THE MEDIA AND THE GLOBAL-LIBERATION MOVEMENT:
THE MAGAZINE FRAMING OF THE 2009 PITTSBURGH, PA. G-20

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ABSTRACT

From Sept. 24 to Sept. 25, 2009, the Group of 20 summit was held in Pittsburgh, Pa. The event brought in leaders from the most politically and economically powerful countries in the world, as well as protesters committed to the global-liberation movement. Well aware of the carnival-like demonstrations global-liberation protesters bring to cities that host international summits, the media made speculations on the protesters before the event began and reported on them once the G-20 arrived.

Through a textual and framing analysis of 17 magazines and 32 articles that covered the protesters at the Pittsburgh G-20, this thesis determines how magazines framed the global-liberation movement and its protesters in relation to Herbert Gans’ enduring cultural values. It is made evident how the activists and the ideals of the global-liberation movement, many of which are non-mainstream, were portrayed to the public, and how dissent in America was reported from the streets.

Ultimately, through Gans’ values, the study proves that the global-liberation movement can have difficulty gaining traction because the media is disinclined to fully explain the movement’s motivations and issues to the reader, partially because the movement exists on the fringe of common American values. However, it was also found that a high importance was placed on protecting civil liberties in response to what was interpreted as police overreaction. So while the specific goals of the global-liberation movement might not have been conveyed by the media, the protesters’ statements were still transmitted to the reader that any kind of political action is worthy of protection.