) | Camp mocked for requesting Gas on twitter | Spokespeople from a variety of backgrounds. Police not quoted – but story leads on picture | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 5 23 Man wearing pig mask and toy bobby's helmet arrested on suspicion of impersonating a police officer | DAN THOMPSON | Protestor previously involved in ‘jumped up charges’ arrest, is arrested for wearing a pig mask | Use of the word ‘bobby’ to describe the helmet. Legitimation of arrest by procedure.” A GMP spokesman said: “At about 4pm on Thursday 22 May 2014, a man was arrested in Manchester city centre on suspicion of impersonating a police officer.“He was released on bail until 17 July 2014 pending further inquiries.” | No corresponding press release |
| 2014 5 31 Teenager arrested at anti-fracking protest and charged with obstructing police officer has case dropped | AMY GLENDINNING | Solicitor questions arrest | Moral framing used, as well as an economic framing questioning the costs. |  |
| 2015 10 28 Police watchdog rules senior officer in fracking bust-up should face gross misconduct charge | DAN THOMPSON | Officer involved in ‘jumped-up charges’ accusation to face gross misconduct charge | A GMP spokeswoman said: “Greater Manchester Police has received the recommendations made by the IPCC following their investigation into this matter.  “We have responded to the IPCC with a number of observations in relation to their decision making and we are still awaiting a response from the IPCC to our representations.”  A spokesman for the Greater Manchester Police Federation, the association which represents officers, said: “We reject the recommendations made by the IPCC in the strongest possible terms.  “We remain wholeheartedly supportive of the officer. We welcome negotiations between the Force and the IPCC and we hope that we can all work together to find a suitable outcome.” | 2 November 2015  IF ASKED: |
| 2015 6 16 Gaza protest and anti-fracking demo cost Greater Manchester Police half a million pounds in overtime | JOHN SCHEERHOUT | Costs story | Superintendent Martin Greenhalgh said: “We have a legal responsibility to facilitate protests and maintain public order and safety.”  Procedural framing throughout. | No corresponding press release |

1.iii Blackpool Gazette Content Table - Analysis of articles

The table given below gives an article-by-article overview of the coverage. No attempt has been made to link the associated police-PR as the Freedom of Information Request for this information was not fulfilled by Lancashire Police.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The following table lists all of the stories in turn giving the date, title, byline, summary and discussion. The final column gives the commensurate press release where available. Those occasions where police statements are not used are also listed. On several occasions these contained newsworthy stories which placed the police in a positive light. | | | | |
| Date and headline | Byline | Summary | Text analysis | With official  Police PR? |
| 2017 1 10 VIDEO: Anti-fracking protesters claim ‘thuggish’ guards almost pushed them into the road | None | Protestors claim security guards have pushed them into the road. The claim is rejected by Cuadrilla and a pro-fracking group | Police are not quoted directly, but are reported as saying there have been no formal complaints. Pro-fracking groups and Cuadrilla dominate the text. However, the accompanying video supports the main thrust of the allegation. The central frame is one of violence – it is contested by all parties. |  |
| 2017 1 11 Major road closed due to fracking protest Preston New Road is currently closed after demonstrators took to the streets | DARIA NEKLESA | A NIB highlighting road closure | A carefully worded “currently closed after demonstrators took to the streets to protest” does not place blame for the closure. |  |
| 2017 1 17 New row over Fylde fracking road block | None | Road closure is blamed first on Cuadrilla, and then on protestors. A wider account of events ensues | Protestor comment dominates the piece. Road closure, thus inconvenience to local community forms the dominant frame. A frame supported by choosing local spokespeople to comment. |  |
| 2017 2 1 Lancashire Police arrest four after frack site protests | None | Four protestors arrested and supported by other protestors | The account is factual. Cuadrilla decline to comment, but express disappointment; surely this is commenting? Protestor comment dominates the piece. Community and environmental frames dominate in their comments. However the lead line is arrests. |  |
| 2017 2 2 Police step up presence at Blackpool court as anti-fracking protester granted bail Blackpool Magistrates Court | ROB STOCKS | A court report. Bail conditions are overturned | As a piece of court-reporting this article is restrained by the need to avoid contempt of court. The magistrate’s decision to overturn police bail restrictions is interesting from the point of view of legitimation. Police bail has been criticised by a number of actors, and has served to undermine the polices legitimacy in the eyes of protestors. |  |
| 2017 2 7 VIDEO: Police probe 'collision' during anti-fracking protest outside business | MICHAEL HOLMES | A video of a car hitting a protestor. The protestors react aggressively, and police intervene | The account of protestors dressing in army-style clothing and playing loud music is accurate. While the driver is clearly in error, the actions of the protestors do not present them in a good light. Police are quoted indirectly, and seem to be the secondary source, after the video. |  |
| 2017 2 13 Inside the anti-frackers’ protest camp The fracking camp near B&Q at the Whitehills Business Park Blackpool |  | An extended piece of nearly 2000 words. Dwells upon a range of issues concerning fracking generally | Leads with the pro-fracking claim that ‘outsiders’ and ‘professional protestors’ have come to the camp. Para 2 cites local campaigners as welcoming them. Accounts of ‘slow walks’ agreed with police, and picketing at third-party sites. Councillor quoted at length with community and environmental framing. Several protestors and/or local people quoted at length. Lancashire for Shale quoted at length and focussing upon intimidation, with some small mention of economic advantage to fracking. |  |
| 2017 2 16 Six anti-frackers arrested after latest shale gas protest Police removing six locked-together protesters at the Preston New Road fracking site at Little Plumpton |  | Arrests made. Police and local campaigners quoted. | Passive voice formation “police were called to act…” implies a lack of agency. The police confirm the arrests and are then quoted directly as balancing the rights of protestors and business. ‘Local campaigners’ are said to support ‘peaceful action’. |  |
| 2017 2 28 Anger rises as Fylde coast fracking protests ramp up Anti-fracking rally at Preston New Road, Little Plumpton | None | Reclaim the power to target local businesses. Police recant social media claims. Labour MP speaks in support of protestors. Lancashire for shale claim intimidation is sinister. | Lancshire for Shale focus upon “national professional protesters” – placing an accent upon community framing for local businesses. “A post on the Fylde Police social media page said around 150 people tried to breach the site, however it was later taken down and the figure replaced with the word ‘some’.” A misstep by the police in overstating their position against the protestors. |  |
| 2017 3 14 Fylde coast tanker top protest follows slow walk end A fracking protester climbs aboard a tanker on Preston New Road | None | Protester mounts lorry. Removed by police after several hours. | Comment from pro- and anti-fracking groups. The latter blame the police for ceasing a ‘slow-walking’ agreement. Pro-fracking groups reiterate their opposition to those stopping law-abiding operations. |  |
| 2017 3 24 Fracking site to see 20mph speed limit Police and protesters at the Preston New Road fracking site | None | Speed limit reduced. Protestors welcome decision. Cuadrilla blames protests | Primary contested framing is safety. “…HGV drivers who have not been briefed correctly, carrying out manoeuvres that jeopardise all other road users…” vs “…intent to minimise the danger posed by the behaviour of some activists in the vicinity…” |  |
| 2017 4 5 'People in the road' halt traffic close to fracking site | MICHAEL HOLMES | Road closed by police following incident | Police spokesperson quoted both directly and indirectly in justification of closure. Man injured on fence according to protestor video. |  |
| 2017 4 20 Blast for anti-fracking activists removed from firm's premises | TIM GAVELL | Protest targets local supplier. Activists removed. | Action is attacked by both the company and the local chamber of commerce. Anti-fracking groups refuse to comment, but condemn “aggressive and disproportionate behaviour” which is a comment. |  |
| 2017 4 24 No extra resources to police fracking site | ROB STOCKS | Police request for national funding support refused. Discussion of funding issues and contested liability | “Lancashire Police are faced with an ever rising bill to police the fracking protests.” The protest, not the drilling is blamed. “Protesters have argued the Government should pay up as it overruled local councilors [sic] who rejected Cuadrilla’s application to drill for shale gas.” Protestors cite illegitimate decision-making. “Francis Egan, said a small group of ‘mostly non-local activists’ had broken the law and their actions were wasting public money.” Accent upon community framing. |  |
| 2017 5 2 Road closed due to anti-fracking protest Fracking demonstrators at the site in Preston New Road this morning | DARIA NEKLESA | NIB. Road closure. | Sourced from police and passing anonymous ‘witness’. Possibly social media source? |  |
| 2017 5 10 Vigil planned over policing at Fylde fracking site | TIM GAVELL | Vigil to protest at aggressive policing that is stopping peoples’ ‘right to protest’. | Protests critique police violence and the misuse of police budget. Netpol quoted. |  |
| 2017 5 12 Strong presence essential insist fracking site police chief | ROB STOCKS | Police quoted extensively in a ‘balance of rights’ framing | One of the few occasions win which police are given a sole voice, or have offered extensive comment. Emphasis is upon safety and justification for numbers. |  |
| 2017 5 17 Fylde police station at centre of fracking protest | TIM GAVELL | Protest against police action | Local spokesperson cites peaceful protest. Police cite balance of rights. Some protestors described as aggressive, but the majority described as peaceful. |  |
| 2017 5 24 Fracking site road blocker fined Police at the Preston New Road fracking site | TIM GAVELL | Court reporting. | A report limited by contempt laws. |  |
| 2017 6 6 Vandals attack fracking firm's head quarters The vandalism at fracking firm Cuadrilla's head office in Bamber Bridge | TIM GAVELL | Vandals graffiti on Cuadrilla local HQ. | “Francis Egan, chief executive of Cuadrilla, said: “This pathetic, mindless stunt in vandalising our head office highlights the intimidation and criminal tactics frequently resorted to by anti-fracking activists.”” Framing of deviancy and intimidation. |  |
| 2017 6 30 Contraflow put in place at Preston New Road fracking site | DARIA NEKLESA | NIB. Lock-on at two towers constructed by protestors | Possibly sourced from social media. |  |
| 2017 6 30 Towers protest at Fylde fracking site Anti-fracking protesters built two towers at the site of Cuadrilla's drill site at Preston New Road near Little Plumpton | TIM GAVELL | A further account of tower lock-ons. This account gives the event greater coverage. | Supporting the idea that the previous report was social media sourced. Contains comment from a number of sources – including protestors, Cuadrilla and Lancashire for Shale which said ““This is yet another attempt by a bunch of professional protesters to intimidate and harass people who are legally going about their business.”” Local framing plus violence framing. |  |
| 2017 7 3 Councillors join residents in lock-on anti-fracking protest 13 protesters locked-on at the Preston New Road fracking drill site. | TIM GAVELL | Cllrs lock on and are arrested. Account of central government over-ruling local government. | Cllrs quoted in full. Pro-fracking groups not quoted at all. Community framing. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 2017 7 5 Police investigate Fylde fracking assault claims | TIM GAVELL | Cuadrilla’s security team criticised for violence against protestors | Police investigating. Both protestors and Cuadrilla quoted. Conflicting claims of violence. |  |
| 2017 7 10 Outside police to join Fylde fracking patrols | TIM GAVELL | More forces to be involved as police coverage moved to 24/7 basis. | Previous incident with security not cited by police, who are quoted extensively with a safety framing. Intervention of local MEP with concern to increasing police violence. |  |
| 2017 7 12 Anti-fracking protest sparks road chaos Police closed the A583 Preston New Road after three anti-fracker protesters locked themselves together to block deliveries to the shale gas drilling site. | TIM GAVELL | Road closure | “Anti-fracking campaigners have come under fire for a lock-on protest which resulted in the closure of the A583…” protest blamed for closure. But “Police chose to close the entire road between Fox Lane Ends and Whitehill Road for around five hours for safety reasons.” - implies agency to the police.  Pro- and anti-fracking spokespeople quoted in equal measure. Conflicting Community framing. |  |
| 2017 7 12 Preston New Road closed after fracking protest Preston New Road was blocked by campaigners | DARIA NEKLESA | NIB. Road closed | Police quoted. Possibly social media sourced. Newspaper says blocked by campaigners – police quote does not say this. |  |
| 2017 7 12 Road closed once more amid protests at fracking site | TIM GAVELL | An extended account of the incident above | Three generations locked on. Quoted in full. “at the same time a demonstration by 100 women dressed in white calling for calm”. Environment vs violence frame. Cuadrilla and Lancashire for Shale quoted. |  |
| 2017 7 19 Waste water worries spark fracking road closure | TIM GAVELL | Account of waste water from site sent to Manchester Ship Canal. Rejected by Remsol environment expert | Affiliation of Remsol not made clear. Quotes from protestors, including those locked on. No quote from police. No quote from pro-fracking groups. |  |
| 2017 7 20 Road closures, celebration and deep suspicion - three hours at fracking protest site | ROB STOCKS | Extended first person account of lock-on from undercover journalists | A ‘straight-bat’ account. |  |
| 2017 7 24 Welsh officers 'will not facilitate Cuadrilla's business', Police and Crime Commissioner says Welsh officers will no longer be helping out at the site | DIGITAL REPORTER | North Wales Police Commissioner refuses further mutual assistance to policing of protest | But Mr Jones, an environmental campaigner who fought to halt fracking plans in Wales prior to being elected, tweeted: "No more @NWPolice officers will be going to facilitate Cuadrilla's business in Lancs. Let them pay for their own security. #capacity"  When asked if he helped to 'bring this change about', he replied: "The decision was an operational one over which I have no say but I did make feelings known and may have influenced." |  |
| 2017 7 25 Preston New Road closed due to fracking protest | DARIA NEKLESA | NIB | Social media sourced? Again, editorial says closure ‘due to’ while copy says ‘following’. |  |
| 2017 7 26 Delays after lock-on protest at Cuadrilla Four campaigners are locked on in both sides of the carriageway between Fracking site and Westby Road. | DARIA NEKLESA | A short article sourced from a full police quote. | Police justification for road closure. No other sources quoted. |  |
| 2017 7 28 Decision to deliver rig at 4am was Cuadrilla's Police have put a contraflow in place on Preston New Road after protesters staged a carnival | DARIA NEKLESA | Police did not allow Cuadrilla to deliver drilling rig outside of those times allowed in planning permission. | A short article predicated on unattributed indirect police quote. Possibly social media sourced. |  |
| 2017 7 29 Hundreds sign letter of support for Lancashire Police over fracking response |  | Letter from community supporting police action delivered | “Brent Crossley, from Blackpool, visited Kirkham police station this week to hand in the letter,” – affiliation with pro-fracking groups is not revealed here. Primary contested frame is Community – while intimidation and violence are cited. |  |
| 2017 7 31 Police thanked for protest ‘restraint’ Police hold back protesters outside Kirkham Police Station during one demo |  | Further account of letter of support | Brent Crossley identified as pro-fracker. Letter quoted extensively. Community and violence framing. |  |
| 2017 8 31 Road closure due to fracking protest Part of Preston New Road is currently closed after protesters locked-on outside the Cuadrilla fracking site | DARIA NEKLESA | NIB. Road closure | Police quote, possibly social media sourced. |  |
| 2017 9 25 Blowing your horn for and against fracking Brian Morrison, anti-fracking campaigners and how we broke the story. | DIGITAL REPORTER | Account of story and Gazette’s role in ‘breaking it’. | The account is given. There is an invitation to comment and then “A car horn is fitted for safety”. An editorial comment which ignores the central premise of the protest, that in this case it was also used as an instrument of protest. |  |
| 2017 9 29 Honking convoy in Fylde fracking protest | TIM GAVELL | Convoy of cars honk in protest at the previous events | Protestors quoted extensively. Community framing. No pro-fracking voices or police quoted. |  |
| 2017 11 1 Fracking protesters vow to carry on roadside vigil Fracking protest at Preston New Road | None | An extended round-up of the current situation | Quotes from police, Cuadrilla and protestors. Each party is allowed to give its position. And this becomes a chance for each to restate its chosen frame |  |

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| Appendices Two |
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| Coding Schedule |
| 1. Arrest information |
| 1. Balance of rights |
| 1. Budgets |
| 1. Court reporting |
| 1. Deviance |
| 1. Elision |
| 1. Frames |
| * 1. Frame community |
| * 1. Frame economic |
| * 1. Frame environmental |
| * 1. Frame legitimacy |
| * + 1. Frame Moral |
| * + 1. Frame procedural |
| * 1. Frame violence |
| * 1. Peaceful protest |
| Justifying road closure |
| Netpol |
| Road closed |
| Safety |
| Who speaks |
| Business |
| Cuadrilla |
| Cuadrilla anon |
| Cuadrilla attributed |
| Cuadrilla named |
| Local people |
| Local attributed |
| Local person named |
| Police |
| Police anon |
| Police attributed |
| Police named |
| Police social media |
| Politicians |
| Green Party |
| Politician local |
| Politician national |
| Pro-fracking groups |
| Pro fracking attributed |
| Pro fracking groups anon |
| Pro fracking named |
| Protestor |
| Protesor attributed |
| Protestor anon |
| Protestor named |
| Protestor social media |

**9 Appendices**

**9.1 Brighton Argus. Text data-set.**

**2013 10 3 Have your say: Was the Balcome protest worth the strain on Sussex Police?**

Have your say: Was the Balcome protest worth the strain on Sussex Police?

Thursday 3 October 2013 / News

The Balcombe policiing operation has cost the county in excess of £4m - and has left officers with rock-bottom morale, according to Sussex Police Federation.

Do you think the right to protest is worth the strain on the already-stretched Thin Blue Line?

Have your say below.

**2013 10 5 Your interview: Paul Sellings, Sussex Police Federation chairman**

Your interview: Paul Sellings, Sussex Police Federation chairman

Saturday 5 October 2013 / News

ROTTINGDEANRANT: I had two police officers arrive on my doorstep after I reported someone riding a motorbike in the woods. Surely the majority of calls to police don’t need more than one officer?

PAUL SELLINGS (PS): Correct, the majority of calls can be dealt with by one officer. But it’s the violent minority that we’re concerned about.

When you go out on a call you never know what you’re going to face. In difficult cases our approach is to calm and control. One officer will engage and the other will consider conflict resolution and what force is required.

Violent people don’t make appointments and to deal with violence properly you need two officers.

What we would like to see is enough double crews to deal with those incidents. But the force is suggesting using single crews in the first instance because response times are not good.

If you have single officers responding to a call and they have to call for backup then you need a clear-up operation.

So not only is it dangerous we say it’s a false economy.

These kind of violent incidents are dealt with on a daily basis. It wouldn’t be unusual to have six in one evening in Brighton.

GEFFEN DAVIES, Moulsecoomb: How can the public have faith that the city will be kept safe by unhappy officers who could potentially ignore crimes?

PS: We won’t be ignoring crime. What we’re saying is that if you have a single crew, and you don’t think you can deal with a call-out safely, you should wait for colleagues.

Another point is that under the new conditions if an officer is seriously injured on duty they could be forced out of service.

So, if you’re going to a violent incident and you know you could get injured you might think twice about going in until it’s safe.

We’re fearful that if officers don’t know they’re going to be looked after they might be reticent to get involved.

JANICE DAVIES, Hollingbury: What do you think about drunk tanks? Should revellers be made to pay for their misbehaviour?

PS: If we have drunk tanks we need new legislation because if you detain someone it has to be at a police station. When people are arrested they have all sorts of rights, to speak to a solicitor, to a phone call.

All sorts of things have to be in place if we take away someone’s liberty. By the time we’ve done all that we might as well take them to the police station.

You can’t just throw drunk people on West Street into a room to sober up, you have to prove to a custody sergeant their arrest was necessary.

There are no safeguards in place and until that changes it’s unworkable and pie in the sky.

PETER LATHAM, via email: Should the Home Office pay the costs of the Balcombe operation?

PS: Fracking is a national issue which just so happens to take place in Sussex. I don’t see why Sussex should bear the brunt of a national issue.

I know Katy Bourne has asked for reimbursement of the £4 million operational costs and we urge the Government to satisfy this request.

If fracking goes ahead then the whole country could benefit but at the moment it’s just Sussex that’s having to pay the policing costs and that’s unfair.

NASIR KHAN, via email: Should Sussex Police get extra funding due to all the conferences, protests and events that take place in the county?

PS: Brighton is a popular destination for the likes of EDL, Pride, Smash EDO and we’re well used to dealing with it, it’s part of routine policing. But Sussex Police needs to be properly funded by the Government to deal with these operations.

We’re required to make £50 million savings by 2015. If we didn’t have to do that we would have been able to police Balcombe with the 300 officers we’ve lost.

We had to commit so many staff to Balcombe we had to work out how we were going to satisfy our responses to emergency calls, and the only way we could do it was by transferring neighbourhood policing teams to Balcombe. This meant the flow of intelligence by going out and meeting people stopped.

We believe PCSOs should be used as well as PCs. We police by consent. If the only experience people have of police is when they are arresting then we’re looking at a military state.

TERRY RENFORD, Worthing: In Balcombe were the police effectively acting as security guards for Cuadrilla despite the largely peaceful protest?

PS: I reject that. Cuadrilla was carrying out lawful activity. The rights and wrongs of fracking are not a matter for us. We are apolitical and are there to uphold the law and facilitate peaceful protest.

There were some decent-sized lorries up there and someone could have been seriously injured if they had gone under one.

All police will have different views but that’s academic. We have a duty to uphold the law.

We were getting accused by protesters of being too rough and too violent and using too much force. Then we were being accused of being too soft by others.

It’s a difficult balance to strike but if you’re being criticised on both sides you hope the balance is right.

Look at this way – no one was seriously injured during one month of protests, so that has to be a success.

The operation cost a lot of money but in order to keep the peace it was unavoidable.

We had to call in help from ten other forces and had to pay for the privilege.

ESMERALDA KLEIN, Hove: Is too much spent on corporate communications?

PS: This is a difficult question but what I would say is during the time that the number of corporate communications staff has gone from 12 to 26 we’ve lost 300 police officers. I think we’ve got to have as many officers on the streets as possible and if that’s at the expense of corporate communications then so be it.

PHIL SYKES, Hassocks: What is the rank and file view of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) role? Is it working effectively or a lot of extra expense? Should someone from a nonpolicing background have so much authority?

PS: The PCC has been much more effective than police authorities. I think in Sussex it’s been particularly successful because Katy Bourne is a bright and challenging individual from a business background who is used to trimming the fat from an organisation.

I know she wants to lose as few police officers as possible and she’s looking at all sorts of different ways to do that.

I don’t think she needs to come from a police background. She’s made an astute appointment with Mark Streeter, who has massive police experience.

TRACY DUBOIS, Bevendean: If so many frontline cuts have been made why is there now a recruitment drive and overtime being offered? Doesn’t this defeat the point of the budget cuts?

PS: Overtime is being offered because we haven’t got enough police officers to fulfil the shifts we need. With the protests we’ve had to have officers coming in on their days off. We simply don’t have enough officers so we need overtime to fill the gap.

The recruitment of 80 new officers is to stand still and maintain numbers.

We’ve lost 300 officers and through natural wastage such as retirement and officers leaving, the force is shrinking. Some of our brightest talent is going elsewhere because they know there’s no opportunity for advancement.

Share article

CRAIG NASH, Hollingbury: What’s your favourite TV show about police?

PS: Hill Street Blues. It’s an American show about police officers on and off duty with all the stresses of the job.

**2013 11 5 Cuadrilla signs 30-year lease for Balcombe fracking site**

Cuadrilla signs 30-year lease for Balcombe fracking site

Finn Scott-Delany, Business editor / Tuesday 5 November 2013 / Fracking

An energy firm has signed a new 30-year lease at a rural drillsite.

Drilling company Cuadrilla obtained the renewed lease on land at Lower Stumble, Balcombe, after its original three-year contract expired.

Campaigners said it condemned the village to 30 years of noise, trucks and pollution – and was proof Cuadrilla wanted to ‘frack’ at the site.

Kathryn McWhirter, of the No Fracking in Balcombe Society, said: “Cuadrilla must be pretty confident of extracting oil in large quantities, and over decades.

“We know that the well drilled there in the 80s didn’t flow – the rocks under Balcombe are not a conventional reservoir of oil.

“Cuadrilla know, we know, they will eventually have to frack. Not only are we in Balcombe early-day guinea pigs for the industry and the Government, we now face the prospect of nuisance, pollution and industrialisation of our landscape until 2043.”

Balcombe was the scene of fierce protests over the summer with hundreds of activists flocking to the area and a police operation costing £4 million. The company was testing for oil and gas – but admitted if it found shale gas it could apply to carry out hydraulic fracturing, better known as fracking.

Fracking involves pumping water and chemicals underground to fracture shale rock and release gas.

Campaigners say it is unsafe and could pollute drinking water, while supporters argue it could be a much-needed source of fuel.

Balcombe estate owner Simon Greenwood has signalled his support for fracking if it is viable and safe.

But anti-fracking campaigners have suggested a conflict of interest over Mr Greenwood’s dual position as landowner and member of the parish council, which made no objection to Cuadrilla's original application in 2010.

West Sussex County Council is waiting for Cuadrilla to re-submit an application for well-testing at Balcombe.

Village residents will be consulted on the new plans once the application has been formally accepted.

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**2013 7 25 Anti-fracking campaigners blockade Balcombe roads in drilling battle with Cuadrilla**

Kimberly Middleton, Assistant News Editor / Thursday 25 July 2013 / News

A lorry delivering drilling equipment has had cables severed, according to protesters.

Roads into Balcombe have been blockaded as anti-fracking campaigners battle against an exploratory drill.

But Sussex Police have said cables were quickly mended and the demonstration is continuing peacefully - with no arrests so far.

This lunchtime the Department for Energy and Climate Change have granted energy company Cuadrilla a license for drilling to go ahead.

The Great Gas Gala started at 7am pledging to block the routes to the site south of the mid-Sussex village by parking on narrow pieces of road and using vigilante lollipop people to stop traffic.

The lorry is stranded behind the blockade but the driver is believed to have fixed the damaged cable.

Police are looking into the reported sabotage.

Around 100 are at the site to protest against fracking in Sussex.

Protester Jack Harris, of Lewes, said: "A police seargent is mediating and has asked if there's anything he can do to peacefully resolve the situation but we're not willing to go anywhere.

"Why is it the police's business to assist a fracking company?

"It's getting quite intense now. We've been told the police would use the 'force of the law' to move us if necessary."

A Sussex Police spokesman said: "There is a peaceful demonstration today, Thursday 25 July, outside the Cuadrilla site in London Road, Balcombe, involving some 100 people.

"A lorry trying to enter the site had its brake lines cut shortly after 8am, but a repair was quickly carried out without interference from any demonstrators.

"Demonstrators are currently blocking access for the lorry at the entrance to the site and we are in negotiation with them with a view to enabling the lorry to enter.

"There have been no arrests and no injuries. A small number of local officers are present.

"Sussex Police fully support the right to demonstrate peacefully and within the law.

"Our aim is to provide a safe and secure environment for protesters and residents, to minimise disruption to the community and to prevent crime and disorder.

"We have not 'threatened' them with arrest but in our discussions we are explaining the legal situation and making it clear that at some stage the entrance will need to be clear.

"Currently less than ten police officers and PCSOs are present."

A spokeswoman for Cuadrilla confirmed a lorry had been sabotaged and said vehicles on their way to the site this morning have turned around. She said no more deliveries are expected today.

Consent granted for Balcombe conventional appraisal well

This lunchtime (July 25) the Department of Energy and Climate Change gave Cuadrilla consent to drill a "conventional appraisal well".

A statement said: "The target prospect is oil located in micrite, a type of limestone within the Kimmeridge shale formation.

"DECC and the Health and Safety Executive have scrutinised Cuadrilla’s plans and the company has received the environmental permits required for this type of conventional drilling from the Environment Agency.

"The company does not have consent to use hydraulic fracturing.

"If Cuadrilla decides in the future it wishes to frack or to conduct further tests in Balcombe, the company would need to apply for further permissions, including consent from DECC."

Yesterday (July 24) Cuadrilla got a permit to drill an exploratory borehole in the search for oil and gas reserves from the Environment Agency.

But residents and activists fear it could pave the way for the company - the first to frack for shale gas in the UK - to use the fracking technique on the site.

The technique injects fliud into the ground at high pressure to fracture shale rocks and release natural gas trapped inside.

The Environment Agency has attempted to reassure people that the current permit does not allow the company to carry out fracking - and Cuadrilla has said it currently has no plans to frack the site.

**2013 7 26 Anti-fracking protestors dig in as Cuadrilla drilling equipment forced to turn away from Balcombe**

Anti-fracking protestors dig in as Cuadrilla drilling equipment forced to turn away from Balcombe

Kimberly Middleton, Assistant News Editor / Friday 26 July 2013 / News

Activists and residents declared it Balcombe 1 – Cuadrilla 0 after lorries were forced to turn away from a proposed drilling site yesterday.

Day one of the Great Gas Gala saw up to 250 environmental activists and residents of the mid-Sussex village block the roads to the site from 7am.

Lorries carrying pieces of the rig, being built to start exploratory drills on the land looking for oil and gas, were halted.

After stand-offs with protestors, and one lorry was damaged by having its break line cut, the vehicles were eventually forced to turn away.

Sussex Police said the cut line was quickly repaired with no interference from protesters, adding the demonstration was peaceful, with no arrests or injuries.

At 3pm extreme energy action network Frack Off, which fears the exploratory drill could pave the way for controversial fracking, said on Twitter: “It's gone! Massive community win. Will you be here tomorrow to stop them coming back?”

Fracking involves injecting fluid into rocks at high pressure to fracture them and release gas – but objectors fear the process could cause earthquakes and contaminate drinking water. No application has been made to frack at the site.

Seasoned activist Simon ‘Sitting Bull’ Medhurst said it was the strength of support from the local families which won the fight.

He said: “It was a complete result. I couldn’t have wished for a better day.

“It was really quite surreal. I thought it was going to kick off and the police were talking about making arrests. Then, coincidentally, lots of local people started to turn up and the police backed off.

“The police could see the local people were prepared to get arrested.

“There were lots of families with their children, it was a real party atmosphere and it turned out to be a beautiful day. I thought we were going to be rained on.

“This could give us the chance to take this to a new level of getting serious about blocking their activities.”

A Cuadrilla spokeswoman said: “The lorry was blocking the site entrance this morning has now been repaired, however protestors continue to block the site entrance, so the lorry cannot complete its delivery.

“The police are working with the protestors to move them away from the entrance so lorries can continue to safely deliver the equipment.

“Cuadrilla is disappointed the protestors continue to block the site but the main priority is the safety of all those on and near the site, including the protestors and road users. We plan to continue the approved activities as soon as reasonably possible.”

**2013 7 27 Two more arrests at Balcombe fracking protest**

Saturday 27 July 2013 / News

Protests are continuing today at the site of an exploratory drilling operation.

Two women have been arrested this morning - one for assaulting a police officer  nd the other for trying to stop drivers and other workers from accessing the site under the Trade Union Labour Relations Act.

It follows 16 arrests at the Cuadrilla site in London Road, Balcombe yesterday.

Twelve people, including two teenage boys,  have been charged and will appear before magistrates next month.

Although there is currently no licence to frack – a process which injects pressurised fluid into the ground and crack rocks to release natural gas – campaigners fear the tests for oil and gas could pave the way for the controversial practice.

The village has become a focal point for campaigners, who have highlighted fears linked to fracking, including the use of chemicals.

Cuadrilla said in a statement: “Cuadrilla has followed all legal and regulatory procedures concerning its exploratory drilling plans and obtained the necessary approvals from the Department of Energy and Climate Change, the Environment Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and West Sussex County Council.”

Cuadrilla has said it intends only to conduct exploratory drilling in a temporary operation which will not include hydraulic fracturing.

Superintendent Steve Whitton said this morning: "I have officers at the site to ensure people can demonstrate peacefully and help facilitate the rights of those to go about their lawful business - this means allowing workers to access the site.

“We are trying to carefully balance the needs of everyone and we will continue to show a proportionate response to the challenge we are facing.

“Our aim at Balcombe is to provide a safe and secure environment for protesters, residents and the contractors alike, to minimise disproportionate disruption to the local community and to prevent crime and disorder.

“Protestors are being asked to clear entrances to allow access to the site and where they have refused following repeated requests we have arrested them.”

**2013 7 31 Fracking protesters say police use 'excessive force'**

Fracking protesters say police use 'excessive force'

Gareth Davies, Reporter / Wednesday 31 July 2013 / News

  Pressure is mounting on police after complaints about excessive force used by officers on protesters at a controversial fracking site.

A video sent to The Argus appears to show police officers breaking up a human chain by manipulating pressure points behind a man’s ear and bending his wrist.

Sussex Police were asked on Monday morning to clarify the techniques and tactics since the protest began six days ago, but as The Argus went to press last night, they had still failed to respond.

Keith Taylor, the Green Party’s MEP for the South East, has written to Sussex Police over what he describes as the use of excessive force against protesters.

In the letter to the Chief Constable of Sussex Police, Mr Taylor said: “Given the peaceful nature of the protest I was concerned to hear reports from both my own staff and others that your officers seemed to be using excessive force against protesters last week.

“Specifically I was concerned to see video and photographic evidence showing officers apparently using pressure point techniques against some protesters who had locked arms on the side road leading to Cuadrilla’s drilling area.

“The use of this kind of force seems to me to be excessive given the peaceful nature of the protest and could run the risk of exacerbating tension between protesters and police.”

A total of 23 arrests have now been made at the site.

Music teacher Frances Crack, 31, from Taffs Well in South Wales was arrested in Balcombe on Friday after travelling to Sussex to support the anti-fracking campaigners.

She said: “The brutality I saw going on around me shocked me to my core.

“It was horrifying. I was totally shocked by the way the police handled it all.

“They were approaching us in the v-shaped formation so a lot of us just sat on the floor.

“I was told that if I didn’t move I would be arrested.

“I don’t really think they wanted to arrest me because I didn’t look like your stereotypical campaigner or protester.

“I am against fracking in the UK, and I thought by showing a bit of solidarity, the people of Sussex would support Wales when it is inevitably our turn.”

A spokeswoman for Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne said: “It is a difficult balance for police – to support an absolute legitimate right for people to protest peacefully and also uphold the legal right of the company to operate.”

Your interview

WE want your questions for a high-profile anti-fracking campaigner who will feature in this week’s Your Interview.

Sussex is now on the front line of the controversial fracking revolution.

The Battle of Balcombe continues to rage on as anti-fracking protestors stand defiant against drilling company Caudrilla, who now want to start drilling in the sedate village.

This week’s Your Interview features high-profile anti-fracking campaigner Vanessa Vine, right, founder of Frack Free Sussex.

On Caudrilla, she has previously said: “They have underestimated the local resistance. They will have a big fight on their hands.

“Fracking threatens to contaminate our water and our air, and the roads are not suitable for the tankers.

“We do not need to take more fossil fuels out of the ground – we need to invest in clean renewable technology.”

Do you want to challenge Vanessa's views? Or maybe you want to know more about the fracking process?

Send in your questions for Vanessa by emailing news@theargus.co.uk or by calling 01273 544 682.

**2013 8 1 Anti-fracking protest arrests in Balcombe up to 25 as two glue themselves together**

Anti-fracking protest arrests in Balcombe up to 25 as two glue themselves together

Gareth Davies, Reporter / Thursday 1 August 2013 / News

Two protesters superglued their hands together around the entrance of a controversial drilling site, adding further delays to an energy firm's schedule.

Yesterday started in dramatic fashion as police officers prized two campaigners apart after entangling themselves at the entrance of the site in Balcombe.

Once freed the two protesters Simon 'Sitting Bull' Medhurst and Natalie Hynde were arrested, taking the tally of arrests up to 25 since campaigners first arrived last Thursday.

Yesterday four lorries made it through the gates to the site, each one met with a different protest.

After the first lorry passed through 40 people 'played dead' and lay in the road.

The second lorry, which was flanked by dozens of police officers in a v-shaped formation, was met with children in a line, offering flowers to officers.

The third lorry passed through un-challenged, but Gloria Gaynor's I Will Survive rang around the protest camp, as campaigners belted out the karaoke classic.

Play Video

Balcombe anti-fracking protest

Anti-fracking protesters serenade Cuadrilla lorries in Balcombe

Daniel Lee, 28, a campaigner who led yesterday's meetings among protesters, said: “The message we were trying to get across there was that the police aren't listening to the facts as relates to this case and obviously aren't protecting us - they don't give a damn about our welfare because of the health and environmental impacts that fracking is well known to cause.”

It is understood drilling was scheduled to start yesterday, but protesters remain defiant in their battle against energy firm Cuadrilla's plans to drill a 3,000ft (914m) well and 2,500ft (762m) horizontal bore at the site, pledging to continue to campaign after drilling starts.

Environmental activist Nick St Clare, 53, said: “The British law has a duty of care that's imposed on every person in the country, including the government, which states it must take reasonable care to avoid acts you can reasonably foresee that will injure or harm your neighbour.

“If you damage or destroy the environment, then you're injuring your neighbour.

“The most serious threat to life and property on this planet, right now, is environmental damage and destruction.”

The police's tactics have come under scrutiny recently with complaints about excessive force being used.

Mr Lee said: “I'm a realist - I think when you protest and when you blockade and you get in the way of what is essentially an instrument of the state then you know they are going to use some force.”

Sussex Police has defended its officers actions - including pushing on pressure points.

Leading officer superintendent Lawrence Hobbs said: "It is recognised nationally as one of the safest options where people suffer a momentary discomfort.

“Officers are specifically trained to use this tactic to move people when necessary and it does not cause any lasting pain or injury.

“This technique is proportionate and uses the minimum force necessary.”

A spokesman for Cuadrilla confirmed drilling at the site was 'imminent', adding the company is working hard to get back on schedule and get work underway.

**2013 8 13 Special report: Prime Minister's bold fracking message as activists head to Balcombe**

Finn Scott-Delany, Business editor / Tuesday 13 August 2013 / News

After months of debate over the importance of shale gas and its controversial extraction technique, Prime Minister David Cameron has made his boldest defence yet of hydraulic fracturing.

The PM argued millions of people will benefit from cheaper energy bills, thousands of new jobs and generous windfalls for communities and insisted drilling would only result in “very minor changes to landscape”.

With generous tax breaks in the offing and enthusiastic Government-level support, fracking might look like an increasing certainty.

Yet the rural location of many exploration sites pits Cameron against traditional Conservative supporters.

With an estimated 6,700 wells required to extract just 10% of the county’s gas reserves, Sussex has become a battleground for the anti-fracking movement.

Thousands of new activists are expected to arrive at Lower Stumble on Friday ranging from UKUncut and Occupy, to Disabled People Against Cuts and Greater London Pensioners Association.

In depth: Fracking in Sussex

With protesters fearful about possible earthquakes, water contamination and carbon emissions from a new bounty of gas, the Government may be in for a long fight.

Recent estimates suggest that about 1,3000 trillion cubic feet of shale gas lie underneath Britain, a tenth of which would be the equivalent of 51 years’ gas supply.

David Cameron describes it as a “reservoir of untapped energy” that will help millions of hard-working people across the country.

Some 74,000 jobs would be created in the shale gas industry, while £100,000 would be given to every community near an exploratory well.

If shale gas is successfully extracted, 1% of revenue, up to £10 million, will go back to residents for council tax reductions or school funding, for example.

Mr Cameron dismissed energy fears saying the UK had one of the most stringent regulatory systems in the world with no reason to worry about water contamination.

On one of the most emotive parts of the debate, the PM added: “Our countryside is one of the most precious things we have in Britain and I would never sanction something that might ruin our landscapes and scenery.

 “The South Downs National Park remains one of the most beautiful parts of Britain, yet it has become home to conventional oil and gas drilling since the ’80s. The huge benefits of shale gas outweigh any very minor changes to the landscape.

“My message is clear – we cannot afford to miss out on fracking.”

But the expensive and intensive drilling process have raised questions about the suitability of fracking in rural Britain, which involves pumping large quantities of water and chemicals underground to fracture the shale rock and release the natural gas.

According to one estimate 6,700 wells would be needed in Sussex to extract just a tenth of the reserves.

Caudrilla is testing the ground at Balcombe while Celtique Energie is hoping to drill in Wisborough Green and Fernhurst.

Concerns range from destruction of wildlife and the of the drinking water supply and earthquakes.

While some fears can be dismissed as myths others are backed up by credible sources.

Last month official body Water UK warned fracking could lead to contamination of drinking supplies if not carefully carried out.

Meanwhile south-western American communities are dealing with the consequences of ten years of intensive drilling.

A combination of drought and the industry’s massive thirst for water, has left reservoirs low and a risk of running out of tap water.

Meanwhile environmental groups have dismissed the PM’s defence of fracking.

Andrew Pendleton, Friends of the Earth’s head of campaigns, said: “David Cameron’s case for fracking simply doesn’t add up – there’s plenty of expert evidence that fracking in Britain won’t lead to cheaper fuel bills.

“It poses a real threat to their environment and quality of life and will keep the nation hooked on dirty fossil fuels.

“The PM should stop overhyping fracking and get on with the job of reaping the huge economic benefits of being at the forefront of a clean industrial revolution.”

According to recent findings by the Grantham Research Institute 60% to 80% of fossil reserves must remain in the ground to avoid catastrophic climate change.

Meanwhile the claim that UK shale gas will bring down prices has been disputed by Deutsche Bank, Chatham House, and OFGEM.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has forecast that natural gas prices will rise by 40% by 2020 – even with an influx of cheap shale gas.

Caroline Lucas, Green MP for Brighton Pavilion, pictured below, said: “By repeating the myth that fracking will mean lower energy bills, David Cameron disregards the opinion of a range of energy and industry experts.

“And by so zealously pursuing the drive to extract more fossil fuel from the ground, he is seriously undermining efforts to address the global climate crisis.

“If the Prime Minister really believes that there will only be a ‘very minor change to the landscape’, he might want to look again at the figures.

“According to some estimates, exploiting 10% of the UK’s shale gas resources would require around 110,000 wells, or an average of 160-170 per parliamentary constituency.”

Vanessa Vine, who has led protests as a Balcombe resident and chair of Frack Free Sussex, also dismissed Mr Cameron’s intervention.

She said: “With its bizarre and disturbing mania to force this ecocidal industry upon us, the Tory agenda on fracking is approaching Goebbels lie proportions.

“The Prime Minister’s desperate and dishonest treatise is utterly jaw-dropping and shows him to be on an increasingly desperate trajectory of political suicide.”

Petra Billings, of Sussex Wildlife Trust, raised the potentially “devastating impacts” of fracking at a proposed site near Wisborough Green.

She said: “This is an ancient woodland which has probably existed here since at least 1600.

It has been managed historically as hazel coppice with oak standards, a traditional system of management which supports a high biodiversity, including woodland flowers, birds, butterflies, badgers and rare bats.

“These nocturnal animals are sensitive to light, and continuous lighting of the drill site has the potential to cause serious disturbance to wildlife, not to mention the noise and activity.

Activists expected at site

After just a few weeks of protests at Balcombe and around 30 arrests the scene will escalate with the arrival of potentially thousands of new activists under the Reclaim the Power camp.

The campaigners will arrive on Friday for a week of direct action and civil disobedience, alongside UKUncut, Occupy, Disabled People Against Cuts, Greater London Pensioners Association and Fuel Poverty Action.

Ewa Jasiewicz, a spokesperson for No Dash for Gas, said: “We are expecting in excess of 500 at least. Due to the proximity of the camp to London, it could be in the thousands.

“In the past when there have been climate flashpoints like this – the runway at Heathrow or Kingsnorth coal-fired power station at Kent – we’ve had thousands of people.”

The police operation has already cost in excess of £73,000 in logistical support and overtime – not including the 100 officers a day patrolling the site every day.

Supt Lawrence Hobbs, operation lead, said: “The Reclaim the Power camp has publicised that they will share ideas, strengthen links and share skills in direct action and civil disobedience to take action against the Cuadrilla site.

“We know that the vast majority of protesters feel very passionately about issues and will protest peacefully. If protesters choose to become violent and commit any criminal act they should understand that this is not acceptable and they will be arrested.”

Bill Acraman, county councillor for Worth Forest, which includes Balcombe, said: “I’m against fracking but I think the protest is counter-productive. They’ve got tents, drums and music – it’s like Glastonbury Festival. It puts normal people off.”

‘I’m determined to win debate’

Prime Minister David Cameron, writing in the Daily Telegraph, said: “Fracking has become a national debate in Britain and it’s one that I’m determined to win. If we don’t back this technology, we will miss a massive opportunity to help families with their bills and make our country more competitive. Without it, we could lose ground in the tough global race.

“Gas and electric bills can go down when our home-grown energy supply goes up.

We’re not turning our back on low carbon energy, but these sources aren’t enough.

“This reservoir of untapped energy will help people across the country who work hard and want to get on. Even if we only see a fraction of the impact shale gas has had in America, we can expect to see lower energy prices in this country.

“Fracking will create jobs in Britain. One recent study predicted that 74,000 posts could be supported by a thriving shalegas industry in this country.

“Companies have agreed to pay £100,000 to every community situated near an exploratory well where they’re looking to see if shale gas exists. If gas is then extracted, 1 per cent of the revenue will go straight back to residents who live nearby.

“I want all parts of our nation to share in the benefits: north or south, Conservative or Labour. We are all in this together.

“Local people will not be cut out and ignored. We want people to get behind fracking, and a transparent planning process is an important ingredient.

“International evidence shows there is no reason why the process should cause contamination of water supplies or other environmental damage, if properly regulated. And the regulatory system in this country is one of the most stringent in the world.

“Our countryside is one of the most precious things we have in Britain and I would never sanction something that might ruin our landscapes and scenery.

The South Downs National Park remains one of the most beautiful parts of Britain, yet it has been home to conventional oil and gas drilling since the Eighties. The huge benefits of shale gas outweigh any very minor change to the landscape.

“We cannot afford to miss out on fracking. For centuries Britain has led the way in technological endeavour. Fracking is part of this tradition, so let’s seize it.”

**2013 8 17 Sussex Police rebuts claims it has allowed protesters to bring a halt to oil-drilling at Balcombe**

Anna Roberts, Crime reporter / Saturday 17 August 2013 / News

Sussex Police has rebutted accusations that it has allowed protesters to bring a halt to oil-drilling at Balcombe.

Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs spoke as up a thousand extra people gathered for a climate camp near the site at the weekend.

Cuadrilla previously scaled back test drilling on police advice.

Supt Hobbs said: "Right from the outset, we have been absolutely clear that our priority in this operation is safety - for the general public, for protesters, for Cuadrilla employees and for own officers and staff.

"Over the last three weeks our approach has been quite clear in that we will not tolerate any criminal behaviour and by Friday there had been 45 arrests in connection with the protests, with 33 people being charged with a range of offences.

"This morning (Saturday) we arrested a man in connection with threats made to a local landowner who asked a group encamped on land very close to the drilling site to leave.

"I should like to make it absolutely clear that while we are in full support of Cuadrilla's decision to scale back their activities during this period, it was their decision, which took into account Sussex Police's assessment of the likely impact of the extra protesters.

"For the last three weeks we have worked with all sides in a difficult balancing act to enable them all to meet their peaceful and lawful objectives, whether they be day-to-day commercial activities or protest.

"Cuadrilla's decision is a sensible one and we anticipate that in the next few days they will be in a position to resume their full operation and we will continue to police the situation fairly to ensure the safety of everyone involved."

A 23-year-old man, arrested on suspicion of a Section 4 public order offence was in custody today.

**2013 8 18 Hundreds gather in Balcombe for mass fracking protest**

Hundreds gather in Balcombe for mass fracking protest

Sunday 18 August 2013 / News

Hundreds of anti-fracking protesters are to march on a controversial drilling site this afternoon (August 18).

Activists have promised “direct action” as energy firm Cuadrilla continue to look for oil near Balcombe.

Demonstrators have gathered at a campsite set up by the group No Dash for Gas.

They will march from Balcombe railway station to the drilling site at 3pm.

Officers from 10 different forces are policing the protest.

Cuadrilla has scaled back its operations during the latest protest camp which is scheduled to end by Wednesday.

Energy firm chief executive Francis Egan has indicated drilling will continue at the site as soon as it was safe to do so.

The test drilling does not involve the use of the controversial fracking technique.

However, the energy firm has not ruled out its use in the future.

Brighton Pavilion MP, Caroline Lucas, is among those set to join the march.

Argus reporter Finn Scott-Delany will be reporting from Balcombe throughout the day. For the latest check The Argus website.

**2013 8 18 THE BIG INTERVIEW: Sussex Police Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs on fracking and Balcombe**

THE BIG INTERVIEW: Sussex Police Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs on fracking and Balcombe

Sunday 18 August 2013 / News

THE ARGUS (TA): WHAT are the difficulties in policing a large-scale protest such as Balcombe fracking site where protesters refuse to stand down?

LAWRENCE HOBBS (LH): ALL protests present their own unique set of circumstances and the challenge for police comes in meeting the needs, rights and wishes of those all involved.

The best way to do this is for honest and open dialogue and negotiation and we spend a lot of time doing just that.

A protest that extends over a prolonged period such as this one brings its own challenges of resourcing and commitment, but we believe our approach, which constantly assesses the changing dynamics of the protest, is working and is effective.

TA: HOW would you describe the relationship between protesters and officers at the Balcombe protests?

LH: WHILE there have been flashpoints and indeed, over the last three weeks there have been more than 40 arrests, the relationship has been largely respectful and good-natured.

In Sussex, we are well-versed in protest policing and one of the key elements in this is to engage as fully as possible with those taking part in them.

The sooner we can start to talk to them, the easier it is for us to understand what they are trying to achieve and to let them know what is acceptable within the bounds of the law.

At Balcombe, while the initial arrival of the protesters did take place over a very short time period, our specialist liaison officers have worked closely with them and there is a good mutual understanding.

We have facilitated their protests, but where necessary we have taken action to ensure that the rights and interests of other parties have also been maintained.

TA: HOW would police defend accusations by protesters that some of your officers have been heavy-handed?

LH: THROUGHOUT the operation we have assessed the need for officers to be present and increased numbers depending on the circumstances. It is a difficult balance for police – to support an absolute legitimate right for people to protest peacefully and also uphold the legal right of the company to operate.

We will do all we can to keep that balance right. Our primary tactic is to talk to people and officers are going to great lengths to explain to people why we are there and what is acceptable in terms of their safety and others working at the location.

When we police these kinds of demonstrations we will always look for a negotiated response. We would much rather talk to people and persuade them to move than use coercion. Some pictures in the media look dramatic.

What they often don’t show is the length officers have gone to persuade protesters to move.

If protesters block the way and it is lawful for the company to operate then they need to move.

If they are repeatedly asked to move, and at times are putting their own safety at risk, some level of coercion has to be used.

There are a range of tactics that officers are trained to use and the use of pressure points is one that is proportionate and uses the minimum of force necessary.

TA: HOW will the policing of the operation change in the upcoming days with the expected arrival of hardened G8 protesters?

LH: We will continue to facilitate peaceful protest, but newcomers to the site should be aware if they commit criminal offences then we will collect the evidence and they will be arrested.

Sussex Police is well versed in protest policing with the largest number of protests taking place outside of London and we have a range of tactics and options open to us that, obviously, I would not wish to disclose here.

However, increased numbers of protesters will mean increased numbers of police officers and we are now being supported in a mutual aid operation by colleagues from other UK police forces.

We have enjoyed very good engagement with the protesters at Balcombe through dialogue and negotiation which has allowed them to make their protest and enabled us to facilitate that safely for everyone involved.

I would echo the appeal from the Balcombe community for protesters not to engage in criminal activity in the pursuit of their aims.

TA: CAN you tell us how much the policing of the fracking site protests have cost taxpayers so far?

LH: THIS figure will be released by the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office.

The cost of the operation is not only being borne by Sussex Police, but by many partner agencies and other organisations who are having to plough additional resources and money into dealing with it.

TA: IS IT fair that taxpayers should foot the bill for this?

LH: THAT’S a question that needs to be asked of your representatives in government, both local and national.

It is our duty to maintain the difficult balance of meeting the rights and wishes of all those involved and above all, to ensure the safety of everyone taking part.

TA: Will Cuadrilla be asked to foot any of the bill to cover the costs considering removal of protesters is for their financial gain?

If not, why not?

LH: THERE are nationally agreed arrangements in other policing operations, such as football, where costs can be reclaimed from the event organisers.

These do not cover circumstances that exist at Balcombe.

We will discuss this question with Cuadrilla and government at the conclusion of the operation.

TA: HOW enforceable is a ban on the 30 protesters already charged with crimes from entering Balcombe and are they proportionate?

LH: We imposed these bail conditions as we believed they were right and proportionate in the circumstances.

A recent court hearing has lifted some of those conditions and we respect their decision and reasons for doing so.

TA: IS the force proud of its record of handling large-scale protests such as EDL, Smash Edo and Hastings-Bexhill Link Road?

LH: Yes. Our absolute priority is public safety, while responding to crime and disorder, but also facilitating peaceful protest.

It would be foolish to think that this could be done without arrests being made or some disruption being caused to local communities, but I believe that these have not been excessive and have justified what we feel have been proportionate responses.

TA: AT WHAT point is the right to protest superseded by the right not to cause widespread disruption and damage?

LH: THE right to protest is a valuable one and has our full support.

However, as with all areas of life, there are boundaries and when people elect to step over those boundaries and engage in unlawful and criminal behaviour, then that right is negated and they can expect to be arrested.

TA: Following the announcement that all Brighton and Hove officers will be put on 12-hour shifts over next few days to cover extra force at Balcombe, can you assure the public that policing elsewhere in the county won’t suffer because of the strain put on the force by fracking protest?

LH: WE have always been aware that this was going to be a long-running policing commitment and it is not possible for one force alone to meet the physical resourcing commitment required over an extended period of time.

We are now being supported in a mutual aid operation by colleagues from other UK police forces and I should like to recognise the valuable support of our strategic partners, including Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council.

It has come at a very busy time for the force and at a peak leave period, but I would stress that while this has put a strain on the force, it will not affect day-to-day policing and especially, our response to emergency 999 calls.

Sussex is a reasonably large force and those who work for it are an extremely dedicated and resourceful bunch of people and we are very grateful to them for the way in which they are meeting the demands of the operation, not least by accepting an increase to 12-hour shifts and coming in on what would normally be their rest days.

**2013 8 22 Green Party MP Caroline Lucas insists Balcombe arrest not a publicity stunt**

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas insists Balcombe arrest not a publicity stunt

Ben Leo / Thursday 22 August 2013 / News

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas has hit back at criticism that her arrest was a publicity stunt.

The Brighton Pavilion MP was held for five hours in Crawley police station following her arrest at the anti-fracking protests in Balcombe.

She and her son were arrested for suspicion of obstructing the highway under section 14 of the Public Order Act, and she has been bailed while the Crown Prosecution Service decides whether to charge her or not. A decision is expected to be announced at the end of the month.

More fracking news

Asked whether her arrest was a publicity stunt and pre-planned, Dr Lucas said: “I’ve been to Balcombe several times over the past few weeks, to show support for the villagers, and for other campaigners who are sending a clear message that they oppose this desperate attempt to extract yet more fossil fuel.

“They’re trying to stop a process which would damage efforts to tackle climate change, and which would have consequences for the already water stressed south east, including Brighton.

“Many constituents have lobbied me to take action against fracking, and I’ve done everything I can to raise it as an issue in Parliament, including securing debates, but the Government is refusing to listen to me, or to the people of Balcombe, 85% of whom oppose fracking.

“Risking arrest isn’t something I did lightly, but there are times when non-violent peaceful direct action can be legitimate.

“I think that’s especially the case when the Government is risking a breach of its global commitments on climate change by seeking the widespread use of shale gas.”

Dr Lucas’ spokesman said she was now away on a family break and will return to office next week. It’s unclear whether her son, who was also arrested at Balcombe for the same offence, is also on the family trip.

When asked for further details on her experience in police custody, her spokesman replied: “It would be potentially prejudicial to the legal process to talk more about Caroline’s experiences before the CPS has announced its decision.”

It’s not the first time Dr Lucas has been on the wrong side of the law. She was arrested in 2007 at a demonstration in Faslane against the UK’s Trident nuclear weapons arsenal.

**2013 8 22 Police Federation leader: "Sussex taxpayer should not pay for fracking protest costs"**

The chairman of Sussex Police Federation has said that “budget plans will be in tatters” unless the cost of policing the Battle of Balcombe is reimbursed.

Federation leader Paul Sellings told The Argus that Sussex taxpayers should not bear the brunt of policing the event, which he estimated to have cost at least £1 million.

He asked: “Is it fair Sussex taxpayers should foot the bill for the whole country?

“Fracking is a national issue and the protests should be paid for nationally.

“I cannot see how having to police such a big event cannot have an impact on Sussex Police’s budget plans for the year. All Sussex Police’s plans for other services will be in tatters.”

Supt Lawrence Hobbs said: “We have known this would be a long-running policing commitment and it is not possible for one force alone to meet that resourcing demand over an extended period of time.”

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne said: “The cost of this operation has put pressure on the police budget at a time when we are being asked to find significant savings.

“I have now spoken and written to the Policing Minister, Damian Green, to confirm that I will be applying to the Home Office for funding to meet the additional costs of this policing operation, once the final figures are known.”

A Home Office spokeswoman declined to comment.

**2013 8 29 Balcombe villagers speak out against anti-fracking protesters**

Balcombe villagers speak out against anti-fracking protesters

Gareth Davies, Reporter / Thursday 29 August 2013 / Fracking

Residents of a sleepy village have come out in force to record their “strong disapproval” of recent antifracking protests.

A letter sent to The Argus contains the names and addresses of 60 Balcombe villagers who wish exploratory drilling to continue without the presence of protesters at the Cuadrilla site.

The letter coincides with a story in The Argus on Wednesday outlining campaigners’ intentions to stay “indefinitely” at the site which has developed on the side of the B2036 London Road.

All the latest on fracking in Sussex

The statement said: “In spite of the relentless propaganda issued by a small clique in the village and their strident supporting groups from elsewhere, we do not believe exploratory drilling or properly regulated further exploitation will unduly damage our environment.

“We deplore the abuse suffered by employees of the drilling company and the police, extended trespass, and the establishment of a semi-permanent protest camp on hitherto beautiful road verges – actions which add up to an abuse of the undoubted right to peaceful protest.

“We acknowledge the exemplary service provided by the police at the protest site and in the village but we respectfully question the decision to advise the drillers to suspend operations for over a week, thus allowing a self-appointed group to dictate to a legitimate business.

“The priorities now must be to ensure work can resume and roads are kept open to site and general traffic.”

Those who signed the objection, dated August 27, also warned other communities who might experience anti-fracking demonstrators in the future that the problems spread beyond a busy camp.

They claim the village has suffered not only from the protesting crowds, but unfair abuse of the parish council, politicisation of the village fete, unsightly banners and the spreading of unwarranted fear.

The letter went on to say: “To encourage a more reasoned attitude to this and future drilling operations, we ask Government, local authorities and the industry to provide clear and easily understood information on the rationale for developing a British shale oil and gas industry.”

**2013 8 9 UPDATE: Fracking protests target drilling company Cuadrilla's HQ**

Fracking protests target drilling company Cuadrilla's HQ

UPDATE: Fracking protests target drilling company Cuadrilla's HQ

Monday 19 August 2013 / News

Anti-fracking protesters have blockaded the headquarters of energy company Cuadrilla while others have superglued themselves to a PR company used by the firm.

The action at Cuadrilla in Lichfield, Staffordshire, and at PR firm Bell Pottinger in central London comes on the first of two days of "mass civil disobedience" which campaigners have pledged to carry out to highlight their stance against fracking.

They have also reported to have delivered a wind turbine blade to Balcombe MP Francis Maude's constituency office.

 #ReclaimthePower activists have brought a gift to the office of Francis Maude, Local MP for Balcombehttp://t.co/nWbXewMmmk

— David Cullen (@humbleetc) August 19, 2013

Three disabled and two able bodied activists have reportedly blocked the main gate of Cuadrilla’s drill site in Balcombe.

Reports from No Dash for Gas said: "Four of the activists used d-locks and super-glue to attach themselves to the other activist’s wheel chair.

"They are surrounded by a human chain of 16 people and a further four large groups of activists blocked the surrounding road. The action is organised by Disabled People Against the Cuts."

A tweet from No Dash for Gas said: "Caroline Lucas MP is inside the police kettle outside #Cuadrilla rig side, and says she is prepared to be arrested @CarolineLucas #fracking"

A Sussex Police spokesman said: "The B2036 between Balcombe and Cuckfield has been closed by police this morning in order to help facilitate peaceful protest outside the gates of the Cuadrilla drilling site.

"Drivers are being advised to avoid that immediate area for the time being."

Activists are currently taking part in a six-day Reclaim The Power action camp in Balcombe, West Sussex, after Cuadrilla began carrying out exploratory oil drilling at the site.

Campaign group No Dash For Gas said six protesters superglued themselves to the glass door of Bell Pottinger at 8am and deployed reinforced arm tubes to stop anyone else getting inside.

Another activist climbed the High Holborn building and unfurled a banner bearing the words: "Bell Pottinger - fracking liars".

The protest group claims it has obtained a secret recording of a senior public relations officer at the firm admitting that the effect fracking will have on people's energy bills will be "basically insignificant" and said it was playing the recording on a loudspeaker.

Meanwhile, it said 20 protesters shut down the Cuadrilla site in Lichfield by blockading it with their bodies. It said two people inside the building had also hung banners from it saying: "Reclaim the power" and "Power to the people".

Kerry Fenton, who was one of those taking part in the protest in London, said: "Bell Pottinger has a long history of representing polluters, arms companies and dictators so it's entirely appropriate that Cuadrilla reached out to them when they wanted to sell fracking to the British public.

"Bell Pottinger has been responsible for a sustained campaign of corporate misinformation, but they were caught out by a secret recording that shows they don't even believe their own spin.

"This morning we're stopping their staff reaching their desks in the hope that, for one day at least, Bell Pottinger won't be able to mislead the British public about fracking. In truth it's polluting, expensive and dangerous."

A spokesman for Cuadrilla said of the Lichfield protest: "Three protesters have forced their way into our offices. The police are in attendance and are dealing with this matter.

"A small number of protesters are outside the building. Our office remains open."

**2013 9 10 Liveblog: Balcombe anti-fracking protest eviction**

THIS LIVE EVENT HAS FINISHED

SUMMARY

Anti-fracking demonstrators have until 9am to leave the site of their roadside protest in Balcombe or face eviction.

Protesters have been rallying support and urging people to travel to the site today to show they will not be moved.

Police have issued a Section 14 order to confine any protests today to one site opposite the site entrance

Three arrests have been made so far

Most Recent

5:08pm

One of the arrests today was of the first Balcombe resident to feel the long arm of the law at this protest.

PA reports that poet Simon Welsh was arrested outside the gates of the Cuadrilla site in the Sussex village shortly after leading singing of the anti-fracking Balcombe Anthem, according to the No Fracking in Balcombe Society (No Fibs).

A No Fibs spokeswoman said he was arrested at the same spot where former Green Party leader and Brighton Pavilion MP Caroline Lucas was arrested last month.

"He was arrested shortly after leading the singing of The Balcombe Anthem, to Parry's rousing tune Jerusalem," she said.

"Simon had adapted William Blake's words to express the current threat of industrialisation of our countryside through fracking."

Sussex Police said a 34-year-old man from Balcombe was arrested on suspicion of breaching a Section 14 Public Order Act notice and was in custody this afternoon.

The force said a number of protesters were arrested outside the Cuadrilla drilling site today, including two who tried to block a lorry arriving at the site.

3:31pm

West Sussex County Council has just released the following statement:

West Sussex County Council today (Tuesday) confirmed that it has now instructed its agents to seek an order for possession which will lead to people, roadside tents, canopies and caravans being removed on the B2036 London Road, Balcombe, in an area close to the site where energy company Cuadrilla is completing exploratory drilling work.

The council, as the Highways Authority, is taking the action over increased concerns for the safety of all road users.

Notices were served yesterday (Monday) requiring protestors to vacate the land by 9am this morning but, because this did not take place, the council has now instructed its agents to take court proceedings.

The council will apply for an early hearing because of its safety concerns.

“We would re-emphasise the statement we issued yesterday that this action is being taken on safety grounds to protect all road users.

“We would hope that people will still leave of their own accord, and, again we would encourage protestors to use the defined area where peaceful protest will be facilitated.

“This has been set-up to strike a balance between the safety of road users and the democratic right of people to protest lawfully.”

3:24pm

Update: Sussex Police say the road has now reopened:

 "The road was re-opened shortly before 3pm. The man released from the D-lock/ A man has been arrested."

2:43pm

Sussex Police statement on the caravan blocking the road:

The B2036 London Road at Balcombe has been closed after protesters pulled a caravan across the carriageway, blocking it in both directions.

As the caravan was pulled into position around 1.45pm on Tuesday (September 10), a man D-locked himself to the vehicle delaying its removal.

Superintendent Jane Derrick said: "A specialist protest removal team is attending to release the man and the caravan will be moved as soon as we are able to safely do so. While we are working as quickly as possible to re-open the road, people planning to use the route, including those picking up children from school, should consider alternatives where possible."

A number of protesters have been arrested outside the Cuadrilla drilling site today, including two who tried to prevent the movement of a lorry arriving at the location.

2:16pm

More live feeds:

2:08pm

2:00pm

There's now another live feed from Balcombe:

1:45pm

12:37pm

Not strictly newsworthy, but Liz Finlayson has taken this great picture of one of the policemen's fine set of chops:

12:18pm

12:18pm

10:52am

10:52am

Henry Bodkin, who is on a work placement with us, has taken these pictures:

10:46am

Some more pictures from Liz Finlayson, who says the protesters are now kettled in the road opposite the site entrance:

10:37am

10:35am

From Argus reporter Gareth Davies at the scene: Police have started arresting people, we believe for breaching the new Section 14 Order. Three people have now been arrested.

 It appears that West Sussex County Council are indeed going to have to go to the High Court to evict the protesters, as they are not moving.

10:29am

10:29am

10:14am

And here it is embedded:

10:13am

 A live video stream said to be from Balcombe can be found here

10:06am

The Balcombe Community Protection Camp has issued a press release.

It says: "Please find below an update from the Balcombe blockade of the Cuadrilla drilling and fracking site. The update is provided in the context of a letter from one Tony Kershaw of West Sussex County Council’s legal department. The blockaders are consulting their own legal advisers about how to respond to it. The validity of the letter is questionable.

"From the viewpoint of the blockaders the last six weeks have been a great success with national and international coverage of the danger fracking poses to the environment and human health. The invasion of the British countryside has been strongly resisted and will continue to be resisted until the last fracker runs out of gullible investors. Landowners are discovering the hidden liabilities they will have to bear when the inevitable accidents, contamination and injury bring massive claims for damages. Best of all communities are learning how to defend themselves and combine with other communities in strength and unity.

"An amazing feature of the fight against fracking is the range of people, political and social positions that have drawn together to face the unwelcome gas and oil invaders. The blockaders have conducted themselves peacefully throughout this first blockade of a UK based fracker. The safety and sanctity of human life is at the heart of the purpose of the blockade.

"It is a shame that a lower speed limit has not yet been imposed in the area of the entrance to the Cuadrilla drilling site and the blockaders and their many supporters in the wider community urge those responsible to immediately establish a safe speed limit of 20 or 30 miles per hour on the relevant stretch of the B2036 south of Balcombe. Failure to heed this request for a lower speed limit will lead even more people to question the good faith of their elected representatives and institutions.

"The Balcombe blockaders urge West Sussex County Council to take urgent steps to preserve its democratic role in the community."

10:00am

This tweet is not from someone at the site, but who is following protesters on Twitter:

9:38am

She says it's fairly quiet, the road is still open and there are not too many police present other than at the entrance.

9:37am

Here's a couple of pictures from our photographer Liz Finlayson from the roadside today:

9:26am

However, despite the call for support, it appears that the trains to Balcombe are currently quite quiet:

9:23am

9:20am

However, at least one Balcombe resident is welcoming the upcoming eviction:

9:19am

9:18am

8:57am

Sussex Police has this morning announced it will be directing protesters to a specified assembly area on the western verge opposite the entrance of the site from today.

In a statement, it says it has issued an order under the Public Order Act because "it is reasonably believed that the public assembly may result in 'serious disruption to the life of the community' or 'the purpose of persons organising it is the intimidation of others with a view to compelling them not to do an act they have a right to do or to do an act they have a right not to do'."

Chief Superintendent Paul Morrison said: "This will allow a significant number of people to assemble in close proximity to the site to carry out their protest, but without causing obstruction to the road. We will review its use on a daily basis.

"Since protesters started to gather at the end of July we have facilitated peaceful protest and will continue to do so. However, over the last week we have seen a rise in the amount of unlawful activities and this has caused increasing disruption to the local community and to those trying to carry out their lawful business.

"This is unacceptable and we have reluctantly had to take this course of action. Anyone who chooses to ignore the direction faces arrest.

"We would urge anyone intending to organise any form of protest at the site at any time to make contact with us."

8:53am

Some housekeeping - comments are not pre-moderated, so if you spot something you think should be removed, please report it and we'll take a look.

If you want to automatically get the most recent posts, then click on yes for enabling automatic updates at the top of the blog.

8:50am

Good morning, and welcome to the Argus liveblog on what appears to be the beginning of the end for the Balcombe anti-fracking protest.

Yesterday, West Sussex County Council said it will remove people, roadside tents, canopies and caravans on the B2036 London Road near to the site where energy company Cuadrilla is completing exploratory drilling work for oil, over increased concerns for the safety of all road users.

Notices were served yesterday, and if the land is not vacated within 24 hours, it will be followed up with court action to seek possession of council-owned verges and an injunction preventing people from returning, a council spokesman said.

**2013 9 11 More than 100 now arrested at Balcombe**

More than 100 now arrested at Balcombe

Wednesday 11 September 2013 / News

The number of anti-fracking protesters arrested in Balcombe has topped 100 since demonstrations started in July.

Six people were arrested yesterday as demonstrations against exploratory drilling by energy firm Cuadrilla continued, Sussex Police said.

They are believed to have included the first local resident to be detained, with anti-drilling group the No Fracking in Balcombe Society (No Fibs) claiming poet Simon Welsh was one of the six arrested.

A 26-year-old man was also arrested after locking himself to a caravan that was used to block a road through Balcombe for around 75 minutes.

Anti-fracking protesters were given 24 hours to move from the roadside where they have been camped for the past two months after police invoked a Section 14 Public Order Act notice.

Chief Superintendent Paul Morrison said: "We have provided an area where protesters can clearly see and be seen to be carrying out their legitimate right to peaceful protest opposite the entrance to the drilling site.

"While they do this we are quite happy to facilitate their protest, but the criminal activities of some are having a significant impact on the local community and this is not acceptable.

"We have again seen a number of arrests, bringing the total to more than 100 since the protest began in July.

"Ours is a very simple message: exercise your legitimate right to lawful protest, but please refrain from activities that are going to bring you to the attention of police.

"If you choose to break the law, then you face arrest and it is up to you to consider the consequences of that."

Protesters were told that they would be confined to a specified assembly area under the newly imposed Section 14 order following continued disruption.

Sussex Police said assembly would be confined to a clearly delineated area on the western side of the verge opposite the entrance to the Cuadrilla site, starting approximately 10 metres north of the police control van and continuing along the verge for about 30 metres.

West Sussex County Council confirmed it will remove people, tents, canopies and caravans from the road, near to the site where energy company Cuadrilla is completing exploratory drilling work for oil, over increased concerns for the safety of road users.

Last week, Cuadrilla announced it had withdrawn an application for an extension to its planning permission for exploratory drilling at Balcombe.

The company said a new planning application for the site will be lodged in the near future, but it will not go before the council before next year.

No Fibs said Mr Welsh was arrested outside the gates of the Cuadrilla site shortly after leading singing of the anti-fracking Balcombe Anthem, A group spokeswoman said he was detained at the same spot where former Green Party leader and Brighton Pavilion MP Caroline Lucas was arrested last month.

"He was arrested shortly after leading the singing of The Balcombe Anthem, to Parry's rousing tune Jerusalem," she said.

"Simon had adapted William Blake's words to express the current threat of industrialisation of our countryside through fracking."

Sussex Police said a 34-year-old man from Balcombe and a 29-year-old man from Leicestershire were arrested on suspicion of breaching a Section 14 Public Order Act notice and were in custody.

A 26-year-old man who locked himself to the caravan was released by specialist protest removal officers, a police spokesman said.

He was arrested on suspicion of obstructing the highway and an offence under Section 241 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act.

Additionally, a 24-year-old man from Southampton and a 45-year-old man from Brighton were arrested on suspicion of offences under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act. The man from Brighton was also arrested for obstructing police, the force said.

A 46-year-old man who gave no address was arrested on suspicion of assaulting a police officer as he tried to help a lorry enter the Cuadrilla site.

**2013 9 13 Council seeks eviction of Balcombe protesters in High Court**

Council seeks eviction of Balcombe protesters in High Court

Friday 13 September 2013 / Fracking

A High Court hearing to evict a protest camp from the roadside will be heard on Monday.

West Sussex County Council is seeking a possession order for the B2036 London Road, Balcombe.

Anti-fracking activists have been protesting against energy Caudrilla which has been conducting exploratory drilling for oil and gas at the site.

The removal of people, tents, canopies, and caravans from verges is being sought.

The county council said it was seeking this order on road safety grounds and urged people to move voluntarily.

An area has been agreed with police opposite the gates to the Cuadrilla site where people can lawfully and peacefully protest.

Notice has been given to protestors of a hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London.

A spokeswoman for No Fracking in Balcombe Society (No FiBS) said: “The camp is considering its response.

"No FiBS reiterates its gratitude to all those who have given up their summer to come and help protect us in Balcombe from the bullies in our Government and the fossil fuel industry.”

**2013 9 14 Council aiming to remove fracking protest camp in Balcombe**

Council aiming to remove fracking protest camp in Balcome

Finn Scott-Delany, Business editor / Saturday 14 September 2013 / News

A protest camp could be removed as early as Monday after a High Court hearing was scheduled.

West Sussex County Council is seeking a possession order for the verges along London Road, Balcombe, where anti-fracking activists have been camped for weeks.

The council is seeking the removal of people, tents, canopies and caravans from verges on road safety grounds.

Meanwhile the cost of the policing operation at Balcombe was revealed to have reached £2.5 million.

Activists have been protesting against energy firm Caudrilla, which has carried out exploratory drilling for oil and gas at the rural site.

Notice was given yesterday of the hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London, scheduled for Monday.

Protesters held a meeting yesterday to discuss the hearing with a source saying they would be “well defended” in court.

If the court grants the council immediate possession of the land, eviction could take place straight away.

Kathryn McWhirter, of No Fracking in Balcombe Society, said: “We will have very good legal representation.

“They have given us ridiculously short notice on a Friday afternoon when lawyers have gone home for the weekend. It just doesn’t give us time to mount a proper legal challenge.”

Under new directives campaigners will have to gather in an area away from the gates described as a “sheep pen”.

Mrs McWhirter added: “Nobody is going into the pen. We’re not sheep.”

A council spokesman said: “Today, the council reiterated its previous statement that it is seeking this order on road safety grounds, and urges people to move of their own volition.”

Meanwhile the Home Office is considering an appeal by Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne for help with the operation costs.

Chief Supt Tony Blaker said: “This was not a decision taken lightly but with the continuing disruption to users of the road and the local community it was one that had to be made. “

As we have said all along, we are more than happy to facilitate legitimate, peaceful protest and will continue to do so, but step out of line and you are liable to arrest.”

**2013 9 16 Balcombe anti-fracking protesters claim High Court victory**

Balcombe anti-fracking protesters in High Court today

Monday 16 September 2013 / News

UPDATE: Anti-fracking protesters are hailing a High Court decision as a "resounding victory" in their fight against drilling in Balcombe.

The council gave demonstrators formal notice last week that they were no longer able to protest on the council-owned highway outside the site where gas company Cuadrilla is undertaking exploratory drilling.

The protest camp refused to leave, and this morning both parties were at the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

But Mrs Justice Lang adjourned the application after describing it as "flawed", with the result that if the council does not apply to restore it in a new form by October 8, it will be either withdrawn or dismissed.

There were cheers in court by a group of campaigners - some of whom had instructed lawyers to contest the action, which the council said were necessary to avoid disruption of the highway.

The judge said that, although the case was presented as a straightforward matter of obtaining possession, it was more complicated as there was a need to balance the right to peaceful assembly and to demonstrate.

She had heard from counsel that the proceedings might well be academic as the planning permission granted to Cuadrilla three years ago will expire on September 28 and there was currently no application to extend it.

The company would not be permitted to drill after that date and it was likely that many campaigners would leave the site.

The question of who will pay the legal costs of the hearing was put off to a later date.

Tim Williams, of East Grinstead, who is part of the camp, told The Argus: "This is a resounding victory for the protectors of the environment.

"We know that Cuadrilla cannot be trusted. West Sussex County Council have no idea what they're doing. We're only trying to find out what is being put into the ground."

West Sussex County Council said in a statement: “We very much regret the adjournment of the case, but accept the court’s decision.

“The County Council reiterates that the reason for taking this action was to maintain road safety on a busy rural road, unlit at night with a 60 mph limit.

"The roadside encampment is very close to the edge of the grass verges, and there have been numerous encroachments into the public highway. In our opinion it is not safe. We also have a duty to keep the highway open for all traffic.

“The County Council now respectfully requests that the protestors behave responsibly and do not cause a safety hazard on the road or disrupt the highway.

“The court has been given assurances on behalf of the protestors that their action will cease on the expiry of the planning permission on 28 September.  We expect those assurances to be fulfilled.

“Today’s ruling by the Judge does not exclude the Council returning to court before October 8 if safety issues on the B2036 escalate.

“There have been some reports that costs were awarded against the County Council. This is not the case. The Judge ruled that the issue of costs should be reserved which means that a decision has been postponed to a future hearing.”

Juliette Harris, a Balcombe villager for more than 30 years, said: "Eighty-five per cent of people don't want Cuadrilla in Balcombe.

"The majority of the villagers have been supportive of the protesters, and they have been down there in their hundreds.

"The protesters I have seen are decent, committed people who have been out in all weathers, and who have been demonised by the press and deterred by the police.

"We are thrilled that the judge thought that West Sussex County Council's application to evict was flawed. The council has done nothing to assist us and everything to help Cuadrilla.

"It's time the council paid attention because it is us who pay their wages."

Cuadrilla declined to comment on the hearing.

Meanwhile, the campaigners are calling for help on the ground in Balcombe.

Frack Off UK posted this message on its Facebook page yesterday: "As well as needing and appreciating support at The High Court the camp itself needs your help.

"There will be a large amount of pressure on the camp from now until the end of Cuadrilla’s planning permission (Sept 28th) and it’s more important now than ever to be dictating our own terms of resistance."

**2013 9 20 Police officer disciplined for Twitter slur calling Balcombe anti-fracking protesters 'scum'**

Anti-fracking protesters have been camped at Balcombe

Anna Roberts, Crime reporter / Friday 20 September 2013 / News

A Sussex Police officer has been disciplined after calling protesters in Balcombe “scum” on Twitter.

The unnamed officer, a PC, made the slur at the end of last week on the social networking site.

Campaigners have spent weeks camping on roadside verges near the mid Sussex village in a protest against fracking – a process which extracts natural gas from the ground for energy.

A member of the public picked up on the tweet and reported it to the force, which immediately launched an investigation.

The man who complained said: “Should your officers really be calling protesters ‘scum’ on Twitter? I suggest you issue some guidance ASAP.”

Sussex Police confirmed the report was genuine and the tweet had been sent by a PC.

A spokesman said: “Sussex Police has received a report of a personal Twitter account belonging to a Sussex officer, which is abusive to protesters in Balcombe.

“The officer has been identified and will be receiving management advice about their actions.

“We have worked hard to engage with everyone involved in and affected by the activities surrounding the drilling operation at Balcombe and no matter who authors them such comments are unhelpful and not acceptable.”

It is understood the officer involved made the comment on his personal account, but was clearly identifiable as a police officer.

He was not among the officers who have been policing in Balcombe.

A Sussex police officer, who asked not to be named, said he and fellow officers were aware of the incident.

“I am really disappointed that a colleague would do this – it is stupid to put it bluntly,” he told The Argus.

“Irrespective of your personal opinion you cannot say things like this. You have to remain impartial as a police officer.”

**2013 9 20 Sussex Police Chief Constable to face questions on Balcombe anti-fracking protest policing**

Sussex Police Chief Constable questioned on Balcombe anti-fracking protest policing

Friday 20 September 2013 / Crime/Courts

Published Friday 20 September 2013 / Crime/Courts

Sussex's police comissioner is quizzing the force's top officer about the anti-fracking protest in Balcombe.

Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, Katy Bourne, will question Chief Constable Martin Richards about the police response to the protest in Balcombe during a meeting at 1pm.

Katy Bourne said: "It is my role to hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public.

"I have received several questions from residents about the policing operation in Balcombe and, as a result, I will be addressing these issues during an accountability meeting with the Chief Constable.

A spokesman said a recording of the webcast will be shared online shortly after the meeting and we will bring that to you as soon as it is avaiable..

**2013 9 21 Top policeman defends pressure point tactics used at Balcombe fracking protest**

Top policeman defends pressure point tactics used at Balcombe fracking protest

Melita Kiely / Saturday 21 September 2013 / News

The Chief Constable of Sussex has defended police tactics used to control anti-fracking protesters as he was grilled by Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Katy Bourne.

Mrs Bourne asked Chief Constable Martin Richards to explain the use of police force and pressure point techniques at the Cuadrilla drilling site in Balcombe.

Chief Constable Richards said: “Force has to be proportional and reasonable.

“We are in the spotlight. Any activity, action a police officer takes is under scrutiny.

“Use of force can look dramatic and alarming.”

Pressure point techniques are used by applying pressure to certain parts of the body, such as just behind the ears, which causes temporary pain.

Chief Constable Richards said the tactic has been used after officers had been negotiating between one-and-a-half to two hours to no avail.

He added: “It does hurt. It doesn’t cause any injury. “It’s a disabling technique that allows us to move from an unlawful position to a lawful position.”

Balcombe resident Simon Welsh, 34, said he thought police pressure point techniques were disgusting.

“I do understand the police are in a difficult position when they are trying to uphold the law as it currently stands.

“But I don’t agree with it at all as it was peaceful that day.

“It does hurt but it doesn’t cause damage.

“It’s playground bullying tactics but if you fight back against that you’re in big trouble.”

During the two hour accountability meeting Chief Constable Richards also defended the cost of policing at the site in Balcombe, which now stands at more than £4 million.

Chief Constable Richards said the policing strategy was reviewed on a daily basis to ensure the appropriate number of officers are deployed at the protest camp.

“In my days as a middle ranking officer a weekend of policing travellers a potential camp of thousands cost £2 million, ” he explained.

“Given the length of this operation I am as satisfied as I could be we have pitched the resources at the right level.”

Katy Bourne also said she has spoken to the policing minister to request additional funding as she believes this is a national issue around energy.

**UPDATED: Brighton Pavilion MP Caroline Lucas to be prosecuted in relation to Balcombe fracking protest**

Brighton Pavilion MP Caroline Lucas to be prosecuted in relation to Balcombe fracking protest

Wednesday 25 September 2013 / News

The country's first Green MP is to be prosecuted after taking part in anti-fracking demonstrations.

Brighton Pavilion MP Caroline Lucas has been charged with “breaching a police order on public assemblies and wilful obstruction of the highway”, according to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

It relates to mass protests at Balcombe as Cuadrilla undertook exploratory drilling for shale gas last month.

In a statement yesterday, Dr Lucas said: “Sussex police has confirmed I am being charged with two offences arising out of my arrest in Balcombe on August 19.

“One of the offences is for obstructing the highway. The other is for failing to comply with a police condition to move to a specified protest area.

“I firmly believe in the right to peaceful protest and remain deeply concerned about the impact of fracking on climate change and the wider environment.

“I have been advised by my lawyer to make no further comment at this stage.”

Nigel Pilkington, a senior lawyer with the Crown Prosecution Service South East, said: "Following an investigation by Sussex Police, the Crown Prosecution Service has received a file of evidence in relation to Ms Caroline Lucas MP, who was arrested during the anti-fracking demonstrations at the Cuadrilla drilling site in Balcombe last month.

"After careful consideration, we have concluded that there is sufficient evidence and that it is in the public interest to prosecute Ms Lucas for breaching a police order on public assemblies and wilful obstruction of the highway."

He said Sussex Police had been authorised to charge Ms Lucas with one count of breach of a section 14 order contrary to section 14 of the Public Order Act 1986, and one count of wilful obstruction of the highway contrary to section 137 of the Highways Act 1980.

Both offences are alleged to have taken place on 19 August 2013.

Mr Pilkington said the decision had been taken in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors and the Director of Public Prosecution's guidance on cases involving public protest.

He said: "These are summary offences which can only be tried at magistrates' court."

Ms Lucas will appear at Crawley Magistrates' Court on October 9.

**Police take tougher stance on Balcombe protesters after tripod protest closes road**

Police take tougher stance on Balcombe protesters after tripod protest closes road

Anna Roberts, Crime reporter / Friday 6 September 2013 / News

Police have launched a crackdown on Balcombe protesters after a campaigner held up the road for more than five hours yesterday.

The “completely unacceptable” act – which saw a man, named only as Jamie, scale a 15ft high tripod in the middle of the 60mph road – sparked police to issue a Section 14 order, under the Public Order Act 1986, which tells protesters where they may assemble.

If they do not comply with the order or incite another person to disobey it, they will have committed an offence and could be arrested.

Full details of where they are banned from assembling – believed to include London Road, which has been the centre of fracking protests – were not released last night.

The man clambered up the tripod at 8.10am and Sussex Police said he threatened to urinate on officers after super-gluing himself to the structure.

Police officers said the hold-up meant about 60 children were delayed for their first day at school and a distraught mother was unable to reach her daughter at school after she suffered a seizure.

The man was taken down by officers at 1.50pm.

It is the first time such an order has been issued at the Balcombe site, where protesters have gathered for more than 40 days.

They are objecting to Cuadrilla’s exploratory drilling of the site, as there are fears it may lead to the controversial process of fracking.

The Home Office said the order could be put in place “to prevent serious public disorder, serious criminal damage or serious disruption to the life of the community”.

Speaking yesterday Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs said the order was issued in response to an “increase in the number of those intent on criminal or anti-social behaviour” which is “endangering everyone at the site and having a massive impact on the Balcombe community”.

He added: “This is unacceptable and we have now taken action to define an area where peaceful protest will be facilitated today.”

No campaigners from fracking groups were available for comment yesterday.

But commenting on the road block on social media, a group called Ifthetrees said: “Jamie is now up a tripod blocking the whole road. It’s a lovely sight."

“Class action this morning closes road, hero still up there. This is just the beginning… believe it.”

Three people were in custody last night including a 29-year-old man, no address given, arrested on suspicion of obstructing a police officer and an offence under Section 241 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act.

A 26-year-old man, no address given, was arrested on suspicion of breach of the Section 14 order shortly after it was put in place, having ignored advice from police.

A 44-year-old woman from Burgess Hill who ignored directions to stop at the road closure on London Road, Balcombe, was arrested on suspicion of failing to stop for police.

**Fracking firm stops drilling in Balcombe after "rattling" noise complaints**

Fracking firm ordered to stop drilling in Balcombe after "rattling" noise complaints

Bill Gardner, Senior Reporter / Monday 9 September 2013 / News

Anti-fracking protesters are celebrating after an oil and gas exploration firm stopped drilling after neighbours complained about the noise.

Work has stopped at the Cuadrilla exploration site in Balcombe after nearby residents complained the noise was rattling their windows and disturbing their sleep.

Jubilant activists claimed the halt was a serious blow to Cuadrilla’s chances of turning the area into a permanent site for fracking.

But officials from the energy firm claimed the delay would only be temporary.

In recent months Balcombe has been at the centre of a national row over the controversial fracking process, where rock is blasted with water to release shale gas.

Planning permission granted to Cuadrilla in 2010 stated noise levels for nearby residents should never exceed 55 decibels between 7.30am and 6.30pm from Monday to Friday.

At all other times the drilling must not exceed 42 decibels.

But at a meeting with the Environment Agency last week, noise experts told Cuadrilla night levels were nearing prohibited levels.

Bosses immediately called a halt to the drilling and workmen are now scrambling to fit “sound baffles”, which will muffle the noise of drilling.

A spokesman for Cuadrilla confirmed work was scheduled to start again “as soon as possible”.

He said: “We’ll have it back up and running as soon as we can.West Sussex County Council has had quite a few complaints so we have been trying to reduce noise.

“But we don’t think the noise is too bad. For instance, when a train goes by it reaches 75 decibels.

“In fact, the noisiest thing around here is the protesters having their Sunday sing-along.”

However Vanessa Vine from Frack Free Sussex said the sound of drilling had been “almost unbearable” for householders in Balcombe.

She said: “A lot of residents have been complaining since the start about this, and it’s good to see something being done.

“People in the village have not been able to sleep and others have been complaining that their patio tiles have been shaking.

“Cuadrilla has exceeded the decibel levels so the site should be shut down.”

The news came as the cost of policing the on-going protest at the site was revealed to have soared to £2.3 million.

Last Thursday, an activist caused chaos when he mounted a home-made tripod in the middle of the road, causing mile-long tailbacks until police officers eventually arrested him.

Jamie Spiers, 29, has been charged with wilful obstruction of a highway, causing danger to road users and using threatening words or behaviour to cause harassment alarm or distress.

He will appear at Crawley Magistrates on September 18.

Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs said: "We will continue to remain open and transparent about the cost to Sussex Police of this operation.

“Officers remain at the site facilitating peaceful and safe protest. Those who break the law will continue to be arrested and we will do all we can to put them in front of a court.”

**Balcombe anti-fracking activists cleared of obstructing highway charges**

Balcombe anti-fracking activists cleared of obstructing highway charges

Finn Scott-Delany, Business editor / Friday 10 January 2014 / News

Activists hailed a victory for freedom of protest after being acquitted of obstructing a highway.

The anti-fracking protesters were prosecuted after passively blockading the gates to drilling firm Cuadrilla in Balcombe.

But all charges against the ten defendants were dismissed yesterday after a three-day trial.

They were arrested on July 26 amid a summer of protests against the drilling firm, which was test drilling for oil and gas at the rural site.

Scores were arrested, including Brighton Pavilion MP Caroline Lucas, during a police operation costing £4 million.

Paul Deacon, 50, formerly of Selden Lane, Worthing; Samantha Duncan, 30, of Beaconsfield Villas, Brighton; Ian Freeston, 52, of Phoenix Place, Lewes; Ezra Lynch, 31, of Phoenix Place, Lewes; Mark Mansbridge, 51, of Paddock Road, Lewes; Richard Millar, 30, of Upper Gloucester Road, Brighton; Michael Atkins, 37, of Westbury; Frances Crack, 31, of Cardiff; Justin Preese, 44, of Pontypridd and Nancy Walker, 25, of London, were all cleared of obstructing the highway.

Mr Atkins was also cleared of assaulting a police constable by throwing tea at her.

Supporters cheered at Brighton Magistrates’ Court as District Judge William Ashworth delivered the verdicts.

Defence lawyers disputed an obstruction took place as the B2036 London Road at Balcombe was closed to traffic at the time.

The court heard how police used pressure point techniques against protesters, who had linked arms and were sitting on and around a large log.

The judge praised the protesters’ good character and said they had acted reasonably and with dignity.

Speaking outside court Mr Freeston said: “The gist of it was, were we unreasonable? Did we go over the top with our freedom to protest? The judge said we surfed very close to unreasonableness but he sided with us. We’re an interesting bunch of committed citizens and I think he saw that.”

Mr Millar added: “The judge accepted trucks were held up and we caused an obstruction but he said it wasn’t unreasonable. I hope other judges follow this lead and see we do have a right to protest.”

**Balcombe fracking protesters 'not given enough arrest warning'**

10:40am Wednesday 8th January 2014

By Finn Scott-Delany

Sussex Police gave insufficient warning to peaceful anti-fracking protesters before arresting them, a court was told.

Eleven campaigners are standing trial accused of obstructing the highway during protests against drilling firm Cuadrilla.

The activists were arrested in Balcombe on July 26 outside the drill site gates after being warned they were blocking the access for emergency services.

But defence lawyers told Brighton Magistrates’ Court yesterday that police officers did not give enough warning before making arrests.

Paul Deacon, 50, formerly of Selden Lane, Worthing; Samantha Duncan, 30, of Beaconsfield Villas, Brighton; Ian Freeston, 52, of Phoenix Place, Lewes; Ezra Lynch, 31, of Phoenix Place, Lewes; Mark Mansbridge, 51, of Paddock Road, Lewes; Richard Millar, 30, of Upper Gloucester Road, Brighton; Michael Atkins, 37, of Westbury; Frances Crack, 31, of Cardiff; Justin Preese, 44, of Pontypridd; Marcin Swiercz, 35, of London; and Nancy Walker, 25, of London all deny wilful obstruction of a highway.

Atkins is also accused of assaulting a police constable by throwing tea at her.

Opening the prosecution case, Jonathan Edwards said that a large tree trunk was dragged in front of the gates to the site being test drilled by Cuadrilla, off London Road, which protesters sat on to block access.

The court saw a video of police officers warning protesters that they were breaking the Trade Union and Labour Act by disrupting a workplace.

Pressure point techniques were used to force the protesters apart, with onlookers shouting “shame on you!”

Chief Inspector Matthew Webb, commander of police on the ground at Balcombe, said the site was a “hazardous working environment” and needed 24-hour emergency service access.

But he accepted that after arriving at Balcombe at 9am to the log blockade, he did not warn protesters to move until midday, shortly before ordering a first round of arrests. After a second warning he said he ordered further arrests.

Shahida Begum, one of the defence lawyers, said: “Nowhere in your statement does it say you instructed police liaison officers to have formal discussions with protesters. There was no engagement.”

CI Webb said: “If the protesters had not heard my warning then that was because of the noise they were making themselves.”

District Judge William Ashworth must decide if there was an obstruction, if it was wilful and without excuse, and if prosecution was a reasonable response.

The trial continues.

**Police tried to negotiate with Caroline Lucas for two hours at fracking protest, court told**

Caroline Lucas arriving at court yesterday

Emily Walker, Chief reporter / Tuesday 25 March 2014 / News

Police tried to negotiate with protesters including MP Caroline Lucas for two hours before arresting her, a court was told.

Superintendent Jane Derrick told Brighton Magistrates’ Court that she was trying to ensure the safety of protestors and Cuadrilla staff at exploratory oil drilling site in Balcombe, on August 19 last year.

The court was told officers on the ground were trying to get the demonstrators to move from the only emergency access to the site.

She said a number of people were locked together at the entrance of the site and police liaison officers were sent in to ask them move.

Ms Derrick said: "We used a tiered response, asking people to unlock themselves, get up and to walk away from the entrance.

"We were not containing people, we were allowing them to walk away from that area."

She told the court her officers spent more than two hours trying to negotiate with the protesters sat in front of the entrance but that the information coming back to her was that the protesters wanted to remain in front of the entrance all day.

Ms Derrick said although no drilling was taking place that day there were still staff on site, and deliveries of equipment, water and food supplies were made on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, expected that day.

She also said due to the nature of the equipment being used at the Cuadrilla site, there needed to be emergency access maintained at all times.

Supt Derrick said she also believed the protesters at the climate camp had the means and equipment to cause disruption.

Ms Derrick said: "It was clear to me I should do everything I could do to facilitate a peaceful protest but the main concern was safety.

"I made it very clear to them that I was willing to negotiate and that being there all day was not acceptable and that if they continued not to comply then the likelihood was that they would be arrested."

Lucas, from Brighton; Josef Dobraszczyk, 22, from Bristol; Ruth Jarman, 50, from Hook, Hampshire; Sheila Menon, 42, from north east London; and Ruth Potts, 39, from Totnes, Devon, all deny wilful obstruction of the highway and breaching Section 14 of the Public Order Act.

The trial continues.

**Caroline Lucas: Why fracking should be banned**

Caroline Lucas: Why fracking should be banned

Monday 21 April 2014 / News

AS an MP, I’m in the privileged position of being able to make the case against fracking in Parliament.

I’ve tabled motions, championed debates, and put questions to the Prime Minister – and will continue to do so.

But the Government is ignoring the evidence, and is set on a reckless and irresponsible new dash for gas, offering the fossil fuel companies generous tax breaks as well as senior roles within Government itself.

Balcombe, in a Sussex area of natural beauty, was one of the first places in the UK to be earmarked as a potential fracking site.

Yet fracking will accelerate climate change, pollute our environment and lock us into yet more dependence on fossil fuels at precisely the time when we need to be moving in the opposite direction.

That’s why I, and many others, took part in peaceful protests outside the Cuadrilla site in August last year.

My acquittal and that of the four other co-defendants on Friday is a huge relief, but it is by no means a cause for celebration.

That will only happen when David Cameron announces an end to fracking, as has been achieved in other countries like France, and will put investment instead into cleaner, greener energy sources.

The case at Brighton Magistrates’ Court raised questions not just about fracking, but about police tactics too.

I appreciate the hugely difficult job the police have to do, and the challenges in facilitating peaceful protest, and often Sussex Police get the balance absolutely right.

However, on August 19, the day of our arrest, the police leadership clearly got it wrong.

In delivering his verdict, the judge said that the conditions imposed on people at the Balcombe protest on that day were unlawful, since the senior police officer was not authorised to issue the conditions, and they were so vague and unclear as to be meaningless.

Moreover, the policing seemed arbitrary and disproportionate.

The fact that, during the summer protests at Balcombe, of around 126 people arrested, and 114 charged, there have been only around 27 convictions, suggests that many of the arrests were unnecessary, and many cases should quite simply not have come to court at all.

There is no evidence that they were in the public interest, and a huge amount of money and resources were wasted, when both are in short supply.

The campaign against fracking will continue until the Government finally listens.

9.2 Manchester Evening News Text Data Set

**Barton Moss policing report clears officers of brutality, but GMP must improve the way it handles demonstrations**

00:01, 16 OCT 2014

BY DAN THOMPSON

Independent report finds GMP needs to improve planning and communciation to improve public confidence in the force in wake of Barton Moss anti-fracking protest

Protesters at the anti-fracking site at Barton Moss

A report into the Barton Moss anti-fracking protest has cleared police officers of brutality – but said Greater Manchester Police needs to improve how it plans for future demonstrations.

Police commissioner Tony Lloyd set up an independent panel to examine policing of protests following criticism of the force’s operation in Eccles, Salford, which included the use of aggressive tactics.

But the panel found that protesters’ claims of police brutality were ‘not substantiated’ – although it did conclude there was ‘clear evidence of many people being shoved as they exercised their democratic right to protest’.

Its report also said that, although the majority of protesters were peaceful, a small number ‘crossed the line’ and wanted to cause trouble.

The panel concluded there was a breakdown of trust between officers and the anti-fracking demonstrators – caused by high-profile incidents including ‘flaregate’, where it was alleged a protester had fired a flare at a police helicopter from the camp on Barton Moss Road.

It found that GMP’s previous success in managing previous protests had been dependent on building trusted relationships with demonstrators – but this had been absent during the Barton Moss operation.

It added that the communication between officers and the protesters was poor.

The panel has made a number of recommendations for GMP and protest groups, which said:

Police should do more to engage with protest groups in run-up to, and during, operations like Barton Moss – with a senior officer assigned to sole role of engaging them.

GMP should explore the possibility of independent mediation in cases where there has been a breakdown in trust

Protesters should consider adopting a set of principles surrounding behaviour to avoid demonstrators ‘crossing the line’

GMP should consider inviting a nominated representative from protesting groups into the police control room during operations

For controversial incidents such as ‘flaregate’, GMP should provide more supporting information to keep the public informed

Martin Miller, chair of the independent panel, said: “It was a complex and difficult operation which created a number of issues, and saw officers subjected to daily abuse as they carried out their job. We also found that some protesters were shoved and felt they were treated badly, although I want to stress that allegations of police brutality have not been substantiated.

“Although there were many things that were done right, we found that many of the issues could have been mitigated or resolved by better pre-planning and more constructive communications and engagement with the protesters and wider public.”

Panellists visited the Barton Moss site to see the policing operation first hand and reviewed social media, video footage and media coverage of the protest.

They spoke to police officers, protesters, local businesses and residents, Salford Council, iGas and members of the media.

Tony Lloyd said: “The Barton Moss protest was particularly complex and contentious and, amid the legitimate public concerns raised, it was clear that independent scrutiny of this operation was needed in order to build trust and public confidence in our police service.

“Now I’ll work with GMP and other public bodies to make sure these recommendations are put into practice.”

Sir Peter Fahy, Chief Constable of GMP, said the force accepted all the recommendations in the report.

He added: “It is crucial in all its dealings with protest that GMP is seen as impartial, policing is not a popularity contest and the police are often stuck in the middle. The policing of this protest cost GMP £1.7m, money which could not then be spent on local policing.”

The report has been presented to Mr Lloyd and Sir Peter, who will respond formally in the coming weeks.

**Man wearing pig mask and toy bobby's helmet arrested on suspicion of impersonating a police officer**

16:39, 23 MAY 2014

UPDATED 20:51, 23 MAY 2014

BY DAN THOMPSON

Steven Peers was detained in Manchester city centre while wearing the outfit to perform 'comic sketches'

Steven Peers, 46, from New Moston, is arrested on suspicion of impersonating a police officer in Manchester

A man who dressed up in a pig mask, toy bobby’s helmet and hi-vis jacket was arrested on suspicion of impersonating a police officer.

Steven Peers said he has often donned the mock outfit to perform ‘comical parodies’ ofGreater Manchester Police after becoming unhappy with how officers behaved during the Barton Moss anti-fracking protests.

He wore it around Manchester city centre while filming sketches yesterday but was stopped by an officer near Bootle Street police station.

Video of the incident shows the policeman pose questions about the outfit before arresting Mr Peers, 46, on suspicion of impersonating a police officer.

Father-of-four Mr Peers was held in custody for eight hours before being bailed until July – while the outfit was confiscated.

He said: “My reaction to being arrested was total disbelief. I was wearing a toy hat and a pig mask and was arrested for impersonating a police officer. It’s ridiculous.

“If they want to take it to court they will be a laughing stock because there is no substance to it whatsoever.”

Mr Peers, who lives in New Moston, regularly visited the anti-fracking protest at Barton Moss, in Eccles, to film the demonstration, which became known for its clashes between police and environmental campaigners.

VIEW GALLERY

He featured in the M.E.N. in February accusing an officer of lying to detain him on a‘trumped-up’ charge of refusing a breath test.

The case against him fell apart at court when prosecutors offered no evidence and the Independent Police Complaints Commission is supervising an investigation into the arrest.

Mr Peers, an electrical engineer, said he began performing skits using his comic character ‘Officer 666’ to highlight the ‘violence, corruption and bad behaviour’ which he believes has been carried out by GMP.

Dr Steven Peers

He said: “I don’t think it’s antagonistic. It’s just a parody making fun of GMP. I’ve dressed like this at Barton Moss, in front of Swinton police station and in front of the force HQ in Newton Heath. Other officers have laughed it off.”

A GMP spokesman said: “At about 4pm on Thursday 22 May 2014, a man was arrested in Manchester city centre on suspicion of impersonating a police officer.“He was released on bail until 17 July 2014 pending further inquiries.”

**Fracking campaigners welcome Lancashire move to block drilling bid**

23:55, 21 JAN 2015

UPDATED 23:55, 21 JAN 2015

BY DEAN KIRBY

Lancashire council officials recommend energy firm's proposal is rejected

The Barton Moss fracking site

Campaigners against fracking taking place in Greater Manchester have welcomed the recommendation by planning chiefs in Lancashire that an energy company be blocked from carrying out the controversial process.

Energy firm Cuadrilla wants to start exploring two sites between Preston and Blackpool for shale gas.

But a report by planning officials has now recommended that fracking should not go ahead.

Another firm, iGas, was met with large-scale protests after it moved onto Barton Moss in Eccles to see if the site would be suitable for extracting shale gas last year.

Test drilling at the site led iGas to increase its estimates of the natural gas availableunderground across the north west.

Protesters also set up camp in Davyhulme after iGas put forward plans to extract methane.

Barbara Keeley, the MP for Worsley and Eccles South, said: “I think that planning officers in Lancashire are right to recommend refusal of the planning applications on the grounds of noise and disturbance to local people.

“I raised serious concerns and objections to shale gas exploration at Barton Moss, as there were residential properties, farms and businesses close to the site.

“Too little is known about whether fracking for shale gas is safe for neighbours living near to the site or people working there. I am glad to see that a planning authority is acting in a cautious way and considering the needs of local people by recommending refusal of the application.”

Lancashire County Council’s report recommends that Cuadrilla’s application for one site, Little Plumpton, should be turned down due to concerns over noise.

It says there would be an increase in traffic at the other site, Roseacre Wood, which would impact on rural roads and reduce road safety.

But Cuadrilla’s applications for monitoring equipment to test seismic activity at both sites have been recommended for approval.

A Caudrilla spokesman said the firm was ‘disappointed’ with the council’s recommendations.

He said: “We await the councillors’ decisions on both these applications and we believe that all of the limited issues that have been raised can be resolved.”

Protesters at Barton Moss voiced fears in November over future fracking after iGas announced ‘encouraging’ results from exploratory test drilling at the site.

The results showed that Barton Moss contained similar rock types to prolific shale gas areas in the US and had a ‘high’ suitability for shale gas extraction.

Environmental group Friends of the Earth said protesters were bracing themselves for a planning application for full-scale drilling at Barton Moss.

Protesters in Dabyhulme left another camp near Barton Bridge in July after a high court ruled their stay was illegal.

They had set up camp at a site where energy firm iGas applied to extend planning permission for coal bed methane extraction.

**Fracking protester charged after police find video footage of court proceedings on YouTube**

09:39, 7 JAN 2015

UPDATED 09:54, 7 JAN 2015

BY PAUL BRITTON

Steven Peers, 47, has been charged with contempt of court over footage taken at Wigan magistrates court and at Manchester Civil Justice Centre

Dr Steven Peers

A man has been charged after video footage filmed inside court rooms was posted on YouTube.

Father-of-four Steven Peers, 47, who regularly attended anti-fracking protests at Barton Moss, Salford, has been charged with two counts of contempt of court over the footage.

Mr Peers, of Scholes Drive, Moston, is due to appear before Manchester magistrates court for an initial hearing on January 12 and remains on bail, police have confirmed.

An investigation was launched after officers discovered the footage on the video-sharing website. Two separate pieces of video footage were discovered online by police, apparently filmed inside two courts in Greater Manchester.

The first is alleged to have been filmed at Wigan magistrates court last October. The second piece of footage related to Manchester Civil Justice Centre in the city centre later the same month, where it’s alleged that a deputy district judge was recorded on film.

A ban on filming and recording proceedings in court is contained within section 41 of the Criminal Justice Act 1925 and sections 9 and 14 of the Contempt of Court Act 1981, the Ministry of Justice confirmed.

Mr Peers, an electrical engineer, was arrested at the Eccles anti-fracking site in January last year for refusing a breath test after a policeman accused him of driving to the site drunk. He responded that he had only drunk tea but was later charged. The case against him however collapsed when prosecutors offered no evidence in court.

Mr Peers was also arrested last May for impersonating a police officer after he was stopped wearing a pig mask, a high-visibility vest and a toy police helmet in Manchester city centre. That case was also dropped by Greater Manchester Police because of ‘insufficient evidence’.

Steven Peers (right) was arrested on suspicion of impersonating a police officer after wearing a pig mask. The case was later dropped.

In a statement, police said: “A man has been charged after police became aware of two videos on YouTube, apparently filmed inside two different courts in Greater Manchester. Steven Peers, 47, of Scholes Drive, Moston, has been charged with two counts of being in contempt of court. He is due to appear at Manchester and Salford magistrates’ court on January 12, 2014.”

The Crown Prosecution Service confirmed the charges were being in contempt of court by tape recording court proceedings without permission contrary to sections 9 and 14 of the Contempt of Court Act 1981.

When approached by the M.E.N, Mr Peers claimed he has been charged with uploading the footage, not taking it. He refused to comment on whether it was him who filmed inside the court rooms.

He said the police and the CPS are ‘abusing’ their powers under the Contempt of Court Act, because taking and uploading the videos did not disrupt the proceedings.

Mr Peers said: “We’re talking about uploading footage. That had no bearing on what was going on in court. That can’t be contempt. It’s nonsense.

“Just by uploading something, you’re not affecting a trial where a judge is sitting alone. A judge should be thick-skinned enough.”

Mr Peers, who fixes computers, said police raided his home and took dozens of DVDs, storage devices and PCs. He said he has lost business at the busiest time of year.

He said footage he took at Barton Moss had been taken, despite it having nothing to do with the two charges he faces.

Mr Peers added: “I’ll be wanting to see every bit of evidence they have ahead of any plea.”

Huge parts of Greater Manchester targeted for fracking after exploration licences awarded

18:08, 23 DEC 2015

UPDATED 18:14, 23 DEC 2015

BY TODD FITZGERALD

Environmental campaigners have raised fears of a ‘reckless dash for gas’ after approval was granted

Huge swathes of land in Greater Manchester could be opened up to fracking after licenses were awarded to energy giants to explore for oil and gas.

Environmental campaigners have raised fears of a ‘reckless dash for gas’ after The Oil and Gas Authority – the UK’s oil and gas regulator – revealed energy companies had been given permission to search seven ‘blocks’ across the region.

Huge chunks of Trafford, Rochdale, Salford, south Manchester, Bury, Bolton, and Wigan have been opened up for gas and oil exploration.

Licences give companies the right to explore for gas and oil, but they still need planning permission to build rigs and drill.

If searches are successful, the move could pave the way for fracking sites across the region - the controversial method of extracting shale gas or oil from the ground.

Hydraulic fracturing involves injecting water, sand and chemicals into underground rocks at high pressure.

Companies including INEOS Upstream; Hutton Energy; and OK Energy could soon set about exploring land across Greater Manchester, Lancashire, and Cheshire.

Rochdale MP Simon Danczuk said he would ‘keep a close eye’ on developments.

He added: “We are still in the early stages and there is no guarantee that anything will be found during the exploration period.

“The oil and gas industries are subject to very strict regulations and limitations as to where they can drill.”

Gas exploration has been particularly contentious in Trafford.

In October, iGas was given permission by town hall chiefs to explore potential gas reserves thousands of feet beneath the earth near the Trafford Centre and Chill Factore.

The scheme is identical to the controversial project at Barton Moss, which sparked a six-month protest by environment campaigners opposed to fracking.

The approval means IGas would be able to develop any methane it discovers in the coal bed underground.

But, like Barton Moss, if the energy company wants to extract any shale gas it finds, through fracking, it would have to make another application.

Dominic Salter

MP Simon Danczuk

Dan Jerrome, a Green Party campaigner in Trafford said the latest move to hand out licenses across the region could lead to a ‘reckless dash for gas’.

David Messina, managing director at Hutton, which will explore four blocks locally, said licenses were merely the ‘first step’ - and that wells would not be drilled for at least three years.

Tory MP for Altrincham and Sale West, Graham Brady, said shale gas could become an important energy source in the UK, reducing dependence on ‘volatile’ overseas suppliers.

He added: “The government has committed to the very highest standards of environmental monitoring and protection and these must be observed in practice.

“Any exploitation of shale gas reserves must only proceed when it can be shown to be safe and to meet proper environmental standards.”

**Gaza protest and anti-fracking demo cost Greater Manchester Police half a million pounds in overtime**

11:54, 16 JUN 2015

BY JOHN SCHEERHOUT

Joel Goodman

Police spent £500,000 on overtime to cover the Gaza and anti-fracking protests in Greater Manchester last year, new figures show.

Some £300,000 was spent on overtime for officers who policed the Gaza protest for around three weeks in August last year.

Pro-Palestine supporters began a demonstration outside Kedem, a beauty store, as it sources products from Israel, after an escalation of the bombing in Gaza.

Pro-Israel supporters then mounted a counter-demonstration and the stand off continued for around three weeks, with the police keeping the two groups apart.

Several attempts to persuade the protestors to move on failed and Kedem accused the police of failing to protect it and other businesses.

Pictures: The anti-fracking protest at Barton Moss

VIEW GALLERY

The stand-off finally came to an end after the authorities ruled it was unlawful as it had gone ‘beyond legitimate protest’.

Police also spent out £200,000 on overtime for the anti-fracking protest which lasted for about four months at Barton Moss in Salford.

Demonstrators delayed wagons arriving at the site where shale gas exploratory drillingwas taking place.

The entire operation cost GMP £1.7m although the force failed in a bid to get the Home Office to pick up the bill.

Even though the demo was over a much longer period, the overtime bill was smaller than for the Gaza demo as officers were rostered to maintain security at the site during their regular hours.

Pictures: The demonstations outside Kedem on King Street

VIEW GALLERY

The bill was part of a £2.8m overspend on overtime last year, according to figures in a report to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

About half of the cash was recovered from other organisations, for instance £900,000 for helping to police the NATO World Summit in Newport, Wales.

The overspend on overtime, however, is dwarfed by an underspend of £5.7m on wages during the period as the force slashed posts to meet swingeing Government savings targets.

Superintendent Martin Greenhalgh said: “We have a legal responsibility to facilitate protests and maintain public order and safety.”

**Greater Manchester MPs call for end to fracking ahead of meeting over possible new sites in Lancashire**

10:06, 23 JUN 2015

BY PAUL BRITTON

The statement has been signed as energy firm Cuadrilla wants to develop two new sites between Preston and Blackpool to explore for shale gas by drilling, fracking and testing the flow of gas

A Cuadrilla exploratory drilling site

Greater Manchester MPs have signed an open statement opposing fracking.

The statement, organised by the Manchester branch of Friends of the Earth, comes as councillors meet to discuss plans to frack for shale gas at a site in Lancashire.

Energy firm Cuadrilla wants to develop two new sites between Preston and Blackpool to explore for shale gas by drilling, fracking and testing the flow of gas.

A report from Lancashire County Council planning officials recommended that one of the sites - at Preston New Road near Little Plumpton - be passed subject to a number of conditions being met such as hours of working, control of noise and highway matters.

The council’s development control committee will have the final say on the matter in a decision expected at County Hall, Preston.

Eight Greater Manchester MPs - including Manchester’s Lucy Powell - signed the joint statement expressing ‘serious concerns’ about the risks that fracking poses to people’s health and the environment.

It also calls for all fracking applications to be withdrawn or refused planning permission.

The MPs include Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield), Kate Green (Stretford and Urmston), Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish), Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South), Rebecca Long-Bailey (Salford and Eccles), Michael Meacher (Oldham West and Royton) and Jeff Smith MP (Manchester Withington).

Ali Abbas, co-ordinator of Manchester Friends of the Earth, said the statement would be handed in to Lancashire’s councillors at today’s meeting. He added: “Fracking isn’t just a threat to people’s health and the local environment, it also undermines action on climate change. We urge councillors to protect residents and the environment by rejecting Cuadrilla’s plans to frack in Lancashire.”

An anti-fracking protest camp was set up last year at Barton Moss in Salford during exploratory testing work.

The go-ahead in Lancashire would enable test fracking at the site with drilling at up to four exploration wells but a separate application would be required if Cuadrilla wished to progress to commercial fracking. Committee members will also meet on Thursday and Friday to rule on plans by Cuadrilla for a similar site at Roseacre Wood, Roseacre.

The Government is pushing for the development of a shale gas industry in the UK, claiming it would create jobs and growth, reduce energy prices and cut the country’s reliance on gas imports.

**Anti-fracking demonstrators brawl with police outside Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court**

19:15, 2 SEP 2015

UPDATED 19:16, 2 SEP 2015

BY ALEX HIBBERT

Three arrested after scuffling with police outside the court building moments after activist is sentenced for assault

This is the shocking moment anti-fracking protesters clash with police as they attempt to storm Manchester and Salford Magistrates’ Court.

Video footage shows the group scuffling with officers yards from the court after some of the demonstrators staged a protest inside the building.

A number of anti-fracking activists are caught on camera tussling with officers as cries of ‘scum’ ring out, while one is pictured with a bloody face. Another eyewitness has claimed they saw police officers being assaulted during the melee.

The trouble first flared at after a group of 15 staged a protest inside the court when their fellow campaigner Vanda Gillett was handed a conditional discharge for assaulting a detention officer.

After exiting the building, just off Deansgate, the group then clashed with police after being joined by about 20 more protesters.

Three people were arrested at the scene of the incident, which happened at around 2.20pm.

Witness Luke Burdon told the M.E.N. that eight police vehicles were at the scene at one point.

He said: “Some TAU (Tactical Aid Unit) officers were chasing protesters down while others guarded the door to the court. The fighting started when protesters attempted to bum-rush the doors.

“They then carted some of the protesters off in police vans.”

Protesters at the scene would not talk to the M.E.N.

But one lawyer described how trouble flared inside the court building after the conviction of Ms. Gillett, who claimed she was assaulted by officers after being detained at Barton Moss anti-fracking protest last year.

The solicitor, who asked not to be named, said some of the group had their faces covered and one recorded video footage on a mobile phone inside the building, which is a criminal offence.

The lawyer said: “A group of around 15 men and women were protesting in the main hall area.

“The group were shouting ‘the defendant is not guilty...police are guilty’.

“Police arrived at the scene and the group were being abusive and stormed down the escalator and went outside. Officers formed a barricade at the front door to stop them from getting back in.

“More police arrived alongside tactical aid unit officers and it was a massive brawl outside.

“The group was shouting and screaming and it all ended up at the main hall near reception. Police officers were definitely assaulted outside. A couple of the group had face coverings. One was wearing a bandana and another had his hood up. One of them was filming inside the building.

“They were claiming that it was a peaceful protest, but it was anything but. Some of them were very intimidating.”

Last year Ms Gillett had complained to GMP about her arrest at the Barton Moss anti-fracking protest, and had been detained and charged over a number of offences.

A GMP spokesman said they arrested one man on suspicion of assaulting a police officer, another on suspicion of theft of police property and a woman on suspicion of assault.

**Man and woman charged following anti-fracking bust-up outside Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court**

18:42, 3 SEP 2015

BY PAUL BRITTON

No further action taken against another man who was arrested on suspicion of theft

Police outside Manchester and Salford Magistrate's Court

A man and woman have been charged after a disturbance outside Manchester and Salford Magistrates’ Court.

Trouble flared inside the court building off Deansgate after a group of 15 anti-fracking activists staged a protest inside.

It spilled outside and police were called at around 2.15pm on Wednesday. Officers made three arrests.

Gustabo Eacbarce, 34, has now been charged with assaulting a police officer. He has been bailed to appear before Manchester and Salford Magistrates’ Court on October 1.

Christine Ann Carter, 59, has been charged with a public order offence and bailed to appear before the same court on September 30.

A 24-year-old man who was arrested on suspicion of theft has been released without charge and will face no further action.

A police spokesman said: “This is in relation to an incident on Wednesday, when police were called to Crown Square to reports that a group of anti-fracking protesters causing a disturbance inside Manchester Magistrates, Court.

“Officers attended and the protesters moved their demonstration outside the court before they left.”

**Video: Salford anti-fracking demonstrations**

18:10, 27 NOV 2013

UPDATED 10:19, 7 JAN 2014

BY JOHN SUTTON

Placards proclaiming 'keep fracking out of the UK' were being held aloft by the protesters, with reports suggesting as many as 30 were at the site today.

Police have made arrests on the second day of an 'anti-fracking' demonstration in Irlam, Salford.

A large group of protesters are gathering at the Barton Moss site.

Images from the scene show the group attempting to block the arrival of drilling equipment.

One man was seen being held by police face down on the floor.

A convoy of lorries began to arrive at the site at 11.30am this morning, flanked by Greater Manchester Police Tactical Aid Unit vans.

It is understood that police moved in as protesters attempted to block the entry route to the controversial site.

Placards proclaiming 'keep fracking out of the UK' were being held aloft by the protesters, with reports suggesting as many as 30 were at the site today.

Fracking protestors clashed with police as more heavy machinery was brought onto Barton Moss.

**Video: Barton Moss Anti-fracking protesters taking part in demonstration march**

13:55, 12 JAN 2014

UPDATED 13:57, 12 JAN 2014

BY DENISE EVANS

Hundreds of protesters are campaigning against heavy machinery being moved in for test drilling at the Salford site

Trade union anti-fracking protest at Barton Moss

Anti-fracking protesters are currently embarking on an anti-fracking demonstration atBarton Moss.

Hundreds of protesters are campaigning against heavy machinery being moved in for test drilling at the Salford site.

The protest march began at AJ Bell Stadium at 1.30pm and will finish at the site on Barton Moss Road.

Watch the video below as the protesters march towards the Barton Moss site.

PLEASE NOTE: There may be swearing and inappropriate language in this video

**Anti-fracking campaigners chain themselves to petrol pumps**

16:24, 18 JAN 2014

UPDATED 16:25, 18 JAN 2014

BY YAKUB QURESHI

Two protesters in protective clothing used a padlock to secure themselves to the self-service gauge at the Total Garage on Rishton Lane this morning.

Campaigners in protective clothing used a padlock to secure themselves to a petrol pump at the Total Garage on Rishton Lane, Bolton

Four people have been arrested after anti-fracking protesters chained themselves to pumps at a petrol station in Bolton.

Campaigners in protective clothing used a padlock and glue to secure themselves to the self-service gauge at the Total Garage on Rishton Lane this morning.

Police were called to the scene, south of the town centre, just after 11am today.

The unknown activists who took part in the 'lock on' are believed to be part of a wider campaign against test drilling at Barton Moss.

Campaigners in protective clothing used a padlock to secure themselves to a petrol pump at the Total Garage on Rishton Lane, Bolton

The Frack Off group reported that around 40 campaigners had gathered around the site and posted pictures on social media.

However, Greater Manchester Police said around 'a dozen people' had attended the stunt and were now in the process of dispersing.

Campaigners in protective clothing used a padlock to secure themselves to a petrol pump at the Total Garage on Rishton Lane, Bolton

A spokeswoman said: "At about 11.20am on Saturday 18 January 2014, police were called to the Rishton Lane service station in Bolton to reports of a disturbance.

"Officers attended to find four people had glued their hands to the petrol pumps, as a precaution the pumps were isolated.

"They have been removed by specialist officers.

"Two men have been arrested for criminal damage and a man and a woman have been arrested for criminal damage and criminal trespass.

They all remain in police custody for questioning."

**Anti-fracking protests: Number of arrests reaches 100**

13:49, 29 JAN 2014

UPDATED 13:50, 29 JAN 2014

BY LEE SWETTENHAM

Campaigners have been camping out at the site for the past three months, protesting against drilling being carried out by iGas to explore the potential reserves of shale gas below the surface of the earth.

Vince Cole

More than 100 people have now been arrested during anti-fracking protests at Barton Moss .

Campaigners have been camping out at the site for the past three months, protesting against drilling being carried out by iGas to explore the potential reserves of shale gas below the surface of the earth.

The majority of those arrested are from outside the Greater Manchester area and claim they are defending the land from environmental damage by trying to stop lorries getting through.

Residents at 'Camp Barton' say they have been welcomed by the local community.

But police, who are making fresh arrests on an almost daily basis, claim it is a far from peaceful protest.

Hundreds of fracking protesters march to Barton Moss protest camp in solidarity

Video: Inside the Barton Moss Anti-fracking camp

Chief Supt Mark Roberts, from Greater Manchester Police, said: "At the start of this protest the majority of protesters were peaceful and law-abiding but over the past couple of weeks local residents and officers have seen a distinct change to this.

"It now seems that the majority of people who are arriving at the site are not there to protest against fracking but to disrupt and intimidate the community and antagonise police.

"We have seen offences of assaults, damage, harassment of residents and workers, a flare fired at the police helicopter and threats to kill.

"I attended a residents' meeting and people were close to tears.

"Locals, who initially supported the protesters, have been approached by protesters in balaclavas which has been extremely intimidating.

"We have seen a huge increase in the calls from that area and this is continuing."

Chief Supt Roberts said his officers regularly received verbal abuse and had even been spat at.

Protestors had also started jumping in front of or on top of moving lorries, he said.

He added: "It is not up to GMP who operates on this land and who has access to it - we are simply there to police it to ensure that everyone remains safe.

"It is only a matter of time before someone is seriously injured."

Sasha James Conway, spokesman for 'Camp Barton', said the group would remain for as long as iGas worked on the site.

"We're not protesters, we're protectors" he said.

**'Unbelievably stupid' flare attack on police helicopter near anti-fracking protest camp**

14:23, 6 JAN 2014

UPDATED 10:15, 7 JAN 2014

BY PETE BAINBRIDGE

Officers are searching the camp after the device was shot into the path of the aircraft as it came in to land at Barton Airfield in Eccles in the early hours of Saturday. Anti-fracking protesters have denied the flare came from the camp.

125SHARES

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Vince Cole

A flare was fired at the force helicopter from the anti-fracking protest camp in Barton Moss, police suspect.

Officers are searching the camp after the device was shot into the path of the aircraft as it came in to land at Barton Airfield in Eccles in the early hours of Saturday.

The aircrew said that the flare appeared to come from the site of the nearby demonstration at around 12.15am.

A senior officer branded it “an unbelievably stupid act of criminality”.

Environmental campaigners set up outside Barton Moss in early December after it became a test site for fracking, the controversial extraction process. Development firm iGas was granted permission from Salford town hall for exploratory drilling.

Officers descended on the protest camp on Barton Moss Road on Monday, after being granted a search warrant by magistrates.

See Sean Hansford's pictures of police on the site today below ...

Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts said: "This is was an unbelievably stupid act of criminality which was extremely dangerous, not only for the police helicopter, but all other aircraft that use the nearby Barton airfields and the wider public.

"Had this flare caused an emergency situation it would not only have been catastrophic for the aircraft and its crew but potentially for numerous homes near the airfield, the M62 motorway and a children's residential facility.

"The protest camp appears to be a tight knit group who seem to be continually filming anything occurring on Barton Moss Road.

"If one of the protesters is responsible, I suspect their identity will be known to others and I would expect those reasonable members of the anti-fracking campaign to provide any information they have to the police.

"An attack on the police of this nature has nothing whatsoever to do with whether or not exploratory drilling is right or wrong. Whilst I recognise the genuine concerns of many of the protesters in relation to exploratory drilling, it is obvious that there is also an element of regular protesters from outside the Greater Manchester area who seem more interested in seeking confrontation with the police.

"GMP continue to balance facilitating peaceful protest with the rights of others to go about their lawful business, whilst minimising disruption to the local community and businesses.

"Because of the way the camp is set up we have to systematically search the site under a warrant issued by a local court.

"We will attempt to facilitate this through dialogue with protesters but we have to take all reasonable steps to ensure there is no repeat of this action near to the airfield and that we identify those responsible.

"We have therefore had no option but to carry out this action.

"We are very grateful to the residents of nearby communities, who are well aware of the need for safety at the airfield, for their ongoing patience with regards to this matter."

Protestors have denied that the flare came from the camp.

Rachel Thompson from Frack Free Greater Manchester said: "We refute this claim. Greater Manchester Police have refused to show any evidence of this alleged incident.

"The behaviour of Greater Manchester Police has been outrageous throughout this whole campaign. In our eyes this is just another aggressive tactic aimed at isolating the camp from the community and to put them in a bad light."

Sacha Conway, one of the demonstrators, said: "No flare was fired from this camp on Saturday or any other day. We would condemn any such action as aggressive, violent and in breach of our very strict safe spaces policy.

"We are peaceful people who wish to stop the destruction of this land by IGas and all of the other fracking companies."

Alice Freeman, 23, said: “They (the police) have warrants and have been searching all of our tents looking for evidence.

“They rifled through all all of our stuff out of our tents and threw all our stuff including bedding and stuff like that it into the road.

“They seem to have no regard for us or our stuff.

“They say it is because of someone letting off a flare but I think that's just an excuse.

“It shows you what sort of state we live in.

“We don't know anything about any flare.

“No one from this camp would do something like that.

“We are a peaceful camp.

“I hope someone is calculating how much all this is costing.

“We're angry and disappointed at the reaction but we won't give up.

“This will only deepen our cause.”

Government scientists have ruled the fracking process safe, but it continues to spark protest from environmentalists.

Several people have been arrested for blocking the site's entrance since the protest camp was formed in early December. Demonstrators have been filmed chaining themselves to trucks and super-glueing themselves to railings.

**Anti-fracking protesters arrested after gluing themselves into car blocking Salford site**

11:14, 7 JAN 2014

UPDATED 11:20, 7 JAN 2014

BY EMILY HEWARD

Two women fixed themselves to a concrete barrel wedged through a hole in bottom of the vehicle this morning.

Anti-fracking protestors superglued inside a car at Barton Moss.

Two anti-fracking protesters have been arrested after supergluing themselves inside a car to blockade the entrance to the Barton Moss drilling site.

The women, aged around 25 and 45 and from Lancaster, fixed themselves to a barrel of concrete wedged through a hole cut in the bottom of the blue Ford escort.

It was parked outside the only entrance to the IGas site from 7.30am today, stopping site traffic from entering or leaving.

The women were both removed by 10am and the car was towed away half an hour later.

GMP said the pair had been arrested for wilful obstruction of a public highway.

A statement released by one of women said: "I have taken action today because from water contamination to air pollution and huge amounts of waste, there are so many problems with fracking.

"One third of the workforce comes directly from the US and most of the rest will be contracted in from other parts of the UK, meaning practically no jobs for local people."

Kate Nye Photography

Anti-fracking protestors superglued inside a car at Barton Moss

Fellow campaigner Mandy Roundhouse, 30, said being arrested was a risk the pair had been prepared to take.

"It's not a decision they have taken lightly but they have done letter-writing, they have done going on marches, they have tried all the other means and nothing is working so they have had to resort to this," she said.

GMP said it had an extraction team on standby after similar incidents at the site, such as when one woman superglued herself to the site gates last week.

"GMP continue to balance facilitating peaceful protest with the rights of others to go about their lawful business, whilst minimising disruption to the local community and businesses," he said.

Policing the Barton Moss fracking site has cost the taxpayer £300,000

'Unbelievably stupid' flare attack on police helicopter near anti-fracking protest camp

Barton Moss became a test site for the controversial extraction process after development firm IGas was granted permission from Salford town hall for exploratory drilling.

Government scientists have ruled the process safe but environmental campaigners, who set up camp at the site in early December, have branded it a "toxic nightmare".

Simone Jones, another anti-fracking protester at the site, said: "The US has clearly demonstrated fracking is dangerous, destructive and devastates communities.

"Despite regulation this will also be the case in the UK. Only one well has been drilled and fracked here and it caused earthquakes that damaged the well so gas and chemicals could leak out.

"This was not reported to the Health and Safety executive for six months. We need clean, safe, affordable energy which can be achieved by renewables such as wind and solar owned by local communities."

An IGas spokeswoman said: "We recognise the right to peaceful protest, however we do not condone any illegal activity, or anything that impacts the right of local residents to go about their daily lives and work.

"Our priority is to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the residents and businesses of Barton Moss Road.

"We have received all the necessary permissions to drill a vertical exploration well to take and analyse rock samples, and remain confident we will complete our programme as planned.”

**Anti-fracking protesters set-up camp outside Swinton police station**

21:51, 9 JAN 2014

UPDATED 21:55, 9 JAN 2014

BY AMY GLENDINNING

They're protesting after two men, protesting against machinery being taken to the Salford site, were arrested for breaching the public highway earlier today.

Anti-fracking protesters have set up camp outside Swinton Police Station after two of their group were arrested this afternoon at Barton Moss.

Two men, protesting against machinery being taken to the Salford site, were arrested for breaching the public highway earlier today.

The pair are understood to have refused bail as a protest against being arrested and have been kept inside the police station on Chorley Road.

This evening up to 20 anti-fracking protesters left their camp at Barton Moss and set up outside Swinton Police Station, calling for their release.

One protester, who gave his name as Dash Chlouk and said he had been at the anti-fracking camp for around two months, said: "These men have refused bail because the do not believe they have committed a crime.

"It also means they will get to see a Magistrate quicker."

**Police watchdog to re-investigate arrest of anti-fracking protester after GMP clears officers of wrongdoing**

09:00, 11 OCT 2014

BY DAN THOMPSON

The IPCC says it has 'concerns about the findings reached by the investigating officer'

y Lambert

Steven Peers was arrested during the anti-fracking protests at Barton Moss

The police watchdog is to re-investigate the arrest of a man in the Barton Moss anti-fracking protests – after an internal GMP investigation cleared officers of wrongdoing.

Steven Peers lodged a complaint against Greater Manchester Police in February, claiming video footage showed an officer lying to detain him on ‘trumped up’ charges.

He was filming the protest in Eccles, Salford, when he was arrested for refusing a breath test after a policeman accused him of driving to the site drunk.

Mr Peers, from New Moston, was charged but the case collapsed at court when prosecutors offered no evidence.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) asked the force to investigate the arrest, under the supervision of the IPCC counter corruption team, after footage of the incident appeared on the M.E.N. website.

We can reveal GMP’s investigating officer, Det Insp Mark Radford, did not uphold Mr Peers’ complaint – finding that the policemen involved in the incident had reasonable beliefs that their actions were correct.

But the IPCC has now decided to step to investigate the matter independently.

IPCC caseworker Philip Harrison, in a letter to Mr Peers, said: “I have concerns about the findings reached by the investigating officer.

“It is unclear on what basis the investigating officer considers the officer’s belief to be reasonable. It is my opinion that the findings reached by the investigating officer are not supported by the evidence and are therefore not appropriate.”

He adds: “In light of this, it has been decided that we will re-investigate your complaint as an independent investigation. This gives us full control over the investigation and the final outcome.”

Video that Mr Peers took of his arrest appears to show him being pushed to the floor by one officer as he films a protester being detained.

A second policeman, Inspector David Kehoe, then attempts to lead Mr Peers away from the scene on Barton Moss Road before accusing him of drinking and driving to the protest site.

Inspector David Kehoe

Mr Peers denies he has drunk alcohol, saying: “No I’ve not. I’ve had tea.”

But moments later, as more officers gather round, Insp Kehoe says: “You’ve had a drink this morning. Where’s your car... You’ve just said to me you’ve had two drinks.”

Mr Peers, an electrical engineer, told the M.E.N. he still plans to bring a civil claim against GMP for wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and assault once the IPCC investigation is complete.

He said he thought the findings of GMP’s original probe were ‘scandalous’.

Father-of-four Mr Peers, 46, added: “That’s the standard stage one of the corporate complaints process – investigate themselves and then find themselves not guilty.

“I welcome the IPCC overturning their fraudulent attempt at an investigation.”

But Mr Peers added he believed the IPCC was an ‘illusion’ set up to try to restore faith in the police complaints process – and it still amounted to police investigating themselves because of the number of ex-police officers working for the watchdog.

He said: “You can’t get a fair hearing in this country.”

A spokesman for GMP said it would not be appropriate to comment on the case while the IPCC investigation was on-going.

Fracking protester cleared of obstructing police after court rules GMP got the law wrong

13:11, 7 OCT 2014

UPDATED 15:20, 7 OCT 2014

BY CHRIS OSUH

Garry Henesy's conviction quashed as Manchester Crown Court says inspector was given incorrect legal advice

Garry Henesy

An anti-fracking protester convicted of obstructing police after chaining his neck to a bus has had his conviction dramatically quashed.

An appeal panel ruled Greater Manchester Police got the law wrong when they arrested activist Garry Henesy, 35, outside Barton Moss, Eccles a week before Christmas.

Mr Henesy had attached himself by the neck to a door handle inside an orange single-decker parked outside the entrance of the Barton Moss Road site in protest at energy company IGas’ test drilling for shale gas, and refused to release himself when officers entered the vehicle.

The Barton Moss fracking site

The makeshift blockade led to works vehicles queuing as they were prevented from getting in.

Police arrested Mr Henesy on the basis that his refusal to unlock himself meant he was obstructing their efforts to safely move the bus - which officers believed was ‘obstructing a highway’. Mr Henesy was later charged and convicted in his absence.

However, it later emerged that Barton Moss Road is actually a private road, which means police had no duty to move the bus on. A Manchester Crown Court appeal of conviction heard the inspector tasked with moving the bus on had been given incorrect legal advice.

Richard Brigden, defending Mr Henesy, said: “There’s no duty in law to remove an obstruction, under the Highways Act, on a private road. Would you not think it an absolute farce for an officer to get the law wrong, and you then to be charged with obstructing him, because you ignored his erroneous order?”

Garry Henesy (second from the right) with his supporters outside Manchester Crown Court

Ruling there was ‘no case to answer’ and quashing the conviction, Recorder Brian Cummmings QC said: “The whole police approach was based on the belief that the road in question was a highway - unfortunately, from the point view of the police, it has now been established that Barton Moss Road, being a private road, was not and is not a highway.”

Mr Henesy, from Brighton, was one of over thirty people protesting on and around the bus - including others on the roof and chained to the underside.

Speaking after the case, he said: “I knew the police were out of their jurisdiction, and didn’t really feel the need to acknowledge them when they came onto the bus, because I believed what we were doing was right.

Fracking is very dangerous for the environment, and this case exposes how police are being used in protecting this industry.”

GMP declined to comment when approached by the MEN.

**Environmental groups voice fracking fears after 'encouraging results' from Barton Moss drilling**

20:00, 4 NOV 2014

BY RICHARD WHEATSTONE

A report by iGas shows tests at the Eccles site earlier this year are 'encouraging in respect of the shale potential of the area'

Joel Goodman

Anti-fracking protesters at Barton Moss earlier this year

Protesters have voiced fears over future fracking at Barton Moss after energy firm iGas announced ‘encouraging’ results from exploratory test drilling at the site.

iGas Energy was met with large-scale protests as it moved onto Barton Moss in Eccles to see if the site would be suitable for the extraction of shale gas earlier this year.

Results of test drilling at the site show Barton Moss contained similar rock types to prolific shale gas areas in the US and had a ‘high’ suitability for shale gas extraction.

The results have led the firm to increase its estimates of natural gas available underground across the north west.

Environmental group Friends of the Earth said protesters would now be bracing themselves for a planning application for full-scale drilling at Barton Moss.

North West campaigner Helen Rimmer said: “These shale gas results will ring alarm bells in the local community who last winter showed huge opposition to IGas drilling at Barton Moss.

“Fracking for shale gas is high risk for communities, the environment and the climate and Salford Council must listen to the concerns of residents and reject any application to frack.”

Opponents have several issues about the fracking process, including concerns it can lead to the contamination of water supplies with cancer-causing chemicals.

But a Public Health England report stated it believed fracking would be a low risk to safety if properly operated and regulated.

iGas says fracking is safe and will bring 3,500 jobs and £10bn to the north west economy.

Following the release of the report, iGas CEO Andrew Austin said the results showed the economic viability of drilling in the area.

He said: “The results of the well are encouraging in respect of the shale potential of the area.

“I am also pleased to announce the revised GIIP (Gas Initially In Place) numbers has narrowed the range and increased the overall potential (of gas volumes).”

Hundreds of protestors set up camp in the area over several months earlier this year in a bid to disrupt the test drilling.

The campaign also triggered complaints from protectors over Greater Manchester Police’s handling of the protest site. An independent report cleared police over claims of brutality.

**Fracking protester lodges formal complaint, says police acted 'like a pack of wolves'**

20:04, 20 FEB 2014

UPDATED 17:24, 21 FEB 2014

BY DAN THOMPSON

The 37-year-old claimed officers acted like ‘a pack of wolves’ when detaining her on suspicion of a public order offence

Vanda Gillett

A mother-of-five has made a formal complaint about Greater Manchester Police claiming she was assaulted by officers during the Barton Moss anti-fracking protest.

Vanda Gillett said she was left injured on the floor for more than 45 minutes waiting for an ambulance to arrive after she was hurt during her arrest at the site in Eccles , Salford .

The 37-year-old claimed officers acted like ‘a pack of wolves’ when detaining her on suspicion of a public order offence – injuring her arms and ‘strangling’ her with her coat.

Vanda, who lives in north Manchester, told how she was about to film a protester on top of a lorry when an officer pushed her out the way. She said she swore at the policeman – causing officers to ‘charge’ at her.

One video of her arrest shows her screaming ‘I can’t breath’ before going into spasm on the floor.

Separate footage shows her lying on the floor covered by a sheet as a police liaison officer says: “She can’t feel her back or her hips.”

According to eye-witness Colin Gong, 49, protesters believed police had called an ambulance for Vanda shortly after her arrest just after midday on Saturday. But he said when one of the group called to check where the ambulance was, she was told none had been requested.

A spokeswoman for the North West Ambulance Service said they were called at 12.43pm and arrived on site at Barton Moss Road at 12.54pm following reports of an ‘unwell female’. Vanda was taken to Salford Royal Hospital and discharged later that day after treatment.

She said: “It was shocking. There was no need to do what they did. One of the officers said to me, ‘I hope that hurt’. That’s not good policing.

“Apparently I went into spasm because I had trapped a nerve and I still have bruises on my arms from the police.”

Vanda was de-arrested at hospital but said she was told she would be summonsed to court to face charges.

She added she made a formal complaint about the incident at Swinton police station on Tuesday.

Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts said: “If people have issues with the way Barton Moss is being policed then I would encourage them to make a formal complaint so we can investigate them properly and, if we need to take action, we will do that.”

Campaigners have been camping at Barton Moss since late November, protesting against drilling being carried out by IGas to explore the potential reserves of shale gas.

The process to extract the gas, known as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, involves blasting a fluid mixed with chemicals into the earth - and protesters say it runs the risk of poisoning water supplies

The campaigners face being evicted from the camp after landowner Peel issued legal proceedings against them on grounds of trespass. A hearing will take place at Manchester County Court today.

**Police watchdog to investigate arrest of anti-fracking protester**

15:17, 21 FEB 2014

BY NEAL KEELING

A police watchdog is to investigate the arrest of a man at an anti-fracking camp

Sgt David Kehoe, left, and Dr Steven Peers

A police watchdog has ruled the arrest of a man at an anti-fracking camp should be investigated.

Dr Steven Peers is planning to sue Greater Manchester Police, claiming video footage shows an officer lying to detain him on ‘trumped up’ charges.

He was filming a demonstration at Barton Moss in Salford and arrested for refusing a breath test after the policeman accused him of driving to the site drunk.

He was charged but the case collapsed at court when prosecutors offered no evidence.

Now the Independent Police Complaints Commission has decided the incident warrants an investigation.

Anti-fracking protester to sue police over 'trumped-up' drink arrest caught on video

A spokesman for the IPCC said: “The IPCC made inquiries with GMP after footage of the arrest of Dr Peers appeared in the media. GMP then referred the matter to us.

“Following an assessment we have asked GMP to carry out that investigation which will be supervised by the IPCC’s counter corruption team.

“The IPCC will agree the terms of reference and need to be satisfied the investigation meets those terms before it is signed off.”

A video that Dr Peers took of his arrest appears to show him being pushed to the floor by one officer as he films a protester being detained.

A second policeman, Sgt David Kehoe, then attempts to lead Dr Peers away from the scene on Barton Moss Road before accusing him of drinking and driving to the protest site.

Hacienda DJ to play free gig in support of Barton Moss anti-fracking protesters

Fracking protestor lodges formal complaint, says police acted 'like a pack of wolves'

Dr Peers denies he has drunk alcohol, saying: “No I’ve not. I’ve had tea.”

But moments later, as more officers gather round, Sgt Kehoe says: “You’ve had a drink this morning. Where’s your car...You’ve just said to me you’ve had two drinks.”

The policeman then asks two other officers to breathalyse Dr Peers, who refuses to consent to the test, saying he is a pedestrian on a public footpath.

Father-of-four Dr Peers was then arrested and charged with failing to provide a specimen of breath but the Crown Prosecution Service decided there was insufficient evidence for a conviction so withdrew the case at the first hearing at Manchester and Salford Magistrates’ Court.

**Girl, 15, charged with obstructing police officer at Barton Moss anti-fracking site**

11:45, 22 FEB 2014

UPDATED 14:30, 22 FEB 2014

BY WAYNE ANKERS

The girl, understood to be a schoolgirl from Cadishead, was arrested during a protest

Tankers leaving the site passing the protest camp at Barton Moss

A 15-year-old girl has been charged with obstructing a police officer at the Barton Mossanti-fracking protest camp

The girl, understood to be a schoolgirl from Cadishead , was arrested during a protest on Friday afternoon.

She was taken to Swinton Police station and last night charged with obstructing the officer.

It is understood that she had been part of a slow-moving protest in front of a wagon leaving the site.

A GMP spokesman confirmed that the girl had been charged with “obstructing and/or disrupting a person engaged in lawful activity.”The arrest came on the day a court hearing was due to be held to evict protesters from the site.

Corporate giant Peel Investments had applied for possession of its land at Barton Moss where around 60 protesters have set up camp.

The land is being leased to IGas, the firm carrying out exploratory drilling to see if gas extraction by fracking can be done there.

But since November anti-fracking groups have gathered in protest, disrupting work being done at the site with police making a series of arrests for public order offences.

Police say patrolling the site has cost taxpayers £700,000 to date.

Peel, a giant real estate company, served notice to the protesters, handing out letters at the camp, on Tuesday saying they were going to the High Court in Manchester in a bid to have them removed for trespass once and for all.

But lawyers working for free for the protesters successfully argued the case should be adjourned until March 6 so they can prepare a defence case.

**Most fracking protesters are there to 'intimidate the local community' and 'antagonise' the force, police claim**

08:25, 23 JAN 2014

UPDATED 16:10, 23 JAN 2014

BY MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS

Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts says that that peaceful protests become intimidating while campaigners claim the force is out of control

The majority of people arriving at a long-running anti-fracking protest are there to "disrupt and intimidate" the local community and "antagonise police", a police chief said today.

More than 80 people have been arrested at a drilling site in Barton Moss on the outskirts of Salford, Greater Manchester, with the figure rising "with each day of deliveries", police said.

Of the 82 people held, 62 are from outside the Greater Manchester area and many are from the south of England, according to Greater Manchester Police (GMP).

A number of those detained had been arrested previously at Barton Moss or other protest sites, the force said.

Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts said: "At the start of this protest the majority of protesters were peaceful and law-abiding but over the past couple of weeks local residents and officers have seen a distinct change to this.

"It now seems that the majority of people who are arriving at the site are not there to protest against fracking but are there to disrupt and intimidate the local community and to antagonise police."

Mr Roberts spoke out after reports emerged of claims by a disabled man that he was left 'bruised, aching and with a possible cracked rib' after being arrested at the Barton Moss fracking site.

Sean Christopher O'Donnell, 44, says he was protesting peacefully at the camp in Salford when police officers violently shoved him to the ground and kicked him repeatedly.

Video footage of the alleged assault, which was filmed by Mr O'Donnell himself, shows him shouting at the police officer. The video then goes black as he puts the phone in his pocket.

Sarah Carmichael from campaign group Frack Free Greater Manchester said she believed Greater Manchester Police were out of control.

"They shout and scream in people's ears and we have seen an 82-year-old woman forcibly removed from the protest on numerous occasions. They even threw another disabled man down a hill so they could snatch arrest a pregnant woman.

"I have witnessed them arrest people for no reason at all. Before IGas arrived here I always believed we could trust our police but Greater Manchester Police are absolutely out of control."

Police say they are aware of the footage relating to the arrest and the issue has now been passed to the Professional Standards Branch.

Mr Roberts's statement goes on to say that the force had recorded offences of assault, damage, harassment of residents and workers, a flare fired at the police helicopter and threats to kill.

"I attended a residents' meeting last week and people there were close to tears and have had enough of this daily disruption to their lives," he continued.

"Locals, who initially supported the protesters, out walking their dogs and driving down Barton Moss Road have been approached by protesters in balaclavas and have been questioned by them, which has been extremely intimidating.

"We have seen a huge increase in the calls to police from that area and this is continuing.

"Officers are verbally abused on a daily basis, one has even been spat at and another officer required stitches to his hand after trying to get a protester down from a fence.

"The police are there to do a job and that job is to facilitate peaceful protest and to balance the needs of all parties, the residents who live there, businesses who operate from there and the protesters themselves."

Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts

Since November around 60 tents and caravans have sprung up along the farm track leading to the site, between Barton Aerodrome and the M62.

Police have been called on a number of occasions and made arrests as protesters have attempted to stop lorries entering by erecting blockades such as a giant wind turbine blade and a bus.

Environmentalists claim there is indisputable evidence that fracking causes air and water pollution and leads to earth tremors. The Government and industry say it is safe and will create jobs.

Mr Roberts said police were at the protest "to ensure that everyone remains safe" and it was not up to GMP "who operates on this land and who has access to it".

He added: "We are increasingly seeing protesters trying to jump in front of HGVs or jump down from trees on top of moving lorries - it is only a matter of time before someone is seriously injured if they continue to act in a reckless manner.

"We are working very closely with many partner agencies to try and resolve this emerging threat and issue to try and reassure the local residents who feel intimidated in their own homes from people who have travelled from all parts of the country to set up camp in Barton Moss."

**Teenage girl held and charged at anti-fracking demo should never have been arrested, say family – with video**

17:36, 23 FEB 2014

UPDATED 17:43, 23 FEB 2014

BY EMMA FLANAGAN

Saffron Hughes, from Cadishead, Salford, was with her mum Karon and step-grandma Elaine taking part in a march on Barton Moss Lane on Friday afternoon when she was arrested

Fifteen year old Saffron Hughes with mum Karon Callaghan, and right, footage of her at Barton Moss

The family of a 15-year-old girl charged with obstructing a police officer at the BartonMoss anti-fracking protest camp has said she should never have been arrested.

Saffron Hughes, from Cadishead, Salford, was with her mum Karon and step-grandma Elaine taking part in a march on Barton Moss Lane on Friday afternoon when she was arrested.

Her mum and step-dad say the schoolgirl, who protesters believe was wrongfully arrested, was taken into police custody without an accompanying adult.

Saffron, a pupil at Culcheth High School in Warrington, said: “The police pointed at me just before I got arrested, we were all mingled in between the protesters and the police.

“I just wanted to show my support and that fracking isn’t safe and we need some young local people to show support.

“All I did was walk in front of the police officers and try to help the old woman next to me.”

Saffron’s mum Karon Callaghan, who was also at the protest, became separated from her daughter in the protest.

Karon, 50, said: “It’s disgusting. I’m still in shock. It’s been really distressing for us all. I’m overwhelmed by it all if I’m honest.”

Saffron says after her arrest she was locked in the police van for around 15 minutes away from the site, near Salford City Stadium, before being taken to the police station.

Frank Roberts, Saffron’s step-father said: “When Karon [Saffron’s mother] arrived the police said she was not an appropriate adult and wouldn’t let her see Saffron. Apparently being at the protest meant she was not suitable to accompany her.

“She should never have been arrested. She was not doing anything wrong.”

Video footage has emerged which shows Saffron marching in front of police, linking arms with an elderly protester to offer her support, before suddenly being arrested.

Sean Wilton

Fifteen year old Saffron Hughes with mum Karon Callaghan

Saffron’s family said she was held by police for six hours. She has been released but her bail conditions say she can not return to the Barton Moss site and she can only travel down the A57, if she does not stop.

Saffron said: “I’m not allowed to stop on the A57, how am I supposed to go and see my Dad? Am I going to get arrested if we get stuck in traffic?”

Steve Spy, a protester who filmed the event said: “She was singled out. The police don’t like children or the elderly being up there because they can’t use their intimidation tactics. Anyone they can’t push around they remove.”

Greater Manchester Police confirmed a 15-year-old girl has been charged with ‘obstructing and/or disrupting a person engaged in lawful activity’.

A spokesman said if the family are not happy with the arrest they should make a formal complaint which would be investigated.

Saffron is due to appear in Manchester Magistrates Court on March 7.

**Police officer hurt as Barton Moss protesters lock-on to concrete drum filled with barbed wire and broken glass**

09:54, 25 FEB 2014

UPDATED 14:11, 25 FEB 2014

BY EMMA FLANAGAN

Officers say the drum was created by using a form of porous sand, and an officer has received a minor injury trying to free them

Barton Moss Community Protection Camp

Protesters locked on to a concrete blockade filled with barbed wire and broken glass at Barton Moss Lane

A police officer has been injured trying to arrest protesters who had locked themselves to a concrete drum filled with barbed wire and broken glass.

Officers say the drum was created by using a form of porous sand, and an officer has received a minor injury trying to free them.

They were called to the site shortly before 8am after reports a female and male protester were obstructing Barton Moss Lane.

READ: See all our coverage on fracking in one place

It took police almost two hours to free both protesters who were blocking the entrance to the site where iGas are carrying out exploratory drilling.

Barton Moss Community Protection Camp

Protesters locked on to a concrete blockade filled with barbed wire and broken glass at Barton Moss Lane

Both people have been arrested for assault and aggravated trespass. It is thought both are in their early twenties but they have refused to give their details to the police.

The protesters fear drilling could lead to the discovery of shale gas, which may mean fracking starts on site.

A GMP spokesperson said: “Our lock-on teams have worked to free the two protesters. A police officer has sustained an injury to his finger due to the contents of the drum the protesters were locked-on to.”

More than 30 people gathered at the site, including protesters and local residents to watch the protest.

Alina Friedman, 23, from Fallowfield, who is living on the site spoke to us while police were on the scene.

She said: “The police are drilling through the concrete blockade so the protesters will be free soon. But we are showing that IGas is not wanted. Local residents don’t want it, it is unsafe.”

Barton Moss Community Protection Camp

Protesters locked on to a concrete blockade filled with barbed wire and broken glass at Barton Moss Lane

**Anti-fracking protester to sue police over 'trumped-up' drink arrest caught on video**

16:32, 5 FEB 2014

UPDATED 11:39, 7 FEB 2014

BY DAN THOMPSON

Dr Steven Peers, who was filming the demonstration at Barton Moss in Salford, was arrested for refusing a breath test after the policeman accused him of driving to the site drunk

Sgt David Kehoe, left, and Dr Steven Peers

A man arrested during an anti-fracking protest plans to sue Greater Manchester Police - claiming video footage shows an officer lying to detain him on 'trumped-up' charges.

Dr Steven Peers, who was filming the demonstration at Barton Moss in Salford, was arrested for refusing a breath test after the policeman accused him of driving to the site drunk.

He was later charged by GMP but the case fell apart at court when prosecutors offered no evidence.

Watch the clip here (full clip lower down the article)

CLICK TO PLAY

A video that Dr Peers took of his arrest appears to show him being pushed to the floor by one officer as he films a protester being detained.

A second policeman, Sgt David Kehoe, then attempts to lead Dr Peers away from the scene on Barton Moss Road before accusing him of drinking and driving to the protest site.

Dr Peers denies he has drunk alcohol, saying: "No I've not. I've had tea."

But moments later, as more officers gather round, Sgt Kehoe says: "You've had a drink this morning. Where's your car...You've just said to me you've had two drinks."

The policeman then asks two other officers to breathalyse Dr Peers, who refuses to consent to the test, saying he is a pedestrian on a public footpath.

Father-of-four Dr Peers was then arrested and charged with failing to provide a specimen of breath but the Crown Prosecution Service decided there was insufficient evidence for a conviction so withdrew the case at the first hearing at Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court.

Watch the full video as it was uploaded to YouTube by the protesters here.

Dr Peers, an electrical engineer with a doctorate in metaphysical sciences, told the M.E.N. he now plans to bring a civil claim against GMP for wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and assault.

The 46-year-old, who lives in New Moston, has made a formal complaint to GMP about the incident and the force's professional standards branch is now investigating.

Dr Peers said: "It was a ridiculous, trumped-up charge. He wanted me arrested to take my video camera away.

"He told blatant lies. He was perverting the course of justice.

"I was shocked that he would do that on camera.

"When officers go well beyond the course of their duties and fabricate evidence, they should be removed. You've got to have some standards in the police."

Dr Steven Peers

Campaigners have been camping out at Barton Moss for the past three months, protesting against drilling being carried out by iGas to explore the potential reserves of shale gas below the surface of the earth.

Dr Peers, who said he is not an anti-fracking protester but goes to the site to document the demonstration, told us he had not drunk alcohol on the morning he was arrested - January 14 - and added he had not arrived at 'Camp Barton' in his car as he had stayed there the previous night.

His video of the arrest has had more than 100,000 views on YouTube since it was posted five days ago.

A GMP spokeswoman said: "Greater Manchester Police have received a complaint about this video which officers from the Professional Standards Branch are investigating."

Last week we reported how more than 100 people had been arrested during the protests - with more arrests being made on a daily basis.

It is understood police believe many people are arriving at the site from outside of Greater Manchester not to protest against fracking but to antagonise officers.

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**2014 2 7 GMP chief Sir Peter Fahy slams fracking protesters for trying to 'provoke' police officers**

11:37, 7 FEB 2014

UPDATED 17:05, 7 FEB 2014

BY KATIE STOREY

Sir Peter Fahy is dismayed by the amount of time and money his force have spent on patrolling the anti-fracking protest

Dave Thompson / PA Wire

A protester sits on top of a lorry as anti-fracking campaigners protest against plans for exploratory drilling at Barton Moss

Greater Manchester's chief police officer is dismayed by the amount of time and money his force have spent on patrolling the anti-fracking protest at Barton Moss.

Chief Constable Peter Fahy has raised concerns that the costs of patrolling the protest, which already stands at £660,000 could escalate to £1M.

He claims his officers have been verbally abused and are stuck in the middle, unable to carry out normal duties with three months already spent at the site.

Chief Con Fahy said: "The cost of this operation is met from our normal budget and means that officers on duty at this protest are not patrolling their beats or carrying out operations to investigate crime.

"We have to be there to ensure the protest is peaceful and to balance the rights of the protesters and those wanting to carry out drilling on the site which are both lawful activities. The police are stuck in the middle."

The force are expecting that they may have to stay at the site for a further two months.

They are now also facing an investigation by the professional standards branch after protester Dr Steven Peers was arrested and charged for refusing to take a breath test after officers accused him of drink driving.CK TO PLAY

The father-of-four claimed he had walked to the site and had only been drinking tea.

The case fell apart when prosecutors offered no evidence.

Chief Con Fahy said: “For all the hundreds of hours of policing we have received only 21 complaints, five of which are from the same person.

"We take this seriously and will investigate any complaints thoroughly.

“We appreciate the strength of feeling of the protesters and that drilling for gas is a matter of national debate."

He added: "We deal with many protests in Greater Manchester and always try to negotiate an understanding which facilitates protest which is a basic human right.

"On the other hand we are disappointed that some at the site constantly try and provoke officers and are personally insulting to them.

"We will continue to expect the highest standards of restraint and patience from our officers but also ask the public to appreciate the difficult position they have been put in."

Peter Cranie, the North West Green Party's European election candidate said: "Non-violent direct action is something that the Green Party believes is sometimes necessary when you have a situation when the government simply isn't listening to public opinion, isn't listening to the evidence and isn't making the right policy choices."

"Yesterday our party leader, Natalie Bennett visited Barton Moss and was surprised by the high number of police deployed for a non-violent protest. IGas is an extremely profitable private company and it really should fall to them to pay for their own security, rather than the taxpayer. Why should fracking companies have a special call on police resources? Greater Manchester Police should instead be using their resources for their intended purpose - to investigate crime and make our communities safer."

**Solicitor compiles dossier for UN on police 'aggression' at Barton Moss fracking protests**

16:00, 25 MAR 2014

UPDATED 16:16, 25 MAR 2014

BY DAN THOMPSON

Simon Pook, from Lizars, said he was shocked by Greater Manchester Police's repsonse to the anti-fracking protest in Eccles, Salford

Police at the anti-fracking protest at Barton Moss

A solicitor acting on behalf of campaigners arrested at the Barton Moss anti-frackingprotest is compiling a dossier about Greater Manchester Police’s policing of the situation to send to the United Nations.

Simon Pook, from Lizars, said he was gathering witness statements and video footage showing how officers have acted at the site in Eccles, Salford, because he was concerned about the ‘aggression’ and ‘overt violence’ shown.

Mr Pook intends to submit the dossier to Maina Kiai, the United Nation’s Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and association, who raised concerns about these rights in the UK in a report to the British Government last year.

The solicitor, based at the Moss Side practice, said: “I’m extremely concerned about the policing model at Barton Moss. I have never witnessed such aggression and overt violence being perpetrated by the state – and by the state I mean the police.

More Fracking Protest News - videos and photo galleries

“I’m a solicitor and I was shocked when I went to Barton Moss because I feared for my safety. The police appeared to be out of control. I had to go and stand in a field when I went there because I was so afraid of what was going on.

“The last time I saw policing like this was during the miners’ strike in the 1980s. That’s why I’m asking the United Nation’s Rapporteur to revisit his report on peaceful protest in the UK.”

Mr Pook is representing Vanda Gillett, the north Manchester mum-of-five who was charged with assaulting a police officer following her arrest last week. Ms Gillett, 37, who lodged a formal complaint to GMP about the way she was arrested in a separate alleged incident a month ago, has been bailed to appear before magistrates in Manchester on April 3.

Video of her arrest last week shows her detained on the floor by four officers. Mr Pook said the footage was being analysed to see if the restraining techniques were GMP and Home Office approved.

Campaigners have been camping at Barton Moss since November to protest against exploratory shale gas drilling being carried out by IGas. The M.E.N. understands that around 200 arrests have been made since then.

Chf Supt Mark Roberts, from GMP, said: “Should Mr Pook wish to make any formal complaint we would encourage him to make contact with us. We would encourage him to share with us any ‘dossier of evidence’ of ‘aggression and overt violence’ so that such allegations can be properly and thoroughly investigated.

“Should such an allegation be found to be valid, there will be serious consequences for anyone found culpable. Equally, there would be consequences for anyone found to be providing false information to an investigation.”

**Fracking protester, 82, 'shocked to the core' by Greater Manchester Police's behaviour at Barton Moss**

10:48, 8 MAR 2014

BY DAN THOMPSON

Retired teacher Anne Power is a former councillor and Green Party activist regularly goes to the protest camp.

Fracking Protesters outside The Civil Justice Centre protesting about the land with Peel Holdings Anne Power aged 82 outside court

Retired teacher Anne Power is an 82-year-old former councillor and Green Party activist who lives in Chorlton and regularly goes to the Barton Moss protest camp to show her support.

She told the M.E.N. why she believes in the anti-fracking cause - and her views on how she feels GMP has responded to the demonstration.

VY

Anne said: “I’m shocked to the core by GMP’s policing of this protest.

“My grandfather lost his life as a policeman saving the lives of little children and my father was in a police orphanage as a consequence.

“I was brought up to think the police were on the side of the public. They were honest and open. They were respected for what they did. But this is something else. The police come here in their huge numbers. There may be 20 or 30 protesters and they come with 30 vans full of police. Is that necessary?

“Then when they are there on the site they are treating us so badly. They are bullying and pushing and shoving. I’ve spoken to various women who felt very offended and very...violated is the word they used, to have these male elbows and arms round the waist.

“I’ve felt it myself and I felt utterly violated to have these hands round my waist, the first time I stood in this line. I’ve been manhandled by police and they are always telling me it’s for my own good.

“I realised after two sessions they just wanted me out of the way so they could push the younger ones, and I’ve witnessed it, beat up the younger ones.

“So I was just a nuisance to them so when I cottoned on to that of course I stayed there - and I’ve been as much of a nuisance as I possibly can be.

“Since I came to Barton Moss at the end of November I’ve just met so many dedicated people.”

**Police boss: Fracking protesters are 'overstepping the mark'**

06:00, 8 MAR 2014

BY DAN THOMPSON

Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts has hailed the professionalism of his officers at Baron Moss

Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts

A police chief has hailed the professionalism of officers in the face of anti-fracking campaigners who he says have ‘overstepped the mark’ during the Barton Moss protests.

Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts said officers were doing a ‘fantastic’ job in keeping people safe while balancing the rights of the protesters and those of IGas - the company carrying out exploratory drilling at the site in Eccles, Salford.

He said he believed some of the protesters were peaceful and even hailed their conviction for spending winter camping in Salford for their beliefs.

But he added he thought some had turned up with the intention of antagonising police officers, who have had ‘personal abuse’ hurled at them.

He said: “Some officers might think the exploratory drilling is the right thing to do, some might think it’s wrong, but they are simply there to keep people safe and to uphold the law.

“Some of them have been called ‘Nazi scum’. The protesters have overstepped the mark.

“The restraint and professionalism officers have shown has been fantastic.”

Manchester Evening News reporter goes undercover at Barton Moss anti-fracking camp

Fracking: Two Manchester University professors give opposing views on the controversial process

As it happened: Barton Moss eviction hearing for anti-fracking campaigners

Three quarters of Mancunians oppose fracking, an M.E.N survey finds

'We're worried about what Fracking will do to the environment... and the value of our home'

Chf Supt Roberts said that, every time the trucks arrived and left, Greater Manchester Police deploys 60 officers to the site - which is occasionally one per every protester.

Chf Supt Roberts said: “Our primary concern is safety of people there. There have been no serious injuries there as yet.

“If someone was seriously injured, people would say ‘why did you not have more officers there to stop this sort of thing happening?’”

He also expressed his frustration at allegations of police brutality that have surfaced on social media but not followed up with formal complaints. He said: “Some of the claims are getting more and more sensational. One allegation was that a protester had his leg broken and fractured his eye socket but he was seen walking up and down Barton Moss Road a couple of days later.”

He said GMP had received 20 complaints, five from one person.

He added: “None of them have been particularly serious in terms of assaults.”

**Teenager arrested at anti-fracking protest and charged with obstructing police officer has case dropped**

18:20, 31 MAY 2014

UPDATED 18:20, 31 MAY 2014

BY AMY GLENDINNING

Saffron Hughes was at the camp earlier this year for a school project, and was held by officers policing the protests against fracking at the site

Fifteen year old Saffron Hughes with mum Karon Callaghan, and right, footage of her at Barton Moss

A 15-year-old girl arrested and charged with obstructing a police officer at an anti-fracking protest has had the case against her dropped.

Saffron Hughes had travelled to the Barton Moss protest camp in February this year for research on a school project on fracking.

She found herself pushed down the lane towards the camp on Barton Moss Road amongst other protesters there to protest at test drilling by company IGas.

The teenager, from Cadishead in Salford, was then arrested for obstructing a police officer and later charged with the offence.

But her solicitor has now confirmed the charge against her has been dropped after the Crown Prosecution Service met with Greater Manchester Police to review the case - and described her arrest and charging as ‘abhorrent’.

Simon Pook, from Robert Lizar Solicitors, who is representing Saffron, said: “The charges arose from Saffron Hughes being allowed to walk down Barton Moss Road then being pushed through it by GMP.

“At a different point they arrested her.

“I’m grateful the CPS has met with GMP and decided not to proceed with these charges but it has taken many months.

“This is a 15-year-old school girl who in her own words was there for a school project and it’s abhorrent that she was arrested and charged.

“The arrest was aggressive, she was frightened.

“The whole experience was not in keeping with the welfare of a child and I would question that.

Sean Wilton

Fifteen year old Saffron Hughes with mum Karon Callaghan

Barton Moss drilling firm wants to study geography across three areas of Greater Manchester

Ministers urged to prepare for huge fracking expansion despite protests

Anti-fracking protesters hold farewell party at Barton Moss camp

“I’m also extremely concerned about the cost to the public purse - not only the policing cost at Barton Moss but the cost of cases being withdrawn and of solicitors and the CPS.”

Saffron had attended the protest with mum Karon Callaghan, but was taken to a holding area near Salford City Stadium and then Swinton Police Station alone.

Because her mum had also been at the protest she was not allowed to see Saffron - although her stepdad Frank Roberts was later allowed to speak to her.

After being charged with obstructing a police officer Saffron, a pupil at Culceth High School in Warrington, was also banned from stopping anywhere along the A57 road in Salford - the road her dad lives on.

The MEN has contacted Greater Manchester Police and the Crown Prosecution Service for comment.

**Police watchdog rules senior officer in fracking bust-up should face gross misconduct charge**

11:54, 28 OCT 2015

UPDATED 11:56, 28 OCT 2015

BY DAN THOMPSON

Inspector David Kehoe is accused of lying to detain an anti-fracking campaigner at Barton Moss in Eccles after footage was shown to the IPCC

Sgt David Kehoe, left, and Dr Steven Peers

A senior police officer accused of lying to detain an anti-fracking campaigner should face a charge of gross misconduct, the police watchdog has found.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) reached its conclusion after video of Dr Steven Peers’ arrest appeared on the M.E.N. website .

The footage shows Inspector David Kehoe, from Greater Manchester Police , making drink-drive allegations against Dr Peers during the anti-fracking demonstration at Barton Moss, in Eccles, Salford.

The environmental campaigner denies drinking alcohol – saying he is a pedestrian and had only drunk tea that morning.

But, as colleagues gather round, Insp Kehoe says: “You’ve had a drink this morning. Where’s your car...You’ve just said to me you’ve had two drinks.”

Insp Kehoe then asks two other officers to breathalyse Dr Peers, who is arrested for refusing to take the test.

GMP later charged the environmental campaigner but the case fell apart at court when prosecutors decided there was insufficient evidence to proceed.

The 47-year-old complained to the force about the arrest – claiming the footage, which he took, showed Insp Kehoe lying to make the drink-drive allegations against him. He also alleged another officer had assaulted him.

Andy Lambert

Both officers were cleared of wrongdoing in an internal GMP probe – so Dr Peers called in the IPCC to reinvestigate the claims.

Now the police watchdog has found Insp Kehoe should face a gross misconduct hearing.

In an email, IPCC lead investigator David Doodson said: “I can confirm that I have recommended a case to answer for gross misconduct against the officer who initiated the drink drive procedure with Dr Peers and authorised the seizure of his property at custody.”

Mr Doodson concluded the officer who allegedly used ‘excessive force’ should face no further action.

The protest, against test drilling for shale gas carried out by energy company IGas at Barton Moss last year, became known for angry confrontations between police and protesters.

GMP arrested 120 people – although more than half of those dealt with so far have been cleared of wrongdoing.

Father-of-four Dr Peers, from New Moston , was arrested in January last year while filming the demonstration as a self-styled ‘legal observer’.

It is understood Insp Kehoe has not been suspended while the investigation into the incident has been on-going and continues to work for GMP.

Dr Peers, an electrical engineer with a doctorate in metaphysical sciences, said: “After over a year and a half of GMP attempting to excuse their unlawful arrests on Barton Moss, it is inexcusable that this officer should remain on duty despite a recommendation from the IPCC that he should face charges for gross misconduct.”

A spokesman for the police watchdog confirmed the gross misconduct conclusion over the arrest of Dr Peers.ERY

He added: “We have shared these findings with GMP and are currently considering their response.”

A GMP spokeswoman said: “Greater Manchester Police has received the recommendations made by the IPCC following their investigation into this matter.

“We have responded to the IPCC with a number of observations in relation to their decision making and we are still awaiting a response from the IPCC to our representations.”

A spokesman for the Greater Manchester Police Federation, the association which represents officers, said: “We reject the recommendations made by the IPCC in the strongest possible terms.

“We remain wholeheartedly supportive of the officer. We welcome negotiations between the Force and the IPCC and we hope that we can all work together to find a suitable outcome.”

**Anti-fracking campaigner Steven Peers jailed for 10 weeks for filming court cases then uploading footage on YouTube**

13:27, 6 MAY 2015

UPDATED 13:32, 6 MAY 2015

BY PAUL BRITTON , JONATHON HUMPHRIES

The court was told Steven Peers, who acted as a 'lawful observer' at the Barton Moss fracking protest camp, also has a conviction for attacking his wife

Father-of-four Steven Peers, 47, who regularly attended anti-fracking protests convicted of contempt of court over YouTube vision

An anti-fracking campaigner who illegally filmed cases in court then uploaded the footage on to YouTube has been jailed for contempt.

Father-of-four Steven Peers, 47 of Scholes Drive in Moston, filmed a case at Wigan Magistrates' court last October then recorded a second case at Manchester Civil Justice Centre later the same month.

Both videos were uploaded to a YouTube account under the name ‘Stevespy’, which Peers admitted he controlled, a court was told.

The footage, which was spotted by a police officer who raised the alarm, was titled ‘Jay and Steve spy in court’, Liverpool and Knowlsley Magistrates' Court heard on Wednesday.

Peers, who acted as a ‘lawful observer’ at the anti-fracking protest camp based at Barton Moss in Salford pleaded guilty to two charges under the Contempt of Court Act and was jailed for 10 weeks.

Andy Lambert

Steven Peers was arrested during the anti-fracking protests at Barton Moss

A ban on filming and recording court proceedings is contained within section 41 of the Criminal Justice Act 1925 and sections 9 and 14 of the Contempt of Court Act 1981.

CCTV footage from the court linked Peers to the videos.

Lionel Cope, prosecuting, said Peers claimed he was being ‘lawfully rebellious under the Magna Carta’ when interviewed by police.

The court heard he had been convicted of attacking his wife 12 months before the latest offences and was sentenced to 12 weeks in prison, suspended for two years.

A district judge activated the original sentence but reduced it by two weeks after hearing Peers had worked well with the Probation Service.

He will serve half of the resulting 10-week sentence behind bars.

Peers, an electrical engineer, was arrested at the Eccles anti-fracking site in January last year for refusing a breath test after a policeman accused him of driving to the site drunk.

He responded that he had only drunk tea but was later charged.

The case against him however collapsed when prosecutors offered no evidence in court.

Peers was also arrested last May for impersonating a police officer after he was stopped wearing a pig mask, a high-visibility vest and a toy police helmet in Manchester city centre.

Steven Peers, 46, from New Moston, is arrested on suspicion of impersonating a police officer in Manchester

That case was also dropped because of ‘insufficient evidence’.

Detective Sergeant Paul Walker said: “Filming inside court buildings, or of court proceedings, is strictly not permitted and is a serious offence in itself.

“Steven Peers was on a suspended sentence following his conviction for an assault against a woman at the time these offences were committed.

"Given he has chosen to ignore the sentence previously handed down to him, coupled with his illegal filming in court buildings, demonstrates a clear disregard for the law and judicial process.”

**9.3 Blackpool Gazette Text Data Set**

**VIDEO: Anti-fracking protesters claim ‘thuggish’ guards almost pushed them into the road 0:11 / 0:15**

Published: 07:24 Tuesday 10 January 2017

Anti-fracking protesters have claimed security guards at a Fylde drill site have behaved in a “thuggish” manner. Residents and campaigners carried out another day of protest at the site off Preston New Road at Little Plumpton Protesters at Preston New Road On Friday they staged a slow walk in the road ahead of a truck working for gas exploration company Cuadrilla as it left the site.

In the latest incident they said security guards almost pushed them into the A583 as they stood in front of security fencing at the site. Claire Stephenson, from the Preston New Road Action Group, said: “Lancashire residents will continue to exercise their rights to peaceful protest on a daily basis at Cuadrilla’s Preston New Road site for the foreseeable future.

“The violence protesters have been subjected to this morning has been taken seriously by the police. This thuggish behaviour is unacceptable and does not align with Cuadrilla’s so-called ‘community engagement’.”

The violence protesters have been subjected to this morning has been taken seriously by the police. But pro-fracking support group Backing Fracking blamed the activists for the scuffle.

A spokesman said: “This is just the beginning of the behaviour we can expect to see at this location and which we confidently predict will escalate to large-scale confrontations with police and security personnel, as witnessed previously at Barton Moss in Manchester and Balcome in Sussex, unless Lancashire police take a zero-tolerance approach.

“In the video, the protesters can clearly be seen standing in the safety lane created by traffic cones, with the flow of traffic controlled by temporary traffic lights and a 30mph speed restriction, but an off-camera protester can be heard making the false claim that the security guards are pushing them into the road and oncoming traffic.”

Police said they had received no official complaints but would continue to work closely with both parties.

A Cuadrilla spokesman said police had asked for the fencing and added: “There were some protesters who recklessly put themselves and other road users at risk by attempting to stop the fencing from being erected along our work area on the road as well as blocking truck delivery to the site. We ask that protesters to behave responsibly and don’t put themselves and others at risk.”

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/crime/video-anti-fracking-protesters-claim-thuggish-guards-almost-pushed-them-into-the-road-1-8325788

**Major road closed due to fracking protest Preston New Road is currently closed after demonstrators took to the streets**

DARIA NEKLESA Email Published: 10:53 Wednesday 11 January 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Drivers travelling from Blackpool to Preston are suffering delays this morning (11 January) after a major road was closed for a fracking protest.

Preston New Road is currently closed after demonstrators took to the streets to protest about Cuadrilla's plans to frack in the region.

Fylde police are advising that the A583 Preston New Road is closed in the direction of Preston between Whitehills and Fox Lane Ends. More to follow.

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/environment/major-road-closed-due-to-fracking-protest-1-8328132

**New row over Fylde fracking road block**

A truck delivering portable cabins to the fracking site at Preston New Road

Published: 09:18

Tuesday 17 January 2017

Anti-fracking campaigners have vowed to keep a close eye on a gas drill site on the Fylde saying they will report any breaches of planning conditions.

Their statement came after trucks servicing the gas exploration site of Cuadrilla’s site blocked the busy A583 during deliveries.

Members of the Preston New Road Action Group (PNRAG), which represents local residents, say they will continue their roadside protest along with slow walking in front of delivery wagons agreed with police.

Last week some anti-fracking protesters, believed to have been from outside the area, stopped traffic on the eastbound lane of Preston New Road for around four hours, drawing criticism from pro-fracking groups.

But today a PNRAG spokesman said: “Cuadrilla’s traffic management plan dangerously closed the A583 on two separate occasions, to facilitate installation of several site cabins.

“Emergency vehicles would not have been able to pass due to the entire carriageway being blocked by the HGVs delivering the cabins, thus endangering lives.

“Despite the Conservative government’s continual proclamations of gold standard and robust regulations, several breaches of health and safety and planning conditions have been recorded and are being investigated by different agencies, including one of assault by security guards on site.”

The group added Cuadrilla did not inform residents of their works until the day after heavy vehicles had arrived on Preston New Road and began construction and hedge removal.

Local resident, Ian Roberts, who was one of a group of residents carrying out a litter pick near the protest site, said: “Resistance has grown massively since we started Residents Action on Fylde Fracking (RAFF) six years ago. The strategy we have adopted so far has got longevity in it. We are looking at the long-term aspect. While we are out on the roads gathering support, there are still legal challenges ongoing.”

However, Cuadrilla said the road closures were due to protester at junction 4 of the M55 leading to the truck being forced to leave at junction 3.

A spokesperson said: “Due to protester activity the emergency procedure of our traffic management plan was invoked which involved closing the Preston New Road twice for a few minutes on Thursday, January 12. This decision was taken in consultation with the police.

“We again ask that for the safety of everyone and the avoidance of further road closures that protestors behave responsibly.”

**Fracking protesters vow to carry on roadside vigil Fracking protest at Preston New Road**

Published: 10:46 Wednesday 11 January 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

It has become the latest battleground – but protesters have vowed they will not be moved at a fracking site on the Fylde come what may.

Around 40 local people were again at the site on Preston New Road at Little Plumpton to demonstrate their opposition to plans to drill for shale gas on a farmer’s field there.

Earlier this week there were minor scuffles as security guards and protesters clashed as security fencing was put in place. An incident with a lorry almost hitting protesters also occurred and police were forced to close the A583 in both directions for a while to negotiate safety arrangements.

Protesters’ actions have drawn criticism from pro-shale groups resulting in a war of words on social media.

The pro-shale groups said the police should introduce a zero tolerance policy, but protesters blamed inexperienced security on site for the issues. Today the campaigners said that even with an offer of a so-called “safe protest area” on the farmer’s land from Cuadrilla, which people would be directed to by the police, they will remain on the roadside every day.

Claire Stephenson, from the Preston New Road Action Group, said: “It has been a very peaceful protest today. “We have carried out slow walk protests in front of the delivery trucks on the cordoned off area at the site and there have not been any repeat of the issues from yesterday.

“Investigations are going on into the incidents from yesterday. We are not holding up traffic.” She said they had been receiving constant support from passing motorists and members of the public.

When asked if things became more heated at the site or if outside protesters came to take part in mass protests, she said that as a group the Preston New Road people did not condone any illegal behaviour and would continue with their own protest.

She said: “With regard to a safe area, this was an idea mooted by the police six months ago. It is just a way of corralling protesters. “It is up to other people how they want to protest but we would prefer to make ours here at the roadside using peaceful methods.”

Tina Rothery, from the Lancashire Nanas anti-fracking group , was present during the scuffles and said she intervened when protesters were caught behind a reversing delivery lorry on Tuesday.

She said: “Lancashire Police have been wonderful. “I think the security guards at the start were ill-prepared for a protest site, which caused the issues.

“There have been no problems today unlike when the lorry almost reversed into protesters. We had to bang on the windows and climb on it to get it to stop.

“The police negotiated a safe and sensible way to let people protest.”

She said trucks going to the site to help build an access road, were being held up behind the safety barrier while protesters walked slowly in front of them to delay them as a protest. But she rejected plans for a safe protest area.

She said: “By telling us where we are allowed to protest it would mean other places were not permitted. “We prefer to do peaceful protest our way.” She said the local people were getting tremendous support.

She said: “We posted our video of what happened on line. It got something like 1,000 views. “Then through social media it got picked up by Bianca Jagger and by that night had been seen by more than 100,000 people. It went viral and as a result we have seen people coming here today to offer help.”

She said some members from outside groups had turned up but after talking to the locals were happy to go with their wishes not to escalate protests. However, some at the protest site wanted more support from members of the public and elsewhere to more effectively disrupt the construction of the fracking site.

John Tootill from nearby Maple Farm said: “The problem is they are still getting their work done. It is heartwarming to see so many local people giving up their time to make their views known here and show their opposition to fracking.

“They are doing it in all weathers. But if others and other groups want to come and add their support they will be most welcome. It is the ordinary people who will be affected if fracking spreads across the county and the country.”

But gas exploration company Cuadrilla, which wants to drill and frack four horizontal wells on the site once the well pad about the size of a rugby pitch is completed, said that work was progressing despite the protests.

They said that the police were responsible for protesters outside the site and that the site boundary was from the coned off lane where the temporary traffic lights were to the field where people did not have the right to be under site safety regulations.

A Cuadrilla spokesman said: “Outside of our permitted work area it is the police who are responsible for health and safety of protesters and as some were in the main road the police decided to close the road yesterday for 15 minutes which we are aware delayed some local journeys.

“We are working with the police to keep the area safe and ensure that traffic on the main road is not blocked. Whilst some truck deliveries to our site are taking longer, our work continues as planned.”

Pro-fracking group Backing Fracking blasted the protesters over the scuffles earlier in the week. They said irresponsible behaviour had resulted in the main road being closed for 15 minutes and could have hampered emergency services.

A spokesman said: “Despite assurances to the contrary, activists are prepared to cause disruption to ordinary road users and local residents by going beyond ‘peaceful rolling roadside protests’.

“Not only that, but in forcing the closure of the road, their actions could have put lives in danger - the A583 is part of Lancashire’s strategic road network and is used by the North West Ambulance Service in reaching “blue light” emergencies.

“It is targeted to attend 75 per cent of Category A Red 1 calls (the most time critical, where patients are not breathing or don’t have a pulse) within 8 minutes.

“It is not an overstatement to say that a 15-minute closure of a major local trunk road could make the difference between life and death. “Risking their own safety for a publicity stunt is one thing; risking the lives of other Lancashire residents is something else altogether.”

The spokesman said: “As for the dedicated protest area, that sounds like a very responsible idea from Cuadrilla that would enable protesters to continue demonstrating but in a manner that doesn’t endanger the protesters themselves, workers, other road users or those who could be affected by delays to ambulances and other emergency services.”   
  
Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/business/fracking-protesters-vow-to-carry-on-roadside-vigil-1-8328097

**Lancashire Police arrest four after frack site protests**

Anti-fracking protesters stop a truck at Preston New Road

Published: 10:08

Wednesday 01 February 2017

Trucks were stopped from getting to a Fylde fracking drill site when four protesters chained themselves together blocking the entrance.

The four, including representatives from the Kirby Misperton fracking protest site in Yorkshire, lay down across the access road at around 7.30am.

Police were called and the four were warned that under the public order act they should leave by 9.15am.

But they remained in place and along with other protesters prevented trucks entering the site where Cuadrilla’s workers are preparing a drill pad for test fracking later this year.

Lancashire Police said four were arrested for a breach of a public order at around 1pm.

Local protesters who have been maintaining a vigil opposite the site said while the protesters were from outside the area, they were welcome as long as they were lawful and peaceful.

We support any action that is peaceful and lawful

Sue Marshall, from St Annes, said: “I am here to support the protest and I am very grateful these people have come to help us. We have to stop fracking. It is a toxic industry being forced upon our community. In Kirby Misperton they will be testing the sites for radioactive radon gas, they will not be doing that here because they say it is too expensive.”

Claire Stephenson, from the Preston New Road Action Group, said: “When you have a company and industry that is not wanted and has gone against local democracy it is no surprise that some people would take action like this.

“We support any action that is peaceful and lawful.”

One of the protesters chained together, Eddie Thornton from Yorkshire, said: “We want to inspire other people to get creative to stop this industry. We are showing support to Lancashire, where the people have said no to fracking and they mean no.”

Cuadrilla did not want to comment as it was a police matter but a spokesman said while they were disappointed by the action by people mainly from outside the area, it did not prevent work being carried out on site.

**Inside the anti-frackers’ protest camp The fracking camp near B&Q at the Whitehills Business Park Blackpool**

Published: 13:00 Updated: 15:00 Monday 13 February 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY The controversy over fracking on the Fylde looks set to continue throughout the coming year. Pro-fracking groups have pointed the finger at campaigners from outside the county who they claim are “professional” protesters using new tactics of “harassment” and “intimidation”.

But the local campaigners who have been fighting the shale gas exploration plans for years have said outside protesters are welcome as long as protests remain peaceful and lawful. An anti-fracking camp has sprung up at the Whitehills Business Park a short distance away from the Little Plumpton shale gas exploration drill site. Smoke from a camp fire drifted lazily into the late afternoon sky of a cold February day as the group of around 20 environmental campaigners prepared to settle in for the night after a day’s protesting.

Members had been down to the Preston New Road site to carry out “slow-walks” in front of Cuadrilla’s delivery trucks, delaying them by up to 15 minutes as a token protest as they take supplies to the site where preparations are being made for a well pad which will see four deep bore-holes drilled down into the Bowland Shale to test for gas.

It is an agreed protest procedure with the police and Cuadrilla, and has been regularly carried out by the protesters at Preston New Road since the work began last month. But some had also been to the nearby Travis Perkins depot to protest about the company supplying the fracking site and had obstructed the entrance during the morning.

That followed similar protests at a supplier in Bolton and at Moores Readymix in St Annes – both companies have since said they are not supplying the site following the action. These protests have attracted criticism. Some thinking things are going too far. Some pointing fingers at the outsiders highlighting previous “unsavoury” behaviour and highlighting the arrests made when four campaigners locked themselves together earlier this month to stop vehicles entering the fracking site. But the camp is also getting support from some locals, with an elderly couple bringing a box full of bread and food to the group in the tents, make-shift shelters, caravans huddled close to the B&Q building near an area of open, marshy ground. Another couple turned up bringing hot food for the campers as they broke up old pallets for firewood.

Coun Miranda Cox, from Kirkham Town Council was at the makeshift camp, to support the protesters. She said: “I am involved because fracking will affect everyone. It is a local issue with global impact. “Communities have to stand up and protect themselves from the creeping nature of this industry.

“I am concerned about the health implications and the environment but it is the way it has been imposed on Lancashire, which voted against it, that really opened my eyes. “I have been on the roadside nearly every day since the work at Preston New Road started. “I feel that this talk about locals and outsiders is a non-issue.

“It is a global issue – we all live on this planet, the fracking sites may be local for us but fracking could spread to hundreds of communities across the country and global warming is an international issue.

“I have not seen any violence. Everyone has different ways of expressing their opinions and protesting. For some it is writing letters or emails, for others it is waving placards, for others it is direct action. It may take a combination of all of those to raise awareness of this issue and make an impact.

“The talk of intimidation is being used to create an impression, to make it all seem unlawful.” She agreed that they would like to prevent Cuadrilla from drilling the wells and test-fracking for gas but she said the protest at the exploration company’s suppliers was as much about raising awareness with them of the issue and showing how local people did not support fracking. She added: “It will not create the jobs people have been claiming.

A study in Australia showed that for every one job fracking creates, around 14 are lost in other sectors such as tourism or farming. There is no social licence for fracking here in Lancashire – we are just being used as an experiment.

“I think it is marvellous people are coming here to support us and so do other local people. We have seen many people come to this camp to drop off food and supplies and the number of people honking their horns as they pass on the road is great.”

Ann, from Bury, said she was a healthcare worker who was now self employed and who was working at weekends and nights so she could come to the camp in the day time to offer support and herbal medicine to those who needed it. She said: “My husband works too and we have been involved in the anti-fracking movement for about three years.

“There are shale gas licences in the Bury, Bolton and Radcliffe areas too and we realise that if we are to stop it we have to help here in Blackpool first. “Lancashire has to be united against this, it is important the we all stick together. “I don’t want people’s health affected and the future of our children affected by this industry. Local companies, here and in Bolton, have been supplying Cuadrilla’s well pad construction so we have been protesting at their sites to make our issue known and to raise awareness.

“I am a healthcare professional and I have seen research into fracking and the health concerns that are appearing in America. I don’t want our children to be affected by chemicals in the air and the water.” “Lion”, from Croydon, explained why he had come to the site to spend cold nights in a small tent to be close to the Little Plumpton site.

He said: “I was an IT professional, but I have given my career up and my life aspirations because this is so important. “People should read the OCI report The Sky’s Limit to understand why it is vital that we keep fossil fuels in the ground. “We should not have any more infrastructure, exploration, no new fossil fuels exploitation because it will make climate change worse and result in human tragedy around the world.

“The companies which have caused this problem should be responsible for turning it all around.” He had joined the camp a couple of days ago but had been at other environmental protests in recent months. He said: “I have come to offer any help I can. People have to be made aware of the dangers of this industry and about what is happening here near Blackpool. “We are here to raise awareness and protest. If that means walking slowly in front of lorries then so be it.

“We are passionate about opposing fracking. Air and water are more important than income and profit. “Fracking can lead to fugitive emissions of methane from under ground and methane as a greenhouse gas is 80 times worse than CO2. “Protesting is not something I want to do. It’s something I feel I have to do. I don’t want to live like this. I could be earning £30 an hour as an IT specialist but this is important.” Gadget, aka Benjamin Deevoy, has been at the site for a couple of weeks.

He said although he was from “down south” he had lived in Blackpool for a third of his life and used to work in corporate hospitality at Blackpool Football Club when the team was in the Premier League. He said: “It was a great job, I really enjoyed it. I even served drinks to Alex Ferguson at Bloomfield Road one time. Fracking is not a safe industry. It is not easy to get that gas out of the ground like you see in the USA with oil and those nodding donkey pumps. “Fracking involves drilling deep and pumping in water and chemicals at pressure. It causes earth tremors and pollution. I am here to protect the aquifers and the local ecology.”

Asked about whether the protests had become too intimidatory, he said the protesters were dressed in combat fatigues and scarves because they were cheap clothing , hard wearing and kept them warm in winter.

He added: “It is a necessity to be here and stop it. We do not want to be unlawful, but the protests will carry on.

“There is a lot of positive energy here at the camp. People have come from a lot of different places, but we have had local people giving us hot food and support. A little girl came the other day, Ruby aged six, and drew a lovely rainbow on my caravan. “We are in high spirits and morale is high because of that local support.” The following day a man answering his description was arrested at the Preston New Road site as the contractors were trying to putout their daily placed traffic management system.

A police spokesman said: “A 31-year-old man from Blackpool was arrested on suspicion of an offence under Section 241 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act.”

But local campaigners came to his defence saying the arrest was completely unecessary. A spokesman for the Preston New Road Action Group said:

“The PNR protection activists are completely astounded by today’s abuse of police powers. “He is one of our most ardent supporters and has been involved with the anti-fracking campaign since it started in the UK.

“He is incredibly well-versed in legal process and would definitely have not overstepped the mark. “There will most certainly be repercussions because of this. Expect lock-ons in the very near future!” But supporters of the shale gas industry, who say it will provide energy security, jobs and a boost to the economy through taxes, have criticised the protesters for their tactics which they say are disruptive.

A spokesman at Lancashire For Shale said: “Cuadrilla has obtained all the relevant legal permissions it needs in order to now advance its shale gas exploration plans here in Lancashire, and we are pleased to see it starting to do just that.

“It should be allowed to get on with its work while creating new economic opportunities for businesses across the county, but hardened activists from outside the area have spent the last few weeks trying to prevent it from doing so by apparently harassing and intimidating local businesses that have been supplying the Preston New Road site.

“While we fully respect people’s right to peaceful protest, we do not believe that local companies should be deterred from seeking work in the shale gas supply chain by activists that take things too far and cross the line from acceptable protest to something altogether more sinister.” Babs Murphy, chief executive of the North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, said they were concerned about what many members of the business community saw as an escalation of protests. S

he said: “It is quite wrong on all counts to intimidate, harass, bully and disrupt small, local firms who are simply getting on with their daily lawful business and keeping their employees in jobs.

“It is outrageous that such appalling intimidatory tactics being employed from a small group of coordinated cross border activists who come from outside our region are preventing local businesses from benefiting from the significant opportunities afforded from this industry.

“Should the intimidation continue at this level, I fear the local supply chain will lose out to organisations operating outside the area. “The police must at the very least adopt a firmer line against activists who are causing danger on the highways and to those who are taking direct action that prevents businesses trying to get on with their job.”

**Six anti-frackers arrested after latest shale gas protest Police removing six locked-together protesters at the Preston New Road fracking site at Little Plumpton**

Published: 17:29 Updated: 17:39 Thursday 16 February 2017

Police were called to act as six anti-fracking protesters locked themselves together at the Preston New Road shale gas site. The group arrived near Little Plumpton at around 8.15am on Thursday and blocked the entrance to the site where exploration company Cuadrilla wants to drill four wells and test frack for deep-lying gas.

They had locked themselves together with their arms inside metal pipes in a bid to delay work at the site where an access road has now virtually been completed.

They were supported by a group of protestors alongside the A583 where a traffic management system is in place. ADVERTISING

Although the protests have drawn criticism from businesses which support a shale gas industry amid claims of intimidation, local campaigners say they support peaceful action.

John Hobson, from Frack Free Lancashire, said: “People come on a daily basis to protest peacefully and on occasion have been met with aggression and that has resulted in tension on both sides.

“People will continue to protest within the law to ensure that awareness is raised about the threat of fracking and the implications of turning the Fylde into the largest gas field in Europe.”

James Nisbet, from the Roseacre Awareness Group, said: “I am here to support the Preston New Road people and the anti-fracking movement across the country. “The future of the UK does not depend on fracking, we have other sources of gas and renewable energy.”

A police spokesman confirmed that five men aged between 23 and 55, all from the Blackpool area and a 51-year-old woman of no fixed address, were arrested on suspicion of offences under Section 14 of the Public Order Act. A sixth man, 53, was reported for summons by officers. He said: “Our intention is to ensure a consistent and coordinated policing response and ensure a balance between the rights of people to lawfully protest, together with the rights of the wider public, including local businesses, to go about their lawful activities.”

**Police step up presence at Blackpool court as anti-fracking protester granted bail Blackpool Magistrates Court**

ROB STOCKS Email Published: 10:42 Updated: 16:06 Thursday 02 February 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Police presence was increase at Blackpool Magistrates’ Court for the first court appearance of an anti-fracking protester Louise Hammond. Hammond, 52, formerly of Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, who gave her address in court as the Blackpool Protection Camp, Whitehills Retail Park, Preston New Road, Blackpool, is accused of being one of the four protestors who chained themselves together at the fracking drill site on Preston New Road blocking the entrance.

It is said police warned the quartet under the public order act after they obstructed the access road at about 7.30am on Tuesday that they should leave by 9.15am.

It is alleged they remained in place and along with other protesters prevented trucks entering the site where Cuadrilla’s workers are preparing a drill pad for test fracking later this year.  Hammond pleaded not guilty to an offence under the public order act of failing to comply with a police direction to leave at Westby on January 31.

She pleaded guilty to breaching a previously imposed bail condition not to enter the Borough of Fylde for any reason except to travel through to attend her listed court hearing at which she will face an offence of obstructing the highway as part of a fracking protest.

Prosecutor, Pam Smith, asked for her bail condition to continue saying: “The defendant is part of a national organisation and protests are being professionally organised. The Crown says the bail condition is proportionate.”

Defence lawyer, Adam Bonney, asked for his client’s bail to be unconditional. He said: “Anti fracking is not a national organisation.  “My client feels passionately about anti-fracking. The court is being asked to restrict her right to protest.”

Hammond’s case was adjourned to March 1 for her to face the obstruction charge and March 3 for failing to comply with a police direction to leave.

She was given unconditional bail. Magistrates said that to have imposed a condition to her bail would not be proportionate.  • Jared Dunne, 22, of Manchester Road, Warrington; Edward Thornton, 33, of, Pickering, North Yorkshire and Joseph Boyd, 43, of Blyth Hey, Bootle were charged with Section 14 fail to comply with prohibited assembly police direction and are due to appear before Blackpool Magistrates Court on March 3.   
  
Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/crime/police-step-up-presence-at-blackpool-court-as-anti-fracking-protester-granted-bail-1-8367382

**Anger rises as Fylde coast fracking protests ramp up Anti-fracking rally at Preston New Road, Little Plumpton**

Published: 10:00 Tuesday 28 February 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Protesters are set to ramp up the fights against fracking this spring despite a row following a rally at the weekend. National climate change protest group Reclaim the Power said it was set to target companies supplying goods and services to shale gas explorer Cuadrilla.

Anti-fracking rally at Preston New Road, Little Plumpton The group, which organised a fracking camp in 2014 on a field close to the Little Plumpton drill site, said it plans to pressure companies in the fracking supply chain during a fortnight of direct action called Break the Chain from March 27 to April 10.

The news comes after local protesters criticised Lancashire Police for overreacting at Saturday’s event at Preston New Road.

A post on the Fylde Police social media page said around 150 people tried to breach the site, however it was later taken down and the figure replaced with the word ‘some’. After a rally featuring almost 1,000 people, a small group of protesters got on to the farmer’s field where the drill site is and tried to access the works area.

MP Cat Smith at the anti-fracking rally A spokesman for Frack Free Lancashire said they were disappointed with the number of officers deployed by Lancashire Police and the unnecessary closure of the road in what they said was a successful lawful rally.

The spokesman said: “The audience heard many passionate speeches. Friends of the Earth’s CEO, Craig Bennett, talked about the urgent global need to reduce fossil fuel use.

“Labour’s MP, Cat Smith, also spoke to the crowds on democracy, along with a host of other community and national speakers. Musicians, face-painters and dancers entertained the multi-generational crowd.”

But pro-fracking group Lancashire For Shale said the police should act to prevent further action.

A spokesman said: “We are appalled at what has happened at the Preston New Road site in Fylde, when dozens of mainly national professional protesters have chosen to trespass on a local farmer’s land, causing extensive criminal damage and laying siege to the family home. “Lancashire For Shale also condemns the cost to Lancashire tax payers of having to police disruptive, unlawful activities.

“The time has come to say no to these sinister tactics. Our local communities and our vitally important farming and tourism economy stand to lose out if this sort of disgraceful behaviour is allowed to continue on the Fylde Coast.”

Activist group Reclaim the Power, however, has said it will escalate action in the coming weeks with hundreds of people trained to take action ahead of plans for a more sustained campaign of resistance to the industry on the ground this summer, should companies move to begin fracking.

Ash Hewitson from Reclaim the Power said: “For six years, the people of Lancashire have successfully fought off fracking.

“Along with other communities across the UK, they have held rallies, signed petitions, talked to their MPs and councillors, and lodged opposition through local planning processes.

“But now the industry is raising the stakes and pressing ahead with its plans, and the Westminster government is finding any way it can to force fracking on communities, despite overwhelming opposition. “So we need new strategies to resist. “Fracking companies don’t exist in isolation; and we can stop the industry if we cut it off from the systems it needs to survive. “By taking out the links in the chain we can break the whole industry into pieces.”

**VIDEO: Police probe 'collision' during anti-fracking protest outside business**

MICHAEL HOLMES

[Email](mailto:michael.holmes@jpress.co.uk)

Published: 08:52Updated: 15:39Tuesday 07 February 2017

A group of anti-fracking protesters refused to let vehicles leave a concrete firm this morning, police said.

Around 10 to 12 protesters arrived outside Moore Readymix, in Snowdon Road, St Annes, at around 7am, a spokesman said.

Protesters outside Moore Readymix earlier this morning

Some were dressed in army fatigues and had speakers playing loud music in the middle of the road, he added.

Officers were called to the scene, and are now investigating a 'minor collision between a protester and a Mitsubishi vehicle', he also said.

"The injured party received very minor injuries and the driver will be spoken to," he said.

No arrests were made and the incident was caught on camera. The footage, *which contains strong language*, has been made available online. Viewer discretion is advised.

Protesters had previously told police they 'were not going to let vehicles through', the police spokesman said.

Moore Readymix has since pledged to stop supplies of concrete to Cuadrilla's site at Preston New Road in Little Plumpton.

**Delays expected due to fracking protest Drivers are being warned to expect delays.**

DARIA NEKLESA Email Published: 06:54 Updated: 07:07 Monday 21 August 2017

Drivers are being warned of delays around the Preston New Road area this morning due to "protester activity".

Police in Fylde have said that the eastbound carriageway towards Preston has been closed after protesters locked on at around 5.15am on August 21.

A contraflow has now been put in place to allow traffic to pass. A police spokesman said :"We have got protesters locked on in the area and this required us to close the eastbound carriageway. "There is general protester activity in the area."

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/transport/delays-expected-due-to-fracking-protest-1-8713018

**Fylde coast tanker top protest follows slow walk end A fracking protester climbs aboard a tanker on Preston New Road**

Published: 10:35 Tuesday 14 March 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Anti-fracking protesters stopped supply tankers at the Preston New Road by climbing onto their roofs.

The first was stopped before 9am on Monday and police cordoned off the vehicle close to the entrance of the shale gas drill site at Little Plumpton off the busy A583.

Fracking public inquiry 2016 at Blackpool Football Club The man remained on top of the vehicle for several hours as police did not the equipment to remove him.

In the afternoon a tanker leaving the site was halted as a second man climbed on its roof.

Bob Dennett from Frack Free Lancashire said: “The police have stopped allowing people to have the agreed 15 minute slow walk protest in front of the supply trucks and so this is the result. The tanker slowed on the way in and the man took his chance to climb up so they had to stop.”

Cuadrilla’s Matt Lambert said: “This kind of irresponsible behaviour is totally unacceptable and all it has achieved is delay and disruption to local, law abiding road users. There are many ways to peacefully make your point without having to stoop to such ridiculous antics.”

**Fracking site to see 20mph speed limit Police and protesters at the Preston New Road fracking site**

Published: 06:00 Updated: 09:24 Friday 24 March 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Anti-fracking campaigners have welcomed moves to impose a temporary speed limit on the road near a Fylde fracking site. Lancashire County Council is cutting the road speed on Preston New Road to improve safety for drivers, police, protesters, and vehicles accessing the site.

The 50mph limit will drop to 20mph in the immediate vicinity of the Little Plumpton site, with a 30mph zone 600m either side of it.

Yesterday, temporary signs were put up to indicate an advisory 30mph limit on the approach to the site ahead of a fully-designed scheme with an enforceable 20mph limit at the site.

County Coun John Fillis, cabinet member for highways and transport, said: “There is currently a lot of activity near this site and the police have raised concerns about the safety of the public, motorists, and their officers, in such a busy location.

“I visited the site last week and it’s clear that reducing the speed limit would help to minimise the risks. “Initially we will bring in an advisory 30mph limit using temporary signs, but as soon as possible afterwards we will introduce a 20mph limit. We can’t do this immediately as it will take a short while to design a scheme, manufacture the signs, and prepare the legal order needed to change the speed limit and ensure it’s enforceable.

“Road safety is everyone’s responsibility and I would ask people to respect the changes to the speed limit and drive with extra caution in this area.””

Claire Stephenson, from the Preston New Road Action Group, said: “We welcome Lancashire County Council finally acting upon the increasing risks on this dangerous stretch of road. “Since Cuadrilla arrived in our community, we have seen nothing but dangerous actions, including HGV drivers who have not been briefed correctly, carrying out manoeuvres that jeopardise all other road users and road closures to facilitate Cuadrilla’s large-scale machinery entering the site.”

A Cuadrilla spokesman said: “We understand Lancashire County Council’s decision and their intent to minimise the danger posed by the behaviour of some activists in the vicinity of our exploration site on Preston New Road.

**2017 4 20 Blast for anti-fracking activists removed from firm's premises**

Anti-frackers have targeted companies which supply goods or services to shale gas firm Cuadrilla. Here they visited a company in Derbyshire which stores a drilling rig.

TIM GAVELL

[Email](mailto:tim.gavell@blackpoolgazette.co.uk)

Published: 16:37Thursday 20 April 2017

Anti-fracking campaigners have been slammed by pro-shale gas groups after protests at a supply chain company.

Activists were removed from the premises of contractor Pete Marquis by staff there, as they tried to stage a blockade, including by chaining themselves to obstacles.

The Lea Town company has been working as a supplier for Cuadrilla’s Preston New Road shale gas drilling pad being constructed near Little Plumpton.

In a separate incident yesterday, anti-fracking protesters staged a noisy demonstration outside the Barclays bank in St Annes.

Barclays backs Third Energy which is aiming to frack in Ryedale, Yorkshire.

Lancashire For Shale, which backs the development of an onshore gas industry in the county, said protests targeting supply chain companies were unfair.

A spokesman said: “Pete Marquis, owner of Fylde coast based Pete Marquis Contractors, successfully prevented an attempt to deny access to his business by around 10 anti-fracking activists.

“The group of protesters from as far afield as Birmingham and London targeted Mr Marquis’ premises with a ‘lock-on’.

“Mr Marquis and other staff members carefully moved the activists out of the way so they could continue with the day’s work.”

CEO of the North and Western Lancashire Chamber, Babs Murphy, said: “The Chamber condemns any bullying and intimidation of local businesses and employees.

“We commend Pete Marquis for taking proportionate steps to remove those trying to target his business, and many other Lancashire businesses who have also taken a stand against such aggressive and unjustified behaviour.”

Mr Marquis said: “I respect that people have got the right to protest but my employees and I have a right to go to work to earn a living too. When we saw what the activists were trying to do to shut us down, we decided to carefully remove them from our premises.

“As they were trespassing on private property we were legally entitled to do this. This sort of attempted bullying of a local business and workers by out of town professional protesters isn’t fair and it’s not going to work either.”

A Frack Free Lancashire spokesman said: “The aggressive and disproportionate behaviour of Mr Marquis and his staff is subject to a possible police complaint so it would be inappropriate to comment.”

**No extra resources to police fracking site**

Clive Grunshaw

ROB STOCKS

[Email](mailto:rob.stocks@blackpoolgazette.co.uk)

Published: 17:25Monday 24 April 2017

Pleas for extra cash to help cover the cost of policing anti-fracking demonstrations have fallen on deaf ears.

Lancashire Police has estimated the on-going protests linked to Cuadrilla’s plans to drill for shale gas at Preston New Road will cost the force an extra £450,000 a month.

Police and crime commissioner Clive Grunshaw had called on the Government for extra funding.

As it stands, the force will have to pay at least £2.6m before it can apply for additional help towards covering the costs of policing the protests.

Mr Grunshaw said: “Lancashire Police are faced with an ever rising bill to police the fracking protests.

“The Government has confirmed it has made no extra provision to help meet the costs of policing the protests.

“That’s £2.6m that could have been spent investigating child exploitation, serious crimes and domestic abuse, but instead is focussed on policing protests.”

Officers are providing a round the clock policing operation at the Preston New Road site where protestors have been camped out since January.

The force said its officers are there to facilitate peaceful protest and ensure businesses in the area are able to operate.

Mr Grunshaw added: “Our officer resources are being stretched to the limits and the Government has said that there will be no additional financial help until our costs reach £2.6m.

“Even then, we will only be able to claim anything over that initial cost.”

Protesters have argued the Government should pay up as it overruled local councilors who rejected Cuadrilla’s application to drill for shale gas.

Meanwhile the firm’s chief executive, Francis Egan, said a small group of ‘mostly non-local activists’ had broken the law and their actions were wasting public money.

**'People in the road' halt traffic close to fracking site An anti-fracking protester on top of a supply tanker at Preston New Road on Monday (Image: Ami Roberts)**

MICHAEL HOLMES Email Published: 12:13 Wednesday 05 April 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Preston New Road in Little Plumpton was blocked in both directions earlier because of 'people in the road', police said.

Motorists were told to find alternative routes because of the obstruction, close to Cuadrilla's fracking site, at around 11.20am.

A spokesman for the force said the road was 'passable with caution' by noon, though he urged drivers to 'please be aware of people in the road'.

The site has seen on-going anti-fracking protests, which The Gazette yesterday revealed is costing £450,000 per month to police, and has led to a number of arrests.

In a statement, Lancashire Police told The Gazette: "A section of Preston New Road was blocked due to a number of protesters being in the road near to the entrance to the Cuadrilla site. "It is now accessible but we are urging motorists to drive with caution."

A spokeswoman for the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) said paramedics were called to the site at 11.18am, after a man in his 20s suffered a suspected leg injury.

He was taken to Blackpool Victoria Hospital for further treatment, the spokesman added, though she could not say how he was hurt. One Facebook Live video, purportedly shot by a protester at the site today, claimed the man's ankle was injured after he caught it in fencing. Police said no arrests had been made.

**Vigil planned over policing at Fylde fracking site**

Police at the Preston New Road fracking site

TIM GAVELL

Email

Published: 10:19

Wednesday 10 May 2017

Protesters are to hold a silent vigil at Kirkham Police station to complain about the policing of a Fylde fracking site.

Anti-fracking campaigners have accused the police of being over aggressive and deploying too many officers at the Little Plumpton site off Preston New Road.

They say the cost to the public is too high and they are restricting people’s rights to protest peacefully.

They plan to hand in a letter, signed by hundreds of local people, calling on the incoming Chief Constable, Andy Rhodes and the Police and Crime Commissioner, Clive Grunshaw, to take part in an open public meeting to listen to concerns.

One of the protesters, Bob Dennett, who was arrested after taking part in a 12 person lock-on protest at the site on Monday, said at times the police response had been too aggressive. He said protesters, including a man from Blackpool in wheelchair, had been pushed over at the site.

He said: “It has been over the top. We spoke to the silver commander at the site on Friday and things were much better on Monday.

“These officers are cooped up in vans all day which is not healthy, they are not trained for this sort of thing. They are framed to respond to violence and trained in crowd control and that is not appropriate in a peaceful protest like ours.”

He said the £450,000 a month police were setting aside to pay for policing the protest was just the tip of the iceberg, since there were extra police and court costs.

The protesters are being supported by Netpol, a national human rights organisation which monitors policing.

Kevin Blowe, its coordinator, said: “Concerns have been raised about the financial costs of policing the protests at Preston New Road but little thought appears to have been given to the legacy costs of this confrontational style of policing or the long-term impact it is having on relations with local people.”

**Strong presence essential insist fracking site police chief**

Police at the Preston New Road site

ROB STOCKS

[Email](mailto:rob.stocks@blackpoolgazette.co.uk)

Published: 16:28Friday 12 May 2017

The officer in charge of policing anti-fracking protests in Fylde has defended the number of police deployed.

Lancashire Police has up to 100 officers deployed at the drilling site in Preston New Road every day, prompting criticism from some quarters of the resources being given over to the operation.

Supt Richard Robertshaw admits the numbers required are a drain on resources.

But he says recent events show the need for such strength.

He said: “On a daily basis there are approximately 100 officers directly involved in the policing of the fracking protest.

“I will be the first to admit that this is a significant drain on scarce police resources and, in an ideal world, we would clearly have significantly fewer officers on site.

“However, as recent protest at the site, during which several campaigners ‘locked on’ across both carriageways of the A583, blocking the road for several hours, show there are times when it is absolutely essential to have the number of officers at the site that are currently allocated to the operation.

“Public safety is always our main priority and having this number of officers available is essential for ensuring all parties remain safe.”

insisted police had a duty not only to protect protesters at the site but to ensure energy firm Cuardrilla could keep materials moving.

He said: “What Cuadrilla are doing is legal and we have an obligation to ensure they can go about their lawful business. However we have an equal duty to facilitate peaceful protest and our approach is always to encourage people to move voluntarily when deliveries are being made to site.”

Supt Robertshaw said force was only used as a last resort.

He said: “There will be occasions when our requests are ignored. At this point, it may be entirely appropriate for police officers to use the minimum force necessary to get people to move to allow Cuadrilla to make lawful deliveries to the site.”

**Fylde police station at centre of fracking protest**

TIM GAVELL

Email

Published: 17:26

Updated: 17:34

Wednesday 17 May 2017

Around 100 campaigners gathered at Kirkham Police Station to protest over the policing of fracking.

They handed in a letter signed by hundreds of people to the Chief Constable expressing concerns about the number of police involved and what they view as over-aggressive policing leading to some people being injured.

While the event was billed as a silent vigil, at times some protesters chanted “we said no” while standing on the entrance road to the station and a couple shouted aggressively in the faces of police officers.

Most people there, however, were peacefully making their point. Among those was Barbara Richardson from the Roseacre Awareness Group.

She said: “We just want to show Lancashire Police that the police presence has been heavy-handed at Preston New Road, has been facilitating Cuadrilla’s drilling operation and not allowed us to carry out our rights to peaceful protest.

“This issue is not going away and the police need to work with us to find a better way of dealing with it.”

The protest was organised with human rights group Netpol, whose spokesman Kevin Blowe said: “The letter calls on the incoming Chief Constable, Andy Rhodes, to take part in a public meeting, ideally with Police and Crime Commissioner Clive Grunshaw, to listen to concerns about strategy at the site.”

Speaking for Lancashire Police, Supt Richard Robertshaw said: “Our intention is to facilitate peaceful protest but that has to be balanced by the right of Cuadrilla to develop their site.”

Road closed due to anti-fracking protest Fracking demonstrators at the site in Preston New Road this morning

Pic: Ros Wills DARIA NEKLESA Email Published: 07:32 Updated: 09:21 Tuesday 02 May 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

A major road has been closed following an anti- fracking demonstration in Little Plumpton, say police. The A583 Preston New Road between Peel Road and Westby Road is currently closed. A major road has been closed following an anti- fracking demonstrationin Little Plumpton Pic: Googlemaps A witness who was trying to pass the site said they saw protesters lying on the carriageway stopping a large truck turning into the site. Traffic management and a diversion have been put in place, although some delays are expected.

**Fracking site road blocker fined Police at the Preston New Road fracking site**

TIM GAVELL Email Published: 16:23 Wednesday 24 May 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

A pensioner blocked a major road in Lancashire during a protest against fracking. Barbara Cookson, 66, of Lawrence Grove, Liverpool, pleaded guilty to obstructing a highway.

She was fined £100 with £70 costs and ordered to pay £30 victims’ surcharge by Blackpool Magistrates’ Court. Prosecutor, Jim Mowbray, said Cookson was among a number of anti-fracking protesters walking very slowly across the A583 Preston New Road, Westby-with-Plumpton, opposite Cuadrilla’s shale gas site and obstructing the road on April 19.

Cookson said she had been slow walking across the road and when police asked the protesters to stop she “went floppy” and officers arrested her.

She confirmed she had a criminal record involving two previous convictions for aggravated trespass and one previous conviction for assault which she acquired when she was involved in anti-fracking protests.  
  
Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/environment/fracking-site-road-blocker-fined-1-8560653

**Contraflow put in place at Preston New Road fracking site**

Contraflow put in place at Preston New Road fracking site PIC: LET US BE FRACK FREE

DARIA NEKLESA

[Email](mailto:daria.neklesa@jpress.co.uk)

Published: 10:13Friday 30 June 2017

Two towers and a crate have been built as part of  a protest outside the Cuadrilla fracking site, say police.

Fylde Officers say that Preston New Road has been partially blocked in the latest 'lock-on protest' that is being staged by anti-frackers.

Four people are currently thought to be locked-on at the site.

A contraflow has been implemented using temporary traffic light to allow vehicles to pass the site.

Police have confirmed that the 'protester removal team' are currently on their way to the area.

**Towers protest at Fylde fracking site Anti-fracking protesters built two towers at the site of Cuadrilla's drill site at Preston New Road near Little Plumpton**

TIM GAVELL Email Published: 14:33 Friday 30 June 2017 1 HAVE YOUR SAY

Anti-fracking protesters say they are determined to delay the arrival of the main drilling rig at Cuadrilla’s shale gas site on the Fylde.

More than 100 people gathered at the Preston New Road site on Friday to support protesters who had built two towers out of pallets overnight to blockade the entrance to the site.

Four people also locked themselves together across the entrance. Meanwhile at the Marriott Drilling Group in Chesterfield protesters halted a four lorry convoy of what they claimed were parts of the main drilling rig bound for the Fylde site.

Police blocked off the Eastbound lane of the A583 and set up a contra-flow traffic light system while they worked to cut free the locked on protesters.

Tina Rothery from the Lancashire Nanas group said: “Those who oppose shale gas drilling continue to show resilience. We have been here since January and will continue as long as it takes.

Cuadrilla were hoping to get the drill in the ground in March, it is now July.” Independent Fylde councillor Roger Lloyd said: “Today has been very well supported. The people who have been protesting her since January have done so peacefully and without violence and should be commended. Fracking is a crime against the environment.”

But Cuadrilla said today that work had gone ahead as normal on site and pro-fracking group Lancashire For Shale said the protests blocked the roads and were costing the tax-payer.

A spokesman from Lancashire For Shale said: “All of these actions will be to the detriment of the Lancashire taxpayer, who will eventually have to bear the cost, including the cost of bailiffs to evict the protesters from trespassing on the Council’s own land.

“This is yet another attempt by a bunch of professional protesters to intimidate and harass people who are legally going about their business.”

**Vandals attack fracking firm's head quarters The vandalism at fracking firm Cuadrilla's head office in Bamber Bridge**

TIM GAVELL Email Published: 13:00 Tuesday 06 June 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Police are investigating after vandals attacked the headquarters of shale gas drilling firm Cuadrilla.

The words “CuadKilla” and “scum” were sprayed on windows at the Bamber Bridge offices of the firm which is set to drill and frack for gas at Preston New Road, Little Plumpton near Blackpool.

Francis Egan, chief executive of Cuadrilla, said: “This pathetic, mindless stunt in vandalising our head office highlights the intimidation and criminal tactics frequently resorted to by anti-fracking activists.

"The rational basis for their opposition is as lacking as their respect for the law or for others. We are getting on with our work developing shale gas for the benefit of Lancashire and the UK and will support the police in investigating this criminal act.”

Police confirmed that early investigations were under way and that the damage was done overnight on Monday.  
  
Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/business/vandals-attack-fracking-firm-s-head-quarters-1-8580608

**Outside police to join Fylde fracking patrols**

Reclaim the Power protesters at Cuadrilla's offices in Bamber Bridge

Reclaim the Power protesters at Cuadrilla's offices in Bamber Bridge

TIM GAVELL

Email

Published: 17:24

Monday 10 July 2017

0

HAVE YOUR SAY

Lancashire Police is calling in help from other forces as they step up their presence at a Fylde fracking site.

And MEP Keith Taylor has urged Sara Thornton, the head of the National Police Chiefs’ Council, to issue guidelines to officers after claims of excessive force by security guards and police at the Preston New Road site and others in the UK.

Police were called yesterday to shale gas exploration group Cuadrilla’s headquarters in Bamber Bridge after Reclaim the Power protesters picketed outside the building.

Two other protesters climbed on top of a lorry to prevent deliveries at Preston New Road as part of a month of action by the campaign group as Cuadrilla’s main drilling rig is expected to arrive.

A spokesman for Lancashire Police said: “A decision has been made to move to 24/7 coverage of policing the fracking site on Preston New Road for the coming days. This is due to increased protester activity at the site over the last week and is to ensure the safety of protesters, Cuadrilla staff and members of the public.

“Due to the need for extra resources, a number of other forces will be providing mutual aid in July and August.”

Claire Stephenson, from Frack Free Lancashire, said: “Keith Taylor MEP is right to demand an urgent intervention and review of the increasingly violent tactics that are being used towards peaceful anti-fracking protesters by both private security guards and the police at Preston New Road. Frontline campaigners have repeatedly been subject to violence and assaults since day one.”

**Anti-fracking protest sparks road chaos Police closed the A583 Preston New Road after three anti-fracker protesters locked themselves together to block deliveries to the shale gas drilling site.**

TIM GAVELL Email Published: 10:24 Wednesday 12 July 2017 0

HAVE YOUR SAY

Anti-fracking campaigners have come under fire for a lock-on protest which resulted in the closure of  the A583 near Blackpool. Pro-fracking groups said the action was irresponsible and claimed an ambulance was delayed. Anti-fracking protesters at the Preston New Road shale gas drilling site

The event was part of Reclaim the Power’s month of action against fracking centered at Cuadrilla’s Preston New Road drill site.

Police chose to close the entire road between Fox Lane Ends and Whitehill Road for around five hours for safety reasons. Three people were arrested after locking themselves together in the road to stop deliveries to the site.

A spokesman from Lancashire for Shale said: “ This led to reports of an ambulance being delayed to transfer a child to hospital. We accept that people have the right to peaceful protest, but such actions are causing distress to local people going about their daily lives in Fylde.

“Sadly, it is unrealistic to ask activists capable of such extreme and callous actions to show basic consideration for the local community, so we call on other more responsible figures in the anti-fracking camp to encourage those responsible to moderate their behaviour.

“Combined with the escalating costs of policing these protests, the impact of professional activists on the lives of local people and Lancashire’s public finances is indefensible.”

But local campaigners said they were left with no alternative but to continue peaceful protest and said that plenty of room was deliberately left on the road to allow traffic to pass.

Fylde resident Nick Danby said: “Any protest action which causes delay or inconvenience is to be regretted but I would ask people to remember that we have explored every other mens of stopping this industry. Lancashire County Council refused planning permission for this development.”

He added that in the protesters’ view fracking would have a negative impact on traffic flow across the county as more wells were drilled and trucks serviced them, as well as the potential to pollute air and water.

Yesterday The Gazette reported that police had been drafted in from other counties to maintain a 24 hour presence at Preston New Road as protests ramped up.

Today shale gas company Cuadrilla said: “The Lancashire public are rightly more than frustrated that the reckless and in many cases illegal behaviour of a small number of national, professional activists is making daily commuter journeys hell and unnecessarily stretching Lancashire’s police force to the limit.

“Cuadrilla is going about its law abiding business and unreservedly condemns the self- serving and selfish actions of these so-called protestors.”

A ‘rolling roadside protest’ is also planned for 9.30am until 11am today, and will involve women dressed in white clothing. It is being held to ‘demand safety for our peaceful protectors, for a calming of the aggression by authorities, and to recognise our human rights to protest’.  
  
Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/business/anti-fracking-protest-sparks-road-chaos-1-8644790

**Preston New Road closed after fracking protest Preston New Road was blocked by campaigners**

DARIA NEKLESA Email Published: 11:28 Updated: 11:33 Wednesday 12 July 2017 0

HAVE YOUR SAY

Preston New Road has been closed in both directions after anti-fracking campaigners blocked the carriagway, say police.

The road has been closed since around 10.50am between Whitehills and Fox Lane Ends while campaigners conduct speeches in the carriageway.

A spokesman for the police said: "A number of campaigners have locked on over at the Cuadrilla site in Preston New Road.

"Drivers should try to avoid the area while the incident is in progress." Anti-fracking protest sparks road chaos

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/transport/preston-new-road-closed-after-fracking-protest-1-8645046

**Road closed once more amid protests at fracking site**

Anti-fracking protesters locked-on at the Preston New Road

TIM GAVELL Email Published: 16:45 Wednesday 12 July 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY A major road into Blackpool was closed for most of the day after anti-fracking campaigners stage a lock-on at the entrance to a drill site.

The protest was staged by four people, three members of the same Lancashire family who locked themselves together with their arms inside large boxes reading ‘families against fracking’ outside the gates of the Preston New Road exploratory fracking site.

Anti-fracking protesters at the Preston New Road drill site Police closed the road to release them and at the same time a demonstration by 100 women dressed in white calling for calm after allegations of heavy-handed policing and security took place at the site.

However, some scuffles broke out with other protesters as police tried to isolate the locked-on protesters to cut them free and arrest them.

Gillian Kelly, 73, mother of Sebastian, 48, and grandmother of Megan, 19, all locked-on at the site along with Paul Martyn, 61, said: "I’ve never done anything like this before, but I can’t sit idly and watch the place I was born and raised be poisoned and polluted by fracking.

"I feel now I’ve got to make a stand. This will affect my whole family and their futures; my sons, my grandchildren – and that’s why we’re taking action together as a family today."

The protest and demonstration came as as part of the Rolling Resistance month of action, organised by local anti-fracking groups and national network Reclaim the Power.

It aims to disrupt work at Cuadrilla’s site every day in July as the company prepares to bring its main drilling rig to the site to begin the process of drilling four wells to frack and test for gas flow.

The campaigners say fracking, which involves injecting water, sand and chemicals at high pressure into shale rock to release gas, could pollute air and water and lead to tremors and industrialisation of the countryside.

Supporters of fracking, who say it will create jobs, provide a tax boost to the economy and a secure home grown supply of gas for heating and industry, condemned the action of the campaigners saying blocking main roads was irresponsible.

Francis Egan, CEO of Cuadrilla said: “We unreservedly condemn the activists who have yet again blocked a major road regularly used by commuters, tourists and emergency services in Lancashire today.

"This is not the 'rolling roadside peaceful protest’ that was claimed would happen. We call upon them to put a stop to such reckless and aggressive behaviour which is unnecessarily causing more chaos and upset for locals and wasting valuable Police resource.

"We have a democratic right to conduct our business as do those who choose to peacefully protest , there is no justification whatsover for this kind of negligent and irresponsible behaviour.”

And a spokesman from Lancashire For Shale said: "Enough is enough. Our patience is wearing thin, since repeat lock-ons are achieving nothing, besides disrupting the day to day activities of local residents and businesses, at a significant cost to the local taxpayer.

"Tougher action is needed now. It is time for increased fines and judicial sentences for anyone arrested, particularly repeat offenders.

"Lancashire For Shale condemns these ongoing, repeat lock-ons, which are associated with unacceptable aggressive behaviour towards the police.

" Meanwhile Lancashire police said that Christopher Saltmarsh, 21, of Cricket Road, Oxford; Grace Lane, 24, of Ridge Terrace, Leeds and Christopher Wilson, 55, of Preston New Road, Blackpool have all been charged with obstruction of a highway following a lock-on protest on Tuesday and were due to appear at Blackpool Mags on August 7th.

**Waste water worries spark fracking road closure**

Campaigners locked themselves together at the Preston New Road fracking site near Little Plumpton to protest about fracking and its possible effects on water

Campaigners locked themselves together at the Preston New Road fracking site near Little Plumpton to protest about fracking and its possible effects on water

TIM GAVELL

Police set up a contra-flow system on the Preston New Road after five women from Leeds staged a lock-on protest at the fracking site near Little Plumpton.

The women, part of the month-long series of protests from environmentalist group Reclaim the Power, said they had locked themselves on to devices on the road across the front entrance of Cuadrilla's shale gas drilling site to disrupt work for the day in order to call for an end to fossil fuel extraction and a development in renewables.

The women also said they had travelled from Leeds for fear of impact on water supplies and treatment after discovering that Cuadrilla was likely to be sending waste water from drill sites to the Knostrop water treatment works in Leeds.

They say that millions of gallons of water will be needed for fracking which would then be pumped back out from deep underground contaminated with heavy metals and low level radioactive waste which would need cleaning up at treatment sites.

Coralie Datta one of the activists at the site said concerns around fracking waste water have existed since Cuadrilla discharged two million gallons into the Manchester Ship Canal after being processed at the Davyhulme treatment works in Trafford in 2014.

She said: “In countries where fracking is already happened there are repeat cases of water contamination, both in the ground and during the treatment process.

"The process of treating post-fracking water in the UK is unknown but Leeds’ Knostrop treatment works is one of the few sites in the UK that has been designated to take fracked water and that is a huge concern to me.”

Skye Golding, one of the women locked on said: “We’re here today to stand with the local community, but also to think about the bigger picture. Across the world there are 300,000 lives lost a year as a direct impact of climate change and this will only increase with the development of a new fossil fuel industry.

"Those least responsible for global warming are the most affected. They did not ask for these impacts, just as the community of Lancashire did not ask for fracking."

Police at the scene were busy cutting the protesters free from the lock-on devices. They warned: "Please be aware a contraflow has been implemented with temporary lights past the fracking site on the A583 Preston New Road. Delays are expected."

Replying to the worries over waste water treatment, Lee Petts, environmental expert at Remsol said: "Wastewater from Cuadrilla's Preese Hall test well was appropriately treated at United Utilities' Davyhulme plant, which then lawfully discharged clean 'final effluent' into the Manchester Ship Canal in accordance with its environmental permit.

“Davyhulme processes sewage flows of around 6,600 gallons a second, which means the total quantity of fracking wastewater accepted at the site over many months in 2011 is the equivalent of just 5 minutes’ worth of normal daily inputs.

"Any waste water from the shale gas site at Preston New Road will be treated by an appropriately permitted industrial waste facility. For example, the Knostrop site in Leeds already accepts and deals with similar wastewater from the upstream oil and gas industry, and from other extractive processes, and so people can be confident of its ability, if required, to accept and deal with fracking wastewater."

**Road closures, celebration and deep suspicion - three hours at fracking protest site** 0:01 / 6:50

ROB STOCKS Email Published: 15:55 Updated: 17:14 Thursday 20 July 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Few issues have divided opinion like the ongoing protests at Preston New Road, where energy firm Cuadrilla is currently constructing a fracking well. In almost daily correspondence to The Gazette, both sides have made their case.

Those battling to halt construction claim police have been heavy-handed and are working not to ensure the safety of all those at the site, but to facilitate Cuadrilla in its work. Those who support fracking say the protesters are causing unnecessary problems for people just trying to get on with their daily lives by blocking the road and therefore, causing it to be closed. Every road closure, every incident is viewed in a different way depending on what side of the argument they are on. And those views are spread widely, without recourse, on social media.

So, how to get to the truth? The Gazette went incognito at Preston New Road on Tuesday, to independently observe events as they unfolded. The 'lock-on'happened during a 'die in' protest Under cloudless skies battle lines have been drawn. On one side stand a line of uniformed police officers, standing together, ranks closed, clad in high visibility yellow.

It isn’t just Lancashire’s officers on duty. A team of officers from Merseyside wait at the roadside some 50 yards away. One of two vans blocking the Cuadrilla gates belongs to officers from Cumbria. Just yards away, across the no-man’s land of a busy A-road, the anti-fracking protesters – self-styled protectors – have made their camp. A small line of tents, crushed up against the hedge-line, is home to a semi-permanent core of campaigners.

Others come and go, either from a nearby camp or their homes in neighbouring towns and villages. At first sight the atmosphere seems peaceful. At one end of the makeshift camp a man is strumming a guitar. Elsewhere people are playing boardgames – I’m invited to join in as I pass. People are cleaning their teeth, chatting, going about their usual morning routine.

But digging a little deeper the lack of trust from both sides becomes clear. My arrival at the scene has not gone unnoticed. Police monitoring CCTV cameras have picked up a ‘new face’ and want to know who I am and what I’m doing.

I’m wearing jeans and a T-shirt...not my normal gear on a Tuesday morning. Two officers, on liaison duty, approach. I’m only too happy to chat but it sparks a reaction from someone in the protest camp, who jump to try to prevent me from being ‘harassed’. It’s a stark reminder of the rift between the ‘protectors’ and the police, one which becomes evident as the morning progresses. It’s the camp residents who make the first move.

The trickle of arrivals changing from a drip to a steady stream is a clue things are likely to change. A speaker is wheeled across the road onto a traffic island and the leaders of the protest make their move, no-mans land becoming occupied territory. The police stand their ground as Cuadrilla’s private security watch on from behind the fences.

The traffic island now an improptu stage, speakers are invited to address the crowd, the message not just anti-fracking but anti-fossil fuel, the protest clearly becoming, to some at least, about far more than one small corner of Lancashire. A delivery to the site causes something of a stir, the police lines parting, vans moved inches to allow the skip lorry access. A ripple of boos breaks out among the protesters, hardly the radical reaction expected, before they return to the business of oration. And then chaos descends. The campaigners decide they are going to stage a ‘die-in’, in solidarity with villagers in Southern Italy who live on the route of a planned gas pipeline.

Officers move to halt traffic as the crowd lie down in the road, a high-visibility yellow ring put in place around the group, with, it seems almost one officer to every campaigner. The protest seems peaceful enough, until, without warning, wild celebrations begin.

Some protesters are dancing, the tone celebratory. “Shut it down, shut it down,” they sing. “They’ve only gone and locked on,” another shouts. “Their hands just slipped into the pipes, it’s an accident,” another says, barely stifling sarcasm and laughter. It is clear they are enjoying a moment of triumph. “We dropped it, right under their noses,” another shouts, dancing to loud music being played from the speaker in the middle of the road. The immediate impression is that this, to the protesters, is a game – they’ve scored a victory over the authorities, they’ve blocked a main road.

The tone has changed, with police moving vehicles into place to shield the scene, a simmering stand-off threatens to become a full blown skirmish, played out between hedgerows under bright summer sun.

It quickly becomes clear the police strategy is to close the whole road and to create a barrier either side of the group. While some officers go to work turning around cars – long queues are already forming – others form a physical barrier.

Anyone who leaves the protest area will not be allowed in. Within the cauldron created by the cordon, there remains something of a party atmosphere.

Some people, however, are getting carried away, taunting police, shouting repeatedly to senior officers. “Police farce, that’s what this is,” shouts one woman. “Make a decision, Maam,” Those within the cordon quickly become aware that police, rather than keeping the clear lane open, have decided to shut the whole road.

The reason for the strategy is not clear. There would be, without doubt, room to get one lane of traffic through.

And campaigners make their opinions clear. “Open the road,” they shout. fearing the police are as much concerned with turning local hearts and minds against the campaigners as they are for their safety.

A scuffle almost breaks out when one of the legal observers walks beyond the police lines. Constables, acting on orders, refuse to allow her to cross.

The same faces who rushed to challenge officers on my behalf are there again, making their thoughts known.

Senior officers quickly step in to resolve the situation while, attempting to take advantage of the distraction, a small number of other campaigners, try to sneak past the police lines.

All the time music is playing, photos are being taken and campaigners film and live stream the scenes.

The stand-off lasts more than half an hour while, quietly, members of the police team work to try to free the locked-on foursome. A change of police strategy is signalled by the movement of vans (cue more remarks relating to driving skills of those behind the wheel). Police close in around the campaign group, finally re-opening the road. Behind the temporary wall created by the line of vehicles work goes on to end the lock-on. But the larger crowd, realising their moment is over, head back to the pavement as the traffic, once again, begins to flow...

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/environment/road-closures-celebration-and-deep-suspicion-three-hours-at-fracking-protest-site-1-8661378

**Welsh officers 'will not facilitate Cuadrilla's business', Police and Crime Commissioner says Welsh officers will no longer be helping out at the site**

DIGITAL REPORTER Email Published: 14:06 Monday 24 July 2017

The Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales Police, Arfon Jones, said officers from the force will no longer 'facilitate Cuadrilla's business' in Little Plumpton. Lancashire Constabulary had announced a 'number of other forces' were helping police Cuadrilla's fracking site in Preston New Road this month and next after protesters stepped up their presence there.

But Mr Jones, an environmental campaigner who fought to halt fracking plans in Wales prior to being elected, tweeted: "No more @NWPolice officers will be going to facilitate Cuadrilla's business in Lancs. Let them pay for their own security. #capacity"

When asked if he helped to 'bring this change about', he replied: "The decision was an operational one over which I have no say but I did make feelings known and may have influenced."

He later said in a statement: "I was told last week there would be no further deployments after I made representations around capacity issues in North Wales and questioned how could we justify sending officers to Lancashire in those circumstances.

“Why should officers from North Wales be sent to police and facilitate an activity where the activity is more or less unlawful in their own country?

“The decision not send any more officers from North Wales after this week may be down to a number of factors, my opposition only being one factor.”

North Wales Police currently has a sergeant and six constables helping out at the site for a second week, Mr Jones's office said. Deputy chief constable Gareth Pritchard said they were there from Sunday, July 9 to Friday, July 14, and arrived back at the site yesterday, where they will remain until Friday.

"However, due to high demands in north Wales over the holiday season, we are unable, at this time, to offer any further support," he said.

"Colleagues in Lancashire are aware of and understand this decision." The Welsh government has made its opposition to fracking clear, and the controversial practice can't be carried out in Wales without permission from natural resources minister Carl Sargeant.

Mr Jones said he was 'prominent' in lobbying the government to issue the moratorium, and will continue to fight to ban fracking completely. "I have opposed fracking as I considered it a danger in many respects, but mainly because of potential pollution of water," he added.

Earlier this month, Lancashire Police said it had decided to police the Preston New Road site round-the-clock amid 'increased protester activity'.

Campaigners announced a month of action, which saw protesters 'lock on' using metal tubes, including inside vehicles, and climb on top of lorries, as Cuadrilla's main drilling rig was expected to arrive.

A Lancashire Police spokesman said the decision to police the site 24/7 was made to 'ensure the safety of protesters, Cuadrilla staff and members of the public,' and added: "Due to the need for extra resources, a number of other forces will be providing mutual aid in July and August'.

Earlier this year, the force said it was spending £450,000 a month on policing the site, which has been dogged by protests since work began there, and seen Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner Clive Grunshaw voice his concern at the cost. In a recent letter to new policing minister Nick Hurd, he wrote: "Your predecessor replied on April 18 to state categorically that there was no further resources available for policing fracking protests in Lancashire.

"However, since that letter we have seen a significant increase in both the size of the protest and the scale of the tactics used and the impact this is having on the local community.

"Since a 'month of action' was called for by a national protest group on July 1, we have seen 21 people 'lock-on' at the site, protester activity around the clock, the construction of makeshift towers at the site entrance and the A583 (Preston New Road) fully closed on three separate occasions but a contraflow needed in a further eight instances.

"This is a real concern as the road is an emergency service 'blue light' route. "In response to this increase, Lancashire Constabulary have made the decision to move to a model of policing the site 24/7.

"This increase in policing presence has necessitated calling in mutual aid from other forces in the region and I understand there may be a need to move to a national call for assistance. "This additional assistance comes, quite understandably, at an additional cost as officers need to be housed and fed while they are away from their home force as well as other associated costs.

"I am therefore urgently requesting that you review the decision made previously at the Department that no financial support can be provided from central government to Lancashire Constabulary."

Mr Grunshaw said in a statement today: "Officers are at the Preston New Road protests to ensure public safety, facilitate peaceful protest and keep the road open as much as possible to allow others, including Cuadrilla, to conduct their lawful business.

"The ongoing operation continues to put a strain on our resources and the move to 24/7 policing has required us to utilise mutual aid to call in support from other forces. This is an operational decision from our constabulary and whether other forces are able to support is a decision for them to make.

"The decision which led to this operation was made by the Government and due to this I continue to call on them to fund the costs for this ongoing operation. I met with Lancashire MPs in Westminster last week who agreed to write a joint letter to the minister in support of our claim that this should be centrally funded."

Cuadrilla, which has talked of the 'irresponsible and intimidating' behaviour of some of the protesters, who have in turned complained about police being heavy-handed, hopes its operation at Preston New Road will see gas flowing into the national grid next year.

Claire Stephenson from Frack Free Lancashire said: "With respect to the decision by North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, Arfon Jones, he is absolutely correct on all of his stated points.

"Fracking poses significant risks to the community, public health, environment climate and so on. These risks cannot be mitigated.

"The fanciful idea that a publicly-funded service such as police forces from several counties should be responsible for facilitating a private corporation to operate in a community, is an outrage.

Cuadrilla and other fracking companies need to realise that if they are unable to operate without police as corporate security, then their business is untenable and unsustainable."

A spokesman for Cuadrilla said: "We strongly condemn the increased illegal and aggressive behaviour of activists which has put all road users near our Preston New Road site at serious risk.

"We ask that those responsible for the activity put a stop to such reckless and aggressive behaviour which is unnecessarily causing more chaos and upset for locals and wasting valuable police resource.

"We and the companies and individuals that work with us have a democratic right to carry out our lawful work without any of our staff or contractors suffering intimidation. "The right to protest should not supersede the right to work.” Pat Davies from Preston New Road Action Group added:

"Any policing bill should not be met by local people but by Cuadrilla. They should meet those costs in full. "It's somewhat ironic to expect a police force from Wales to facilitate a frack site in Lancashire when the actual process in Wales is not currently allowed."

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/environment/welsh-officers-will-not-facilitate-cuadrilla-s-business-police-and-crime-commissioner-says-1-8666647

**Preston New Road closed due to fracking protest**

Preston New Road - closed after protesters climbed onto wagons

DARIA NEKLESA

[Email](mailto:daria.neklesa@jpress.co.uk)

Published: 08:48Tuesday 25 July 2017

Preston New Road is currently closed due to a fracking protest, say police.

Fylde Police have said that they have closed the road in both directions after campaigners climbed onto wagons and blocked the road.

The road is closed between Whtiehills and Fox Lane Ends.

Drivers are advised to find an alternative route.

**Delays after lock-on protest at Cuadrilla Four campaigners are locked on in both sides of the carrigeway between Fracking site and Westby Road.**

DARIA NEKLESA Email Published: 07:33 Wednesday 26 July 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

A contraflow has been put in place outside the Cuadrilla fracking site this morning following a lock-on protest, say police.

Four campaigners are believed to be staging a lock-on in the carriageway on Preston New Road. Campaigners are also protesting on top of lorries Traffic is reported to be "heavy".

A police spokesman said: "Please be aware of four campaigners locked on in both sides of the carrigeway between the fracking site and Westby Road. "This has caused us to have to manage single flow of traffic. Traffic can still pass between the two lock-ons but please drive past slowly and with care especially in the current weather conditions.

"While we will endeavour to keep the carrigeway open and flowing, the safety of everyone is paramount. This delay is in addition to the traffic light contraflow near Whitehills." Drivers are advised to expect disruption and seek an alternative route if possible.

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/environment/delays-after-lock-on-protest-at-cuadrilla-1-8669796

**Decision to deliver rig at 4am was Cuadrilla's Police have put a contraflow in place on Preston New Road after protesters staged a carnival**

DARIA NEKLESA Email Published: 12:35 Friday 28 July 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

The decision to have a rig delivered to a Lancashire fracking site at 4am in breach of planning regulations was ultimately made by Cuadrilla, say police.

Police have said that although liaison with the company is on-going, they are not responsible for the suspected planning breach at the Preston New Road site on Tuesday.

Cuadrilla are under investigation by County Hall for delivering the rig outside of permitted hours, which breaks strict planning rules. Cuadrilla said it was a decision made after "consultation with police".

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/environment/decision-to-deliver-rig-at-4am-was-cuadrilla-s-1-8674922

**Hundreds sign letter of support for Lancashire Police over fracking response**

The letter praising the police response was addressed to the chief constable

STAFF REPORTER

Email

Published: 12:30

Saturday 29 July 2017

More than 300 people have signed a letter praising the policing operation at the Preston New Road fracking site in Lancashire.

Brent Crossley, from Blackpool, visited Kirkham police station this week to hand in the letter, addressed to the chief constable.

The letter, signed by 351 people, thanked his officers for their work to keep the county safe.

It specifically mentioned the ongoing Lancashire Police operation at Preston New Road, where energy firm Cuadrilla plans to drill for shale gas.

This month has seen anti-fracking campaigners step up their protests at the site, with daily action taking place. Several arrests have been made in recent months.

Mr Crossley said: "Anyone that has driven past the site, or followed events in the local media, will be very well aware that national activists have shown scant regard for the law or the rights of people trying to use the A583 to get to work or school.

"All of this has diverted valuable police resources from more important duties and cost the decent, hard-working council taxpayers of Lancashire a lot of money.

"I knew I couldn't be the only resident appalled by the treatment police officers on the fracking front line have had to put up with - ordinary men and women that live amongst us in our communities when they're not in uniform - and decided to do something about it.

"The response has been amazing, and shows that the police are fully supported by the vast majority of law abiding people who, regardless of their views on fracking, just want these activists to stop willfully breaking the law and wasting everyone's time and money."

Meanwhile, protesters, who have previously alleged that their treatment at the site has at times been heavy-handed, have repeatedly insisted they have a legal right to protest - and will continue to do so.

Following the arrival of Cuadrilla's drilling rig at the site on Thursday, Frack Free Lancashire issued a statement saying: “It is abundantly clear that community protest has had a major impact on Cuadrilla's attempts at making progress at this site and it will continue to do so.

"As Cuadrilla's work on this site intensifies and its predicted impacts start to be felt, our protest will continue, as is our legal right.”

An investigation is currently underway into alleged an alleged breach of planning regulations when the drilling was delivered outside of the permitted hours.

**Councillors join residents in lock-on anti-fracking protest 13 protesters locked-on at the Preston New Road fracking drill site**

TIM GAVELL Email Published: 09:31 Monday 03 July 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Police have put a contra-flow traffic system in place on the A583 near the Preston New Road fracking site.

It came after 13 Lancashire residents, including three councillors, took direct lock-on action in an ongoing bid to prevent shale gas extraction by exploration company Cuadrilla at the site near Little Plumpton.

The protesters arrived at the site at around 3am where the company's main drilling rig is expected any day now, and blockaded the entrance, locking themselves to heavy objects and preventing any vehicles from entering the site.

Lancashire County Councillor Gina Dowding, who is one of the councillors taking part in this direct action, said: “It’s abundantly clear that when it comes to fracking, local councils have been rendered weak and helpless. "I feel I need to be here with the community to say that we won’t roll over and accept this. We are putting our bodies on the line because our voices haven’t been heard.”

Fylde Borough Councillor for Warton and Westby, Julie Brickles, said: “I’m sometimes called the anti-fracking councillor. I strongly disagree with this: I’m the pro-community councillor and Westby is my community. Residents are rightly scared and we have now run out of options.”

Kirkham Town Councillor, Miranda Cox said: “When your community and family is threatened, you are often left with little choice but to take direct action. "As a councillor and member of this community, I have been left with no more alternatives. I feel our way of life locally is under attack by an industry that, backed by a distant central government, is seeking to turn Fylde and Lancashire into the largest gas field in Europe. I cannot stand by and allow this mass industrialisation to happen.”

The protesters said they were angry that the Government has allowed fracking to go ahead despite the parish council, borough council and county council's opposition. Communities Secretary Sajid Javid ruled in favour of Cuadrilla's bid to drill and frack at Preston New Road following a six week public planning inquiry.

Those who support fracking say it will bring jobs, boost the economy through tax revenues and provide a home-grown secure source of gas for industry and to heat homes.

Anti-fracking protesters say that fracking is an expensive and disruptive method of extracting gas from deep underground, threatens the local environment with potential pollution, earth tremors and industrialisation of the countryside. The campaign group Reclaim the Power has said it will be staging a month of activity in the area called Rolling Resistance in Lancashire to oppose fracking.

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/councillors-join-residents-in-lock-on-anti-fracking-protest-1-8628037

**Police thanked for protest ‘restraint’ Police hold back protesters outside Kirkham Police Station during one demo**

Published: 10:05 Monday 31 July 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Pro-frackers have publicly backed police who have come under fire for the way they are handling protests at Cuadrilla’s controversial fracking site.

Lancashire Police officers have been forced to deal with repeated ‘lock-on’ protests by anti-frackers, campaigners climbing on lorries delivering to the site and accusations of facilitating Cuadrilla’s business.

National activits have shown scant regard for the law But those who are supporting the industry say officers have maintained their professionalism despite “extreme provocation and unnecessary abuse.”

A letter, purportedly signed by 351 people, was handed into police at Kirkham last week by pro-fracker Brent Crossley thanking officers for trying to maintain public order with “dignity”.

He said: “Anyone that has driven past the site, or followed events in the local media, will be very well aware that national activists have shown scant regard for the law or the rights of people trying to use the A583 to get to work or school.

All of this has diverted valuable police resources from more important duties and cost the decent, hard-working council taxpayers of Lancashire a lot of money.

“But it was seeing the daily abuse that officers receive that made me think of organising a jointly signed letter to the Chief Constable.

“The response has been amazing, and shows that the police are fully supported by the vast majority of law abiding people who, regardless of their views on fracking, just want these activists to stop wilfully breaking the law and wasting everyone’s time and money.”

Lancashire Police is now monitoring the site 24 hours a day after revealing it is costing them £450,000 a month to police it. Anti-frackers have staged repeated protests at the site throughout July as part of a pre-warned month of action.  
  
Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/business/police-thanked-for-protest-restraint-1-8678154

**Carriageway blocked at Cuadrilla fracking site Drivers in Fylde are being warned of possible delays this morning as another lock-on protest begins.**

DARIA NEKLESA Email Published: 06:47 Wednesday 05 July 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Drivers in Fylde are being warned of possible delays this morning as another lock-on protest begins.

Two protesters are locked-on under a car which is currently blocking the eastbound carriageway of Preston New Road, say police.

A spokesman for Lancashire police said: "At around 2.30am this morning a car pulled over near to the entrance of the Cuadrilla site. "Several people got out of the car and two people managed to lock-on.

"The situation is being managed by police officers, and traffic is able to pass. However, there may be delays as traffic builds in the morning."

This latest protest comes after anti-fracking campaigners promised to stage “an unprecedented month of resistance” on the Fylde.  
  
Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/transport/carriageway-blocked-at-cuadrilla-fracking-site-1-8631789

**Police investigate Fylde fracking assault claims**

Photograph from Kristian Buus and Reclaim the Power of the incident at Preston New Road

TIM GAVELL

Email

Published: 17:06

Wednesday 05 July 2017

Police are investigating an alleged assault at the Preston New Road fracking site.

Protesters say a man was punched and put in a headlock, while another had his leg trapped in a car door and others were pushed into the road on Tuesday at 5.30am.

Ellen Gibson, from Reclaim the Power said: “The brutality by Cuadrilla’s security team represents a totally disproportionate, violent and unnecessary response to the ongoing peaceful protests at Preston New Road.

“While security guards may be allowed to use ‘reasonable force’ to eject someone from private property; punching demonstrators in the face while pinning them to the ground on a public road amounts to assault.”

But shale gas exploration company Cuadrilla denied that anything illegal had occurred and said their security team faced harassment.

Francis Egan, from Cuadrilla said: “An incident occurred during which there was an altercation between a protester and a member of our security team.

"The team are used to dealing with a number of protesters, most of them peaceful, on a daily basis. However on this occasion, the protester became aggressive.

"We understand that the protester was appropriately restrained and then handed over to Police, who were present throughout the brief incident. The matter is now in their hands and we will assist them in any investigation which follows.

"Since the incident, the employee concerned and his family have been subjected to unacceptable harassment and intimidation, which is also under investigation by the police."

A police spokesman said: “A complaint has been made and we are investigating.”

**Road closure due to fracking protest Part of Preston New Road is currently closed after protesters locked-on outside the Cuadrilla fracking site**

DARIA NEKLESA Email Published: 06:32 Thursday 31 August 2017 10 HAVE YOUR SAY

Part of Preston New Road is currently closed after protesters locked-on outside the Cuadrilla fracking site, say police. The road is currently closed in both directions between School Rd and Fox Lane Ends.

A spokesman for the police said: "There is a lock-on with two very wet individuals positioned in the road. "We have closed the road out of concern for their safety."

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/transport/road-closure-due-to-fracking-protest-1-8729652

**Councillors face court over Fylde fracking protest Police and protesters at the Preston New Road fracking site where the councillors were arrested**

TIM GAVELL Email Published: 09:55 Tuesday 08 August 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Three councillors have appeared in court charged with offences alleged to have taken place during an anti fracking protest.

The three were among 12 people arrested on July 3 this year outside the Cuadrilla shale gas drilling site at Little Plumpton.

It will be the biggest single prosecution of its type since protesting started. They are all charged with wilfully obstructing the highway – the A583 Preston New Road – which runs alongside the site. They are also charged under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act with hiding or depriving people working for Cuadrilla of tools and works clothing. ADVERTISING

They are: Lancashire County Councillor Gina Dowding, 54, of Aldcliffe Road, Lancaster; Fylde councillor Julie Brickles, 52, of Habour Lane, Warton; Kirkham Town councillor Miranda Cox, 48, of Ribby Road,Wrea Green. The others facing charges are: Catherine Jackson, 49, of Mowbray Road, Fleetwood; Nick Sheldrick, 36, of Clayton Crescent, Blackpool; Barbara Cookson, 66, of Lawrence Grove, Liverpool; Jeanette Porter, 31, of Shepherd Road, St Annes; Nicholas Danby, 55, of Preston Road, Inskip; Daniel Huxley Blythe, 35, of Rutland Road, St Annes. Cookson is also charged with aggravated trespass at HillHouse business park, Thornton.

The appearances in court are among the first of almost 100 arrests made during a month- long ‘rolling resistance’, organised by protest group Reclaim the Power. Three other defendants will appear at a future date. The accused were all bailed by District Judge Jeff Brailsford at Blackpool Magistrates court until their trial starts on November 13.

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/business/councillors-face-court-over-fylde-fracking-protest-1-8691317

**Blowing your horn for and against fracking Brian Morrison, anti-fracking campaigners and how we broke the story.**

DIGITAL REPORTER Email Published: 10:44 Monday 25 September 2017

Commuter Brian Morrison attracted the attention of the police after he honked his car horn in support of protesters alongside the A583.

The story sparked an extremely lively debate among readers There is nothing more divisive among our readers than the topic of fracking. Any story we run on the issue at the Preston New Road site attracts wildly conflicting views on the process, the roadside protests and the police presence.

Anti-frackers often clash on forums with people frustrated by the number of protests on the A583 which have led to the road being closed on several occasions. ADVERTISING

So when a commuter said he had been threatened with arrest and a police charge for honking his car horn in support of the anti-frackers, it was bound to spark another lively debate. And so it did! Brian Morrison, 47, from Blackpool has made an official complaint saying that he was shouted at and threatened with arrest after beeping to support campaigners.

Lancashire Police said it had received the complaint. It is believed the officer involved was from out of the county, perhaps from Cumbria. While some accused the police of being overly-aggressive to those who honk their support, others said Mr Morrison should have been arrested for breaking the law. Here’s a range of your comments A car horn is fitted for safety.

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/blowing-your-horn-for-and-against-fracking-1-8771129

**Honking convoy in Fylde fracking protest 0:07 / 1:39**

TIM GAVELL Email Published: 16:16 Friday 29 September 2017 More than 20 drivers joined a convoy of noise at the Fylde fracking site to support a Blackpool man threatened with arrest for honking his support for anti-frackers.

Brian Morrison who runs BizSocial Networking made an official complaint to Lancashire Police after being stopped at the site by a officer who ordered him to stop beeping when he passed on his way to work.

Brian Morrison leads the beeping convoy past the fracking site at Preston New Road On Friday he led a convoy of cars driving slowly past the site all beeping their horns. The site was also the scene of a protest against Cuadrilla’s shale gas drilling operation there from anti-fracking campaigners from Northern Ireland, Lancashire residents, Quakers and trades union activists.

While supporters of fracking say it would provide a home-grown gas supply, jobs and a boost for the local economy, opponents say it will create few jobs and the process risks polluting the environment as has been reported in the US.

Brian Morrison said: “I am still upset with the police for being stopped and shouted at but I said I would carry on supporting the campaigners and I have. “I had so many messages of support on social media that we decided to have the convoy to make a point about the right to protest.”

Tina Rothery from the Lancashire Nanas campaign group said people who have maintained a vigil at the roadside since Cuadrilla started working in January were glad of Brian’s support. She said: “I have huge admiration for people like Brian.

This highlights the right to protest and for people to beep their horn in support when they feel like it. “It is not a built up area or after dark.

This convoy is a typically British way of responding.” Kirkham town councillor Miranda Cox said: “The support we get from drivers like him as we stand along the roadside has been incredible and the beeping really cheers us up.

“When you take away someone’s right to express themselves then they will respond in such a way as this. It is important to protect people’s right to protest. It is also great to see such a humorous response.” Pam Foster, from Residents Action on Fylde Fracking, said: “It’s fantastic to be joined by campaigners from Northern Ireland who also have the unwanted experience of drilling in their community and who are here to show their support, alongside trades unions and Quakers.”

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/business/honking-convoy-in-fylde-fracking-protest-1-8780230

**Warning over four-hour road closure after anti-fracking protest Fracking protesters hold up a lorry on Preston New Road**

Published: 06:00 Updated: 09:37 Thursday 12 January 2017 0 HAVE YOUR SAY

Police have warned anti-fracking protesters they face arrest if there is a repeat of yesterday’s actions which saw one of Fylde’s busiest roads partially closed for four hours. Yesterday police were forced to close Preston New Road, near the fracking site at Little Plumpton.

It is thought campaigners from outside the area were instrumental in yesterday’s protest. Protesters attempted to block a lorry delivering supplies to the site where shale gas test drilling is to take place. Police initially closed both lanes at 10.30am before the road was re-opened four hours later.

The eastbound carriageway was closed for the full four hours while the westbound lane was open for some of the time. Police have warned protesters they will be dealt with “fairly but firmly” if they continue to block the road, which is a major arterial route into Blackpool.

Sgt Andy Hill said: “While we have a duty to facilitate people going about their lawful business we also have a duty to facilitate peaceful protest.

“It is regrettable that the actions of a small number of individuals went beyond this at times which resulted in us having to implement road closures for safety reasons.

“This step was taken as a last resort and we understand the disruption this has caused however we hope that people can recognise this was done in order to ensure the safety of all concerned. Local officers are continuing to engage with all parties to reduce any future disruption.

“We appreciate the continued co-operation from the local community and we would like to thank them for their patience and understanding.”

Local protesters have previously held a slow walking demonstration to disrupt traffic to the site. But out-of-towners are believed to have been responsible for yesterday’s road closure, sparking criticism from pro-shale groups.

Babs Murphy, chief executive of the North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, called on police to reconsider its approach in light of the disruption.

She said: “Countless local people and businesses will have been inconvenienced.

“Even more seriously, the potential threat to life resulting from delays to ambulances and other emergency services as a result of the extensive delays caused would have been significant.”

A spokesman for Backing Fracking said: “Fracking campaigners have been joined by anarchist activists, many covering their faces with scarves in order to avoid identification, who have held-up deliveries to the shale gas site and are now simply standing in the road.

“It illustrates how quickly local campaigners can lose control of protests to lawless elements.” Francis Egan, CEO of Cuadrilla, the firm carrying out the test drilling, said his company had been facilitating campaigners’ rights to protest peacefully without blocking the road. He added:

“Protesters at our site publicly committed they would not block the main Preston New Road.

“However, they have already reneged on this. This has caused major disruption and delay to local traffic and more importantly could delay emergency services. “Today’s actions are a blatant disregard for the law and for the many road users caught up in this illegal action. They are also an unnecessary drain on local taxpayer’s policing resource.”

However, Claire Stephenson, from the Preston New Road Action Group, blamed Cuadrilla for the hold-ups.

She said: “People nationwide are incensed that this government overturned local democracy for the benefit of dirty industry.

“People will come and protest however they feel is best for them to delay a company with no social licence from progressing in Lancashire. They should expect continued disruption ongoing.”

John Hobson, of the Defend Lytham group, said: “We fully support the right of local people and other supporters to exercise their rights to legitimate protest against inappropriate development, and it’s our view that fracking in the Fylde falls into that category.”

He said he could not comment specifically on yesterday’s road closure but added: “It is evident that it is not in the public interest for the road to be closed for any length of time.” Lytham businessman Tony Raynor, managing director of Abbey Telecom, said yesterday’s protests ‘overstepped the mark’.

He added: “Forcing the closure of the A583 for such an extended period, preventing businesses from going about their daily work, will be having an unseen but significant impact on the local economy and can’t be tolerated. “The police must take proportionate action and prevent disruption on this important supply route.”

His comments followed claims by Lancashire For Shale that disruptions to goods deliveries and employees struggling to get to work because of the road closure could have cost the local economy £85,000 an hour. Bob Dennett, of Frack Free Lancashire, said people were right to protest in a lawful and peaceful manner.

He said: “I support any protest that is peaceful and lawful, I am 100 per cent behind that and will continue to be. If people come to support the protest from other areas they will certainly not be unwanted. “I have been across the country to support protests and marches about fracking in other areas and I see nothing wrong with that.”

Mike Hill, a consultant engineer from Lytham who has raised concerns about the lack of regulation within the fracking industry, praised the protesters’ restraint. He added: “Some people might say they were being too respectful, if anything. They have done well to be so restrained, because the operation Cuadrilla are proposing is in danger of being a disaster for the Fylde environment.”

Read more at: http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/our-region/blackpool/warning-over-four-hour-road-closure-after-anti-fracking-protest-1-8329714

**Anti-frack pair face court over road block**

editorial image

Published: 10:08

Thursday 02 March 2017

Two anti-fracking protestors accused of blocking a main road have had the first hearing of their case at court.

Louise Hammond and Natalie Middleton are alleged to have obstructed Preston New Road at the Cuadrilla shale gas fracking site.

During the protest it is alleged an emergency ambulance was prevented from travelling at speed and had to stop several times.

Hammond, 53, formerly of the Blackpool Protection Camp, Whitehills Retail Park, Blackpool, now living at Kirby Misperton, North Yorkshire, and Natalie Middleton, 32, of Water Street, Chorley, are accused of wilfully obstructing the free passage along a highway on January 27 this year.

Hammond was bailed to May 11 for trial. Middleton’s case was adjourned.

**I'm going to carry on beeping horn to show my support'**

LENGTH: 596 words

A Blackpool businessman has been left fuming after being blasted by police for sounding his horn at the Fylde fracking site.

READ MORE: {http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/anti-fracking-protests-set-to-be-stepped-up-1-8623427 | Anti-fracking protests set to be stepped up}

Brian Morrison has made an official complaint saying that he was shouted at and threatened with arrest after beeping to support campaigners at Preston New Road near Little Plumpton.

Mr Morrison, 47, who runs networking group BizSocial Enterprises, said he regularly honks his horn as he drives past on his way to work in Preston.

But on Thursday last week he said a police woman ran out across the road as he was driving back to Blackpool and stopped his black Hyundai in the road.

He said: "I normally start beeping my horn as I pass the first banner asking for support and beep on and off as I pass the protesters through to the other end.

"But suddenly this police woman ran out into the road in front of me, she came right across the road, and stopped me.

"I braked hard and all the cars behind me had to stop suddenly too .

"She said to me, Will you stop beeping your horn here every day? We are sick of it.'

"Then she said if I did not promise to not do it again she would get me out of the car and arrest me.

"I said I did not realise it was an offence and pointed out other people did it but she was angry.

"I said I would report her but I could not see her collar number. I was later told she was one of the police brought in from outside the area, from Cumbria.

"After I drove off I looked in the mirror and saw her give the thumbs up to the other police there and they were clapping her."

Mr Morrison, who lives near Stanley Park , said he was so angry that he reported the incident at Blackpool police station.

He said it would not stop him showing support for the protesters at the site.

He said: "I am completely against fracking, I think it is a danger.

"This will not stop me and I will carry on beeping in support of the campaigners. I do it because I cannot go and stand with them at the site myself.

"I have mobility problems, I have had osteoarthritis since childhood and have had a series of hip operations.

"I think it was outrageous for a police officer to behave like that."

Lancashire Police confirmed they had received a complaint.

A spokesman said: "We have received the complaint and are in the process of looking into it." They added that a driver could be said to be committing an offence if they were "using a vehicle to cause unnecessary noise". But they could not confirm that was the case in this incident since they had yet to get an account from the officer concerned. Nick Danby. from Frack Free Lancashire. said: "I am outside the Cuadrilla site at Preston New Road on a regular basis and have been since work started in early January.

"In that time we have had a great deal of support from passing motorists and this support has steadily increased as the site has developed.

"We are regularly serenaded by a passing ice cream van, we regularly get a thumbs-up from a passing bus driver and other motorists are happy to toot their horns as they go past the site.

"It is clear to me that the majority of passing motorists fully appreciate why we are protesting and are happy to show their support for us.

"It is a shame that the police have tried to deter those supporters and have, on several occasions, followed drivers and warned them that they are causing a distraction. They have not been anywhere near as rigorous when vehicles have been clearly breaching the speed limits."

**£2.9m spent already in county as fracking moves closer**

LENGTH: 562 words

Gas exploration firm Cuadrilla has issued an update to its "Putting Lancashire First" commitments tracker.

The latest figures show that the site construction work during April to June this year, at the company's shale gas exploration site at Preston New Road near Blackpool, has more than doubled the total of direct and indirect spend into the county from Cuadrilla and its suppliers.

The total Lancashire spend as at the end of June amounts to £2.9 million compared to £1.4 million in March.

A further nine full time jobs were also created during this period.

Lancashire businesses registering with the Supply Chain Portal managed by both Lancashire Chambers of Commerce in order to be considered for contracts connected to the Preston New Road operations also increased to 569.

Francis Egan, CEO of Cuadrilla, said: "These figures clearly demonstrate that our Preston New Road exploration site in Lancashire has already significantly boosted the county's economy as well as creating jobs for local people.

"As we start drilling the first exploration wells within the coming week we are proud to continue to put Lancashire first in order to ensure the county continues to benefit from this important national need of exploring for a new indigenous source of natural gas."

In December 2016 CEO Francis Egan signed six public commitments to the county of Lancashire to commit Cuadrilla to putting Lancashire first in terms of creating jobs, investment, new skills and community initiatives as a result of shale gas exploration and, if exploration is successful, shale gas production in Lancashire.

The tracker figures have been independently verified by Danbro Accounting Ltd.

But Rose Dickinson, Friends of the Earth campaigner, said: "Putting Lancashire first means listening to what people say, and they don't want fracking.

"These industry attempts to look credible and popular are making no difference when support for fracking is at an all-time low. The true cost is to Lancashire's landscape and quality of life for local people. Nine jobs is a good thing for those nine individuals, but compared to the tens of thousands of jobs that could be secured by investing in renewables then it really does fall away."

Meanwhile, Green Party activists have joined campaigners at the Preston New Road fracking site to ramp up "peaceful" pressure on the shale gas industry and the government

Former Green Party leader, Natalie Bennett spoke at the event, at the side of the A583, and accused police of being "aggressive" towards anti-frackers.

She said: "I'm disappointed to be having to make my third visit to the Preston New Road site. The public of Lancashire, indeed the UK public, have made it very clear that they do not want fracking.

"Lancashire County Council said no, the protectors on site, working day and night for months in the face of aggressive policing, have said fracking must not happen here, yet still Cuadrilla is throwing its shareholders money into a project that doesn't have community consent.

"The Green Party has supported anti-fracking campaigns from the start, and the campaigns have been highly successful in preventing the start of an industry whose existence is indefensible on climate change, safety and wellbeing, and economic grounds.

"We, and the protectors, are also championing the alternatives - community-owned renewables and energy efficiency."

**Greens arrive to add voice to anti-fracking protest**

LENGTH: 212 words

Green Party activists joined campaigners at the Preston New Road fracking site yesterday to ramp up "peaceful" pressure on the shale gas industry and the government

Former Green Party leader, Natalie Bennett spoke at the event, at the side of the A583, and accused police of being "aggressive" towards anti-frackers.

She said: "I'm disappointed to be having to make my third visit to the Preston New Road site. The public of Lancashire, indeed the UK public, have made it very clear that they do not want fracking.

"Lancashire County Council said no, the protectors on site, working day and night for months in the face of aggressive policing, have said fracking must not happen here, yet still Cuadrilla is throwing its shareholders money into a project that doesn't have community consent.

"The Green Party has supported anti-fracking campaigns from the start, and the campaigns have been highly successful in preventing the start of an industry whose existence is indefensible on climate change, safety and wellbeing, and economic grounds.

"We, and the protectors, are also championing the alternatives - community-owned renewables and energy efficiency, which create business opportunities, jobs and energy security."

Cuadrilla is currently constructing its drilling rig.

Interviews

Media Activist – Balcombe Down

04/05/2017

Kathryn McWhirter

Speaker 1: Kathryn?

Kathryn: Yes.

Speaker 1: Hello Kathryn, this is Richard Burn [Fern]. Hello!

Kathryn: Hi. Sorry not to have got back, it's just my mind really. Because I've just been running in too many directions.

Speaker 1: It's quite all right. As I said in my email, I have similar issues with my dad and I know ...

Kathryn: Yes.

Speaker 1: These things can, well they do quite necessarily and quite properly they consume everything. They have to.

Kathryn: Yes. So are you doing a PhD or something?

Speaker 1: I am doing a PhD. I'm doing a PhD at The University of Sheffield, the journalism department.

Kathryn: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And I started out with a journalist and then moved into campaigning. Worked a bit for Greenpeace and a lot for Oxfam.

Kathryn: Oh yeah.

Speaker 1: I also did all kinds of bits and bobs sort of surrounding that. And then I ended up, I got called in to teach undergrads how to write.

Kathryn: What, sorry?

Speaker 1: To teach undergrads how to write. I was ...

Kathryn: Oh, okay.

Speaker 1: I was teaching them journalism.

Kathryn: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And then they said to me, why don't you do a PhD all this stuff you're interested in. And I was like yeah all right then.

Kathryn: Yeah.

Speaker 1: So at the age of 50 I'm now a full time student again, much to everyone's amazement including mine.

Kathryn: Are you from Sheffield?

Speaker 1: I'm actually from Birmingham.

Kathryn: Oh, okay.

Speaker 1: Which is home.

Kathryn: Yeah

Speaker 1: And then teach at Sheffield, teach at Nottingham Trent, I also teach at Birmingham City University which is the [inaudible 00:01:57] [the former Polytechnic as was].

Kathryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: I teach journalism, that's basically what I do. And my research is into police/media relations.

Kathryn: Right, okay.

Speaker 1: I'm talking to everyone that was involved in [inaudible 00:02:21] [in the protest]. So I'm trying to get the broad picture. So I recognise that you probably won't know anything about police/media relations per se, but you'll probably have things to say about how it was all covered.

Kathryn: Yeah, I might have a little bit to say about police/media relations, but I handled during the 2013 summer camp I was handling the press releases for [inaudible 00:02:51] [locals and nationals] the world's press around really to the right people in British to speak to. So I was involved in that, and I was keeping a close eye on the press obviously, and I ...

Speaker 1: So your background is journalism as well, isn't it?

Kathryn: Yes. Independence on Sunday and which ... But also wine, I mean always writing about wine and food and travel really but mostly wine.

Speaker 1: Is that how you managed to get drawn into the role? Did someone ...

Kathryn: Yes, just because I was the person in the village. I mean we actually had an awful lot of skills in the village. I mean we had lawyers, and professors, and experts in burning hydrocarbons in flares, which has been amazingly useful. I mean we just had such a range of [inaudible 00:03:37] [skills] all kinds of reasons, but one of the reasons was that we were a commuting town on the way to London. And the village, we just had all the skills necessary. And yeah, so I was the one that got to well edit things and write things and deal with the country. Also with students actually so I was the right person to deal with you, but I have had all kinds of students from A level to PhD and yeah ... A lot of the village has got student fatigue, it's quite hard to get people to see them and speak to them now because ... No, but I'm really delighted to speak to you. I wasn't meaning that in any kind of ...

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:04:21] [Marin Porter at Barton Moss] said the same thing to me. He said that it was like it became the cause to be at the time and he handled a million phone calls coming in from people doing projects ...

Kathryn: Yeah, I tried to make them go elsewhere. Like, I mean just actually for their own good really. I mean, [inaudible 00:04:38], or Yorkshire, or your area. I mean I'm right by you in the Peak District at the moment, my dad lives in the Peak District. Rather than backtracking to [inaudible 00:04:56] [the protests at Balcombe] but I'm sure you're talking to people all over the place. I have got lots of contacts elsewhere if you have any holes in your geographic coverage.

Speaker 1: Absolutely. The reason I'm looking at [inaudible 00:05:11] [Brighton] mostly is because of the complete data set of coverage. So I can go back to either LexisNexis or the websites themselves, and I can scroll down through the text and that gives me a data set to work with.

Kathryn: Yes.

Speaker 1: I'm also looking at the moment at the situation in Blackpool.

Kathryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: For the same reasons. I'm quite interested in what happens when police start arresting people. What happens in public relations when police start arresting people. Because that's the moment at which it gets quite difficult, the public relations people in the police. Because they have to justify pressure point techniques, or someone getting tasered, or a counsellor being pushed over, or ... You know, they have to justify their actions and that's quite interesting.

Kathryn: Yes.

Speaker 1: Because if you've ever read any Marxism, and I'm not suggesting that you do, but there's a book called [inaudible 00:06:14] who talks about repressive state apparatuses and ideological ...

Kathryn: Which book was [inaudible 00:06:26]?

Speaker 1: Repressive state apparatuses.

Kathryn: Oh, yeah.

Speaker 1: And ideological state apparatuses. And it's interesting that if you work in a press office for a police force, you're both.

Kathryn: Yeah.

Speaker 1: So there you go. So it all starts in 2013, the [inaudible 00:06:51] [in 2013] announces it's going to drill and ...

Kathryn: Well it sort of started for us before that. I mean, we learned about it in December of 2011 and through the press. Because the plan commission was sort of knocked through in an unconventional kind of way. And we knew nothing about it for another 18 months, which didn't help the way we felt about it but I'm sure we would've felt the same about it even if we'd had a better background. But yeah, we were already mobilised by the time they came and held a meeting in May of 2013. They say no, no we probably won't [inaudible 00:07:38] and then suddenly they called a meeting. I mean, we had given them a very hard time in the meeting of January 2012 just after we'd learned about it in the Independence on Sunday actually. And they sort of sat down and they were allowed to speak for 15 minutes at our meeting and over spoke. And they were shouted at at that point, five people including the physics professor I have to say.

This has to come into the police thing that there's an interesting social dynamic in Borkum [transcription error repeated throughout, should read ‘Balcombe’], I think probably more than many other villages in that it's totally owned by ... Well, all the land around about, all the farms and a quarry, all the forests are owned by one family, by the Borkum estate. And a lot of people are lodged by ... a lot of people work for them. And this made a culture of [inaudible 00:08:48] and loving the family. People haven't felt that way about the latest, there's a son who's taken over. But nevertheless there have been generations of people who love that family and Simon Green was the latest one [inaudible 00:09:12].

And there's been a feeling in Borkum against those people who protest. Whether they be people with dreadlocks on the side of the road, or people who dis the government and Borkum estate within the village. Which tended probably to be the more incomers and yeah ... Then the village establishment right across [inaudible 00:09:51] who've been used to running everything form the Parish counsel to the history society and the flower arranging club. It was a great annoyance to those people that the road was blocked, that there were weird people down by the side of the road, that we were sort of wrenching against the conservative government. And the fact that Borkum estates owned everything adds an extra dimension to that. Am I being boring? Is this very relevant?

Speaker 1: Yes.

Kathryn: We've had three different halls in Borkum which were held in different ways and had different kinds of questions. And they've all shown quite a large majority of people against fuel and gas industry being here. But there is nevertheless quite a large chunk of the village who are against the oil and gas industry but are nevertheless against protests against it who actually would kind of rather have the oil and gas industry there than have these weird people within their own community.

So, when the police were here in 2013 on the protests, the people who got to speak to the police they looked high level as well so they had meetings at sort of gold level with the police were that sort of establishment chunk in the village. I mean there were 50 of them who call themselves the something 50 who actually put a letter in the local paper, and it was those people who were sort of chosen by the police to communicate. And we found that supporting the camp and protesting as well were asking for meetings with the police at a similar level to put the thing into a true context, and we never had those meetings, we never got them. I mean they obviously were allowed to speak to people down there. I remember speaking to police actually trying to get such a meeting down there, by the side of the road, and being [inaudible 00:12:39] at slightly by ...

Have you met, have you spoken to Patty Horn? You should really speak to Patty Horn in Bork um. Anyway, bide by Patty Horn that I really shouldn't be so cosy with the police. I mean, I'm not cosy with the police. I now see a police car somewhere and think ... I would think an ordinary middle class person we would expect to ask the police away and hope they might come and help if my house got burgled, but now I have great suspicion at the police ... And they're working from their allegiances. Also, the police allowed [inaudible 00:13:31] [Cuadrilla] to lead officially on communications and that was sort of generally understood that the communication was coming from [inaudible 00:13:50] [Cuadrilla] and having consulted with the police. I'm not sure I have an awful lot to say about communication really, but ...

Speaker 1: It's interesting you mention [inaudible 00:14:03] [Cuadrilla] and police relations. I have in my possession, I'll have to circulate it to you, the police communications plan for the operation and they talk about the [inaudible 00:14:19] [Cuadrilla]. But they also have a list of stakeholders, as you would in any communications plan. And the funny thing is, the protestors are not on that list. It's as though they simply don't see protestors as stakeholders.

Kathryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Which I thought was fascinating.

Kathryn: They did make a distinction between us in the village and protestors that they knew were camping there, which were a huge range of people. A lot of students, foreign students, teachers, all kinds of people. But, if they were camping there they were basically, they were sort of their targets for arrest or being pushed around as far as the police were concerned. But we in the village, we could be much, sort of ... Well I mean I was really quite kind of cheeky sarcastic to them and sort of sauntering around and I didn't feel I was at risk of arrest. I mean, I got pushed off the road sometimes if I sorted too slowly, but they were much more careful with us villagers than ... And you know about Simon [inaudible 00:15:48] [the poet] being the one person who was arrested.

Speaker 1: I do, yes.

Kathryn: Which, I mean simply he ... Well it was a but of a complicated day. All he had done was, he did less than probably we did. I mean he stood on a box and conducted singing in the gateway. It was the day that they were declaring section something or other than means you have to keep moving in a protest. We actually were making a lot of noise and just so that we couldn't hear the guy reading the section whatever.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: And the gesture they made at the end of that was arresting Simon. And sort of marching him off, and he set off to his own, one of them was pulling him one way and the other one was saying well you're resisting me and then the other one pull him the other way and then the other one saying he was resisting him. And Simon was gentle and very vulnerable just in, he was a bit emotional really.

Speaker 1: Did you feel as though you got a fair hearing from The Argus?

Kathryn: From The Argus?

Speaker 1: Yes.

Kathryn: I think The Argus is better than most of the other papers.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: I felt that the midi was very much on the side of the 50 and the establishment of the village, and it was possible to get letters in there and ... But I had quite a good relationship with The Argus really.

Speaker 1: You said the midi?

Kathryn: Yeah the midi is The Mid Suffolk Times which is the paper that really most covers our area. I mean people in our area don't really read The Argus. I wasn't actually so much following what The Argus was doing, I mean our focus was much more on The Mid Suffolk [Sussex] Times, because that's what everyone reads around us. I do now, this is off the record, but I have an arrangement with The Argus now and I used to feed them information quite a lot and I was the person they would call when they knew that something was happening.

I actually got on quite well with them and I felt that they ... The relationship I have now is that they have accepted that I am the energy and climate change correspondent for The Argus and I'm not. I never write anything for them, but I do feed information to them if it's relevant but often the things that I go to as energy and climate change correspondent for The Argus are often nothing to do with anything that they would cover. So that means I can get into certain industry events. Less so now I'm more known, but I mean there are quite a lot of conference things that I can go to like Westminster, and energy transport, and some of these forums. I go to quite a lot of their events. There's a fracking one coming up, but I also go to other things, sort of like solar and nuclear because I actually think it's quite important to be able to answer all the rest of those questions around ...

Speaker 1: Energy.

Kathryn: The rest of the energy issues. So yeah, I have been to numerous conferences that would otherwise have cost a couple of thousand to get in and I might not have gotten in anyway as a landing person but it is quite useful to ... to have that.

Speaker 1: Press credentials, absolutely. I get that. Don't worry, at some point I'll be sending you a transcript of this phone call and I'll also be sending you a form that looks at issues of anonymity. But certainly that little bit, I can make sure appears nowhere.

Kathryn: Why were you asking about The Argus?

Speaker 1: Because that's my main data set.

Kathryn: All right. I think you should ...

Speaker 1: The Mid Suffolk [repeated transcription error should read Sussex] Times is what you're telling me.

Kathryn: Yeah, I think you should look at the Mid Suffolk Times. The Argus is a much more serious paper, as local papers go and it has a bigger staff. And it does a bit more investigative stuff rather than ... The Midi has very few employees and they run it on skin of teeth but it's what everybody reads. I mean it's part of Johnston Press which has, you know they have local papers all around the country including The Blackpool Gazette and I want that thing in East Derbyshire ... The Derbyshire Times actually is theirs as well, and it seems to me that Johnston Press is pretty pro-fracking and pro-industry. It is a bit of a nightmare for the people in the file, the local press is very pro-industry, pro-[inaudible 00:21:36]. And actually, they've been ... They didn't get [do it] here but [inaudible 00:21:46] [Cuadrilla] have bought local support. Sort of like buying kits of football teams, and holding children's parties at Christmas, and renovating the local theatre, that kind of thing. But also taking out big ads in the local papers and really the only paper they read is fair and balanced on matters of oil and gas is The [inaudible 00:22:31] Star.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: And I would say the same in Derbyshire, The Derbyshire Times had a eight page [inaudible 00:22:42] [spread] from [inaudible 00:22:43] [drilling company Cuadrilla?] not so long ago. And their articles are very pro-[inaudible 00:22:50].

Speaker 1: Yeah. Interesting. In some ways kind of inevitable. I mean if you were [Cuadrilla’s] [inaudible 00:23:01] PR person, this is what you would be doing.

Kathryn: Yeah. But [inaudible 00:23:06] around Borkum I don't know, but it was sort of early days and I think they naively were not expecting any sort of big reaction. Frankly, if we hadn't had income as to help us it would've been really hard to make that kind of impact. Because Borkum's on the London to Brighton line and has practically full employment, and it was really hard at the beginning to maintain a presence there until people came and camped.

Speaker 1: How much time do you think you were chucking at media relations at that point? The height of it, 2013. Because you're saying that you were writing press releases. How much time do you think you were chucking at it a week or a day?

Kathryn: Dividing out how much I spent on press ... A lot of it was press queries coming in from outside as well and that could be international, it was quite often international. I would say a day?

Speaker 1: A day a week?

Kathryn: Yeah, but scattered across time. But gradually, it's come to take up most of my time really I suppose. I mean, a good working week still somehow seems to disappear into fracking honestly I feel I do quite a lot of [inaudible 00:24:31] [media work]. And I mean I'm not being paid for this stuff, but Frack Off London I was editing last night and I edited something for Mike Hill who is an engineer in [inaudible 00:24:47] yesterday morning, and somehow those little things fill up over time. And I'm still doing my [inaudible 00:24:57] work and I'm still doing my restaurant buying work but I was writing a book and it's still not published and it's been upstate [beginning to get out of date]. So yeah, it does still check off a lot of my time. And luckily I've got a husband who is also in this but is ... has better self control than I have I suppose. [inaudible 00:25:15] better than I do.

Speaker 1: Yeah, I think it's really interesting if you think about it. A drilling company will have a PR agency and that'll be what? Paying them for probably, shall we say at least two days a week.

Kathryn: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And then the police have a press unit. I mean okay, you had a very supportive local MP, but they all have press units.

Kathryn: We had a very supportive MP?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: Did you say?

Speaker 1: Yeah. Did you not have Caroline Lucas coming along?

Kathryn: Oh, no, well she wasn't our MP but she was so supportive, yes. I see what you mean, but we have a very ... We had Francis Mourd [Maude] at that time as our actual MP and we now have another one who's another toy [Tory], who's not quite as evil but pretty evil. So yeah, Caroline, we were much in contact with Caroline who was great. I was sitting next to her 10 minutes before she was arrested and probably would've been arrested too, but I had [inaudible 00:26:18] ...

Speaker 1: I was just going to say in some ways it always seems to be unfair. If you are opposing something like this, you're giving [doing] it as well as everything else that you're doing.

Kathryn: Yeah.

Speaker 1: There's a real resourcing thing going on. Unless you have someone like [inaudible 00:26:39] [Greenpeace] on your side, which I suppose helps a little but ...

Kathryn: Yeah, I mean Greenpeace were fantastic at the beginning, and actually is 2013. Greenpeace were amazing and they had this woman called Cassie ... I can't remember what her name is now but she was from New Zealand and she went back to New Zealand actually. I kind of a bit lost contact with Greenpeace. I'm off that, they were less proactive. But actually, she helped me quite a lot at the beginning with ... not for long, but I was used to wine and food kind of press releases and she helped me with ... she was quite a snuffy person, but I like that and she was [inaudible 00:27:24], attachment and no journalist is going to answer that, and oh Christ this just goes over to the next page and it's got to be shortened it's got to be factually and full of thought. And that was actually very helpful.

And she invited me to a few things and got ... I mean we go to quite a lot of things in London now and make a nuisance of ourselves and [inaudible 00:27:53] and Westminster and ... we sort of found our way into things, sort of working on labour at the moment and I've got quite ... Well we're having good conversations with shadow labour energy. Hope they're still there, the same people. Had been working a lot on their dens and the ones we knew all had gone really by the time the election happened.

Yeah ... What else should I be telling you about?

Speaker 1: What about social media for a second?

Kathryn: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Twitter and Facebook, were you involved with those at all?

Kathryn: I started tweeting later. I use Twitter now, but at the time I wasn't using Twitter. I don't think anyway. No I think I must've started later than that. My Twitter is Kathryn Borkum if you want to ...

Speaker 1: Yeah. I know this because we've been chatting on it.

Kathryn: Oh, of course we have yeah.

Speaker 1: Because there was one case in the [inaudible 00:29:04] where the tripod went up and they were trying to get ahold of a quote, and they couldn't find anybody ...

Kathryn: And that's because ... Sorry who do I [they] quote?

Speaker 1: They're quoting a Twitter account It's the Trees [If the Trees], which seemed to me to be particularly random, it was like can you really not find someone to quote guys?

Kathryn: Okay, so that is probably my fault for being in Brussels in the European Parliament and not having delegated someone else to do the press while I was away. Because the Queen alliance did a ... I remember looking and watching the intervals of this conference in the European Parliament and looking at videos of the tripod.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: So, yeah they probably only had my contact and I wasn't responding. I mean, that's the problem of them being an [inaudible 00:30:13] [part-time or unpaid] PR person.

Speaker 1: Yeah. I remember reading that report and thinking that was ... As a journalist, and I'm sure you're the same, I would've found somebody ...

Kathryn: Oh, absolutely.

Speaker 1: Quoting Twitter. And the fact that they've not got your telephone number? Did they really not have anybody else's? I remember thinking there's something quite strange happened here.

Kathryn: Yes.

Speaker 1: As an academic, you kind of look at it and you're looking for the power relationships. I looked at the power relationships of that and just thought there's something [really quite interesting] [inaudible 00:30:47]. And I've tried to talk to Ella [Anna] Roberts about, the journalist, and she said [inaudible 00:30:52] on the ... she doesn't want to talk anymore. She's working at PA now, as the social media correspondent funnily enough.

Kathryn: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Or one of the social media correspondents. And yeah, that one struck me as quite odd.

Kathryn: Yes, I was away and frankly, at that time ... You know, you sometimes go through sort of patches of exhaustion. I mean I had one a couple of weeks ago after we'd responded to a North Lincolnshire environmental permit and [inaudible 00:31:28] within far west Suffolk. And Halls Hill had one, and then we had our own one and everyone was asking me to do stuff at the same time, and I just said to my husband, look I've got to stop this. I can't do this anymore I'm just so exhausted. And I had about two days of being exhausted and deciding I wasn't going to do anything and then I cracked and I'm at it again now, but ...

I know that by September I was pretty tired actually ... everybody was really at the end of that summer. Then my mother had a stroke actually, here in [inaudible 00:32:11] in October and then I was always up here and I was a bit out of it most of it, and that's yeah ... I didn't even read that report in The Argus I don't know, but generally I found the Argus nice to deal with and they did used to call me a lot. Possibly more at home, because I work freelance from home but they did have my mobile. And I'm sure I would have dealt with them if I'd had a message.

Speaker 1: Yeah. I find it quite interesting the way in which a decision has been made in the upper echelons have gotten them, probably over a nice brandy somewhere in a London club about fracking. And then everything gets handed down from on high. And then the police find themselves having to enforce this and seeing it very much have that obligation to enforce this. And the moments in which local people get to have an input into this, is the moments in which the police are standing in the way. And I wonder, did you ... I mean I think you've actually already answered this to certain [a certain extent], but did you feel as though somehow you'd been strung on this whole [inaudible 00:33:34]? [The line of questioning here was about whether she felt decision had already been made elsewhere]

Kathryn: Absolutely, yes. And I mean, democracy's failing obviously in other ways like being 980 or something responses to an application for a mining [inaudible 00:33:58] had forgotten to get. Somehow, the environment agency managed to turn that around in three working days.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: When, even when [inaudible 00:34:13] responses went in at the last minute. And, well we discovered afterwards that, because actually ... The thing is it's acidizing at the moment, not fracking in Borkum, although when they first came they said they were here about shale and they were here about fracking, but it's actually acidizing. You know abut acidizing, yes?

Speaker 1: I don't, no. What's that?

Kathryn: Okay, well I'll just backtrack to that in a minute. So, it not being fracking, the environment agency just whisked everything through the computer check and if it said fracking in it, then they strike it. I mean, things like that. I was very careful in responses a couple of weeks ago to the environment agency to put f-ing rather than fracking at every stage, because as we're talking about acidizing I sometimes wanted to compare it to fracking but didn't want the word fracking to be in there. I mean I advised people not to use the word fracking in the recent responses, quite a lot of people have. So yes, I see the environment agency also as being complicit with government. I do see the police as being complicit. I mean I think basically the police are sort of compliant people who don't like people who exercise their right to protest. I mean, I don't think they really believe that people have a right to protest.

Speaker 1: But there is this line constantly in their press material which says something about protecting people's right to lawful protest, balancing people's right to lawful protest against someone else's legal right to practise their business. They're always claiming to be balancing those lines.

Kathryn: Yeah, I mean [inaudible 00:36:16], when they established section whatever in September 2013 they built a, sort of what we called a sheep pen which was beyond the gate because the traffic all had to come from the north, and this was south of the gate so it kind of defeated the purpose. So we were allowed to stand in there. And then one of the agreements that was made afterwards was that the rest of the stragglers who remained at the camp after most left once [inaudible 00:36:55] had left, and one of the agreements they made about them was that they would establish their sheep pen to the north of the gate. And so that sheep pen was made with bales of hay and [inaudible 00:37:12]. I mean, I don't accept that as any kind of dislocating protest, you know, putting people in a sheep pen.

Speaker 1: Yeah. But it's almost as though the real fight happened somewhere in the hallowed halls of London and then by the time it had reached you, it was just you and the police.

Kathryn: Yes. We were carrying on, trying to badger the politicians at all levels. I mean including West Suffolk county council, which is almost entirely tory. We actually stood for local because nobody has this time, but [inaudible 00:38:17] which then went completely tory in the May 15 elections, and we carried out a coupe on the Parish council, which they have no say really in anything. But our Parish council here had been amongst the 50 and had been taken from the village establishment and were against the plans and many of them actually pro-industry and so we ended up with control of the Parish council at the last of the 2015 elections. By drift of people leaving, it's a bit of a hung council at the moment.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: Where people have to [inaudible 00:39:10], not because he wants to be but just because ...

Speaker 1: You've mentioned the dreadlock people turning up there.

Kathryn: The what people?

Speaker 1: So the dreadlocks ...

Kathryn: Oh yes.

Speaker 1: I think were the hippies turning up, and I say that as someone who has many hippie friends.

Kathryn: I have many hippie friends too, yeah.

Speaker 1: So, I mean it in a nice way but ... What the police said to me was the moment at which things started to change was these people, outsiders, turned up, started using the pub, put up a tripod which caused major disruptions to traffic ...

Kathryn: The tripod was right at the end actually. It was September. There were a lot of different things before that, different actions before that.

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:40:13] coverage if you look at it. And it kind of follows the police line, but the police said to me that they thought it was more that the local community started to get whacked off with the protestors.

Kathryn: That was absolutely the 50, I mean I'd be surprised if it was more than those 50.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: But they are 50 influential people within the village and a lot of us used to be down there a lot of the time. You asked me how much time I spent on the press stuff, and I had to think quite long because really I was spending a lot of time doing other things.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: Down there and all connecting work with being down there. There was a lot of the village who weren't pro and we supplied fresh vegetables from our gardens, and they used to get their water from our taps, and food. We supplied them with food and we, not the different people did, I mean they had so many fresh vegetables that they didn't know what to do with them really. The majority of the village was grateful to the people and in real life we couldn't ...

Speaker 1: If the police quite often claim to be representing the local people, and it's as though there's a competition that sometimes takes place in which the protestors are saying we represent the local people and the police are saying no we represent the local people. And that is quite often the place of competition, although it seems that somehow there's a competition to see who has the consensus position. Does that make sense?

Kathryn: Yes. I mean, I think looking at Lancashire now they've grouped a sort of business interest in Lancashire, which a lot of them are not in Lancashire but supported actually by the chamber of commerce.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: Those people are often the ones who are called in to respond and are probably quoted by the police as well. Just as they picked on the usefulness of the 50 in Borkum and the Parish council indeed.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: Here at that time we're totally on side with police and ...

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: In Lancashire and Yorkshire the industry have people that we think must be paid who are giving the industry line and setting themselves up as spokespeople for the community. And we had those people in Borkum. I mean there's this guy called Rodney Jaygo, don't quote him specifically, but he's started going off on cruisers when [inaudible 00:43:52]. And he actually spoke in favour of [inaudible 00:44:01] at the ... They ran out of time as you know having drilled a natural base, not having time to [inaudible 00:44:10] so they had to reapply for planning commission to trust flow.

After they'd left in September of 2013 and at the planning meeting around that planning commission, Rodney Jayco spoke on behalf of [inaudible 00:44:35] and constantly wrote to the papers about it. And there was the former chair of the Parish council Alyssa Stevenson [inaudible 00:44:50] and writing to the papers on the industry side and saying that Borkum was basically against this protest and felt that oil was a good thing. And she for instance was at one point, she was going around other Parish councils where there were threats with the deputy and [inaudible 00:45:17]. It's kind of with that mindset that land was fair to be built upon. I'm saying that it was, the protestors were few and this was a great thing that the country needed done and they should accept it, but it was all about nothing and a myth from incapacitation in the path of the village being against. She also spoke at industry round table things as head of Parish council but pro-industry. So that's why we needed to ... She's still on the council but she's not chair anymore.

Speaker 1: Right.

Kathryn: The council meetings are quite edgy, quite harsh.

Speaker 1: The politics of these things, I'm happily surprised. You mentioned that I should probably chat to a few other people. Is there anyone you think maybe I should have a chat with?

Kathryn: Well there's this guy called Paddy Horne in Borkum, I think you should talk to him. I think he would talk to you. He wasn't a person who would speak to the press in 2013 but I think he's moved on from there. And Paddy was, he must be early 60's and he was a translator for a Japanese company that in 2013 moved back to Japan. He was therefore unemployed at the time when the protests started, and had been very involved in the initial stages of protest in our position and info gathering. And the interesting thing about Paddy, there are lots of interesting things about Paddy, but I think he's somewhere on the Asperger scale somewhere, but low level. But he's got phenomenal memory. And he was terribly useful as an information source and someone who would really research things and that.

But once the, I think he was the only one from the village who was really down there all the time. And there were a lot of us who were there every day to part of the day, and several times a day sometimes. But Paddy would go down there, he didn't sleep down there, but he would go down there first thing in the morning and he would come back very late at night. And he had a very supportive journalist wife, would actually get involved in writing stuff. And two kids who were down there a lot as well who were sort of late teens and he sort of went native down there.

He was a suited, short haired person, clean shaven and now he looks like Father Christmas, well a version of Father Christmas. And he has a long beard, which now he suddenly started to cap. He's gonna shave it off he says when [inaudible 00:48:40] has completely gone from the village. He used to be found in Lancashire and Yorkshire as well and goes around the camp, there's camps elsewhere. And when he was here, I think he was still suspected by the police to be one of the locals and therefore hands off, but he has now been arrested at hotel and has become ... He's very in with the protectors.

Speaker 1: Yeah. The protectors.

Kathryn: Yeah. The protectors.

Speaker 1: Yep.

Kathryn: I mean I see them. I saw a couple at a meeting, I'm definitely on talking terms and there's some that I stayed really in contact with quite a lot. But Paddy is very much in contact all the time and he goes off doing little tiny actions now and he walks trucks and things and elsewhere. And I've been through the paces as well, I've been to Yorkshire, and I went to [inaudible 00:49:54] a couple of times, and I'll be in [inaudible 00:49:58].

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: But yeah, I'll be there later in the summer.

Speaker 1: Could I take an email address for you? Because I'd like to send you a transcript of this conversation if that's okay.

Kathryn: Yeah, I can email you Paddy's email address. I think he would be really useful, if he'll talk to you. Also, well you must've talked to Tina Weathery I suppose.

Speaker 1: I haven't talked to Tina.

Kathryn: But you know of Tina.

Speaker 1: I don't.

Kathryn: So Tina has been, she was, is, I don't know leader of the protests at [inaudible 00:50:43] road. And, well has been walking Norris since ... she's a local granny. She stood for the green party, she's standing again for the green party this time. She stood against ... Anyway she's standing against what matters this time, conservatives in the wild. She does a blog actually, a daily blog on what's going on and the police and so on. And I think she's very interesting to speak to.

The interesting thing there was that she did a deal with the police, and this is amusing and people didn't like this, the protectors didn't like it. But, at the beginning there were just local people and probably 30-ish rotating and they did a deal with the police that they would not camp, but they would be allowed to walk in each lorry and really they walk it and then do a little dance in the entrance and then they would let them in. And there were various roundabout who were furious about that. But then the protectors came in and camped nearby and have changed the policy and type of protest. And interestingly Greenpeace got involved, did you see that yesterday I think?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Kathryn: Blocked the road with those grate things. So it was interesting to talk to Tina about her take on all that. And also to talk to Mike Hill who is this dissident engineer who was in the oil and gas industry for a long time, and sort of came out in 2012 or something and basically saying that this shouldn't happen because the regulations here are rubbish and it was going to do huge damage to the environment and to local people. But he wouldn't come out to say that he was an anti, he was just prepared to come out because he was still doing work in the gas industry. He was prepared to come out and say that the regulations were rubbish. Which, in effect if they had to do proper regulations then it would be too expensive and it was already too expensive anyway. If it was too expensive they would bugger off.

But he was attacked by protest groups, not physically obviously but Mike Hill was attacked for not coming out as being completely anti. Now he is completely anti. Anyway, it's complicated and I think half of those attacks were orchestrated by people who may or may not be infiltrators and paid for by the industry and such.

Speaker 1: Right.

Kathryn: Mike was very much for getting in protectors, encouraging protectors to come, supporting protectors. Because this was happening very close to where he stays. So he would give you the other side from Tina's view. And Tina is not keen on Mike and Mike is not keen on Tina, because they just have ideological differences. I'll send you some emails of people I know who won't mind you contacting them, and my email is KathrynMcWhirter@bturkenwell.com.

Speaker 1: No problem. I'll send across the transcript, it only takes ... I have a typing company that does it so they ... It normally takes about, you'll probably get it at the beginning of next week. At which point you'll have my email address as well. And at that point you can have a look at the transcript, make sure you're happy. You've already noted to me a couple of areas that you would like to be off the record, that's fine. I'll also send you what we call an ethics consent form. It's self explanatory, but it just tells people ...

Kathryn: I know, I've seen lots of those. Basically, I don't mind normally being quoted on anything so you can have everything ready apart from what I said.

Speaker 1: Okay, that's great. And Kathryn thank you so much for your help and for your time.

Kathryn: Oh, I'm sorry it's taken a while to get back to you.

Speaker 1: I hope everything's okay with you and your dad.

Kathryn: Thank you very much. All right.

Media Activist – Barton Moss

16/03/2017

Martin Porter

Voiceover: Please hold.

Martin: Hi, it's Martin.

Speaker 2: Hello Martin, this is Richard [inaudible 00:01:09]. How are you?

Martin: Oh hi. I'm fine, thank you very much. Hold on one minute. [inaudible 00:01:15] Right, Richard, hang on. Now can you hear me all right? It's a bit noisy where I am, I think I might just go outside.

Speaker 2: Okie-doke.

Martin: If that's all right? You can speak away.

Speaker 2: Yeah, I should introduce myself. I'm a friend of Malcolm's from way back, Green Peace stuff and activist stuff, but nowadays ...

Martin: Yeah Malcolm does go way back with me.

Speaker 2: So yeah I'm now doing a PhD and my PhD is looking at the effects of police public relations on regional news coverage, environmental protest, which is why I'm really interested in your experience.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Now what I'll do if you don't mind is once we're done, I'll send through to you a form and it's basically, all it says is, hello, yes, I'm doing a PhD, hello, yes, you have the following rights.

Martin: Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2: Key amongst those is you don't have to answer any questions. So the other thing that's on that form is, I have no special rights before the law. So if the law comes after me, I have to hand over my files, so don’t say anything you wouldn’t want the police to hear.

Martin: No, quite. I don't think you'd have legal privilege here. I understand that. I've been in academic stuff, I've been, yeah.

Speaker 2: The other thing I'm going to tell you is, I'm taping this phone call and I'll send you a transcript of this phone call in a week or so's time, if that's okay.

Martin: Right. That's fine.

Speaker 2: So you were at Barton Moss?

Martin: I was involved in the Barton Moss campaign and kind of lived ... I think it kicked off in November, when the camp started and from about January until when it ended in April, I was basically the media person for Barton Moss.

Speaker 2: Right. How did you get that gig? What happened?

Martin: Kind of by default really. The way Barton Moss protest started, very carefully really, because there wasn't an existing anti-fracking group in Manchester at that time. We had our very first meeting a few days before the first person arrived at camp on the Moss. Further it happened simultaneously, iGas arrived, the camp arrived and fracking in Manchester got off the ground. So, none of us knew each other. They didn't know me. The first two months were chaotic, basically because no one was really taking a lead on the media and I had done it before. I sort of actually took over doing it all.

Speaker 2: So when did you take over... for the media?

Martin: Essentially from January 2014, wasn't it ... November 2013 the camp started, from January ...

Speaker 2: How was it being managed before then? What was ...

Martin: Oh, chaotically. There was a mobile phone at the camp, but it wasn't always answered, or inconsistently. Rachel Thompson, who sets up Northern Gas Gala was sort of doing an awful lot of stuff. She was very active but not terribly organised or effective. She was always contacting people but not putting out press releases or getting the media stuff in a form that they could use.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Martin: The other thing that's important, which we didn't do, was Reclaim The Power [inaudible 00:04:44] winter by locking the gates at the fracking site by Christmas 2013 and that was when the national media at that point, took an interest. It wasn't just the camp that the media wasn't really aware of up until that point, also, we were kind of deliberately being ignored by the media. They didn't think we were a very big story. But [inaudible 00:05:04] for example, it could win the Ken Lopes trial, so that was their excuse for not turning up. But once Reclaimed the Power got that wonderful, very, very evocative image of the road block in the winter. Then we were kind of able to build on the back of that to get more press coverage.

Speaker 2: Reclaime the Power?

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Is that in some way linked to Green Peace?

Martin: No, not at all.

Speaker 2: Because I remember when I did the Reclaim The Light campaign, we used Green Peace, don't know if you were aware of it. Green Peace did a bit of astroturfing on that one.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: But Reclaim The Power, independent organisation, not [inaudible 00:05:42].

Martin: Basically, I mean there was communication but, yeah, they were an independent organisation.

Speaker 2: Fine, okay.

So, you say that you have done media before. What was your background? What did you do before?

Martin: Well, 20 years ago this year I was involved in a media campaign around the second runway at Manchester Airport.

Speaker 2: Right.

Martin: Also, I had done local media for Green Peace and of course I've been part of Green Peace media operations, not running them and not doing the PR, but obviously I was involved enough to see how it was done.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Martin: So I had skills and knowledge I could use.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

So, you took over in January.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Who were you working with, was there anyone in particular at the Manchester Evening News you were working with?

Martin: Not particularly. There was a guy, oh god what was his name ... I think his surname was Thompson, who ended up doing most of the actual coverage. I did speak to him, but not very often. But he was the one who usually, actually ... if they send an actual person to Barton Moss, it was him. Because I didn't really deal with him, because he actually turned up in person. I didn't need to deal with it. He found the story out himself. What I was mainly doing was getting content out for the journalists waiting in their office, the ones that didn't show up in person.

Speaker 2: Yeah. I'm looking at the coverage now. Dan Thompson obviously is the lad.

Martin: That's him, yeah.

Speaker 2: It looks as though there's someone called, a woman called ... Jennifer Williams.

Martin: Yeah, there was a woman who certainly covered the big rallies in Manchester. Alan Beswick on the BBC Radio got me on his station, a couple of times I think. But there's not any one person that was really dealing with many of the media operations.

Speaker 2: Right. Okay.

So you sent out a fair few press releases.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Any chance of me seeing those?

Martin: Oh yeah, I can send you along the ones I've still got copies of.

Speaker 2: Brilliant.

Martin: I've got a sort of reasonable archive of what I've put together.

Speaker 2: I know these sometimes go a bit south, but I used to be a journalist and I used to do PR, actually for Green Peace and then PR for Oxfam.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: So I know what you're getting at.

Martin: That was something ... I was in shock. I've got a full time job. Basically, I was getting up at six in the morning, trolling through the previous day's Facebook posts and sort of, kind of condense them into a press release to get out before I went to work. So, yeah, a lot of these were thrown together in a bit of a hurry.

Speaker 2: Condensed from Facebook, I was going to ask you about the varied social media.

Martin: Well it was massive with social media. That was actually part of the problem really, is that millions of people were posting stuff about the protest. The police were reading it and a lot of the worst stuff, the stuff that was inappropriate and aggressive, was actually posted by people that were nowhere near Barton Moss.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Martin: I knew which people were posting from the camp. There was a load of names I'd never recognise posting stuff up and re posting and saying "oh bully police" and all that, which probably wasn't really helping our cause. So the face of social media was a mess really, it was someone who wasn't ... an outsider journalist wouldn't be able to make a great deal of who was posting stuff up. Because I knew who was sensible, who was actually there, I knew which post I could actually trust. So I could sort of condense that into a press release. I think unless you followed all the feeds and read them every day, you're probably very confused with what was going out on Facebook.

Speaker 2: Yeah. It's interesting. In the end, I'm comparing what happened at Barton Moss with what happened at Balcombe Down and it's interesting that the Brighton Argus uses and did use a lot more Twitter feeds than Manchester Evening News. But the Manchester Evening News used a lot more video.

Martin: Yeah, I'm not sure the Manchester Evening News ever read a single press release I emailed them. My contacts there, that turned into stories, were almost all phone calls.

Speaker 2: Yeah. That's interesting.

Martin: Yeah, I mean, I think once I phoned them, they'd read the email, but I think, I assume they just get so many emails, they don't need that.

Speaker 2: Yeah, that is interesting. Because, it's fairly clear from this that they're reading the police press releases.

Martin: Oh yes, yes. If I send in my press releases, you will see that they do use a lot of quotes of mine from my emails. But generally speaking, that was only after I'd made a personal contact with a journalist.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Martin: If I didn't make a personal contact or they contacted me, which once they got my number they started doing, I don't think ... a press release out of the blue pretty much never gets published in the MEN.

Speaker 2: Yeah. That's interesting [crosstalk 00:11:01].

Martin: That's still the case, yeah.

Speaker 2: I'm really interested in the way in which journalists kind of weigh the credibility of a police press release and the use of it and the credibility of an activist's press release.

Martin: Absolutely. That's the big problem we've got. Yeah.

Speaker 2: Because it's almost ... well it is as though, they believe the police more than they believe the activists, because guess what, I think they believe the police more than the activists.

Martin: Absolutely, absolutely and the police, politicians and think tanks can get their stuff published, almost without being edited. Everyone else really struggles to see if you can get a mention.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Were you treated fairly by particularly the MEN, particularly ...

Martin: To be honest, yes! I actually can't think of anything by the local press that we actually objected to. Now, the Daily Telegraph on the other hand, is a different question. We put in a complaint to the Daily Telegraph and it got partially upheld. After they did a sort of hatchet job article. It included a very specific thing that wasn't true about one of the local activists. So was our only case really of actual proper negative press coverage, misrepresentation in the press. Otherwise, the issue was simply we weren't believed or we were ignored or the police were allowed to put up a counter statement that kind of wasn't based in fact. But it was put out because it came from the police. I mean, the main one being the flare gate thing.

Speaker 2: Yeah, that was extraordinary.

Martin: Absolutely extraordinary. That was really the start of ... it all happened about the same time. They reclaimed the power, did their stunt, got international press coverage, I sort of reorganised. But the flare gate came out, this refuted after Reclaim the Power. Then thereafter, I didn't really feel I was in a sort of a press battle with the police. I'd be putting stuff out and they'd be putting stuff out. It was interesting ... we did appear to be reading to the press releases and in front of cameraman all the time.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Martin: A lot of my press releases didn't get published. I suppose I wasn't expecting them to get published. A lot of stuff about the police misbehaving. But I'd hope, I can't prove this, by simply getting my press release out with a counter story, also stopped the police story getting out. Which I think, if I hadn't ... they weren't going to publish things about me accusing the police of violence and brutality, but I think by simply sending them out especially when I actually quoted people and people that witnessed things, I think it did seem to reduce the number of times the press ran a police story without any counter comments or any critical.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Martin: So I think to a certain extent, the police are like counting each other out. So for instance, there was one instance where a police officer was injured getting somebody out of a lockup and I thought that was bound to make a big press story. So we immediately published ... well not quite an apology ... said we didn't know the person that had actually done it, we didn't agree with that type of action and hope the police officer gets well soon. That kind of seemed to kill the story. I mean, no one published our words, but they didn't publish much of the police's version either.

Speaker 2: Right. To be honest with you, I'm actually looking at fairly extensive coverage of that in the MEN. If I just scroll down to that I'll get to it.

Yeah, a couple of happy pictures of the barrel. I mean, I know why they did it. They did it to slow down the cutting process, not to actually booby trap anything. They [crosstalk 00:15:02] ...

Martin: No, well the people who did it were idiots. They weren't part of the regular protest. They were sections of campaigning in years gone by and what they did, by putting glass in your concrete, it actually weakens the concrete, it makes for a less effective block of. I think people just do it because it makes them seem big and tough to have many to endanger things [inaudible 00:15:21]. But it was a silly, pointless thing to do.

Speaker 2: Right.

Martin: Yeah, there wasn't any sense to harm the police but still, it was a pointless thing to do.

So yeah, we put out a fairly strong campaign that people that turn up need to respect everyone's safety, including the police, blahty blahty blah. You know, as near condemning it as we could without, at that time, even being tarnished that it happened.

Speaker 2: The MEN at this point is quoting Colin Gong, "there was a very little risk of a police officer being injured by the contents". Quoting someone called Miss Freidman, "although we did not know protesters from this morning, and we have not used this form of lock-on here, it is a common way to lock-on and we are happy for any support we receive.” Then there's Tony Lloyd the police commissioner basically saying how unhappy he is.

Martin: Yeah, Colin Gong is one of the regulars of the camp. He's one of the people in the scene.

Speaker 2: I think he's quoted again, yeah.

Martin: Oh yes, he was very active, they're both very active.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Martin: It was Colin that put out the Tweet that got us in the Sun, when he complained that the camp had been out of gas.

Speaker 2: Oh god.

Martin: Absolutely. Yeah.

That one didn't go to the press office, I just want to point out here.

Speaker 2: It was interesting actually that was one of those where the MEN didn't use Tweets very often. But there are three occasions during the period of the camp where they do and one of them is that occasion and they used someone from inside iGas or something, which is some kind of a journal to say, just to criticise. The direct quote from a local professor just taking a piss and then I think there's a quote somewhere from a campaigner afterwards ... I can't remember who it was ...

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: I'm scrolling up now.

Martin: Before I go on, do you know about the memorandum of understanding to the police and iGas?

Speaker 2: Tell me more.

Martin: Right, well something like I think Net Poll got it released. It was basically the document that the police, iGas, other agencies naturally involved with the campaign, signed the ... it's fairly bland and nothing controversial, but it's quite clear in the memorandum that publicity is the responsibility of iGas. But iGas didn't do anything. Absolutely nothing. So I think that's why the police didn't really do anything at all about publicity, pretty much until Flare Gate. Whereupon a whole series of police press releases, none of which refer to fracking, it comes in the usual police press release ... outside agitators, blahty blahty blah and I think the police found themselves in a position about their press release that they didn't want to be in. But they were involved in this higher profile operation, they were getting a lot of press coverage and nobody was putting in their side of the story, because iGas had kind of given up. They almost didn't have a press operation.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Martin: So I think it's after that memorandum that I think the police ... I'm pretty sure the police did not have a media strategy before the campaign got going and they were constantly playing catch up. I've got a copy of the memorandum I can send to you as well.

Speaker 2: That would great. Let me tell you something though, I chatted with the press officers at, based on this process, with the police communications office. I have a copy of that communications plan.

Martin: Right.

Speaker 2: Which I can't share with you, for the same reasons I can't share your stuff with them.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: But, what's interesting is, in the communications plan, quite naturally, there is a list of stakeholders. iGas, one of them is the stakeholder and that list includes the local community, it includes schools, it includes whatever.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: In the list of stakeholders, is not protesters. Protesters are not listed as communication stakeholders. Which I find strange and the same is true incidentally for Sussex police.

Martin: Yeah, well the Manchester memorandum is based on the Sussex one with the names changed. You know, it was pretty much based on that.

Speaker 2: No, because the Sussex police didn't get that memorandum of understanding going until very, very late. The Sussex police were caught on the hop.

Martin: No one expected that protest, yeah.

Speaker 2: And what happened with them was, they actually then took away their learning and basically passed it around the country and I know that because I've got a copy of the presentation.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: It's really interesting. It's interesting the way in which police forces can learn because they have that learning structure, but protesters can’t because there is no structure.

Martin: Yeah, quite, I mean I believe that afterwards the Manchester one was sort of passed around on how not to do it. The master plan generally.

Speaker 2: So, I'm just looking at my notes.

The other one with Steven Peers and the video of him being arrested for drunk driving and ...

Martin: Yes the Green Tea Gate.

Speaker 2: Yeah. What was your take on that?

Martin: Well, be careful what I say ... Steven despite his own ... he's a controversial character, I generally avoided getting involved with him.

Speaker 2: Yeah, I understand.

Martin: At all, because of his history. The Green Tea Gate, I think it appears to be pretty much exactly what it appears. He annoyed the police an awful lot by the complaints put in against him by filming their actions and I think it probably got personal with the officer concerned, who took an opportunity to try to take him down a peg. I mean I think the actual actions I think were fully revealed in the misconduct hearing. Just for some reason, they didn't find any sanction against the officer. I mean, the officer and the police almost didn't have a defence about that. So yeah, I think that was very much directed at him though. I think he wasn't a person in the wrong place at the wrong time. They saw him and they wanted to convict him of something.

And Flare Gate was totally different. Flare Gate was very broad brush. Flare Gate was trying to tar every protester with the same brush. If that was anything, it was a coordinated plan to make the protesters and the campers seem criminals in the eyes of the local community.

Speaker 2: I've put in a freedom of information request for the flight log.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: For that flight. I don't think I'm the only one.

Martin: No, no, no.

Speaker 2: The flight log didn't exist. It's like, really?

Martin: Yeah, no. I mean there's also, there was CCTV cameras on the Barton Secure Centre down the road. There were cameras on the motorway, which we know from the court papers had been used to track the movement of individual protesters around the camp. So when they could trained on the camp and they had very good resolution, but partly all these cameras picked up nothing at all or were pointed in the wrong direction or were turned off at that time.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Martin: I mean, I've even spoken to someone in the, off the record, someone in the police commissioner's office and they have no idea what Flare Gate was about and they were suspecting it didn't happen or was grossly exaggerated. But they didn't know themselves what the truth was.

Speaker 2: Yeah, it almost sounds to me as though maybe they thought something was going on, something else was going on, and they just wanted an excuse to search the site.

Martin: Absolutely, yeah. Because the search wasn't, it wasn't just, the search wasn't just finding things, the search itself involved turning everyone's bedding out on a very wet day. All the campers had all their bedding soaked. It was only because Lush chipped in to have everything laundered and dried and local people came. Otherwise, we'd have had, yeah the middle of winter, sub zero temperatures and no one owning any dry bedding. It could've ended the camp there and then if the local community hadn't chipped in.

The search, the cops turning over the camp, to see what was there, it did seem to disrupt the lives of the protesters though.

Speaker 2: This is something I've noticed both at Balcombe Down and Barton Moss, is this kind of a competition to say who represents the community. The police want to represent the community in policing the protest and where the protester are. The protesters want to represent the community by basically defending the ecology and the environment.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Is that something you would agree with?

Martin: Yes and it's a pity that we didn't have a chance to really develop proper community presence before the campaign started. The community were one day ... sorry the ... the camp on that day, what happened simultaneously with the campaign. Suddenly we weren't in a position of having a united local campaign group, local to the campaigners, before the protest started. They had one by the end. While we think they had tents on the grounds, that they were turning up at the camp with donations and saying we're all doing very well. There was no formal way for us to really [inaudible 00:25:26] that, apart from individual quotes and individual locals but I forget them.

Speaker 2: Was that something that you were aware of when you were writing press releases?

Martin: Yes. I did try to get as many local people as possible to speak on the record. I did send various names off in press releases but as a whole, most of the locals who contributed were located by the press directly, they weren't sourced by me.

Speaker 2: Yeah. Okay. But that was a piece of messaging that you were aware of?

Martin: Yeah, some of the things people did on the camp, we tried to avoid anything that did upset the locals. Because, the way things worked at Barton Moss, there was a weak bridge, just to one side of the fracking site and the lorries and the things that we were disrupting came in on the road past the camps where the slow walks were. But the staff and the security guards came and went on the other side of the road and on the whole, nothing was ever done to disrupt them. Because they were coming and going in marked cars. So if people had been trying to stop those cars, they'd have stopped locals as well by mistake and that would have been well frightening after dark. Someone did that once and we immediately said "Don't do that" you know, people can come and go in cars, we're not going to object to that, we're only going to stop the lorries.

There was disruption of the road, if you need anything, because of the camp and because of the lorries being blocked, but we tried to keep that to the minimum.

Speaker 2: Right.

Martin: There was always this other way in that we never interfered with.

Speaker 2: Okay. That's great. Martin, do you know anyone who was, might have been your opposite number down at Balcombe

Martin: Let's have a look at who runs the campaign there. No, I don't I'm afraid. Not particularly busy, you'd be as good finding them on Google as via me.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Martin: I know people who are at [inaudible 00:27:22] but they were sort of part of the travelling army, rather than local campaigners.

Speaker 2: Yeah, okay.

If you have a brainwave, please do.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: I've been trying to get a hold of them and trying to get them to come back to me. I think it's quite a threatening thing, when you suddenly get an email from the far side of the country from someone else.

Martin: I suspect they also get loads of these, because we did. Even six months after Barton Moss, I was getting almost one a day from students of all types.

Speaker 2: Ha okay. Fair enough. Well thank you for [crosstalk 00:27:55]

Martin: If ever a student at the school project. Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yeah, I can understand. But Martin, thanks ever so much. What I'm going to do is ...

Martin: You're welcome.

Speaker 2: I'm going to get a transcript made up of this call.

Martin: Yeah.

Speaker 2: I'm going to also at the same time, send you over a permission form and it tells you your rights and you just need to sign it and send it back to me.

Martin: Right, okay.

Speaker 2: Thank you ever so much.

Martin: I will send you on some of the press releases I've got archived.

Speaker 2: Brilliant. Thank you so much.

Martin: Okay.

Speaker 2: Bye.

Martin: Okay, you're welcome. Thanks, bye.

**Preston North Road – Media Activist**

20/02/2018

Claire Stephenson.

Speaker 1: Please hold.

Richard Fern: Hello Claire, this is Richard Fern, can you hear me okay?

Claire: Oh hi. Yeah, I can hear you fine.

Richard Fern: Good, good. Thanks ever so much for taking my call.

Claire: Oh, it's no problem.

Richard Fern: I just need to run through a couple of things before I start.

Claire: Okay, no worries.

Richard Fern: Because this is a piece of academic research, you have rights and I need to read you your rights. First of all you don't have to answer any questions that I ask you, and I'm not allowed to push you. If you say, "I don't want to answer that question." We have to move on. You have the right to withdraw up to the point that I submit my PhD, which will probably be the end of March at this stage, because you're one of the last people that I'm talking to. You have a right to anonymity, so you can say to me, "Richard, I don't mind you quoting me, I just don't want anyone to know it's me."

Claire: Yeah, okay.

Richard Fern: The other thing is that I have no special rights before the law. In others words if the police [inaudible 00:01:23] a search warrant to me, I would have to give them all of my notes, so please don't say anything on this telephone call that you wouldn't want the police to know.

Claire: Okay.

Richard Fern: It's a warning I give to everybody because obviously I've been talking to a few people involved in the activist scene and I wouldn't want to be in a position where I was responsible for dobbing somebody in inadvertently. I'm should say, I was an activist myself, I used to do some stuff for Greenpeace and some stuff with Oxfam and some stuff with cloud shares, so I know a little bit about the scene. I've also worked in PR myself and in campaigning. I've also worked as a journalist.

Claire: Right, okay.

Richard Fern: I'm now based at the University of Sheffield where I teach and I'm also doing some research, my PhD. All of which said, how did you become involved in all of this?

Claire: It was going back to 2014, I think, when Cuadrilla's application went in for Fylde coast. And I hadn't really heard much about it even though we lived in the area. Until a colleague had said "have you seen this fracking plan, it's gonna affect where the kids go to school" and that was the first time I had actually looked at maps, and then started researching and delving into the whole extraction technique.

Richard Fern: And how did... I mean obviously you're kinda coordinating the PR how did you get that gig? [crosstalk 00:02:53]

Claire: Nobody else wanted it?

Richard Fern: Fair enough.

Claire: No, I've been a freelance writer sort of, stroke a copy writer, media professional for about 15, 20 years now. And so when I started campaigning on a school level of what we can do to affect the planning application from Cuadrilla. And so we did a very basic PR campaign of parents and friends against the application. So we got a lovely petition together... its only a small school you know, sort of 48 kids.

So we did the photo shoot, handing it into the council. Got national coverage, and then it went a little bit international which was great. And then the harassment started from veiled industry threats. We were followed at one point. My kids were- we were blocked in down a country lane by a Cuadrilla security guard, which was quite intimidating, and then he left his car to photograph and film my children.

So that's when I kind of... it got quite real for me, and I thought "do you know what, whatever happens I'm not gonna let this go. This is something that I believe is wrong and I'll be here until they've gone." And that was my line in the sand. And then... so I set up Preston New Road Action Group's social media campaign. That was what I was doing for a current client at the time. Sort of branded ourselves really, set us out because we're only a very small community group. Nobody really heard of us, but we were taking on Cuadrilla, we were going to go up against them and we were gonna represent, have our expert witnesses, we were going to submit evidence, we were going to have a lawyer. So we did the full shebang. And it was just really to put ourselves on the map, and network globally. I reached out to communities across Pennsylvania, America. Just to say "hey, we hear you, we see you". We're really little ourselves but we're gonna do everything we can to fight this.

And that's when I sort of joined into Frack-Free Lancashire's press campaign. There's not that many people around that have the experience of writing press releases or getting them out quickly, certainly. I've worked from home for, you know 15, 20 years anyway, so I was always here. So if a story broke, I could write a press release, turn it round and get it out to press contacts really quickly. And that's pretty much how its been for the last four years, three or four years.

Richard Fern: Yeah. What's it like working... I mean obviously, many, many different kinds of people become involved with this kind of campaigning. Do you think all of them get media? Do you think all of them want to talk to the media? Does it feels strange sometimes working with people who don't want to talk to the media?

Claire: Um, I mean no because I started of that way, it wasn't something that I was comfortable with. Most of my work has been freelance journalism, online corporate work where I don't really speak to people, but I think its forced me to stand up in front of crowds of thousands and do speeches. Not saying I'm great at it because I'm not, I'm a writer not a speaker. But it's kind of left me with no alternative, if I didn't do it who would, kind of thing. We have some amazing speakers in the campaign. Some really, really clever people who can stand up, and it comes naturally to them. But there are some people that really don't want to speak to the media, who are very suspicious of the media. And that's when I sort of say "give me a quote and I'll put it in a press release, you don't have to be identified, or anything". Its working with people like that, so that their voices are represented too.

Richard Fern: Yeah. From my own part I found, I mean because I came at the whole thing as a journalist and I've worked in PR and campaigning. I often found that there were people who were suspicious of me because of my background, but were very suspicious of the media generally, and when I started to read up, to do the PhD, I found this is actually quite normal. There actually were two types of campaigner. Ones the kind of campaigner that wants to be involved and work the system as you do, I think. And there's some people who reject the system so totally that they just won't talk to it. Did you find that?

Claire: Yeah, yeah there's very much the people that - I call them hardcore because they're all out for anything but they're not into structural organisation or rules or regulations, and that’s fine. You know, everybody's got to work how they work. But for the PR and the press side of something this vast. I think we do have to have a bit of structure. We have a very small team at Frack Free Lancashire Media, a small, few people that are trusted enough to get to the information very quickly, or we need somebody to go on radio. It can be turned around very quickly. So I think that's our little niche, you know that's what we do.

And we all sort of fit into the same cog, doing what we do best. Whether that launching ourselves on top of a truck to delay the industry or to put on the front of a really good PR campaign to say "hey we're just like you, we're doctors, we're teachers, we're nurses, we're artist, we're journalists, we're regular folks". And I think that sometimes, is really important to get out in to the public because industries do try and distort that.

Richard Fern: Yeah, because I'm looking at regional print news groups. I'm looking primarily here at the Blackpool Gazette. How do you get on with the Blackpool Gazette?

Claire: It’s been quite an odd relationship. There's been a couple of journalist here who've I've had a very good relationship and in the last 18 months, it has decreased. Their coverage has become quite one sided and we've had to fight to get parity which has made me really angry because what they haven't been doing is representing the public interest. There's been things that have happened on Cuadrilla's site where they've had warnings by the Environment Agency for breaches. And it hasn't been published. And we've had to really battle to get some information. We're not asking for full coverage but what we are asking for is parity of coverage.

I've been sent Cuadrilla's press releases by a third party, and then I've seen them appear word for word in the Gazette. So they're pretty much copy and pasting what they're writing. I think this is one of the biggest things to hit the Fylde coast for many, many years, and I think the public are entitled to know what's happening behind the scenes.

So I think our relationship has not been as good, certainly in the last year or so. When Cuadrilla have been involved in advertising in the publication, and they've been involved in sponsoring school awards, which is purely disgusting. So I think the Gazette's position has had to be toned down.

Richard Fern: Right, that's interesting.

Claire: Yeah.

Richard Fern: I spoke to…I'm trying to very quickly grab the name of the chap.

Claire: Is it Tim Gavell?

Richard Fern: Yes.

Claire: Yes, yes now he's the one who I respect the most.

Richard Fern: Yeah. [crosstalk 00:10:18] I mean he denied vehemently that things like advertising and pressure from other sources was effecting his copy. As he would.

Claire: Yeah of course. I wouldn't necessarily agree with that. I know there has been pressure and the industry do report journalists that cover us more favourably. I've seen that in evidence. But it must be a really difficult job. All he is trying to do is do his job and make sure that voices are covered. But I do believe- I mean I had a phone call from their sub-editor about three years ago, no two years ago and he- I put a Tweet out from Preston New Road Action Group asking why, going back to when my kids where at school, my kids were banned from talking about fracking in school. Apparently, the councillor had told them that Cuadrilla had pressurised them and that the kids where not allowed to discuss fracking. So whenever they would mention it in class they got told off. And so I'd asked the question via a Tweet and said Cuadrilla are involved with sponsoring one of the Gazette's awards, a school award for head teachers award when the children aren't even allowed to talk about fracking. How does that work?

And about three minutes later I got a phone call from their deputy editor and he said - and I took it down note for note - I wish I'd recorded it. He said "if you don't remove that Tweet, you will receive less favourable coverage from us in the future". And I was quite shocked about that. I have actually reported it to IPSO in the last few months and that's still going through. But obviously this is going back a few years. I was that shocked, I didn't do anything about it then. But I feel that they are under pressure, they have to be under pressure. Yeah this is how it all works. Some of the Gazette staff, one has gone to the local Tory MP as his press secretary and one's gone to the police as part of their media information team.

Richard Fern: [crosstalk 00:12:24] have you got that person’s name?

Claire: Yeah Gareth Vickers went from the Blackpool Gazette to Lancashire Constabulary and Chris Dicksons was another journalist who went to work for Tory MP Mark Menzies. And Paul Berenson, who is a Gazette journalist, I believe he came from the police. So you've got these interactions that are not necessarily as clear cut as people think. But it hasn't been a truly awful relationship. But I do think we've struggled and there have been many, many complaints in the last six months, to the editorial team by members of the public. saying "you have a duty to report the facts and that's not what we're seeing".

Richard Fern: I'll share an early finding with you which you might find interesting. Basically, I looked at the copy that appeared in the [inaudible 00:13:27] first of all, and about 45% of the anti-protest voice belonged to the police, it appeared in test. The same figure for the MEN, Manchester Evening News, the figure for the Blackpool Gazette is 14%.

Claire: Right, the police voice-

Richard Fern: If you add that figure to the voice from Frack- sorry- Lancashire Shale.

Claire: Yeah which is basically Cuadrilla.

Richard Fern: Yep. If you add that share of voice to the police share of voice, you get 45%.

Claire: Right, that's interesting.

Richard Fern: It is from my point of view because obviously it’s an interesting finding for an academic. But what I'm actually thinking is, and this is my take on this, is journalists are trained and god help me but I trained them as well, to always get the other side of the story so it's the way in which they protect themselves. So they'll get your side of the story and then they'll get that side of the story and they'll try to balance the numbers up within the copy.

Claire: Yeah.

Richard Fern: And that's what we're seeing. But what's really interesting is that that set of figures puts the police on the other side. In other words, they aren't neutral forces, at least not in the way they appear in the media.

Claire: Yeah.

Richard Fern: Now it maybe a different type of scene, I get the impression that it isn't. I get the impression from that scene, the police in Lancashire are getting even dottier than the Greater Manchester police and granted Manchester police are pretty dotty.

Claire: Yes.

Richard Fern: Yeah its interesting, the way in which this works. But I didn't know, I think I spoke to a guy called Nick Evens, over at at [inaudible 00:15:26]. Who was polite, professional, helpful. They haven't answered my FOI requests, but I understand there's a certain amount of pressure. Yeah, interesting, that.

Claire: Yeah. They've failed totally on social media, the police. There's media notices and information of road closures, have been completely, 100% on the industry side and very blame oriented. And so following that, we've had incitement for all sorts of acts towards protesters and its incited hatred towards us. And that was being very noticeable. And I know that's happened within the liaison meetings, that it's being pointed out that they shouldn't be posting anything that would be inciting any kind of violence or hate speech towards protesters. There's been a lot of instances and they're supposed to have toned it down so that they're not blaming us but they certainly haven't been neutral.

I run many social media accounts for a living, you're very careful, each word that you put out there has to be very well thought out, especially on litigious points. But some of the posts that the police have put out from Lancashire and Fylde, have been absolutely dire.

Richard Fern: Can you give me the Twitter handles off the top of your head?

Claire: Which ones, sorry? Who do you need?

Richard Fern: The ones, the ones that you say are biased. The Twitter handles that you're following. Because I had a quick look myself and couldn't find anything.

Claire: Well, not so much Twitter handles. Some of these have been Facebook posts by the Lancashire police. Lancashire For Shale, for example-

Richard Fern: But they aren't the police. They aren't the police.

Claire: No, no, no, no, no. No so it's just Facebook search: "Fylde police" and "Lancashire police" on Facebook. That's mainly where the issues have been because they can write a lot more than a Tweet.

Richard Fern: Yep. Okay. I shall have a look at that, thank you.

Claire: Okay, yeah.

Richard Fern: Although I'm not looking at digital media at all, I'm only looking for-

Claire: No. No. But you can get a sense I suppose if you look at things.

Richard Fern: Absolutely. And I mean, for instance, famously in Balcombe, there was the police officer that put out a, on his personal account, described the protesters as "scum". So every now and then, you do get these little glimpses of-

Claire: Yeah. Yeah there was one where a police officer had arrested somebody, put her in the back of the van and then left her live stream on. So all the way back to the police station, it was recording him and his voice and that was quite an interesting conversation. She'd had a very targeted arrest and the follow on from that was quite interesting. We did make that go viral. The police have been very, and that man especially has just been removed from policing that operation because of his abuse towards a disabled protester.

Richard Fern: Yeah.

Claire: So you can get a good feel of people's characteristics, they're certainly not trained to be in this situation because they're not impartial.

Richard Fern: I think also, that digital media, people tend to reveal about themselves, things that they would otherwise keep secret.

Claire: Yes of course.

Richard Fern: I think it's something about the functioning of digital media that makes people reveal stuff about themselves.

Claire: Yeah absolutely, from a psychological point of view, it's quite interesting what people do say on social media.

Richard Fern: I'm just putting down my questions now.

Claire: No you're fine, you're fine.

Richard Fern: So previous experience of PR, already asked you about. [inaudible 00:19:18]. Okay. How's the experience been for you? I mean, some people find this sort of thing, I've spoken to people who said that at the end, they found themselves burning out. How are you finding it?

Claire: I mean, this is my fourth year now. There have been a few months where I've had to take a step back because I do believe it's effecting my mental health. Especially receiving anxiety and harassment from, people like Backing Fracking, they highlighted my house at one point on Twitter and put a map of my house, the roof, to show that I was- I can't remember what they called me now, they often call me The Anti-Fracking Spin Doctor. But it was something about the fact I didn't have solar panels on my roof so was I hypocritical to not be supporting fracking? But they'd highlighted my photograph akin to my house. Twitter removed it almost immediately but that made me quite- I felt very violated because I have two small girls and at every option, I will protect my children but I shouldn't have answered them but I did. I said "well actually we've got an electric car coming next month", which we did. And he said "oh that's great" or whoever it was "but you're other van isn't electric, is it Claire, the Volkswagen that's parked outside your house". And I thought "you know what, that's just not on". So they'd clearly been to my house, they know where I live and then you realise this isn't just some kind of operation to them, they have a lot of evidence on us.

So I think at that point, my anxiety got a lot worse. But I do come back, and there's a team that's strong enough to cover it while we have those breaks because it is intimidating. It can be high pressure, it can be intense. And all the while, you're trying to have a normal job, a normal life and raise your kids. You've got all of this going on so I don't think it can't effect you. It has to effect you and burnout is a very common thing within activism, as you know.

Richard Fern: Yep. Yep.

Claire: So sometimes, I take myself off social media for a while, I don't look at it. Do my job and don't look at it. Because it just invades your personal space, I feel.

Richard Fern: Yeah. Okay. Claire, we're coming to the end of my questions, this is supposed to be a semi-structured interview, is the phrase they like to use. But I always like to ask, is there a question I should have asked you, Claire, that I haven't done? Is there something I should really know about?

Claire: No I don't think so. I think we've covered quite a lot of stuff.

Richard Fern: Yeah. We have. Claire thank you ever so much for the call. I'm going to send you, by email, a transcript of this conversation and I'm going to also send you a form which details your rights and it also is a permission form. I'm going to assume if I don't get the permission form back, you agree with it. But also, the form would be nice as well, if you could just send it back.

Claire: Yeah no worries.

Richard Fern: Well you should get it, I would imagine, the beginning of next week.

Claire: Yes that's fine.

Richard Fern: Might be tomorrow, might be the beginning of next week. But Claire, thanks ever so much and good luck with it all, I have to say for my own part, I have withdrawn from activism because I have a child and it was getting silly out there.

Claire: I understand.

Richard Fern: But I may end up going back at some point. The best of luck to you and yours.

Claire: And to you for your PhD, it's very admirable, what you're doing.

Richard Fern: Alright thanks a lot.

Claire: Alright, take care, Richard. Bye bye.

Richard Fern: Bye bye, Claire.

Sussex Police

25/07/2015

Andy Freeman

Andy: [inaudible 00:00:01] the old PR side of things.

Richard: Sure.

Andy: Public relations. Then there was a production side that looks after the digital columns, websites, video, photography, that sort of thing.

Richard: Okay. That's fine. I'm looking at my taping software on this phone hoping it's working but-

Andy: [inaudible 00:00:23] the bleep! Yeah.

Richard: Yeah. Okay. Presumably there's a corporate communications plan, part of which addresses media relations?

Andy: Yes we have a standard, or a basic, corporate communications plan with regard to public order situations.

Richard: Right.

Andy: What we had had ... previous to Balcombe ... I'm just having a look to see if I've got any sort of information on the date of that one ... we had what was termed Operation Pole Cat which was environmental protests-

Richard: Right.

Andy: Led to a relief road being built around Hastings and Bexhill.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: I say we do have an overall plan for public order situations which forms the basis of individual plans. We'd had Pole Cat which had with it the usual sort of stuff. Tree climbing, tunnelling, lock-ons, that sort of thing.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: We initially based our Operation Mansell, the Balcombe plan, upon that. It quite quickly became apparent that Balcombe was going to be much much more ... much more of a situation for us than the Hastings Bexhill one was.

Richard: Yeah. Yeah. I remember obviously there's a report I know that, I mean, some people have said it's critical of you. I think it just picks up. It was kind of a dish washing session afterwards when it was all over and there was a report came out. I know it was a little bit critical, which I thought was a bit unfair, but there you go.

Andy: We're used to it.

Richard: Yeah! I mean these things happen, and but. Okay. As part of Operation Pole Cat did that just address media or did it address all operational matters with regard to?

Andy: This was. I'm talking from a point of view of the communications strategy-

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: Not the operational strategy from the policing point of view.

Richard: Yeah, so ... Operation Pole Cat [crosstalk 00:02:57]-

Andy: A communications strategy for us covers mostly media relations but it will cover other areas that we become involved in. Internal communications for example because it may, well certainly Balcombe did, had a major effect upon staffing and rotoring and shifts and that sort of thing.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: It will also cover social media engagement from the production side of things along with sometimes you need, the account managers will work local communities, local interests. Stakeholders basically, a stakeholder engagement and it will take that on as well.

Richard: Yeah. Okay. Fine. At the moment that something like this hits your desk and as these things have a nasty habit of doing, I just want to ask you is a risk assessment, is a media risk assessment done?

Andy: I think probably yes. I tend don't tend to use the term "risk assessment" on it. It is part of the communications strategy. Yes, it is a risk assessment I suppose. We identify the pros and cons and all of the various things that may happen and we develop messages to address those sides, those issues.

Richard: Yeah. There's a key messaging element and an objective element as well. Are key messages identified? Do you actually say "We need to say this, this, and this?"

Andy: Yes.

Richard: Okay.

Andy: That said I'm not hard and fast. They can develop, they can be added to. Sometimes you withdraw a key message because it's been superseded.

Richard: [00:05:01]Okay. Oh! I did want to ask about media training. Superintendent Lawrence Hobbs took over didn't he at one point?

Andy: Yes.

Richard: At that level I'm assuming they've undergone media training?

Andy: They have. Yes.

Richard: How many days media training do they get? I only ask this because I want to get a sense of the extent of the ... the extent to which someone at that grade would expect [crosstalk 00:05:36] media.

Andy: Right. It's difficult to put a time on it because someone of that grade has had media training in various forms -

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: Throughout their career. For example, we start with CID student officers. They do get a half day media training to prepare them for to talking to the media about witness appeals and they can work with the media and that sort of thing.

Superintendent level, certainly they have half a day with us and they return as well. It's an ongoing thing. We, anyone who is dealing with the media from superintendent or in fact chief inspector level and above now, gets this half day training. They will sometimes request to come back and we have quite a range of scenarios that we'll throw at them.

It varies at this level. We are giving them quite challenging stuff. Stuff that we, no, I was going to use "that we'll beat them up with but that's not quite the thing. But we will be [crosstalk 00:06:58] very challenging whereas the media training that they could expect when they're, you know, student officers or just getting into perhaps a sergeant and a neighbourhood team is a little more gentle. It's more focused on getting their messages across. Not being challenged as such.[00:07:12]

Richard: Yeah, yeah. That makes sense. As I say, having worked in PR myself I've given the media training and I have beaten up [inaudible 00:07:21] quite deliberately. I nearly made the vice chancellor cry which [crosstalk 00:07:26]-

Andy: Cool.

Richard: You know? It was kind of my moment of not quite air punch but one moment of "Well that was my career."

Andy: Yes it's funny actually some of the looks you get when you're media training but fortunately I know most of the officers quite well that we do it with. They forgive me eventually.

Richard: I also think that, I do think, sorry I'm getting off of the point, but quite often dusting them up fulfils a certain function but most interviews aren't actually, you aren't [inaudible 00:07:57] on most interviews and I think I often-

Andy: No. That's right.

Richard: I always say that to people when I'm training them. "You know what? It probably won't be this bad." Anyway, off point. Back to policy on media training. I want to ask you now about your general relation. I'm going to ask you about your relationship with the regional press. You can draw in examples of other media if you wish to. That's fine. I'm going to ask you three questions, I'm asking them to everybody.[00:08:29]

Can you think of examples of where you have received an unfair feeling in the regional press?

Andy: Right. Are you talking, press, you're talking newspaper yeah?

Richard: I am. I mean, particularly this paper, of course I'm thinking of like Argus.

Andy: Yeah, okay. Yes, I mean we have had times where we felt we have been dealt with unfairly where ... we don't that the full story has been got across. Sometimes the reason for that is that we are not in a position to respond to stuff that's being shown, or being written about us, if you like.

Sometimes it happens that you might get someone who's under arrest or has had dealings with the police and they give all of their story but, because of data protection and that sort of thing, we can't really say "Well this is how it works."

What I would say is on the whole we've got a really good relationship with our local press, well local media generally.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: Local and regional.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: Including the Argus. We do a lot of work with them and we've got a fairly good reputation as a media relations department for what we do. We try and be very open, very honest, transparent. All of the usual sort of words you know?[00:10:02]

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: That does work. But we will be challenged at time and sometimes we do feel we are challenged unfairly.

Richard: Okay. That was actually question number three I was going to ask you, "Do you generally have a feeling of that generally it's fair?" Do you ever think that you've had a particularly favourable hearing? Do you ever think "My God! I'm amazed we got away with that."

Andy: I'm not sure about "got away with it!"

Richard: Okay! Let's word it slightly differently. Many people would argue that the police, that the media are biased in favour of the police.

Andy: Really?

Richard: Yeah! I've spoken to activist who said to me that they don't get a fair hearing. Actually there's a body of literature that talks about the relationship between the media and ... the police as being one of symbiosis. That basically you need each other so you're always nice to each other whereas journalists don't need activists and so might be meaner to them.

Andy: Yeah. That's interesting because ... as an example, what I would point out is as Balcombe was about a fortnight old when it became the climate camp thing. The energy firm Cuadrilla actually shut down the site because there were concerns over it, with our support. We thought that was a good move.

The mail, the following day, didn't know this was coming, headline, front page "Police cave into mob ruler over fracking."

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: Which you've probably seen. Six or seven weeks later when it was anticipated there was going to be another major element of the protest at Balcombe. We had a significant operation running. Only a handful turned up. The Mail that day read on the headline "Operation Overkill: Hundreds of Police Descend on Fracking Site But Only A Handful of Activists Bother to Turn Up."

You can see from my point of view I think it's fairly even. Certainly, you mentioned the Argus, the Argus is without a doubt the most challenging of the newspapers and certainly I wouldn't say that they were slanted towards the police. If anything I would say they're slanted more against them. But that's not just police. It's the Argus' way of working. They will, excuse me, they will attack, if you like, any sort of local authority. They attack the rail companies, the NHS, the hospitals, the fire service. It's the way they work. It's the nature of the Argus so I don't think they pick on the police particularly as an individual organisation but they do pick on organisations generally.[00:13:10]

Richard: Yeah. There's a touch of the ... partly it's a tabloid approach. Partly it's an anti-authoritarian approach generally.

Andy: Yes. Yes.

Richard: They are anti-establishment.

Andy: That said, they're editor got sacked this week so it will to see what happens now.

Richard: They've been in an interesting corner for some time, haven't they?

Andy: Yes they have. Sadly, I think.

Richard: Yeah, I mean, the other protest I'm doing primarily with this we've got one in Manchester at Barton Moss. Obviously the Manchester Evening News in a completely different position.

Andy: Right.

Richard: You know, in Manchester Evening News they're back came to the wall. Well if not to the same extent, so. It's interesting, I think it's very interesting how circumstances and personal relationships change and the effect that they can have on things like coverage.

Andy: Yeah.

Richard: Anna Roberts was the Crime Correspondent at the time. She's now moved on to PA of course.

Andy: Yes.

Richard: Did you work with Anna at all at the time?

Andy: Oh yes. Yeah.

Richard: Was she your primary contact?

Andy: You know I don't really recall. Because it was such a long drawn out protest that quite a few of them got involved. Sorry I really can't recall, specifically, if it was her all of the time.

Richard: Okay. [crosstalk 00:14:36]

Andy: I think, Emily Walker whose the chief reporter there, I think she was involved quite a bit as well.

Richard: There's a particular example, and I'm not ... I'm doing because this gets the mechanics of it.

Andy: Yeah. Sure.

Richard: Not because I need you to comment on the actual story itself. There was a case in which a Sussex police officer was disciplined for using the word "scum" to describe protesters on a private twitter feed.

Andy: Yeah.

Richard: I'm just following through that story. Did the police contact the Argus on that story or did the Argus contact you? Can you remember?

Andy: What? To tell the Argus about it?

Richard: Yeah. I'm just wondering. I'm actually looking at the copy at the moment and it's really interesting because it isn't detailed. It looks to me as though the police force have contacted the Argus but I was wondering if that was the case.

Andy: I don't think so. I've got a feeling that this is one that came to light and that we were asked by the Argus about. I tell you what, bear with me. Carry on talking. I'm just going to draw the-

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: When we had the, when we had the ...

Richard: It's a really interesting piece of coverage because, it's most interesting because of the information that's missing from the report.

Andy: Right.

Richard: The officer isn't named. [crosstalk 00:16:05]

Andy: No. Which is something we wouldn't do.

Richard: But then, if they've got the story from another source then it should be possible for them to name the twitter handle at least.

Andy: Yeah. Sometimes they are a bit nervous about naming people.

Richard: Yeah well, [inaudible 00:16:21], yeah.

Andy: Yeah.

Richard: I mean it's a curious story because it's one of those moments in which the average person in the street who probably does have a great respect for the police would look at that story and say "That's wrong."

Andy: Yeah.

Richard: The police force, clearly Sussex police have had disciplined the officer will probably give him a bit of bollocking and tell him not to be such an idiot again. That's also the police kind of acknowledging this is not the way in which the police should act.

Andy: (cough), excuse me.

Richard: That's obviously the report that's been made in the Argus. Everyone's agreed, hang on a minute. This police officer's being silly.

Andy: Yeah.

Richard: What's interesting is the way in which the story is treated by everyone concerned. For instance there's an unnamed spokesperson for the police service that says "Sussex has received a report." Then they got to a Sussex police, who asked not to be named, said he and his fellow officers were aware of the incidents. "I'm really disappointed a colleague would do this. It is stupid to put it bluntly."

Andy: Yeah.

Richard: It's as though, reading between the lines, and I've tried to contact Anna and she's working for PA and is feeling a bit cagey on the subject.

Andy: Right.

Richard: I'm just curious as to the mechanics of how that story managed to get a page in the Argus.

Andy: Okay. Just a thought, I mean Anna was really good, probably still is. I don't have much dealings with her now. She was good at getting contacts, getting people. She would talk to officers and they would say "I really don't want to be named on this one. That is where that would have come about.

The spokesperson bit is a bit unusual because we will generally try and put a name to any comment that we put out. That said sometimes we'll be asked for a response about something. We will give that response and then the newspaper themselves will say "A spokesman said" rather than asking us "Can we put a name on this?" That is probably where that came about. Have you got a date on that one?

Richard: I have. Hang on a moment. It appeared in the paper on Friday the 20th of September 2013.

Andy: Ooh. Someway on then. I'm just going to have a look at ... 20th, 20th ... yes. 16th of September. I've got a briefing on that. Let's just find where the original call came from. I tell you what this file is so big!

Richard: I'm looking now at the ... I'm just trying to search, because I did notice that the FOI request. You sent all of the press releases but this does not appear. This story does not appear in the press releases.

Andy: No it wasn't a press release. This would have been ... just a response to this particular journalist.

Richard: I may have to [inaudible 00:19:53]. I asked for ... I forget the exact wording for communications to media on this subject. It often happens on FOIs, and I don't know if you've done them yourself. People do their best but that bit or that bit doesn't quite get caught in the net.

Andy: No. I have done a response. Well, I have been asked by FOI for all of our press releases. It may have been your request in fact. I don't know. I don't get told who-

Richard: You wouldn't get told that.

Andy: Who it's for. They may have just said "Can we have all your press releases?" Right, okay, we had a call from the Argus on the sixteenth of September.

Richard: Right.

Andy: They said "Twitter. Should your officers really be calling protesters scum on twitter? I suggest you issue some guidance A.S.A.P." I can't see if they're ... they're actually seeing a tweet and then asking us about it so that-

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: It's a reactive response to it rather than a proactive.

Richard: Yeah, okay. Yeah, that's fine.

Andy: Then we responded to it. Yeah.

Richard: Okay. That's great. Looking at the, so we're nearing the bitter end you'll be glad [inaudible 00:21:14]

Andy: Oh it's all right. [inaudible 00:21:16]

Richard: There's a moment on the and it's somewhere [inaudible 00:21:23] the story breaks in the paper on the 6th of September. One of protesters climbs up on a tripod and blocks the road. The lead [inaudible 00:21:34] in the paper was "Police Takes Tougher Following [inaudible 00:21:39] Protest." It's interesting that at that point, and I'm sure the police do it, I'm sure the police have perfectly good reason for it, it's interesting though at that point that the Argus' coverage becomes far more critical of the activists. It's a real feeling, I mean you might wish to disagree, but there's a real feeling that the paper starts to take a more "law and order line." Up until then it's been "Look at all of these hippies showing up and being hippies" and now it's "Hang on a moment. No."

Andy: I think, I tell you what. Excuse me a moment.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: Sorry about that.

Richard: [inaudible 00:22:26].

Andy: Now this isn't necessarily the sort of police line. This is my personal opinion on this.

Richard: Okay. Okay.

Andy: What had happened around about that time is that the schools have gone back.

Richard: Okay.

Andy: When this tripod went up it really buggered up all of the traffic in the area and the locals started to get even more upset. The locals, initially, had welcomed all of the activists in as being, you know, on their side and all this sort of thing.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: Gradually they took over their local pub and then they started to become a bit of a pain because they will holding up traffic. When all of the schools went back there were people having to do, sort of 20 mile detours to get their kids to school or get their kids from school.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: There was one incident where a kid at school was taken quite seriously ill and the mother couldn't get to her. I think she might have caught up to her in hospital or something like that. She actually went down to the camp and had it out with the protesters about this particular incident.

I think, and as I say, this isn't the police side of things. This is purely a personal opinion. I think that [inaudible 00:23:52] change that you see in there came about because the Argus moved with local opinion-

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: More than moving with law and order.

Richard: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Andy: Yeah?

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: That was on the 3rd of September that tripod went up.

Richard: Yeah. I think it's reported a day or so later. Which makes sense but-

Andy: Yeah.

Richard: It's an interesting turn. Actually, I think you're right. I think it was very much a case of all of the sudden the Argus discovered its readers were no longer as sympathetic as they had been ten minutes ago.

Andy: Yeah.

Richard: I think that was exactly what it looks like. Let me just go back ... to ... okay. I'm going to ask that all important catch all question. Is, we're winding up now, Is there anything you think I should've asked you about and haven't?

Andy: I'm not sure it's what you should've asked me about but something that has occurred to me. When you said about us, Jill and myself, meeting early on [inaudible 00:25:08] meeting. What did happen very early on with Jill, and it's the way we work here, is that a lead media relations officer, be there a senior, or a media relations officer because there's two levels, whoever is leading on that particular job gets embedded straight away with the team that's doing.

They are in with the gold commander, with the silver commander, whoever it may be, right from the start. We do the same with major crime jobs and it works really well for us. At one time the media relations, or the press office as it was known then, was very much, the force tended to look on them as "the media" or "the press" but there's much more understanding now about the value that we can add to an investigation, to an operation by being involved right from the start because we see things from outside that they don't so much.

It feeds both ways. It works really well for us. There was, as I said, Jill was embedded straight away with the command team for the operation. When I took over from her that's where I spent my time as well. Working from the Silver Suite, the command team operation, rather than directly from the news desk as I would do normally.

Richard: Yeah. That's it. That's great. Am I right in thinking that you are actually a police officer rather than civilian?

Andy: No. I'm a civilian.

Richard: You are civilian?

Andy: Yeah. Sometimes, as you're aware people will leave the force and go into civilian roles.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: We have no one with police officer experience here at all.

Richard: That's interesting. May I very quickly ask what your background was before you came into the police force? Were you a media-

Andy: My profession is a press photographer.

Richard: Ah!

Andy: Ah!

Richard: Ah!

Andy: That said I got made redundant as a press photographer after I had been doing the job for about 8 years and moved into more of a PR role. I've worked, I did a lot of work in fishing magazines at one time but also I've worked in the finance, tourism, archaeology, and defence industry before coming to the police.

Richard: Well I, so basically, in some ways, very much just another PR lot? Like I went to work for university you went to work for police for a while. You're a former [inaudible 00:28:02] who's turned into a-

Andy: Yeah. Yeah. I couldn't get meself back into a journalism job at that time. I think it'd probably be even harder now so that's [crosstalk 00:28:15] how ended up doing this.

Richard: Yeah. God knows. The effect of social media, particularly on the pictures desk, has just been devastating.

Andy: Yeah. When I see the press photographer is just almost a non-existent beast locally now. The Argus got rid of all theirs. I knew a, you know, know a lot of them quite well because some of them do go back as far as I do. Which is quite a long way.

Richard: Yeah.

Andy: To old dark room days. You know? Black and white.

Richard: I remember the dark rooms! I [inaudible 00:28:52] [inaudible 00:28:55] and then worked for the nationals for a while. Then like so many others, [inaudible 00:29:01] PR, I'm thinking "Hang on. This pays better! Why wasn't I doing this earlier?"

Yeah it's a common enough route. There's a couple of bits of documentation that you've mentioned during the interview. It's interesting to note that you've got some power points there for presentation to make on the subject.

Andy: Yeah!

Richard: Can I have those?

Andy: I think you probably can. Yeah. This is actually a power point that I deliver to the National Police Communicators Course.

Richard: Oh okay!

Andy: Yeah, I'm hoping. I don't think there's anything of particular horrible stuff so I'll let you have that.

Richard: Can I have access to the corporate communications plan and can I have access to operation Pole Cat plan?

Andy: Pole Cat. Okay. Do you mind [inaudible 00:29:59] for those?

Richard: I can do that.

Andy: Because I fancy there's bits, yeah, I fancy there's bits there that will have to be redacted from an operational point of view. That is something someone else will have to do other than me.

Richard: Fair enough.

Andy: Please do ask, I've certainly got no problem with it.

Richard: Okie dokie. Andy thank you ever so much for giving me your time.

Andy: All right.

Richard: You've been really helpful and ... good day to you.

Andy: Okay. Thanks very much Richard.

Richard: Okay. Bye bye.

Andy: Cheers now. Ta ta.

Greater Manchester Police

23/12/17

Amanda Coleman – Director of Communications

Phone Operator: Please hold.

Richard Fern: This is Richard Fern. How are you?

Amanda: Hi Richard.

Richard Fern: Good to talk to you.

Amanda: You okay?

Richard Fern: I'm well. I'm well. Is this a good time? I tried a little bit earlier on, but you were engaged.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: I just thought-

Amanda: Yeah, let's speak now, because otherwise we'll never get to do it will we?

Richard Fern: No. Quite right. Who am I? Very, very quick [inaudible 00:00:33]. I must send you a consent form, which I will send you as soon as I've hung up.

Amanda: That's fine.

Richard Fern: Which is exactly what it looks like, except you will see a little paragraph at the bottom that talks about, please don't tell me anything illegal, because I will hand it over to the police. I've also interviewing the activists. The things that you do need to know is you are not bound to talk to me. You are not bound to answer any questions. I cannot press you in any way, so I can't say, "Why are you not answering that question?"

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: The other thing is you are allowed to withdraw your consent for this interview up to the point of publication, which will probably be some time, this time next year. That will be detailed in the form that you'll get. It's all fairly straightforward and of course I'll answer any questions.

Amanda: Okay.

Richard Fern: Amanda, I wanted to talk to you with your two hats on. You obviously are the chief of this association that ... The chief officer or the chair of this Association of Police Communicators.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: I also want to talk to you about your role at Manchester, with particular reference to the fracking operation that happened at Barton Moss. Why am I asking you about that? I'm asking you about that because it provides a convenient sample for me, [inaudible 00:01:54] able to do a compare and contrast with you and Brighton. My research question is looking at police PR.

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Richard Fern: As I said to your opposite number Andy over at Brighton, I'm not actually interested in fracking. I'm not going to ask you whether or not fracking is [inaudible 00:02:12]. I'm also not going to ask you-

Amanda: Good.

Richard Fern: Yeah, good. I'm also not going to ask you specifically about policing matters so for instance, I'm not going to ask you about the case that I know has been batting backwards and forwards, the police officer breath test and stuff like that.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: [crosstalk 00:02:28] in that either. I'm interested purely in your views as a professional communicator working within the police force.

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Richard Fern: Okay. All of that said. And me. I have a PR background. I've worked in PR for about 20 years and [inaudible 00:02:47] professional journalism background. I know how the game is played. Could you just talk me through, first of all this organisation that you belong to, which is an organisation of police communicators?

Amanda: Yeah. Effectively it's been in existence in some form for ... God, probably 30 more years now to be honest. What it aims to do is be the voice of police communicators, so look at sharing best practise, look at networking opportunities, because it can be quite isolating for people working in PR and comms within the force. Also, we'll come together to be the voice if there's something nationally that it requires response to, in a coordinated way. That's really what we're there for. A lot about training and support and networking, but also looking at support in [inaudible 00:03:57] policy and procedure. Really trying to promote the good work that goes on as well, within each of the police forces. I think people often think it's ... Have a fixed view of what the role's going to be like, and what it's going to be like working for the police in a comms role. Actually it's really diverse and very different, and we try and highlight that and talk about the work that people do.

Richard Fern: There's been a lot of changeover ... Well, since 1917 I think, when the first police press officer [inaudible 00:04:33] in what is now the MET. I think there's been a movement, would you agree? A movement towards civilian media relations, professionals, rather than enforce people who have taken on the role?

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Richard Fern: Okay. To your mind, when you're approaching something like a major protest ... Again, talking about best practise, rather than specifically what the MP did for the moment.

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Richard Fern: In terms of your operational fit within the organisation, at what point does your department become involved?

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Richard Fern: It was interesting talking to Andy. He was quite positive on the idea that he was now ... He now had direct access to the gold commander of the operation, that he was part of that management team.

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Richard Fern: Is there then, at some point a, what I would think of as a media strategy or a media plan? Is there a written document that says, okay this is context, this is key messaging, this is a timeline perhaps, this is a communications grid perhaps?

Amanda: Yeah. We would always put something together. Whether it's a comms [inaudible 00:08:48] it involves a number of internal, external stakeholders and everything else, or whether it's just strictly a media because it's a media issue, a media handling plan. Something will always be put together so that we can get that agreed with the gold commander and have something. Which may change, that's the other thing, we're always ... It would be subject to change. Particularly with something that goes on for a longer period of time. You need to keep it under constant review, that what we've said we'll do is actually still right to do. Obviously for us, when we had the fracking protest, we actually had people camped out in front of headquarters as it happened at one point.

Again, you can't stick too rigidly to what your plan was originally when those sort of new, unexpected factors came in.

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Amanda: Yeah, we generally, with protests or ... Not just for this. We don't you know generally ... We try and stress, because there will be different views on different sides, we try and stress that our role in that is to just maintain the peace. People have a right to protest as well as people have a right to continue their lives unimpinged by some of the protest. We do ... That's one of the things we've always tried to ... Because policing in the past [inaudible 00:10:50] has had criticism, because people will say, "Well you're taking sides with X or Y." Right the way through, things like when we get the right wing protests and stuff like that, we make a big emphasis on the fact that we're stuck in the middle to a certain extent, in that you need to facilitate the protest, regardless of anybody's views about what their protesting about, as well as minimise the impact on people who just want to carry on their daily lives. That's what we've had to do. Try and maintain that middle ground.

Richard Fern: Yeah. For such ... That's ... As you can recall, was there a core message? Were there two or three core messages identified, and can you tell me what they were?

Amanda: I would have to check that to be fair, but ... Which I can do and then email to you, but that will have been one of them in terms of maintaining the peace and just dealing with criminal activity, which will have been around the process of what we had to do.

Richard Fern: You're obviously very reliant upon the team on the ground to advise you and to tell you what's going on. There were a couple of moments in which ... I need to be careful here, because I really don't want to drift off into talking about specific incidents.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: In which that process training was challenged. There were a couple of times in which it might have seemed as though the police have stepped outside of that ... Those set of rules, if you like. How do you deal with that?

Amanda: I mean realistically, we have to take the best information we have available from what officers provide. In lots of cases now, that's quite difficult when it's against video footage that people may have produced in a particular way for a particular purpose. It is always a difficult thing to do. In hindsight, one of the things I think we probably would have done that we didn't do, would be have somebody actually go down at different points and be able to have a first hand experience. I say, but that's not always possible. Sometimes, because of the nature of what was going on, you can't put staff into a risky position.

Richard Fern: Yeah, I mean you're talking about ... You're talking about sending a press officer, or someone like a press officer, down to basically go undercover. I'm not [crosstalk 00:13:52]-

Amanda: Well, no. They'd be quite obviously there. We have fluorescent jackets with press officer on the back so you can see. They would be there, but I think to get a firsthand experience would have been useful. Looking at how we, particularly as it went on for some period of time, is how we would have perhaps adapted the messaging and we may have challenged perhaps some of the senior officers approach to some of the messaging and what we were doing.

Richard Fern: Is that really the role of press officer? To challenge the-

Amanda: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Richard Fern: I mean the reason I ask that question is, I used to ... I've worked in various PR roles. One of them was the University of Warwick, and there were a couple of times when I kind of had to get into the face of ... Senior managers would say, "Hang on a minute. We're cruising for a bruising here." A university is a different place to a police service.

Amanda: Yeah. I mean that's one of the things we always say and I always say to staff when they start is that you are expected to challenge wen you think it's appropriate. We're all bound by the code of ethics now anyway, and that's part of what's in that. Beyond that, it's a lot of emperor's new clothes situation, in that you can have a senior officer who can be being told what people want him to hear. Actually you might be the only person who will give a honest, ho holds barred, opinion, view, and feedback. It's absolutely critical I think.

Richard Fern: It was actually [inaudible 00:15:33] that Andy also said, was that he felt it was really important that sometimes he had a view that was completely different to everybody else's, when he was there. That he had a line of information perhaps, that the officers didn't have. I thought that was quite interesting.

Amanda: It is. You see it from a different perspective, because you see ... Yes, you see the police side of it, but you also see what's coming in front the public, and you see some of the wider perspectives on some things. I think you can't be doing your job as effectively as you should be, if you don't feel able to put forward, contribute. At the end of the day, the gold commander, whoever's in charge, will make the final decision, but you have to give accurate tactical advice of, "This is the position, this is what's happening. These are the factors you need to be aware of." Particularly, obviously, factors that will impact on potentially how you're managing the communication around it.

Richard Fern: Just to ask then, specifically about GMP. Talk me through the levels of media training that officers on the ground would have. You had a chief superintendent in charge on site I think.

Amanda: Yeah, I mean the bottom line is it's not as good as it should be, because of the cuts we've had. People get inputs within different training, so detectives training and various other training courses. There is no standalone media training.

Richard Fern: Right.

Amanda: We will provide advice and support to offers if they go through the ranks anyway, and some of it will come that way. It can be their media training, in terms of ability to do interviews as well as understanding the media, can be very variable.

Richard Fern: Yep. Okay. In this particular circumstance, and I'll not ask you to name names. Did you basically feel as though you had ... I'm just thinking about the differences between you and Brighton. I'm just thinking, did you feel as though the people who were talking to the media on the ground were competent to do so, in terms of their media training? Did you feel as though there were times at which there was a sharp intake of breath?

Amanda: I always feel a sharp intake [crosstalk 00:18:04]. To be fair. Yeah. There were times when clearly things happened which could have been managed better, and that may be due to what we were doing, it may have been due to the individual.

Richard Fern: Obviously with this part of the interview, is I will ... Basically I'll do it in discussion rather than as part of the interview so when it appears in the PhD, it will not be ... I won't allow it to be the case that you can be identified to that comment.

Amanda: That would be good, because we did have some very strong minded individuals at a senior level, that were very difficult to deal with in terms of challenge and encouraging them to see a different perspective.

Richard Fern: Yeah. That's also an interesting thing isn't it? On one side of it you have what might be called, kind of a media influence on things that is very important. On the other hand you have a highly encultured organisation that has a ... Has a particular way of doing things. The police have a particular way of doing things and a particular mindset and they're pulling in another direction. You kind of feel as though there's this field of conflict between the two sometimes, pulling one way and the other.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: Okay. Not going to [inaudible 00:19:44] on that one. [inaudible 00:19:45]. Okay. I'm going to change tack slightly now. I'm going to ask you a different set of questions about your relationship with the media. I'm going to ask in three parts.

Amanda: Okay.

Richard Fern: I'm going to ask you, do you feel as though you've ever had an unfair hearing? I'm going to ask you if you feel as though you received a favourable hearing. Then I'm going to ask you if you ever received [inaudible 00:20:06]. Let's start with the first one.

Amanda: Okay.

Richard Fern: Do you think you've ever had an unfair hearing? I'm thinking particularly here of the regional press. I suppose I'm thinking of the Manchester Evening News more than any other.

Amanda: Yes and no. I mean in some respects, we do feel they criticised us unfairly on some respects. On the whole it's probably not that ... Not as bad ... Well, we've done various analysis and it's never as bad as people think it is.

Richard Fern: Yeah.

Amanda: It's just you remember the bad headlines.

Richard Fern: Yeah. Poor old Daily Mail had one week where they got criticised ... Sorry, the poor old Sussex police had one week where they were criticised in the Daily Mail for sending too many officers when [inaudible 00:20:52] protestors showed up. The following week lots of protestors showed up, they didn't have enough officers.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: [Hammered 00:20:59] two weeks on the trot in the Daily Mail.

Amanda: I know. You do feel that sometimes, that you know you're in a no-win situation where it doesn't matter what response you provide, it's never going to ... You know. You're still going to face the same outcome.

Richard Fern: Yeah. Generally ... Do you ever feel ... Activists have said to me, "Look, the press are biassed in favour of the police." Would that be your perception?

Amanda: No.

Richard Fern: Right.

Amanda: I actually think they're very variable, depending on what happens. Even more so now, I think, with the mood on social media and stuff. I think they tend to sway more. I think with some of them it's quite difficult to see exactly which way they will go on various things.

Richard Fern: Yeah, because we've been talking mostly about traditional media. I should say traditional media is the thing that I'm focusing on, but social media clearly has a very big role to play here.

Amanda: It does. I think it drives a lot of the media as well. More so now than ever before. The media are using it for stories but they're also using it for public opinion. I think sometimes that amends slightly how they're approaching things.

Richard Fern: Yeah. Like most forces, you now have a strong social media team. I know you have a Twitter feed and ... Several I think of various descriptions. That must feel quite dangerous on occasion, because that can move very, very quickly and get out of control quite fast.

Amanda: It can, although the process and framework we use to train people and things, is quite robust. That minimises some of the risks for us.

Richard Fern: Okay. Right. You'll be delighted to know that we're now drawing to the end of this [inaudible 00:22:47] thing. Obviously, thank you very much. I will send you a transcript of this conversation in about a weeks time. You'll [inaudible 00:22:55] on your desk for the New Year.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: Happy for you to come back to me at that point and say, "Actually I know I said that, but what I really meant was this."

Amanda: Okay.

Richard Fern: That's fine. Also happy for you, if you want to highlight anything that you said that you actually think to yourself, you know what, I did say it and I did mean it, but please don't tell anyone I said that. That's fine as well.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: Is there anything that ... Factual question, you've got to ask at the end, is there anything you think I should have asked you? Did anything I say prompt a thought in you that I didn't follow through, for instance?

Amanda: Not at the moment.

Richard Fern: Okay.

Amanda: Not that I can think.

Richard Fern: All right. Well, I'll send this transcript through to you. I'll also send later on this afternoon, the consent form through to you.

Amanda: That's brill. Yeah. It's fine. We're quite open in our dealings.

Richard Fern: In some ways, I'm more expecting some of the activists to withdraw consent.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: They could ... I think activists in particular can say things sometimes that they suddenly realise, "I didn't mean that," as much as anything else. You'll see the form, it's ... The [inaudible 00:24:05] there. Anyway. Amanda, thank you so much. Really kind of you to help me.

Amanda: No, I'm glad we finally got to speak and I shall have a look through. If there's anything that I think oh I could have expanded on that might help, I'll let you know.

Richard Fern: Is there anyone you think I should speak to on the police side? Is there anyone that I should be getting in contact with?

Amanda: I suppose if it's around obviously protests and the management of them in the comms elements of that, there'll be a national lead and I'm not sure who it is. That would be useful to get their perspective, because they'll have seen different protests and different things all over the country. The people who'll be able to tell you is the NPCC press office.

Richard Fern: Okay. Is that the National Police-

Amanda: Chief's Council.

Richard Fern: National Police Chief's Council. Okay.

Amanda: Obviously that person might be quite useful to get their perspective on what they've seen with the different approaches.

Richard Fern: Okay. Thank you very much. Right, I'll ring off now, but Amanda, Merry Christmas, happy new year.

Amanda: Good to speak to you. Yeah, have a good Christmas.

Richard Fern: [inaudible 00:25:20].

Amanda: Cheers Richard. Bye bye.

Greater Manchester Police

23/12/17

Amanda Coleman – Director of Communications

Phone Operator: Please hold.

Richard Fern: This is Richard Fern. How are you?

Amanda: Hi Richard.

Richard Fern: Good to talk to you.

Amanda: You okay?

Richard Fern: I'm well. I'm well. Is this a good time? I tried a little bit earlier on, but you were engaged.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: I just thought-

Amanda: Yeah, let's speak now, because otherwise we'll never get to do it will we?

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Amanda: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Richard Fern: I mean the reason I ask that question is, I used to ... I've worked in various PR roles. One of them was the University of Warwick, and there were a couple of times when I kind of had to get into the face of ... Senior managers would say, "Hang on a minute. We're cruising for a bruising here." A university is a different place to a police service.

Amanda: Yeah. I mean that's one of the things we always say and I always say to staff when they start is that you are expected to challenge wen you think it's appropriate. We're all bound by the code of ethics now anyway, and that's part of what's in that. Beyond that, it's a lot of emperor's new clothes situation, in that you can have a senior officer who can be being told what people want him to hear. Actually you might be the only person who will give a honest, ho holds barred, opinion, view, and feedback. It's absolutely critical I think.

Richard Fern: It was actually [inaudible 00:15:33] that Andy also said, was that he felt it was really important that sometimes he had a view that was completely different to everybody else's, when he was there. That he had a line of information perhaps, that the officers didn't have. I thought that was quite interesting.

Amanda: It is. You see it from a different perspective, because you see ... Yes, you see the police side of it, but you also see what's coming in front the public, and you see some of the wider perspectives on some things. I think you can't be doing your job as effectively as you should be, if you don't feel able to put forward, contribute. At the end of the day, the gold commander, whoever's in charge, will make the final decision, but you have to give accurate tactical advice of, "This is the position, this is what's happening. These are the factors you need to be aware of." Particularly, obviously, factors that will impact on potentially how you're managing the communication around it.

Richard Fern: Just to ask then, specifically about GMP. Talk me through the levels of media training that officers on the ground would have. You had a chief superintendent in charge on site I think.

Amanda: Yeah, I mean the bottom line is it's not as good as it should be, because of the cuts we've had. People get inputs within different training, so detectives training and various other training courses. There is no standalone media training.

Richard Fern: Right.

Amanda: We will provide advice and support to offers if they go through the ranks anyway, and some of it will come that way. It can be their media training, in terms of ability to do interviews as well as understanding the media, can be very variable.

Richard Fern: Yep. Okay. In this particular circumstance, and I'll not ask you to name names. Did you basically feel as though you had ... I'm just thinking about the differences between you and Brighton. I'm just thinking, did you feel as though the people who were talking to the media on the ground were competent to do so, in terms of their media training? Did you feel as though there were times at which there was a sharp intake of breath?

Amanda: I always feel a sharp intake [crosstalk 00:18:04]. To be fair. Yeah. There were times when clearly things happened which could have been managed better, and that may be due to what we were doing, it may have been due to the individual.

Richard Fern: Obviously with this part of the interview, is I will ... Basically I'll do it in discussion rather than as part of the interview so when it appears in the PhD, it will not be ... I won't allow it to be the case that you can be identified to that comment.

Amanda: That would be good, because we did have some very strong minded individuals at a senior level, that were very difficult to deal with in terms of challenge and encouraging them to see a different perspective.

Richard Fern: Yeah. That's also an interesting thing isn't it? On one side of it you have what might be called, kind of a media influence on things that is very important. On the other hand you have a highly encultured organisation that has a ... Has a particular way of doing things. The police have a particular way of doing things and a particular mindset and they're pulling in another direction. You kind of feel as though there's this field of conflict between the two sometimes, pulling one way and the other.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: Okay. Not going to [inaudible 00:19:44] on that one. [inaudible 00:19:45]. Okay. I'm going to change tack slightly now. I'm going to ask you a different set of questions about your relationship with the media. I'm going to ask in three parts.

Amanda: Okay.

Richard Fern: I'm going to ask you, do you feel as though you've ever had an unfair hearing? I'm going to ask you if you feel as though you received a favourable hearing. Then I'm going to ask you if you ever received [inaudible 00:20:06]. Let's start with the first one.

Amanda: Okay.

Richard Fern: Do you think you've ever had an unfair hearing? I'm thinking particularly here of the regional press. I suppose I'm thinking of the Manchester Evening News more than any other.

Amanda: Yes and no. I mean in some respects, we do feel they criticised us unfairly on some respects. On the whole it's probably not that ... Not as bad ... Well, we've done various analysis and it's never as bad as people think it is.

Richard Fern: Yeah.

Amanda: It's just you remember the bad headlines.

Richard Fern: Yeah. Poor old Daily Mail had one week where they got criticised ... Sorry, the poor old Sussex police had one week where they were criticised in the Daily Mail for sending too many officers when [inaudible 00:20:52] protestors showed up. The following week lots of protestors showed up, they didn't have enough officers.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: [Hammered 00:20:59] two weeks on the trot in the Daily Mail.

Amanda: I know. You do feel that sometimes, that you know you're in a no-win situation where it doesn't matter what response you provide, it's never going to ... You know. You're still going to face the same outcome.

Richard Fern: Yeah. Generally ... Do you ever feel ... Activists have said to me, "Look, the press are biassed in favour of the police." Would that be your perception?

Amanda: No.

Richard Fern: Right.

Amanda: I actually think they're very variable, depending on what happens. Even more so now, I think, with the mood on social media and stuff. I think they tend to sway more. I think with some of them it's quite difficult to see exactly which way they will go on various things.

Richard Fern: Yeah, because we've been talking mostly about traditional media. I should say traditional media is the thing that I'm focusing on, but social media clearly has a very big role to play here.

Amanda: It does. I think it drives a lot of the media as well. More so now than ever before. The media are using it for stories but they're also using it for public opinion. I think sometimes that amends slightly how they're approaching things.

Richard Fern: Yeah. Like most forces, you now have a strong social media team. I know you have a Twitter feed and ... Several I think of various descriptions. That must feel quite dangerous on occasion, because that can move very, very quickly and get out of control quite fast.

Amanda: It can, although the process and framework we use to train people and things, is quite robust. That minimises some of the risks for us.

Richard Fern: Okay. Right. You'll be delighted to know that we're now drawing to the end of this [inaudible 00:22:47] thing. Obviously, thank you very much. I will send you a transcript of this conversation in about a weeks time. You'll [inaudible 00:22:55] on your desk for the New Year.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: Happy for you to come back to me at that point and say, "Actually I know I said that, but what I really meant was this."

Amanda: Okay.

Richard Fern: That's fine. Also happy for you, if you want to highlight anything that you said that you actually think to yourself, you know what, I did say it and I did mean it, but please don't tell anyone I said that. That's fine as well.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: Is there anything that ... Factual question, you've got to ask at the end, is there anything you think I should have asked you? Did anything I say prompt a thought in you that I didn't follow through, for instance?

Amanda: Not at the moment.

Richard Fern: Okay.

Amanda: Not that I can think.

Richard Fern: All right. Well, I'll send this transcript through to you. I'll also send later on this afternoon, the consent form through to you.

Amanda: That's brill. Yeah. It's fine. We're quite open in our dealings.

Richard Fern: In some ways, I'm more expecting some of the activists to withdraw consent.

Amanda: Yeah.

Richard Fern: They could ... I think activists in particular can say things sometimes that they suddenly realise, "I didn't mean that," as much as anything else. You'll see the form, it's ... The [inaudible 00:24:05] there. Anyway. Amanda, thank you so much. Really kind of you to help me.

Amanda: No, I'm glad we finally got to speak and I shall have a look through. If there's anything that I think oh I could have expanded on that might help, I'll let you know.

Richard Fern: Is there anyone you think I should speak to on the police side? Is there anyone that I should be getting in contact with?

Amanda: I suppose if it's around obviously protests and the management of them in the comms elements of that, there'll be a national lead and I'm not sure who it is. That would be useful to get their perspective, because they'll have seen different protests and different things all over the country. The people who'll be able to tell you is the NPCC press office.

Richard Fern: Okay. Is that the National Police-

Amanda: Chief's Council.

Richard Fern: National Police Chief's Council. Okay.

Amanda: Obviously that person might be quite useful to get their perspective on what they've seen with the different approaches.

Richard Fern: Okay. Thank you very much. Right, I'll ring off now, but Amanda, Merry Christmas, happy new year.

Amanda: Good to speak to you. Yeah, have a good Christmas.

Richard Fern: [inaudible 00:25:20].

Amanda: Cheers Richard. Bye bye.

Lancashire Police

19/05/17

Nick Evans – Press office at Lancashire Police

Speaker 1: [00:00:11] Please hold.

Richard: Hello, could I speak to Nick please?

Nick: Speaking.

Richard: Hello Nick my name is Richard Fern, we've been exchanging emails.

Nick: How are you Richard?

Richard: I'm pretty good, how are you today?

Nick: Good, yes very well thank you, very well. Looking forward to the weekend.

Richard: Yeah, I'm looking out the window right now and thinking the weekend's the most dodging the weather, but hey there you go.

Nick: (laughter) What is it doing where you're- are you in Sheffield?

Richard: I'm actually based in Birmingham...

Nick: Oh, okay.

Richard: We've got the weather flying through, so it could be heading North.

Nick: Oh, okay.

Richard: [crosstalk 00:00:54]

Nick: Just in time for the weekend, that's perfect.

Richard: Yeah, just to give you a very quick background on me.

Nick: Yes, please.

Richard: The piece is really straightforward. Its' looking at regional prints, coverage of fracking, but its looking at it from a police PR point of view.

Nick: Okay.

Richard: First I'm asking myself is, what kind of affect does police PR have on regional print coverage? So that's really where I am.

Nick: Yeah.

Richard: Now, the other thing you should need to know is, you've got an awful lot of rights. The first one is, you don't have to answer any question and I'm not allowed to press you.

Nick: Okay.

Richard: If you say I'm not answering that I go yeah okay, I move on.

Nick: Right, gotcha.

Richard: And the other thing is you have a right to anonymity. If you take that right then I will know who you are and so will my supervisor but nobody else. You'll be sent a letter with all of these rights and with that letter will include a transcript of this call because I am taping this call.

Nick: Yeah okay.

Richard: And all of that said I think that's all we need to know unless you have any questions?

Nick: No not particularly, I've spoke to Amanda at GMP, not that I didn't trust who you said you were but just to get her view on the interview really and she said it was fine so I'm pretty relaxed.

Richard: Okay. In which case the first question I want to ask you really is to try and get some context. At what point as the communications professional for the police were you called in?

Nick: Pretty early on to be fair. So you all know the background to the site that we have which is on the 8583 Preston New Road. I and my team have been involved through the various different stages actually not just of the work that's ongoing on the side. But we've been in involved in the planning process and the subsequent inquiry that was held at black port football club as well. Because they have all involved a policing operation in one degree or another, it's around the various stages. So we've been involved for some number of months and even before the work started on the site.

Richard: Yeah. I've also spoken with Andy Fleean from Sussex police.

Nick: Okay.

Richard: Because they were the first police force to have to cope with this particular set of protests. Of course it all went to Balcombe first.

Nick: Yes.

Richard: Have you had opportunity to talk with other police forces about-

Nick: Yeah absolutely. When we sort of started planning I think we did speak to, not necessarily [GMP] but we certainly got some stuff through from Sussex and from GMP because they obviously have the Barton Moss issues. Now in terms of the sort of dynamics, both of those are slightly different to what we've got but it was useful to get some sort of ideas from them about they know comes wise. So yeah we spoke to both of those.

Richard: What did they have to tell you that was useful, what were the key learning points from those two in terms of comps.

Nick: The prime thing I think was around engagement, it's a frightfully buzz word but I think it does sum up quite nicely what I think we were all trying to do and that is keep people, and I can go into more details around who those sort of people are or who our audience is are, but it's just keeping those interested parties fully informed in terms of what our role is. And equally importantly what our role is not within the policing of any protests relating to Fracking activity.

Richard: Yeah tell me a bit more about your audiences, who would-

Nick: Well there's quite a few so we're trying to identify them in terms of stakeholders because there's lots of different interested parties. So particularly for us, and I'm sure this applied actually to Suffix and to GMP, so in terms of our site we've got local residents on the Fyldes in the sort of loosest terms, in terms of the geographic area. So there's residents on the Fyldes because originally there were two proposed sites, you know all this but obviously work is sort of only ongoing on the one at the 8583, so we've got residents of the Fyldes.

We've got local businesses, and they could be pro or anti. So it's in an area that's quite reliant on tourism for example so you might have small businesses in Blackpool that fit within the chamber of trade, some of those might be pro, some of them may be closer to the site who are impacted by traffic disruption or some campaigners at the site or whatever, they might be a bit more anti. But regardless of their views we'd have local business as interested parties. We've got varying local community groups, again pro or anti. We've got the protestors or campaigners themselves, I don't know how you would refer to them.

Richard: Yeah that's fine yeah.

Nick: We've got Cuadrilla, who obviously the firm that are undertaking the activity down at the site. Partner organisations, by that I mean people like the Environment Agency, Utilities, Lancashire Fire and Rescue, Northwest Ambulance] Service, various other partners. Local counsellors, MPs, the police and crime Commissioner, and I guess the media as well would be included on a list of sort of interested parties.

Outside that, I suppose they're the ones who have a sort of vested interest as identified by us but then there is obviously the wider public in its general sense. And we sort of connect more and more with the public through our own channels which I'm sure you'll come onto in terms of how we engage. But obviously we have big audiences now on our social media channels.

Richard: Yeah, talk to me for a second about key messaging. What are the messages you want to get out?

Nick: The messages we want to get out. Well in the broadest sense what we're trying to say is set out what the constabulary's position is in relation to fracking and I'll come onto the specifics in a minute. But what we get quite a lot of is people saying that we are supporting Cuadrilla we are facilitating Cuadrilla, we are supporting fracking. So as part of our key messaging we are very keen to stress that we don't take sides in fracking. What our role is to facilitate lawful protest if people wish to protest. But that has to be balance with the rights of the wider public to go about their business. So that may be a business owner close to the site who is carrying on their business, we need to ensure that they can go about that business.

One of the big issues for us is the fact that the site is on the side of a main road. So one of the things we need to make sure we do is keep that road open as often as we can. We'll close it when we have to but road users, using that road, commuters etc would be a big interested party and they have rights. So we need to ensure that our activity balances their rights to go about their daily business along with the rights of those who wish to be on the site protesting or campaigning.

So generally that is our sort of over-arching message, our priority would be public safety. And the approach we take in terms of the policing approach is one of engagement and communication with all of those affected. So we try very much to lead our policing approach with what we call PLT, so Protest Liaison Teams. So these are the people that will engage with protestors, campaigners, talk to them, speak to them, we're very friendly, we're very professional, we're very open in terms of answering many question that they may have of us. So that's our general policing approach.

We always try and work with protestors as and when we can if they let us know they've got a planned protest somewhere we always try and work with them to facilitate it. But what we won't do is- if anyone commits a criminal offence for example then they will be dealt with. And they will be dealt with fairly and firmly. Arrest will a bit of a last resort but we won't hesitate to arrest as and when we need to. And I think we've arrested about 130 something people so far.

Richard: Yeah. Media training, when do you allow them to speak and under what circumstances do you allow them to speak and how much training do they get before they speak?

Nick: We tend to restrict it to relatively senior officers, we haven't done that many media interviews actually. But we did do some the other day and the officer that did those was a superintendent who is the silver commander, you probably know about policing commander structures.

Richard: I know enough to know what silver commander is.

Nick: Yeah so we have the gold commander who is quite strategic but then the silver commander is much more operational so the silver commander gave a series of media interviews the other day in relation to a specific protest that was held at Kirkham Police Station. And in terms of media training he's pretty media savvy anyway but I had a number of conversations with him before he did those interviews just in terms of what questions he would be likely to get asked.

Richard: I've worked in PR myself, I've delivered media training so was this a day long session in front of a-

Nick: No no no no. He's a pretty senior cop so he'd done that sort of stuff before and the media who were doing the interviews were also, with out decrying them, it was local TV news, local radio and the local newspaper.

Richard: Which one?

Nick: It was BBC North West night was one of the TVs, Grenada's TV was the other TV. We also have a cable news outfit called About Lancashire, so they did something. Rock FM and the Blackpool Gazette was the print, so they're the main local newspaper that's covering fracking stuff. So it wasn't a day long thing with mock up interviews in front of camera, it was just a series of conversations around we think you'll get asked this, this is the sort of thing I'd be saying in response.

Richard: But at some point in his earlier career, CPD development he would have had formal media training.

Nick: It's good question, I don't know to be honest. What I would say is we used to do a lot more media training for officers than we do now and that's largely due to cut backs in essence. We should do more.

Richard: It is hard because of course it’s always one of those things that you look at a budget and you say well we can't get rid of that and that.

Nick: Well indeed and there are obviously firms that offer media trainings so you don't necessarily need to do it yourself although I think that's good if you can. But you can sort of get firms in to do it. But obviously there's a cost element to that so like you said when you're looking at restricted budgets then it's sometimes the thing that goes.

Richard: Noticed that you were talking about gold and silver there. At what level do you guys input?

Nick: Different levels so I'm currently going to probably three or four meetings a fortnight on fracking. We have a regular silver catch up every week which is an internal one so I feed into that. But I also go to the strategic, we have a strategic coordinating group which the gold commander will chair and that will involve police and partners. So I'll have a comes [Comms] input into that. But Ill also have a comes input into the tactical coordinating group which, again, is a sort of more operational partners meeting.

Richard: Talking about social media, obviously I'm following the various strings. How reliant are you on social media and what audiences do you target on social media? Do you target through social media I suppose is the other question.

Nick: Well in terms of geographically, yes because predominantly the channel we use in terms or social media is the Fylde police case book page. And we try and keep that as updated as we can. Not necessarily people in this department that keep it updated, we try and push quite a lot of communication out to cops and police staff out in the relevant areas. So we ask the neighbour policing teams for the areas to do quite a lot of communication on our social media channels. But it's predominantly the file police Facebook page so we'll try and keep people updated in terms of if we need to close the roads for any particular reason, we'll try and let people know that the road's closed, we'll let people know when it's reopened. If we make a number of significant arrests for example, we put that out. Unless it was something really significant, that would be the channel that we would predominantly use rather than the main constabulary Facebook page.

Richard: You're mentioning Facebook a lot but you're not mentioning twitter. I am-

Nick: Twitter we do use so again we have a Fyldes Police Twitter account. So if it's a quick time message around a road closer we would probably put a tweet out as well. Facebook is obviously better for doing more comprehensive updates.

Richard: I know this might be a question you're reluctant to answer if you want to pass that's okay.

Nick: Okay.

Richard: Both GMP and certainly Sussex intimated there was intelligence logged off social media as well. That social media is monitored for essentially activists talking to each other and deciding that I'm gonna put a tripod up here.

Nick: Not by this department.

Richard: Fine, yeah. That makes sense. Some departments are, some aren't. It would actually be quite strange to use police work to [inaudible 00:21:10].

Nick: No no no. What we do do, and I don't know what Sussex and GMP said about this but what we do is to try and engage in a bit of a two way- so we try and respond to people as well on social media particularly on Facebook. So if we get questions in we try to respond to those. What I would say is that we've made a strategic, sorry I'm moving slightly off your question here, but we've made a strategic decision that what we will not do is engage with campaigners on other channels. Does that make sense?

Richard: So if for instance there was a twitter stream being run by the protestors you wouldn't go to that twitter stream.

Nick: No. Correct.

Richard: Okay I understand that, yeah. How do you communicate with the media, what are your major ways?

Nick: We encourage the media actually to follow the social media accounts so in term of stuff that's happening if we put something out on Fylde Police the media should all be following those account and so should get updates from there. They may have subsequent questions and they can obviously ring the press office or whatever if they have additional queries we'll try and answer them. They obviously generate their own or try and generate their own information as well particularly in terms of costs, resources and numbers of arrests and or charges. So FOI's obviously a particularly favourite route for the media to try and get some information. What we tried to do and we're happy to speak to costs and resources and numbers of people arrest and or charged, we're not hiding anything.

But what we've tried to do is proactively put out some of that information on our website. So we've got a fracking page on our website which gives a bit of information and tries to address some of the frequently asked questions. So we've tried to talk a bit about the cost and we're trying to keep it updated in terms of the number of arrests and what have you. But yeah predominantly we just ask the media to follow the relevant social media accounts.

Richard: When you say you ask the media to follow, how do you ask the media to follow?

Nick: Good question, how do you mean?

Richard: Well for instance imagine me some jobbing little Cub reporter's turn up at the Blackpool Gazette. I don't know the patch that well, I do couple of searches I come up with a couple twitter feeds, maybe I come up with a Facebook page. How do I know which ones to follow, how do I not know which ones not to follow, how do I know which ones are for sure, how do I know where things are going to be turning up?

Nick: Yeah, well I mean this doesn't just relate to the fracking stuff but whenever a reporter speaks to us and we obviously have regular reporters with holm we have contact. We will always direct them and verbally this is, so they put a call into the press office, speak to a press officer and ask about a particular thing happening in Blackburn or whatever it may be, we will always suggest to them what the relevant accounts would be for them to start following. And they can also sign up for RSS feeds from the Where app as well so we always encourage people to do that.

Richard: So there are obviously police statements and press releases going off at the same time then.

Nick: Yeah so an example would be the event on Wednesday for which Richard Robert Shore did the media interviews was something that was bashed as a silent protest and it was held at a police station because the individual was in sort of reaction to what the protestors saw as over aggressive policing tactics. That would be how they would describe it. And it descended into something other than a silent and peaceful protest end in fact included, certainly some protestors not all by all means, but a minority blocking the exit to the car park from which emergency response vehicles were trying to get out. And certainly stopped or tried to stop a car leaving on the 999 call. So anyway, following that we put out a proactive statement saying how disappointed we were at the behaviour of some of the protestors during the course of that event, and that went onto the Fylde Police Facebook page.

Richard: I should say talking to matters, I've just turned 50 so when I started as a reported in 1994, I learned on manual type writers. And every morning I trouped down to me local police station in Lichfield and the desk sergeant turned the book round and let me have a look at what had been

Nick: Yeah (laughter). I remember those days. There's something to be said for them in terms of that approach. And I think, and again this is going off topic, but I think that there is, this and other various things, I think of given a perception among some cops that they shouldn't be speaking to the media at all. And I think there's some inherent dangers in that and I don't think it's a healthy place to be. So we try and encourage as much face to face contact as we can. And I think there's certainly some of our local journalists they still have that, maybe not going to the cop shop every morning and speaking to the sergeant but you know they still pull their chords and see how they do and get a lot of their information from there rather than from us. And I'm all for that.

Richard: Yeah, there's an interesting question around culture, because if you look at the extant academic literature by which I mean the books what have been written, they actually place this 1960's quite sort of cosy relationship between-

Nick: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Richard: And then it kind of goes through the 1960s and the failure of gasloops even up through the 70s through the thatcher period where obviously things went very particular with a minor strike and other things that we know about also in that lot. And then we end up with a situation in which we have lots of old school police and lots of old school journalists who are functioning at one end and kind of want to have those conversations over a pint of beer and a packet of crisps. And but you also have social media getting in the way, shrinking newsrooms getting in the way, one would argue PR getting in the way. And it's interesting that that sort of cultural change that's taking place. You're a civilian you were just telling me you used to be-

Nick: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Richard: Do you find there was a resistance to PR within the organisation?

Nick: From the constabulary?

Richard: Yeah.

Nick: From some quarters yeah. And I think, again it may be a generational thing, it may be more nuance than that. But some people I think don't have very much time for it and perhaps that because their view of the media may be coloured by whatever experience or who knows. So they may think they don't have a role in terms of speaking to the media. And other people are very attune to the sort of role that we can play in terms of engaging with the public. I'd always say that the media are a channel through which you are speaking to the public. Now there aren't so many people that pick up a daily local newspaper these days but nonetheless it remains a significant audience that you can tap into.

Richard: If we look at the Blackpool Gazette, do they treat you fairly?

Nick: Well the Blackpool Gazette do, yes. And I think they have a - everything I've seen in the Blackpool Gazette has been quite balanced in relation to fracking. And I speak to their news editor on a fairly regular basis. And certainly anecdotally, I think they have interestingly when they have comments on their stories on their website they tend to get some people saying that the story is biased towards the cops and others saying it's biased towards the campaigners. Their view is if you're getting criticised from both sides then you’re probably doing something right in terms of getting the balance right. I've had no issues with anything that I've seen in the Gazette in relation to fracking certainly.

Richard: Do you think that the news media more generally treats you fairly? Keeping it very broad for obvious reasons.

Nick: Yeah, specifically I have a slight issue with some of the stuff that I've seen the BBC do. For example the other day they'd included some footage of an alleged assault by a cop on a campaigner, which was campaigner footage. And which we have had a complaint about but they didn't come to us for example to query the status of that complaint or to get a view from us on it. They merely took the footage from the campaigners and sort of broadcast it to show what they described as police brutality. Whereas the reality may well end up- and it's difficult for us because there's a complainant about it, it's a bit hard for us to say no it didn't happen like this at this stage, there may be a time where we can do that. But like I say we weren't given a right to reply in relation to that specifically. So I do have some issues, yes.

Richard: Yeah in some ways it's almost inevitable that every now and then something- I mean in a {inaudible} world every now and then a media is gonna either make a stupid mistake or you're gonna have a particularly antsy journalist. It's gonna happen at some point I guess.

Nick: Yeah I would guess so. What I would say is I am, we've tended not to have very much interest outside of the sort of local regional press. We have some specific, the big issue, we've had some interest in the big issue and again I would suggest they may have a slight leading toward what the campaigners are saying. Now I don't know if it's a print thing or just an online thing, there's something call drill or drop.

Richard: Yeah I'm familiar with the website.

Nick: Yeah, so they've shown an interest as well in terms of getting stuff from us in relation to arrests and lock ons and whatever else. Generally I'm relatively happy with the stuff that's been reported in the media broadly, broadly.

Richard: It happened at Sussex I just want to ask you at Sussex they had an agreement with Cuadrilla and their press office. Are you talking to Cuadrilla press office at all?

Nick: No.

Richard: Specifically no. Okay.

Nick: No. I think I once had a conversation with Cuadrilla maybe two years ago in relation to an event they were having at a hotel in Preston and this is very early doors. This was to have a sort of event when they were gonna show some plans or something to member of the public. Since then, no. And I think it's important for us to while part of our role is to facilitate Cuadrilla going about their business, I think it's very important that there is no perception that we are sort of in cahoots with them, working to their directives. So no, I don't have any ongoing conversations with their press.

Richard: That's fine. It was certainly a very controversial thing that Sussex did and I think they were criticised over it. I don't think it worked for them as a relationship anywhere. Cuadrilla [inaudible 00:37:46].

Nick: Yeah operationally we have pretty close links with Cuadrilla because we need to understand how many truck are coming today, what's your schedule etc etc. So we have those links but certainly not comms wise.

Richard: We're coming to the end now, is there anything you think I should have asked you that I haven't? That wonderful catch all question.

Nick: (laughter) it's a very open ended question. I think you have probably covered most of what I was expecting.

Richard: Yeah, okay.

Nick: So I can't think of anything. Obviously if you think of anything I know it's a structured interview so there's probably nothing that's going to pop into your head. But obviously if there is anything else then just drop me an email and I'll do my best to respond.

Richard: Okay what happens now is I'm going to send this off to people I get to do a transcript, they'll do a transcript. I'll probably get my transcript back over the weekend, I'll probably look at it Monday, Tuesday correcting any obvious errors. We'll then send to you three things, you'll get a form which is a consent for which will light a cigar to this interview, you'll get the transcript which will basically be your review and I'm gonna send an FOI request in. Now I can send it to you or I can send it to the FOI department. The FOI will ask two sets of things, it will ask the media communications plan and it will ask for any press statements or press releases.

Nick: Okay. Yeah if you could send it to the FOI that would be great. What they will do is almost certainly just send it on to me but just so we go through the proper process that would be best. I can email you the address if you want?

Richard: Yeah why not. I can pull it off your website as well that's not really- I just wanted to make sure that you weren't surprised by the FOI request.

Nick: (laughter) no it's fine.

Richard: So you'll get two documents probably Monday, Tuesday, transcript and consent of information letter and with that Nick thanks ever so much for agreeing to be interviewed. Really, really helpful.

Nick: You're very welcome. Have a good week.

Blackpool Gazette.

Tim Gavell

20/02/2018 11.30am

Speaker 1: Please hold.

Richard: Is that [inaudible 00:00:20]?

Tim: It is, yes.

Richard: Hello Tim. Hello, my name's Richard [Fern 00:00:26]. I am an academic and a journalist based at the University of Sheffield School of Journalism.

Tim: Hello.

Richard: Hello. Big ask, but may I pick your brains for a couple of minutes?

Tim: Yeah, yeah.

Richard: Tim, I'm looking at, and I'm not interested in the issue precisely itself, I'm not looking at coverage of fracking across three separate newspapers. The MEN, the Brighton Argus and yourselves. I noticed that you covered most of it recently.

Tim: Yes.

Richard: I just want to pick your brains really quickly. I'm really interested in police PR and, so a couple of these questions are really directed towards police PR. How much of your copy are you getting off police PR at the moment, as regards to fracking process?

Tim: Off the police?

Richard: Yeah.

Tim: From their PR department?

Richard: Yeah.

Tim: None.

Richard: Okay, because you're using a few of their press releases and stuff.

Tim: From the cops? We don't get anything from the cops.

Richard: Nothing at all?

Tim: No, nothing. Our police, currently our press office with the police, they're short staffed and they're never ever proactive. Not at all. So everything that we've covered with them to do with the courts, to do with people being arrested, to do with how much the cops are spending on police in fracking, has pretty much been us or our freelance reporter down at [inaudible 00:01:58] picking this stuff up.

The only thing the police have done on fracking, due to the number of people round here who are complaining about the number of cops, is on their website, they have got a fracking page, which they keep updating every so often about how much they are spending on that operation. But that's all. We don't get any help at all. There's not proactive whatsoever from the cops.

Richard: That's interesting. I guess there must be one or two bits of social media or some such that you cover. Is it Daniella [Daria 00:02:30].

Tim: [Daria 00:02:31], yeah.

Richard: With her posting about road closures/

Tim: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah.

Richard: Is she picking up that from Twitter?

Tim: Pretty much, and from people like myself who drive past the fracking centre. There's a lot on at the moment.

Richard: Yeah. I should say, my work was ending from October of last year, so the most recent stuff, I don't know anything about, I'm following you on it. That's why I may be asking questions that don't make a lot of sense.

Tim: Right, no that's fine.

Richard: Why the business desk, and not the crime desk?

Tim: Because the whole issue is pretty much either a business or environmental issue, because this started way back. This started in, what 2010, here in Blackpool, when Cuadrilla turned up and started doing exploratory drilling on this new industry that nobody had ever heard of.

Richard: Yeah.

Tim: When I joined in, was it 2012, was it? I can't remember. I'm getting old. Literally, two or three weeks after I joined, the government, the new coalition government as it was then, decided to, there was moratorium on fracking, because of earth tremors. They decided to overturn that and allow Cuadrila 00:03:53 to carry on. So I followed it from the start basically.

Richard: Right. You quote Lancashire For Shale a fair bit.

Tim: Yeah, we do yeah.

Richard: Obviously, or incidentally, you have the right not to answer any questions.

Tim: Right, okay.

Richard: It's one of the rights you have as academic ethics. You've never identified Lancashire For Shale as being largely paid for by the industry, and I was wondering why.

Tim: Yeah, it's a difficult one to answer that, because-

Richard: I can anonymize your answers by the way.

Tim: Right, okay. Probably on this one, that would be a good idea.

Richard: Okay, acknowledges.

Tim: What it comes down to ... I think. It's been so long since they reared their heads, I think maybe in the first instance, we sort of said, backed by the shale industry, but we don't make a big thing of it. To be honest, I write so many of these articles about fracking, that I don't give, what's the word? The attributation, I don't describe the organisations that I quote in detail anymore.

It's like I don't tend to say what fracking is in every article anymore, because frankly there just isn't room.

Richard: No.

Tim: But yeah, we do acknowledge that Lancashire For Shale is industry backed. We always describe them as a pro shale industry group or a pro industry group.

Richard: I'm looking at a piece today, written by one of your colleagues, in which they are quoted as the pro fracking group.

Tim: Yeah, I haven't got the wherewithal to run this through company sales and sort of question where all the funding comes. I think we sort of take it as read. There are other groups, and there's another group called Backing Fracking. I don't know if you've come across them.

Richard: Yeah, I have.

Tim: Yeah, which I just refuse to quote them at all, because they're just basically an industry shield, and really nasty with it. It's a lot of bitchery goes on, on the internet. I just won't have anything to do with them. In the same way that I don't have anything to do with certain anti fracking groups, who [crosstalk 00:06:20]

Richard: I was going to ask you about that.

Tim: Misleading stuff.

Richard: Yeah, the local anti frackers, how good are they at media relations?

Tim: Very.

Richard: Yeah?

Tim: Yeah very good indeed. Some of them, a couple of them have worked in PR.

Richard: Right.

Tim: So they know how to do things. You can't describe them as well organised and well-funded like Lancashire For Shale is.

Richard: Yeah.

Tim: Because Lancashire For Shale has got a couple of ... Well it did have. It had a couple of professional PR people working with them.

Richard: Yeah, yeah.

Tim: I'm not sure if they still are. But a couple of these anti fracking groups are very adept at what they do. Some of them get help from Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace.

Richard: And Greenpeace, yeah, yeah. Yeah, again just because I looked this morning before calling you, I noticed that there's a Greenpeace press release have just put out a piece about how the business benefits won't be quite as good as they first seemed].

Tim: Yeah, we ran that yesterday. Well-

Richard: Yeah, yeah. I picked it up today, yeah. If I were to simply say to you, "Look, my research is looking at how police PR and activist PR and pro fracking groups argue over how they get into the local papers."

Tim: Yeah.

Richard: Do you every sort of feel as though you're in the middle of all of this?

Tim: Oh god yeah, absolutely. Shot by both sides is how I describe it.

Richard: Yeah. Do you ever feel dominated by them? Do you ever feel like, oh my god, if I don't give the police a favourable hearing-

Tim: No never. Never ever, ever, ever. Under no circumstances, no.

Richard: Right.

Tim: I do what I do. I try and do it fairly, and they can police themselves what they say or write about me. I don't care.

Richard: Okay. Tim, on that note, I'm going to thank you for your time. It was very kind of you to take my call at such short notice. I'm going to email you a copy of this transcript.

Tim: Right.

Richard: It's Tim.Gavell?

Tim: Yeah. It's Gavell actually.

Richard: Gavell.

Tim: Gavell, I'm posh.

Richard: G-A-V. Oh of course. G-A-V-E-L-L @blackpoolgazette.co.uk?

Tim: Yeah, that should find me.

Richard: I can look up your email address online anyway. So that's fine. But Tim, you'll also find a little form in there, that gives you your rights.

Tim: Right okay. So what are you going to do with it?

Richard: It's going to go into a piece of research that's looking at police public relations and its effect upon regional newspapers' coverage of fracking. Now I know that sounds really quite small beer, and to a certain extent, it kind of is, but that's academia for you.

Tim: Right. Well, no that's fine. The police public relations aspect of this, is probably the least, has the least effect, really, for me certainly. The whole debate is led by the industry and the opponents of the industry. Because they generate these stories. They come up with stuff. They stage events. The company helps the local community where it can. It keeps putting money into it, and it keeps relations with certain big businessmen, so that they can be seen to be doing good things in the community.

The anti frackers, there's two camps really there. There's the what people would describe as the professional protestors and then there's the local resident groups. There is overlap, but both of them are very activist and committed, and also generate a lot of the news angles as it were. So the police are just there to, and caught in the middle in a way.

The anti frackers would say that they're facilitating and supporting a business that nobody wants. Whereas the industry would say, the police, we've got to have them there. If all these protestors weren't trying to break in, we wouldn't need the protection.

So I think in a way, the Lancashire police certainly would be quite happy not to have to do this.

Richard: Yeah.

Tim: But anyway, I hope that helps.

Richard: It does a lot. Just so that you know. When I compared the [MEN 00:10:51] coverage with yourselves, what was really interesting was, the police were in there to about 45% of total quotes, but there were no pro fracking organisations like Lancashire For Shale. The reason why the Blackpool Gazette is really interesting is, police quotes are much, much smaller and you've explained why to me, actually.

Tim: Yeah.

Richard: [crosstalk 00:11:16]. But also if you add together, the Lancashire For Shale like quotes, the industry quotes, and the police quotes, you'd get back to 45%.

Tim: Oh right, yeah, yeah.

Richard: I think it's because journalists thought of the same thing, and I'm a journalist too. It's you say, "I have to get the other side of the story."

Tim: Yes, indeed. You do.

Richard: [crosstalk 00:11:33] And if the police aren't going to give it to you, you're going to end up going to the industry.

Tim: Yeah. Well you're coming at it from a crime point of view, whereas we're coming from it as a community point of view, and therefore it's okay to talk to the industries. It's okay to talk to the community. In fact, it's better than getting some bland PR quote from the police.

Richard: Yeah.

Tim: If indeed they ever come up with it, because then like I say, Lancashire Police PR department is hard pressed and it's really difficult to get anything out of them. We haven't got a fantastic relationship with the police anyway in this part of the world. We don't talk to ordinary coppers on the street thanks to the whole [Levison 00:12:18] thing.

Richard: Yeah.

Tim: They use it as an excuse to put all queries through the PR section, which means they're really busy and therefore by irony, don't really help us too much, but anyway.

Richard: Tim, thanks ever so much. Appreciate it.

Tim: Okay. Right no worries. Yeah, yeah.

1. Arfon Jones achieved the rank of inspector before retiring from the police force. At the time of writing he remains a community councillor in Gwersyllt, but he previously served as a Councillor in Wrexham Borough Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The killing of three police officers in 1966 which led to calls for the routine arming of the police, and the return of the death penalty. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *On Television* was widely criticised for being over-simplistic and Althussarian. It was written immediately after the privatization of the largest French television channel in 1986, and so is informed by fears of encroaching commercialisation. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Having travelled globally as an activist I can personally attest to how unusual this is. I have bribed my way past checkpoints in situations where police legitimacy is entirely based upon their power as state-sanctioned thugs. This does not happen in the UK. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. My own newsroom experience included this. I visited our local police station every morning for an informal conversation with the desk sergeant. It was considered routine by all parties. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Jowett and O’Donnell (2012) offer an extended discussion of Persuasion in which it is described to be: transactional; building upon values and beliefs; seeking voluntary change; and it can be misleading. It is unconvincing, failing to construct a conclusive line of definition between persuasion and propaganda. The reliance upon falsehood used in this thesis is more. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Hall also notes the difference between local coverage in the Birmingham Post and national papers, citing ‘local interests’, being ‘closer to the ground’ and an ‘ideology’ generated from localised connectivity – this is repeated in these fracking case-studies. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The concept comes from Actor Network Theory (ANT) - see Anderson, C. (2013) *Rebuilding the News: Metropolitan Journalism in the Digital Age*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. It is not used here because it largely ignores critical analysis of societal power structures. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)