Smartphone vs. Police brutality

A socio-technological account of the public image of militarized
United States law enforcement in conjunction with new media

As mobile technology has progressed in the past decade, users have been increasingly able to share content through their mobile devices. Where users were previously limited to audio and text messages in 1-to-1 communication, they are now able to audio-visually record content and distribute it over a vast network of interconnected mobile and stationary devices. This progression is now affecting the representation of United States law enforcement in online and traditional media as police misconduct is more easily recorded and distributed through smartphone technology. This technology has been excessively used by American protesters in the Occupy movement which is why it will exemplify the war of images being fought by law enforcement and the public. The role of mobile devices and social media in the movement will be analyzed in order to under-stand how the ubiquity and affordances of representation of digital technology is now converging with a parallel develop-ment of increased militarization and non-lethal weapon use by law enforcement.

police brutality | occupy movement | smartphones | militarization | representation

Rens Wiebenga | 3546667 | Master thesis MA NMDC

Smartphone vs. Police brutality
Universiteit Utrecht
Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen

Rens Wiebenga
3546667
30-5-2012
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Mirko Tobias Schäfer

Universiteit Utrecht

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Universiteit Utrecht

Introduction

As mobile technology has progressed in the past decades, users have been increasingly able to share content through their mobile devices. Where users were previously limited to audio and text messages in 1-to-1 communication, they are now able to audio-visually record content and distribute it over a vast network of interconnected mobile and stationary devices. And although older models of the mobile technology, such as digital cameras and mobile phones, were already capable of documenting the environment of the user, it was the overlapping technologies and the rise of the smartphone that lead to an increased capacity to distribute content to many other users of this network, within mere seconds. This technology has been excessively used by American protesters in the Occupy movement in order to expose what they considered to be police misconduct inflicted upon the protesters. The occupy movement and the new media practices that manifested itself thereon are used as a case study throughout this thesis. The Occupy movement is chosen because it exemplifies a growing dissociation between traditional representation of law enforcement and the chosen representation of the public. The recordings are then empowered achieve cult status through parodies, memes and viral distribution, thereby representing the entire United States police force as employers of excessive violence. The main phenomenon discussed in this thesis is the way in which the representation of United States law enforcement is altered through the use of smartphones and social media outlets.

The focus of this research will be on citizens' power to influence discourse through the representation of police abuse. The role of mobile devices and social media in the movement will be analyzed in order to understand how the ubiquity of digital technology is now converging with a parallel development seen in law enforcement. The development referred to here is the increased level of military influence in the strategy, ideology and representation of law enforcement since the signing of the Military Cooperation with Law Enforcement Act of 1981 (Find Law, 1981) (Balko, 2006). Through the rhetoric of domestic war, military procedures have increasingly taken its hold on law enforcement institutions and the manner in which they are represented in traditional media. The clash between the increased number of recording devices and the level of militarization of law enforcement has altered the pre-existing condition in which the representation of law enforcement was largely positive instead of laden with excessive verbal or physical abuse also known as police brutality. Police brutality has largely gone unnoticed as victims were not capable of presenting any evidence of their case in court or to the public. However, now citizens can gather recorded evidence, similar to what has been done in the Occupy protest. In this movement there has been a mass distribution of videos of police brutality which has drawn the topic of militarized law enforcement back into the discourse on law enforcement, just like the Rodney King scandal did in 1991.

From an academic point of view, the massive amounts of shared videos of police brutality on the internet are interesting, because it illustrates the power of grassroots public journalism to affect discourse. This has lead to the following research question:

How does the ubiquity of camera phones affect the representation of United States law enforcement in public discourse?

Firstly, the case study of the Occupy movement is presented next to the Rodney King scandal to illustrate that there have been considerable changes in the way that citizens can distribute recordings and represent law enforcement officials. Special attention will be given to the role of social media platforms such as Twitter and YouTube in the distribution of opinions and recorded content and the way that they collide with police conduct. In this section a brief history of both the militarization of police and the affordances granted by new media are discussed. The militarization of United States law enforcement is researched to indicate how its ideology and representation have been altered since 1981. This progression is then placed next to a historical account of new media which shows the growing number of affordances granted by new media to citizens. This will illustrate that there is a war of images going on between law enforcement and the newly empowered public. This paper will rely on culture critic Mark Dery and Leah Lievrouw to illustrate how these affordances are explored by citizens as culture jamming tools to oppose dominant powers. The thesis will finally conclude by explaining how power relations and public discourse are affected by the combination of affordances granted by new media. This thesis will then conclude with a display of the war of images and their representational value. Through that effort an outline is given of the current state of the law enforcement image to indicate how the representation of law enforcement has been altered with the advent of smartphones. This thesis will serve to inspire awareness of a growing animosity between the public and police as the war on images progresses.

From Rodney King to the Occupy movement

On the night of 2 March, 1991, King was stopped by the Los Angeles police for speeding. When he refused to stop the car, chase was set in motion which culminated in a physical confrontation between King and the police. However, when King was cornered by the police, they start bludgeoning them with batons after tasering him. The beating of 56 baton blows allegedly caused King to suffer "11 skull fractures, permanent brain damage, broken [bones and teeth], kidney damage [and] emotional and physical trauma" (Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, 1991). The police officers responsible for the beating then filed a false police report in an attempt to justify the injuries of Rodney King. The officers claimed he attacked law enforcement personnel and that they that King was struck only 'several' times with the baton (Bradley, 1991). The incident was about to become just another statistic in violent crimes perpetrated by an African-American man. It would be his word against that of several police officers if the beating would ever be reported upon. Rodney King's testimony alone would hold little judicial power against such opposing forces. He would be as helpless in court affairs as he was physically helpless on the night of 2 March.

However, unbeknownst to the police, a man named George Holliday was present that moment whilst wielding a camcorder allowing him to record the beating from a distance. He was there at the right time, at the right place, with favorable lighting and with enough cover to not be seen by the police officers. These very specific conditions allowed Holliday to safely record and distribute the tape to the KTLA television station. It was sheer luck that these practices came to light when they did. Camcorders were not nearly as ubiquitous as mobile recording devices today. This device made its introduction in 1982 and by 1985 half a million were sold and by 1988 this went up to 3 million camcorders (Marples, The History of Camcorders – The Smaller the Better, 2008). This means that at most 1% of all US citizens were in possession of camcorders in the beginning of the nineties. And even then, the chances of actually having it with you at the time when you need it most are slim at best as the camcorders were still fairly bulky and useless for any other purpose than to record your surroundings.

But however coincidental the recording was (Illustration 1), it bore a tremendous aftermath as it reignited unrest between the police and 'people of color'. The Rodney King beating became iconic for the social inequalities experienced by the underclass and particularly 'people of color' (The color of justice, 1992). Police misconduct had therefore largely gone unnoticed by Caucasian people as they are not subject to this inequality. This taping however, brought this inequality to light. It gave the underclass leverage as they had irrefutable proof that equal justice had been denied in at least one case.

Illustration 1: Screenshot of the Rodney King beating. [1] Source: (Holliday, 1991)

The underlying unrest erupted into physical conflict in the 1992 Los Angeles riots when three out of four police officers were acquitted from the judicial aftermath of the Rodney King incident (BBC, 1992). This video of police brutality is by far the most famous and achieved cult value through the extensive aftermath. This would be one of the first citizen recordings that would radically adjust the public's perception of law enforcement officials as shown by Associate Professor of Justice Studies J.R. Lasley whom in 1993 conducted a survey to determine the impact of the Rodney King taping on the attitude of citizens towards law enforcement. He thereby asked 369 respondents how they would feel about the creation of a policing program by the Los Angeles Police Department. He showed a 68% drop in attitude in the African-Americans he interviewed just after the Rodney King incident as opposed to before the Rodney King incident. Hispanics and Caucasians were similarly affected by a 27 %and 28 % percent drop in attitude towards the pilot (Lasley, 1994, p. 250). It does bear noting that Lasley does not describe how he measures the level of attitude which he so keenly ascribes number and figures. For the purposes of this thesis, we can only conclude out of his findings is that negative responses were more common after the incident. This notion is also validated by Clifford and Mitchell whom on March 1991 report that "There has been a widespread, extremely negative reaction that spans the United States and Canada" (Clifford & Mitchell, 1991). As the Rodney King incident dominated the airwaves on news reports and talk-shows, the representation of law enforcement as just conveyors of justice was continually damaged as public discourse shifted to the incident, the riots, police brutality and racial inequality (Illustrations 2,3,4 & 5).

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[1] In order for the reader to make a clear distinction between literature and video sources, two different citation styles have been used. Footnotes are solely used for media sources while literature is presented in the bibliography. Holliday, G. (1991, March 3). Rodney King Beating Video. Retrieved May 7, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0w-SP7iuM6k

Illustration 2: ABCnews report of jurors about to acquit. [2]
Source: (ABC news, 1992)

Illustration 3: ABCnews report on complaints police misconduct. [3]
Source: (ABC news, 1991)

Illustration 4: CNN report of Rodney King speaking out on riots. [4] Source:
(CNN, 1992)

Illustration 5: Random collection of interviews during the riots. [5] Source:
(1992 LA Riots)

But this was not just the work of one camera wielding citizen. Since Holliday had no way of distributing this content to the public, he required the help of the KTLA television station to copy and distribute the recordings to the public. Without a method of distribution, Holliday would not have been able to show his recording to the mainstream public. In the example of the Holliday video, we can see how citizens were becoming capable of counter surveillance, which is a method of culture jamming by which the user subverts the message of an institution by recording and distributing content to oppose said message (Dery, Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, and Sniping in the Empire of Signs, 1993), whilst being limited by the affordances granted by the technology of the time. But even with the limitations of the time, the incident has achieved cult status as it is routinely referred to in mainstream media outlets to denote extreme police brutality or racial inequality.

This common usage can for instance be found to this day

in online petitions such as the one for Anastasio Hernandez Rojas which the petition header ascribes to be "The Most Racially Charged Police Brutality Since Rodney King" (CAUGHT ON TAPE: The Most Racially Charged Police Brutality Since Rodney King, 2012). The petition is even accompanied with a video of excessive force used on Rojas.[6] We can also find its usage in popular cartoons such as SOUTH PARK IN which a sport announcer claims "Why, I haven't seen a beating like that since Rodney King" (Parker & Stone, 1997), or as a syndrome to denote the tendency to for police officers to use excessive force out of frustration (McLaughlin & Smith) and it even used to define police brutality itself (Dray). We can even detect his presence in current Twitter trend as Rodney King is continually mentioned on the topic of police brutality (Illustration 6).

3

[2] ABCnews. (1992). LA Riots: Juror Say's Rodney King Beating was Justified. Retrieved May 8, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXRZMGHqA7E

[3] ABCnews. (1991). Rodney King tape on national news. Retrieved May 8, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW1ZDIXiuS4&feature=results_main&playnext=1&list=PLBA915E0DD14C1ED5

[4] CNN. (1992, May 1). L.A. Riots of 1992: Rodney King speaks; Late troop arrival . Retrieved May 8, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgiR04ey7

[5] 1992 LA Riots. (n.d.). Retrieved May 8, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b5nr8VAF8c&feature=fvwrel

[6] Justice for Anastasio Hernandez Rojas!!. (2012, April 18). Retrieved May 7, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSjVQY0ifls
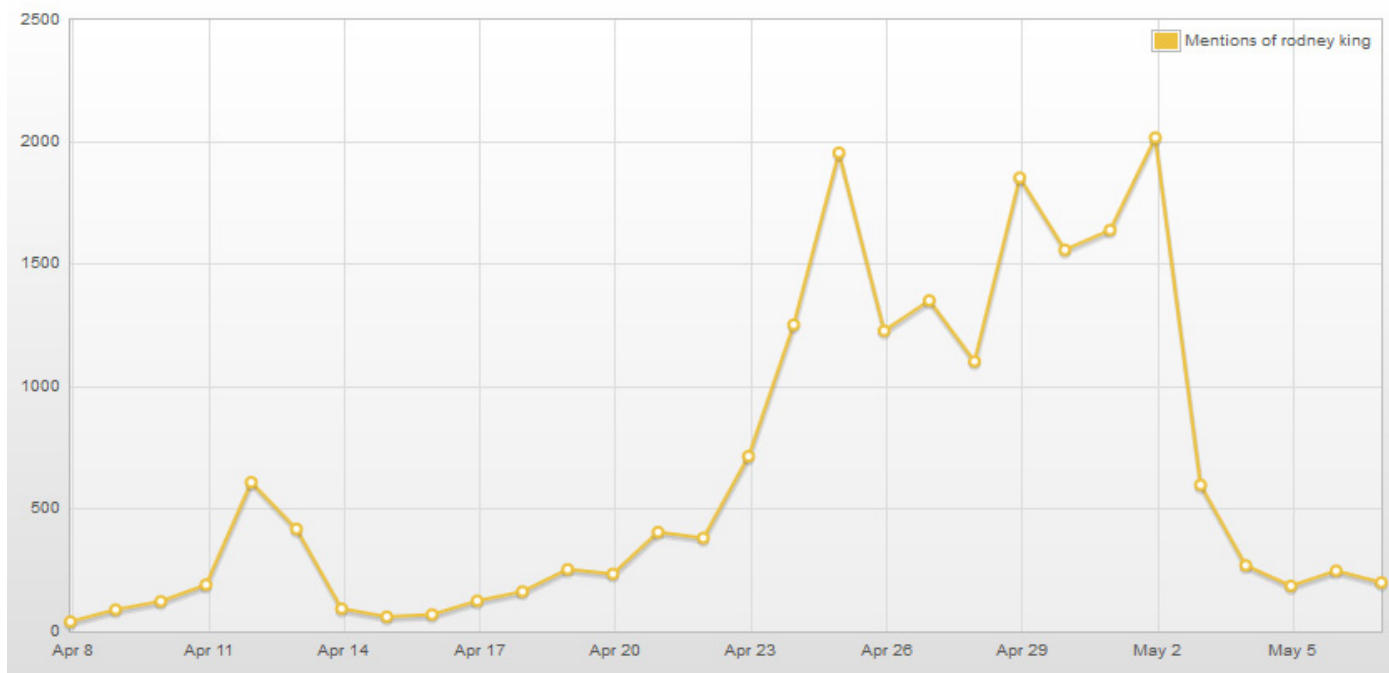
Illustration 6: Explorative research on number of mentions of the name Rodney King on Twitter in the last month. Source: (Topsy)

More than twenty years after the incident, his name is still mentioned thousands of times per month on the social networking service Twitter. The spikes in the graph are mentions of him in relation to the death of the 17 year old African-American adolescent Trayvon Martin whom was shot by a neighborhood watchman (CBS Tampa, 2012). Although it is not clear how many times Rodney King has been mentioned before the death of Martin, the fact that he is associated with it by journalists in news articles implies that the Rodney King incident is still in the minds of their readers. The Rodney King incident thereby exemplifies the power of counter surveillance to alter public discourse and representation regarding legal and law enforcement institutions. It is therefore in many ways similar to the Occupy movement as will be discussed later. What has changed however is the ubiquity of camera phones in the public space and their affordance to distribute audio-visual recordings. The Occupy movement will contrast the Rodney King incident in the uses new media practices. For the purpose of this thesis, main focus of new media practices revolves around oppositional uses of new media to subvert messages of institutions or corporations.

17 September, 2011, was the culmination of months of effort made by anti-consumerism, culture jamming group Adbusters in conjunction with Anonymous. The movement was a protest against this stratification of social and financial wealth wherein an oligopoly controlled most of the wealth and judicial power. As the weeks progressed, more and more cities joined the New Yorkers in their fight against financial inequality. 29 October, 2011, 2000 other cities in over 80 countries had joined in with their own communities and sets of tents to fight for financial equality. The movement grew in numbers and media attention. Whereas the movement on 17 September started with about one thousand protesters, on the first of October, several thousands of people marched onto the Brooklyn Bridge (Baker, Moynihan, & Nir, 2011). By 15 October, tens of thousands of protesters all over America, and indeed the world, took part in the movement. The Occupy Oakland protest alone drew thousands of protesters (Gabbatt, 2011).[7] The size of the movement is not what is really important to this thesis; it is the role of camera phones and namely smartphones in the representation of their interactions with the police.

In an attempt to make sense of 12 million Occupy related tweets, an open collaboration platform was created through which research teams from around the world could explore and experiment with the data. Three students from the New Media & Digital Culture master program of Utrecht University with the assistant professor Mirko Schäfer were part of said collaboration at which they found a direct correlation between the amount of tweets and instances of police intervention. One of the results is the graph below illustrating the spikes in Occupy related tweets. For the convenience of the reader, the incidents of police intervention are placed below to accommodate the events described on the website of Schäfer and other events found in the news of the time (Schäfer, #OccupyData Hackathon. Analysing millions of tweets, 2011) (CBS Boston, 2011) (Abdellatif, Salah-Ahmed, & Rabie, 2011) (CBS San Francisco, 2011) (Bowe, 2011).
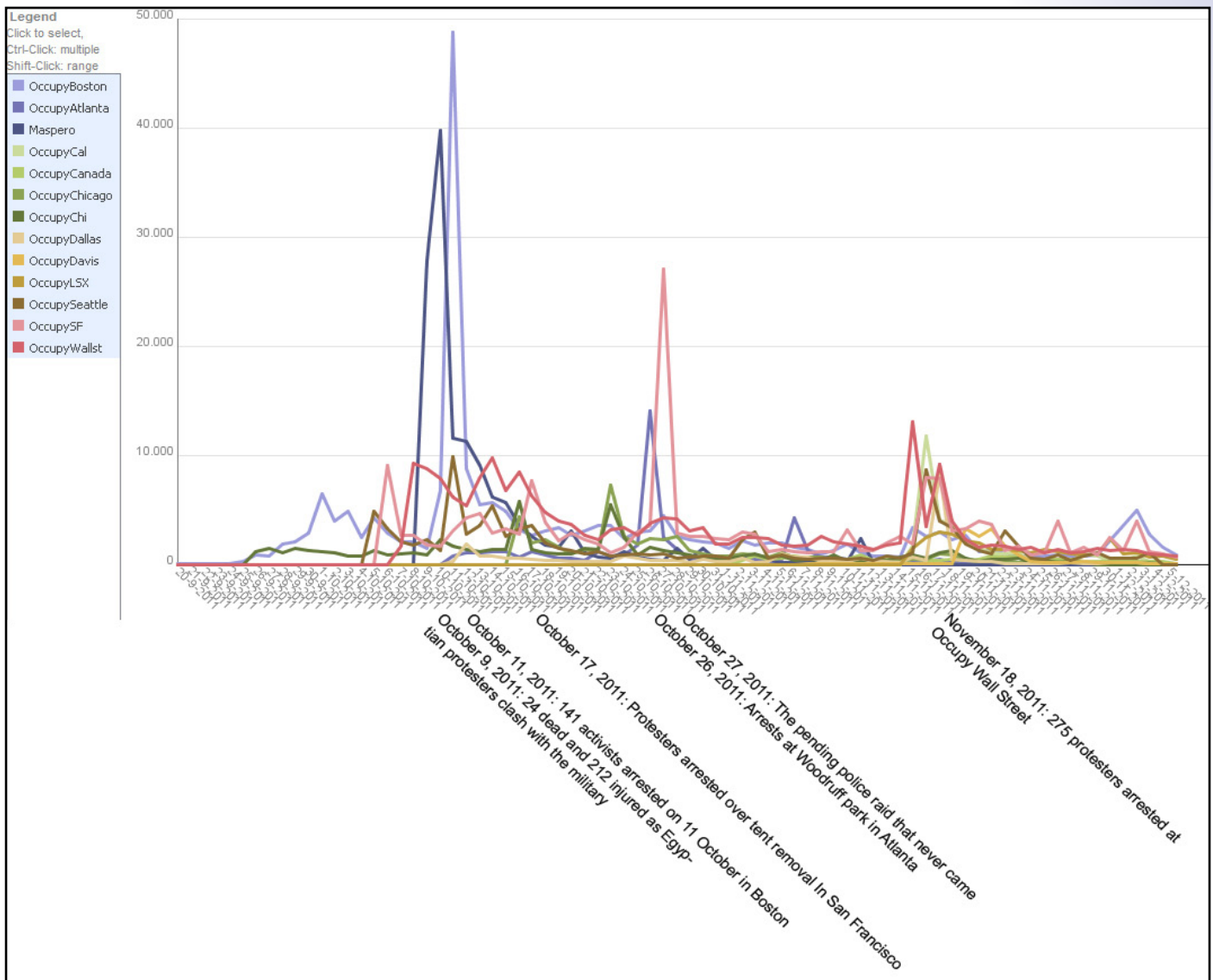
4

Illustration 7: Spikes in tweets corresponding with events of police intervention. Source: (Boeschoten, 2011)

In the graph there are several significant spikes present (Illustration 7):

- The first spike is that of the Maspero Massacre performed by the Egyptian military on the protesters in Cairo on October 9, 2011 (Abdellatif, Salah-Ahmed, & Rabie, 2011). Although it bore no reference to the Occupy movement, it is striking to see how protesters suddenly turn to Twitter when institutions of authority are the perpetrators of violence.
- The second spike was due to the police arrests made in the morning of October 11, 2011 when the protesters at tempted to occupy a piece of the Rose Kennedy Greenway (CBS Boston, 2011).
- The third spike in the San Francisco chapter of the movement reached a spike when protesters were arrested in a confrontation over the removal of one of the tents (CBS San Francisco, 2011). This report was also accompanied by a video of police officers hiding their badges and using physical force. [8]
- The fourth spike was due to the arrests made in Woodruff Park in Atlanta. 52 protesters were arrested on October 26, 2011 (Boone & Cook, 2011).
- The fifth notable spike was again in San Francisco when on October 27, 2011, the police called off a pending raid. Although there was no physical intervention on part of the police that day, it was clear that the amount of tweets regarding the topic of OccupySF grew significantly (Bowe, 2011).
- The sixth spike was preceded with what the protesters called "The Day of Action". It was organized at October 17, 2011 and in a response to the growing assertiveness of the protesters moving towards the Brooklyn Bridge. As a response, police arrested 275 protesters a day later (Rappleye, Livingston, & Lisi, 2011).

[8] SFoccupation. (2011, October 17). Occupy SF Oct. 17th SFPD Police Brutality. Retrieved May 9, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www. youtube.com/watch?v=G9wkTIpY4Sw
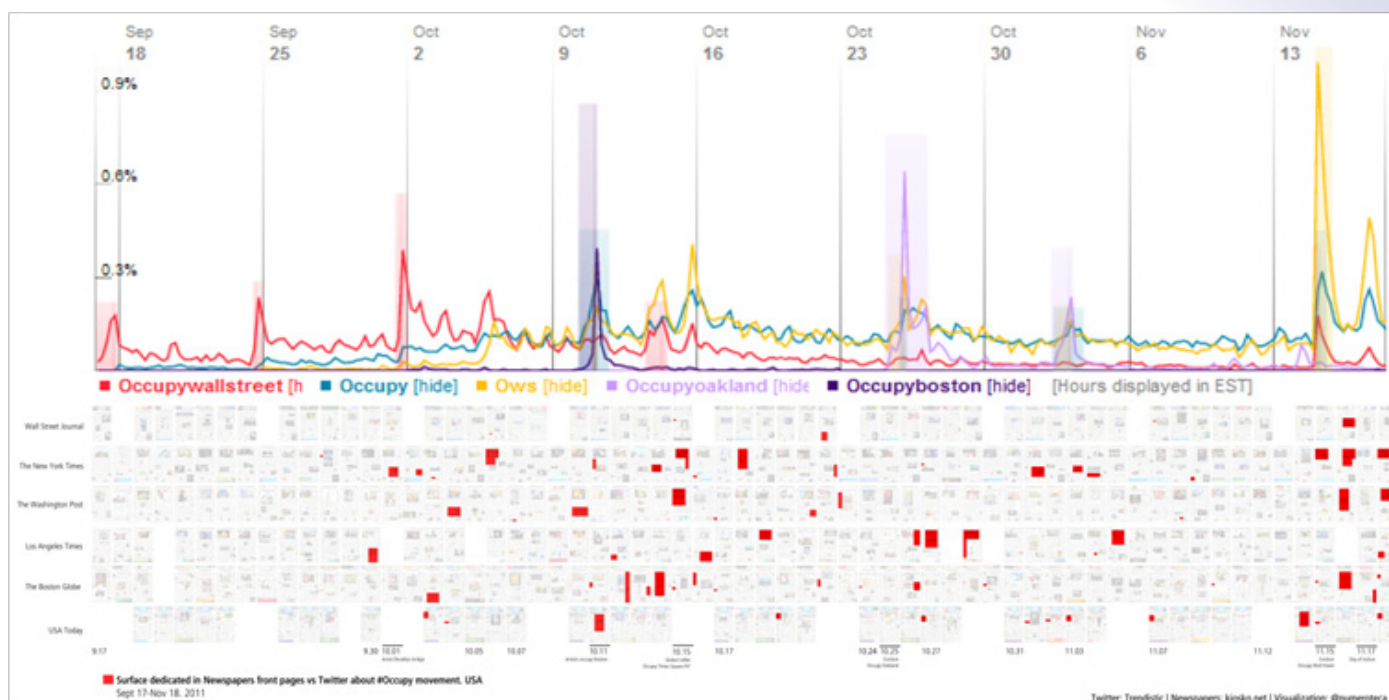
Illustration 8: Social and traditional media attention through police intervention. Source: (Mazon, 2011)

These twitter statistics allow us to conclude that police intervention is a source of motivation for tweets on the subject of the Occupy movement. However, we cannot forgo that these number do not tell the whole story. The statistics created in the collaboration along with the accompanying story imply that police intervention always translate into extra tweets with the proper Occupy hashtag. This, however, cannot explain why several iconic recordings and reports of brutal police intervention go unnoticed in these statistics.

Further data is required which is provided by Sasha Constanza-Chock whom researched the new media ecology at the time of the Occupy movement and found that police intervention was directly correlated with front page attention and enormous Twitter-spikes (Illustration 8). The largest peak in coverage in both traditional media and the blogosphere was on November 15 as police try to evict the protesters from Occupy Wallstreet.

Another notable moment of police intervention in the blogosphere is known as the red net incident in which several protesters are quarantined in something that appears to be a net used to directing human traffic. On September 24, 2011, the protesters marched north towards Union Square when police intervened and arrested at least 50 people. The number of tweets with the hashtag #occupywallstreet were being counted as almost 10.000 tweets per hour (Know your meme, 2012). The popularity of this event in the blogosphere and traditional media became apparent as another video of police violence came to the stage. Whilst being quarantined and adequately subdued by the surrounding police officers, a police lieutenant starts pepper spraying the protesting women. The police officer was identified through the vast networks of interconnected people online. It was Deputy Inspector Anthony Bologna who negated the civil rights of American citizens. The incident was filmed

with professional and amateur cameras. And although shooting footage of police officers is actually legal, the footage also shows that cameramen are being abused for doing nothing illegal but filming police doing their job. According to MSNBC, this is because "since the Rodney King beating was caught on an amateur video camera, American police officers have known that video cameras are their worst enemies" (MSNBC, 322).

Illustration 9: Female protesters being sprayed by Lieutenant Bologna. [9]
Source: (TheOther99Percent, 2011)

The video in the illustration alone has been watched more than 1.5 million times on the popular video platform YouTube (Illustration 9). The copies and similar footages of this event add another million views which brings the grand total of online views on YouTube up to 2.5 million. This is not counting the amount of attention the footage received on traditional media such the MSNBC commentary program THE LAST WORD, THE TODAY SHOW on Comedy Central and various news outlets (Illustrations 10, 11 & 12).

6

[9] TheOther99Percent. (2011, September 24). *PEACEFUL FEMALE PROTESTORS PENNED IN THE STREET AND MACED!- #OccupyWall-Street* . Retrieved May 9, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=moD2JnGTToA MSN-BC. (2011, September 26).

Illustration 10: Commentary program on Bologna incident. [10]
Source: (MSNBC, 2011)

Illustration 11: News report on the bologna incident. [11]
Source: (MSNBC, 2011)

Illustration 12: THE DAILY SHOW parody of Lieutenant Bologna. [12]
Source: (Comedy Central, 2012)

A second and maybe even more popular example of police abuse in the Occupy movement is the incident at the University of California, Davis campus, on 19 November 2011. A little over a month after the Occupy movement started, Lieutenant John Pike became infamous when he pepper sprayed Occupy demonstrators at the University of California. One might expect this type of excessive force to be

wielded in a situation laden with physical peril for the police officers. However, in this scenario the protesters are sitting down in a human chain as non-violent protest, at which time the Davis police department initiated a charge while 'casually' pepper spraying of all those in the path of the police officers (Roberts, 2011). This is another incident that bears almost no significance in these Twitter statistics while it considered to be the biggest internet meme to come out of the Occupy movement. The discrepancy between the statistics produced and the online presence of this incident means that the Twitter statistics are heavily influenced by the hashtags chosen to research. Therefore these visualizations can only be considered to be guidelines or trends and should not be used as definite proof for an increase in sympathy or representation. All we can say is that police intervention correlates with the spikes making it reasonable to assume that online discourse is affected by these incidents. In further research, of different datasets there actually is another notable spike present around the time of this incident on the #ows hashtag (Illustration 13).

Assuming that the online discourse is affected, we are then left to wonder how it is affected. What is actually done with this content and what new media practices come into play? In this incident, the violent act on non-violent student protesters had been recorded and virally distributed on vast networks of people. The actions of John Pike thereby exemplified the excessive force of non-lethal weaponry making him subject to endless amounts of criticisms, jokes, satyr and parodies as he achieved meme status (Scott, 2010). Although this thesis will delve into the subject of memes and social media later, it is important at this time to understand that a new set of media practices have been brought forth that allow common users to 'play' with the recordings. They thereby add to the cultural value of the image through recreation and distribution of the images (Illustration 14).
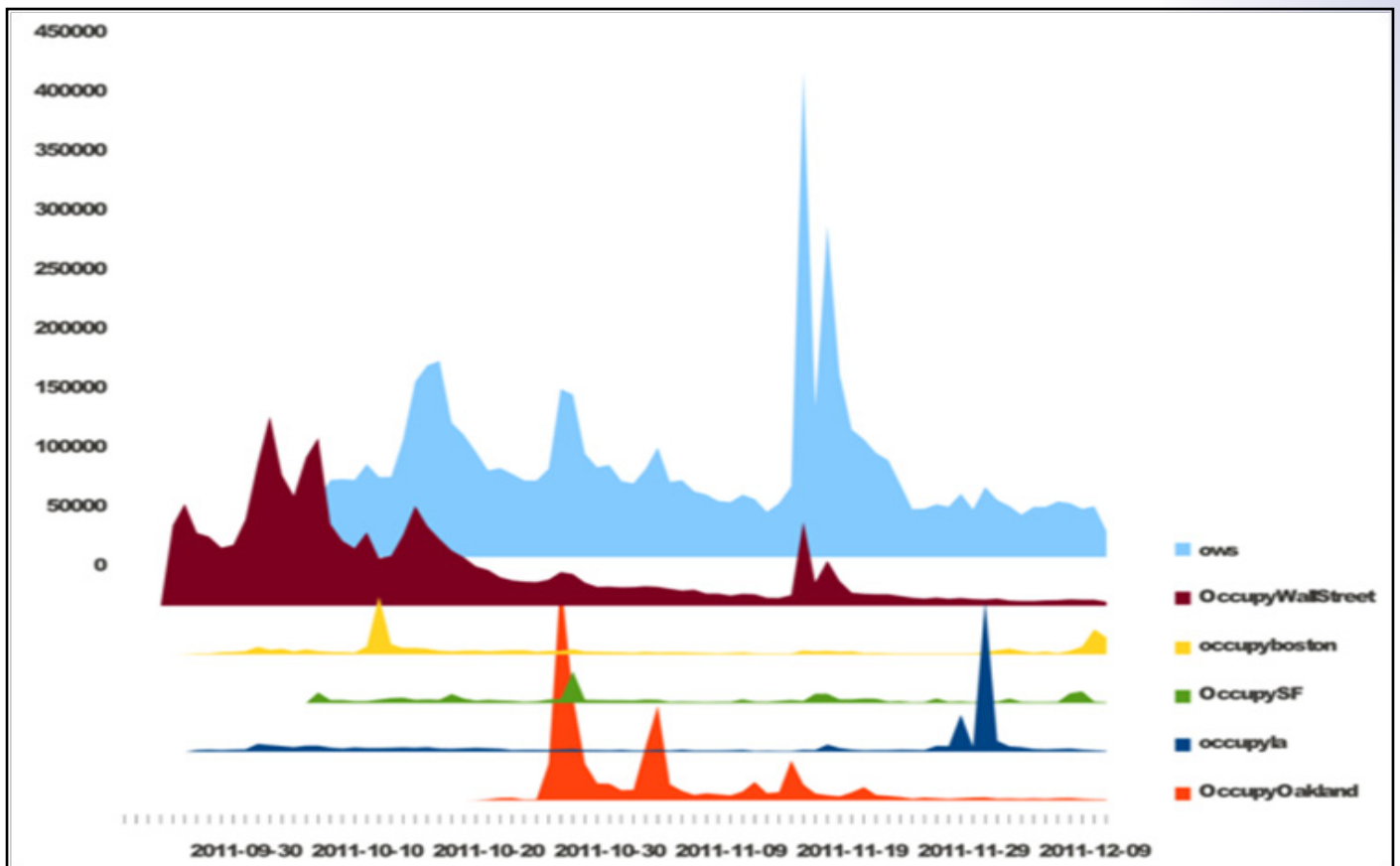
7

Illustration 13: Timeline of Occupy Hashtags Source: (Costanza-Chock, 2011)

14: Collage of "Casually Pepper Spray Everything Cop" meme. Source: (quickmeme.com)

Illustration 15: Mosaic of "Casually Pepper Spray Everything Cop" meme. Source: (Metameme: Pepper Spray Cop Mosaic, 2011)

Some have even taken the liberty of creating a mosaic of the numerous parodies of John Pike further exacerbating the popularity and cult-value of the image (Illustration 15).

In contrast to the Rodney King incident, footage of police misconduct is overly abundant in the Occupy movement. We can see a trend. The ubiquity of cameras in the public space has increased significantly with the advent of cell phones with recording capabilities while the online capabilities of smartphones allow users to instantly share this content online (Agger, 2011, p. 119) (Nielsenwire, 2011). After the user has distributed his message, other user can alter its meaning by creating parodies, criticisms and jokes in the form of online memes. Whereas users usually relied only on traditional media to distribute recordings to a wider public, like Holliday did when he brought his video to the KTLA television station, they have now come to also rely on Twitter, YouTube and various blogging systems to spread messages. It is becoming more and more common for new stations to use social media as a source of inspiration for reports.

In order to understand how these new media practices clash with law enforcement institutions, we will need to understand that the example of Rodney King and the Occupy movement are only two very specific examples. The manifestation of violence portrayed in the Occupy movement was merely the veneer of a changing role of law enforcement as a whole. Law enforcement has lost a great deal of their accountability as their role gradually leaned towards that of urban warriors instead of peace keepers. When confronted with that progression in the Occupy movement, popular discourse on United States law enforcement had started questioning the role of the police in "the home of the free" (Kennicott, 2011) (Burke & Lin, 2011) (La ganga &

Gordon, 2011) (Nolan).The following sections illustrate that these examples the manifestations of two separate trends that are now increasingly coming to light. On the one hand there is the trend of militarization of the police force that has imbued the concept of law enforcement into that of an urban warrior. The militarization of strategy, ideology and representation has created a situation where the police officers are almost immune from reprisal. On the other hand there is a trend in the ubiquity of smartphone technology and social media which are now interfering with this immunity through public upheaval.

9

From peacekeeper to urban warrior

Although military forces and law enforcement have a common ancestor. Democratic cultures long decided to separate these two institutions through the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878. This act was passed to make sure that military forces were not to be used on citizens. Anyone using military personal for law enforcement purposes would be sent to jail for no less than two years (Kopel & Blackman, 1997).

The idea was that law enforcement and the military are completely different, with the Army geared toward destroying enemies of a different nationality, while law enforcement must serve persons largely friendly, who are guaranteed presumptions of innocence and rights not appropriate when dealing with an enemy during times of war. Anything which made law enforcement seem militarized was un-American; our citizens are not supposed to perceive themselves as subjects of an occupying force (Kopel & Blackman, 1997, pp. 619-620).

The separation of military and law enforcement was deemed important because the use of military forces in civilian government exposes the United States to the threat of military rule. They feared that it would allow law enforcement to behave beyond the confines of constitutional rights (Kopel & Blackman, 1997). Criminologist Cynthia Brown illustrates that this distinction between law enforcement and military was deliberate. From the inception of civilian police forces, there has been no standardized intervention from military personnel because it was considered to be a limiting factor to individual freedoms of the people. Brown hereby shows that the current trend of policing is exactly what was feared. Brown states: "A nascent realization is that America's law enforcement today may be confirming [sic] many of the original concerns of those opposing civil-ian police forces.[sic] Issues like repressive criminal laws, abuse of governmental authority, and infringement on citizens' rights are [sic] being revisited" (Brown, 2011, p. 652).

However, a domestic war would suffice to condone military influence in law enforcement. A war against either crime, drugs or terrorism. We cannot forgo the power of this metaphor and the representation of law enforcement in traditional media. The American people have seen a series of these domestic wars fought. The notion of urban warfare is also equally communicated to the public through presidential speeches and representations of heroic police work in traditional media. Whereas Nixon popularized the war on drugs in 1971, Reagan fought a war on crime in the early eighties (Reagan stresses war on crime, 1983) that still persists to this day (Dubber, 2001). George Bush senior declared another 'war on drugs' causing $700 million of federal funding to shift from community support to the development of law enforcement to fight this domestic war (Meeks, 2005). Then after the gruesome attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, a new war was waged both overseas as inland. The terror threat was born which lead to a war on terror. (Brown, 2011) Apart from the overseas encounters by military force, the United States was also waging a domestic war of terror in which obei-sance is increasingly requested from the public in order to properly guarantee their safety. George W. Bush stated that: "[E]very American is a soldier, and every citizen is in this fight" (Bumiller, 2001). Bush then also stated: "The American people are beginning to understand that we fight a two-front war against terror. We fight in Afghanistan [sic] and we fight it at home here" (Department of state, 2001). Thereby further instilling the metaphor of war within their borders (Illustration 16).

Nixon wages war on drugs

"We must wage what I have called *Total war* on public enemy number 1 in the United States. The problem of dangerous drugs".

Reagan wages war on crime

"We have declared war on organized crime and the career criminal in America. More than 100 prosecutors' offices are working with special teams around the country to throw the book at career criminals in court".

George Bush Sr wages war on drugs

"But the war on drugs will be hard won neighborhood by neighborhood, block by block, child by child. If we fight this war as a divided nation, then the war is lost. But if we face this evil as a nation united, this will be nothing but a handful of useless chemicals".

George W. Bush wages war on terror

"Our war on terror, begins with Al-qaida. But it doesn not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach is found, stopped and defeated".

1983

1971   1989   2001

1960   1970   1980   1990   2000   2010

Illustration 16: Timeline of declarations of domestic wars. [13, 14, 15] Source: (CBS news, 1971) (National Rifle Association) (Bush G. H., 1989) (Bush G. W., 2001)

[13] *CBS news. (1971). 40 years later: "War on drugs" rages on . Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5Gh6OEEuSM&feature=related*

[14] *Bush, G. H. (1989, September 5). George H.W. Bush Speech On Drugs. Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heTB8gcwwuk*

[15] *Bush, G. W. (2001, September 20). Bush Declares War on Terror . Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CSPbzitPL8&feature=fvwrel*

But apart from presidents using the rhetoric of war to represent and empower law enforcement. There is also a significant empirical data to be found that validates the trend of militarization. Since its inception in the 60's, police paramilitary units (PPU) have been growing in numbers and possible uses. By 1997, nearly 90 percent of all United States police departments exceeding 50.000 inhabitants had PPU's. PPU's became standard in the arsenal of police departments causing a normalization of PPU activities (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997).
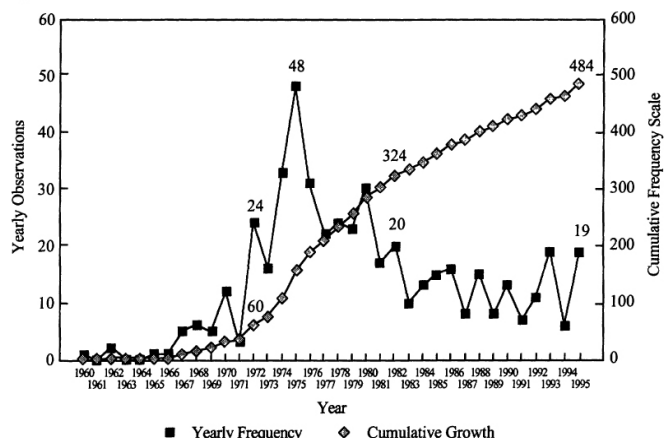

Illustration 17: Year PPU Formed and Cumulative growth. Source: (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997, p. 6)

From 1960's on out we can see a steady increase in the amount of paramilitary units Whereas PPU intervention was still rare in the 60's, the war on drugs created by Reagan in 1971 allowed for a tremendous spike in the growth of PPU's (Illustration 17). However, this trend of increased PPU's means nothing when it bears no correlation to its uses. The following graph therefore tells us more on the number of times that the PPU's have sprung into action (Illustration 18).
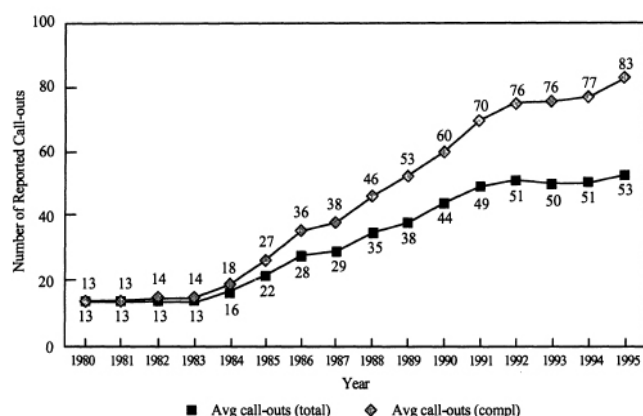

Illustration 18: Mean Call-outs Per Year. Source: (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997, p. 7)

There is a clear trend visible of continued and expanded use of PPU's which is still progressively ensuring jobs to the most militant of police officers. PPU's distinguish themselves from ordinary police units in their array of militaristic equipment and technology. This is why they are often referred to as 'heavy weapons unit'. With their Heckler and Koch MP5 submachine guns, also used by military 'special operations', they exude professionalism and military strength. Among this array there are also sniper rifles, quick fire shotguns and machine guns with armor piercing bullets. Their tactical vehicle, which is designed to be a fortress in itself, also carries breaching equipment designed to distract and disorientate assailants such as percussion grenades, rubber pellet grenades and C4 explosives (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997). "Between just 1995 and 1997, the Pentagon distributed 3,800 M-16s, 2,185 M-14s, 73 grenade launchers, and 112 armored personnel carriers to civilian police agencies across the country" (Balko, 2006, p. 8). Then in 1997, the Pentagon distributed another 1.2 million pieces of military equipment which was the same year that The National Defense Authorization Security Act of 1997 was passed allowing for even easier military equipment to make it way to civil law enforcement agencies. From there on out, the distribution of military equipment only grew as agencies were set up to streamline the transport of such equipment. By 1999, 3.4 million equipment orders were sent to 11.000 police agencies. By 2005, this number grew to 17.000 police agencies demanding military equipment (Balko, 2006).

But the militarization of law enforcement is more than just the use of PPU's and weaponry, it is part of growing degree to which law enforcement "policies, behaviors, thought and values are devoted to military power and shaped by war" (Brown, 2011, p. 654). The level of sophistication of their weapons and technology is merely a manifestation and encouragement of an underlying ideology. However, this does not mean that this sophistication in weaponry is meaningless. In fact, it resembles a willingness to spend excessive amounts of money on military equipment and training. It is part of an ideology of warfare, "defined as a set of beliefs and values that stress the use of force and domination as appropriate means to solve problems and gain political power, while glorifying the tools to accomplish this - military power, hardware, and technology" (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997, p. 1). The role of law enforcement officers has changed over the last decades as a result of the metaphors instilled by the leaders of the day in combination with numerous television programs designed to represent police work as heroic. Military response to wars have always seemed the just response, so why not within the borders of your own country? Through that effort, police officers have been increasingly subjected to an ethical dilemma to either 'protect and serve' the community according to the tenants of the United States Constitution or a call to arms to terrorism, crime or dissenters". (Brown, 2011). Through that effort, police officers are granted several leniencies to ensure their safety and an efficient workflow. These leniencies are beyond the scope of the thesis but for the interested reader there is more material on the subject in Appendix B.

However, the militarization does not stop within the law enforcement agencies themselves, but their message is continually transmitted outward to the public. The following section will attempt to draw an outline or summation of how they choose to represent themselves in traditional media. This representation will stand in contrast to the image portrayed by the Occupy protesters.

The lens of police

The police have used cameras for decades to obtain evidence against suspects.

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Firstly, police cruisers became equipped with a camera in the dashboard called the dash cam. Through it, police officers would be able record the suspect and their car when detaining them. The dash cam was thereby intended to serve as evidence in court to validate the police officer. This practice has then been broadened to include large scale surveillance through CCTV cameras throughout major cities. Privacy concerns were thereby waived for the sake of security, to stop the bad guys from doing bad things. While citing crime statistics and crime-fighting successes they employ an extensive barrage of surveillance equipment (Warren, 2011). And now, the police have even started bringing their individual cameras to protests in order to verify their version of events and vindicate themselves if they are filmed in heated moments (Orden, 2011). These footages are used as justify their behavior and to illustrate the need of force. In that effort of representing the need of force, the footage is often edited to highlight the most favorable moments for the police officer. It therefore constitutes a form of propaganda used to solidify the militant role of law enforcement in the public's eye.

The effects of war propaganda are therefore inherently discriminatory, giving rise to prejudice, distrust, and hostility. This discrimination is also used to marginalize dissenting voices, with official sanction and encouragement (Harrop, 2004, p. 311).

We can this manifest itself in prime time television. In the recent two decades, prime time television has veered towards reality television. "By rolling news, drama, and documentary styles into one low cost wave with high ratings, reality-programming takes the traumas of life, captured live on film or dramatically reenacted, and turns them into prime time television series" (Curry, 2001, p. 169). Although reality shows extend beyond the scope of the crime genre, there is a significant presence in airtime for crime based reality shows. Shows such as COPS, AMERICA'S DUMBEST CRIMINALS, REAL STORIES OF THE HIGHWAY PATROL, AMERICA'S MOST WANTED and ´high speed car chases´ that are continually shown on television (Illustration 19).
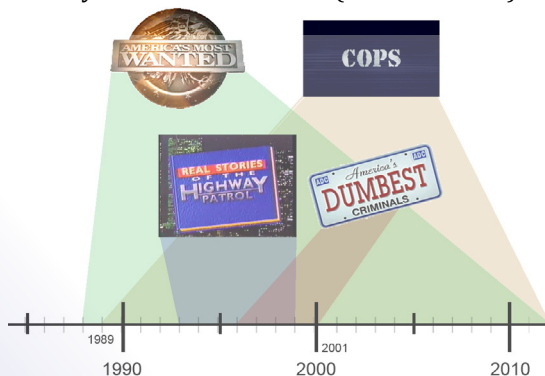

Illustration 19: Timeline of cop shows.

Cop based reality shows have existed for over 20 years and is still popular in the United States and indeed the world over. The premise of these shows is generally as follows; a camera crew typically rides along with several police officers whom are interviewed throughout the show as they go about their daily work. However, by focusing only on the most extreme situations of crime and violence and portraying them as everyday occurrences, the show adds to the perception of the urban warrior (Illustrations 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 & 26).

Professor in telecommunication Dr. George Gerbner has done extensive research into the topic of television violence and suggests that viewers are continually influenced by these programs to refine social relations, power relations and a pecking order. Although it is clear that Gerbner leaves little room for individual interpretations of the programs, he does make a compelling argument. He claims that violence portrayed on the television is a symbolic show of force that sends out a message that determines who has power over whom.

[sic][S]ustained exposure to dramatic violence may cultivate similar assumptions about power and vulnerability regardless of whether the violence is "gratuitous" of justified, if the social relationships involved (who can get away with what against whom) are stereotyped, repetitive, and persuasive. The repetitive daily experience of who gets away with what against whom, regardless of reasons of justifications, has a message of its own (Gerbner, 1994, p. 11).

Gerbner claims that the violence on television can instill the viewers with a sense of danger, threat and fear by perpetual confrontation with violent images. This means that reality law enforcement programs are continually redefining social relations by delegitimizing offenders through violence. The mere portrayal of cops using violence on perpetrators on a regular basis strengthens the position of law enforcement as an omnipresent dominant force. Furthermore it tells the story that violence towards law breakers is acceptable while violence directed the other way around is met with extreme consequences.

Kathleen Curry has tried to empirically research whether or Gerbner's theory holds true. She has examined viewer reaction and response to the prime time reality program COPS in order to determine whether the notions of police and fear of crime are affected by frequently being confronted with violent images of law enforcement personnel. 117 students of various races and backgrounds took part in the study. She found that only a minority of the respondents were affected in their fear of crime or their level of trust in others. The majority actually started to dissociate the reality portrayed from their own social reality (Curry, 2001). This is a problem in its own right as the dissociation might also result in increased ambivalence to the well being of law breakers by dichotomously defining criminals and non-criminals as two distinct groups of people.

In the case of the United States domestic war, drug users, criminals and the underclass are recorded as aggressive criminals. The law enforcer is then encouraged to protect the citizens from this blight by sensationalizing excessive force. Professors of political science and experts on war rhetoric Arjun Chowdhury and Ronald Krebs state the following: "Force alone can hardly civilize politics. Remolding the culture of contention requires rhetorical intervention" (Chowdhury & Krebs, 2010, p. 126). And although they are mainly concerned with rhetoric specific to counter-terrorism, they show that the mere display of force in the day-to-day activities of law enforcement is not enough for citizens to accept their extended judicial and physical power. Rhetoric is required to delegitimize the status of the wrongdoers in order to suppress their behavior. 12

As stated before, the political rhetoric of domestic war had already been established through several republican presidents over the last four decades. This is then exacerbated as excessive displays of police interventions is glorified through a myriad of movies and television shows that feature the police officers as the protagonists fighting dangerous criminals.

Through traditional media, law enforcement has been increasingly sensationalized as exiting dash cam footages and police car chases are continually shown in various shows ranging from prime time local news to clownesque portrayals of crime in shows like AMERICA'S DUMBEST CRIMINALS. Through it, law enforcement officers are legitimized whilst criminals in any shape or form are delegitimized to strengthen the metaphor of urban warrior. However, the

rhetoric has had an unforeseen side effect. Although police officers are increasingly justified to employ force, they have started to dissociate from the public in power, image and sense of justice due to the increased numbers of recorded police abuse. When the public is then confronted with level of dissociation displayed by some law enforcers, they are met with public outrage. This is also where social media in conjunction with mobile recording technology in smartphones come onto the stage as they are better capable than any technology ever before to uncover the dark side of the warfare metaphor. Through the affordances of new media, citizens are better capable of exposing police misconduct which creates a counter representation to the sensationalized image of the police. Citizens thereby obtain the ability image creation and influencing public discourse on a greater scale.

Illustration 20: Reality show COPS. [16] Source: (Fox Broadcasting, 2007)

Illustration 21: AMERICA'S DUMBEST CRIMINALS. [17] Source: (Americas Dumbest Criminals , 2009)

Illustration 22: REAL STORIES OF THE HIGHWAY PATROL [18] Source: (Fox)

Illustration 23: AMERICA'S MOST WANTED. [19] Source: (Fox)

Illustrations 24, 25, 26: Collage of high speed car chases on prime time news. [20, 21, 22]
Sources: (High speed Police Car Chase ends in Crash , 2009) (The Telegraph, 2011) (Fox, 2009)

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[16] Fox Broadcasting. (2007, Oktober 23). A Clip From the Show Cops: Various Segments . Retrieved May 11, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GD9XC_LCcDw

[17] Americas Dumbest Criminals . (2009, March 27). Retrieved May 11, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2gmzPLtBmk

[18] Fox. (n.d.). "Real Stories of the Highway Patrol" Intro (1995) . Retrieved May 11, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Eglnvwd6PI

[19] Fox. (n.d.). AMERICA´S MOST WANTED - Dave Kechter . Retrieved May 11, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWqOxxGQUUs&feature=related

[20] High speed Police Car Chase ends in Crash . (2009). Retrieved May 11, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQQhkflmWhg&feature=fvst

[21] The Telegraph. (2011, December). High speed car chase . Retrieved May 11, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTf4L23C6mY

[22] Fox. (2009, June 29). Dallas High Speed Car Chase Video - June 29 2009 - Dallas Car Chase End in Crash.

From Portapack to smartphone

The following section will focus on the ever growing ubiquity of digital technology which has increasingly facilitated fast paced networked communication. A timeline is presented in which the affordances are reviewed of mobile recording devices in combination with the means to distribute recordings. The term affordance is hereby derived from the book of Donald Norman "The design of Everyday Things" in which he describes affordances to be the range of possible actions it bestows on the user. He is thereby mostly concerned with human-object interaction and the way technological design and esthetics help in shifting a person's mindset into the action it affords. A chair affords sitting, a camera affords recording and so on (Norman, 1988). The timeline itself will focus on the affordances of digital technology for citizens to report on governmental abuse. The time portrayed in the next section is not teleological in nature nor should the inception of one device be considered seminal to any the other. This is because there are many overlapping developments within these technologies which are continuously engaged in a dynamic interplay of technological progression. The timeline will merely represent a trend in the public's ability to record and distribute recordings with the aid of digital technology.

The Portapack

In the early 60's , video-making was only catered to the wealthy and powerful as the first home video system with camera and TV-monitor costs $30,000 and was a huge and heavy device. It was hardly in the price range of any consumer while the sheer bulk made it unusable to anyone without proper lifts and hydraulic equipment. This is why camera developers focused their efforts on the portability of the device and delivered in the form of Portapacks which generally consisted of two pieces; a large camera and a tape recording device the size of a large laptop case. Sony was the first who introduced Portopacks in 1967 with the DV-2400 Video Rover which only filmed in black and White (Marples, The History of Camcorders – The Smaller the Better, 2008). Soon after, Panasonic and JVC would follow with their own portable models, each trying to make it smaller than the last to satisfy customer demand. Before the invention of the Portapack, handheld cameras had not yet been invented. After shooting the film, it needed to be rewound to be sent to a developer which would get the developed film back to you in about a week. Then a projector and a dark room were needed to view the recording making the entire ordeal quite bothersome. These technical problems were continually addressed by JVC, Panasonic and Sony in a race for superior recording technology (Shapiro, 2010).

The Sony Portapack, and other portable video gear from JVC and Panasonic that followed it, revolutionized the video business and opened up video to the masses, making it a medium that anyone could use. No longer was video and television limited to major networks or to those with big budgets (Shapiro, 2010).

Video creation was in the reach of the masses although we cannot ignore that these devices were state of the art and therefore pricy. Becoming a cameraman and shooting your own footage was still a costly and time consuming endeavor but it is true that amateur production opened up independent from the established television networks. This was called Guerilla video or 'street tapes' and were usually created by artists who formed the counter culture and tried to expose the wrongdoings of their governments through art. This process is called culture jamming and will be subject for further investigation at the end of this section. For now it suffices to state that the Portapack gave these people the means to produce their own unique message and show their message to a select group of people They used this instrument to inspire idealism in political and social issues such as the disarmament, nuclear proliferation, homelessness and many others (Illustrations 27 & 28).

Illustration 27: Portapack film Stranded in Canton. [23]
Source: (Eggleston, 1973)

Illustration 28: Guerrilla Portapack film of 3 mile island. [24]
Source: (Baltimore Oblivion Marching Band, 1979)

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[23] Eggleston, W. (1973). STRANDED IN CANTON - Kids. Retrieved May 13, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMDez_kGL2Y&feature=relmfu
[24] Baltimore Oblivion Marching Band. (1979, April). 3 Mile Island - April 3, 1979 . Retrieved May 13, 2012, from 3 Mile Island - April 3, 1979 : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFnEj9c35fE

The Portapack "turned a frequently passive medium into an active one, a forum for an exchange of ideas and debate" (Boyle, 1992, p. 76). However, television stations had no intention of giving up their power to control media outlets. The grassroots video pioneers were thereby forced to look elsewhere for financial aid and distribution of their work making the established networks a hurdle that should not be underestimated (Boyle, 1992). This means that citizens were capable of producing content, but were not yet able to properly edit, copy and distribute the recordings. Furthermore, the Portapacks were far from easy to use as it required quite a bit of knowledge and money to operate one. But things would get better as Sony and JVC were constantly pushing the envelope on size, price, ease of use and durability.

The camcorder
Years of development in recording technology made the modules so small that it could be carried in a single device for both the camera and the recorder, namely the camcorder. This device made its introduction in 1982 and by 1985 half a million were sold and by 1988 this went up to 3 million camcorders. The ability to record your surroundings became cheaper, easier to use and more easily copied as people could hook up multiple VHS recording systems to copy the contents of one tape to a blank tape (Marples, The History of Camcorders – The Smaller the Better, 2008). And although television networks were still a vital part in the distribution of messages to the public, they were often interested in obtaining interesting amateur footage as it was a growing source of video content. Entire shows were made on amateur footages establishing the amateur cameraman as valid source of news and entertainment. Through its ubiquity, citizens were now increasingly armed with the ability to record citizens and government officials alike (Boyle, 1992).

Copying VHS-tapes was still relatively bothersome and expensive as blank VHS-tapes were still pricy. This made distribution to a broader audience still difficult as copies could only be made one by one. The time it would take to record would be the same as the time it took to play the footage, making it a time consuming business for consumers to distribute their tapes to a mass audience. Although the camcorder did grant the affordance to record ones surroundings with easy and relatively easy to use equipment, creating copies and distribution were still only available to large companies in the audiovisual industry. But this changed when digital technology started replacing the magnetic tapes as carrier of content.

Mobile phones
Alongside the invention of the camcorder, the first cell phones or mobile phones started to make the stage. In 1983, Motorola introduced the Dyna-Tac cellular phone which was the first model available to consumers at a cost of $3,500. As most new technology, the first and newest models were very expensive (Marples, The History of Cell Phones – A Vision Realized, 2008). However, the mobile phone was fairly pricy while cheaper alternatives such as beepers were still available. This changed as technology progressed making it more obtainable for the mainstream public. It took nearly one and half decade, but in 1998, 25% percent of the developed world had a mobile phone subscription. In 2006

there were 90 mobile phone subscribers per 100 inhabitants making its use thoroughly intertwined with the needs of a large percentage of the public (ITU).

The mobile phone as ubiquitous device has enormous agency in the way that it enables citizens to converse with each other through either speech or short message service (SMS). With the mobile phone, most citizens are able to obtain a connection to one another at all times and at nearly all inhabited places granting citizens the affordance to quickly and efficiently engage in 1-to-1 communication. The effectiveness of this tool is exemplified by Filipino citizens in 2001 when they successfully removed their president Joseph Estrada. Instant communication through SMS and internet gave grassroots activists the ability to organize their efforts towards a single goal without intervention from government officials (Lallana, 2010).

The effort to unseat then President Joseph Estrada benefited from the prevalence of mobile phones in the country. Rallies, noise barrages, and street assemblies were all coordinated by the use of SMS and Internet (Lallana, 2010, p. 14).

Mobile phones allow citizens to engage in 1-to-1 interaction with little governmental conformities or rules making dissenters and inciters of public rage hard to block. In the years before the smartphone, we can even see that some technologies are starting to overlap as the cell phone had already started incorporating cameras which could be used to document surroundings. By 2004, the majority of phones incorporated camera technology (EE Times Asia, 2004). Mobile phones had thereby added the affordance granted by digital cameras, to their own. Although still relatively pricy and crude, images made with the camera could be sent to one another through the use of multimedia messaging service (MMS) making 1-to-1 sending of multimedia messages possible.

Digital cameras
Digital cameras made their way to the consumer market in 1994 in the form of the Apple Quicktake 100 camera which could be linked to a computer via a serial cable. Panasonic and Sony followed soon after in 1995 (Brooke). The digital era of recording had now begun and has created unique opportunities for consumers to quickly and cheaply copy their work without loss of quality. Copying analog tapes was bothersome and there were many elements that degraded the likeness of the copy such as the quality of your recording system, the cables between systems etc. Digital technology did away with all of those problems as computers are essentially copying machines specially created to copy digital content (Schäfer, The Computer, 2008). Digital cameras in combination with home computers granted consumers the affordance to cheaply create copies of their own recorded material. This meant that citizens no longer required large factories and production companies to fabricate a multitude of copies, they could simply create their own, almost free of charge.

We can start to detect a pattern now, with each development of recording equipment; citizens are increasingly capable of producing and distributing their own content

without intervention from government of corporations. Citizens are thereby seizing power that was previously wielded by corporate enterprises and government institutions.

Internet

The inception of the internet actually predates most of these before mentioned technologies. However it was not until the late 90's that internet started to become the standard prerequisite for computer use. The significance of the internet in our culture is unparalleled and impossible to describe as it has completely engulfed the way we do business, go to school, organize our lives, seek entertainment and manage our social affairs (Prensky, 2001). Although some claim that they have not been influenced by the mere fact that they are not infinitely surfing the web in their free time, they fail to consider that everything behind the scenes of their life is counting on a working internet connection (Castells, 2001). From the biological farmer who uses internet to buy farming equipment to the accountant who does their taxes, our entire civilization is now based on the affordance the internet grants us to quickly come into contact with others. The farmer and the accountant can only create this standard of living through use of the internet.

We are therefore all enveloped by and have become part of the information age. There are countless aspects of life that have been altered through the internet such as our idea of time, space and availability of information and many others. A complete summation of the effect of the internet on our society is far beyond the scope of this thesis. The focus of this section is more on the connectivity afforded by the internet. Through a network of connections citizens are capable of sharing their views and opinions with many. The ubiquity of the internet has thereby granted citizens a platform which they can use with little to no institutional conformities (Berman & Witzner, 1997) (Van Laer, 2007).

Where the internet represents the cables and groundwork for our connectivity, social media applications are our ever present operators. Social media applications started to sprout up in the second half of the first decade of the 21st century. Social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, FlickR, YouTube and others have facilitated consumer's ability to share knowledge and opinions. With a few simple clicks of the button, we create and account and use it with the greatest of ease. Through social media we are capable of connecting instantly to anyone within our social network making the spread of ideas immediate and numerous (Howard & Hussain, The Role of Digital Media, 2011). Even without technical knowledge on creating websites, citizens can add to public debate by posting opinions or multimedia footage they have found or received through their network. Social media are not merely used for social relations but for social issues in general. Topics such as religion, politics, war and crime are all thoroughly debated in a virtual public sphere of social media. Social media are even used to organize protests and rallies making it a political tool for the citizens who want to spread messages across a multitude of networks (Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Mazaid, 2011). These messages can be ideological and practical in nature to quickly direct followers to a common goal. Social media have thereby granted the affordance to quickly spread information through extensive networks of people. Popular messages become memes and are quickly copied and distributed virally. Information inciting action can be spread rapidly through a multitude of platforms without the need for central leadership. This allows citizens to move like a colony of ants and spontaneously swarm on a common goal (Samuels, 2011).

As explained, social media can be used as an instrument to spread messages. However, before the coming of the smartphones, cameras, the ability to distribute these messages required the intervention of a computer at home or at least a place with a wireless connection and a laptop. Smartphones did away with this bothersome third party and allowed citizens to record and distribute their surroundings with a single device.

Smartphones

Consumer research institution Nielson reports in November 2011 that approximately 62% of adults between 25 and 34 are now in possession of smartphones as opposed to regular mobile phones (Nielsenwire, 2011). It is therefore considered to be the highest selling electronic device for consumers in 2011 making it truly ubiquitous in the developed world (Pettey & Stevens, 2011). The defining characteristic of the smartphone is its computing capability through which it is able to support complex operating systems. Operating systems that allow us to be in constant contact with the World Wide Web and those who occupy it. (Agger, 2011). But is more than just connectivity to one another that has become so readily available, it is the ability to gather vast amounts of information of the internet at most times.

There are many aspects of our live that we have delegated with the advancement of mobile computing power and availability of information. This thesis however is mostly concerned with the smartphone's default ability to go online and connect to social media applications and namely its function as connector between the camera and distribution. Smartphones combine affordances of social media, cameras and mobile phones in a single device. The camera has granted the affordance to record ones surroundings, digital technology has made the recording of the camera in such a way that it is easily copied without loss of quality. The mobile phone has granted the affordance for citizens to carry a device with them which allows them to be in contact with them 24 hours per day. And the internet and namely social media have granted the affordance to quickly distribute messages and content to hundreds of people at the same time. Not only can a citizen record evidence of their surroundings and wrongdoings of others, but with a small lag between recording and uploading, share his experience with others. These others might in turn share them with an entire new network of people. This allows a recording to quickly be spread to mass amounts of individuals with little to no intervention from law enforcement or even the subject itself.

The following illustration will put the new media technologies into relation with the affordances needed to record content and distribute it to a larger audience (Illustration 29).
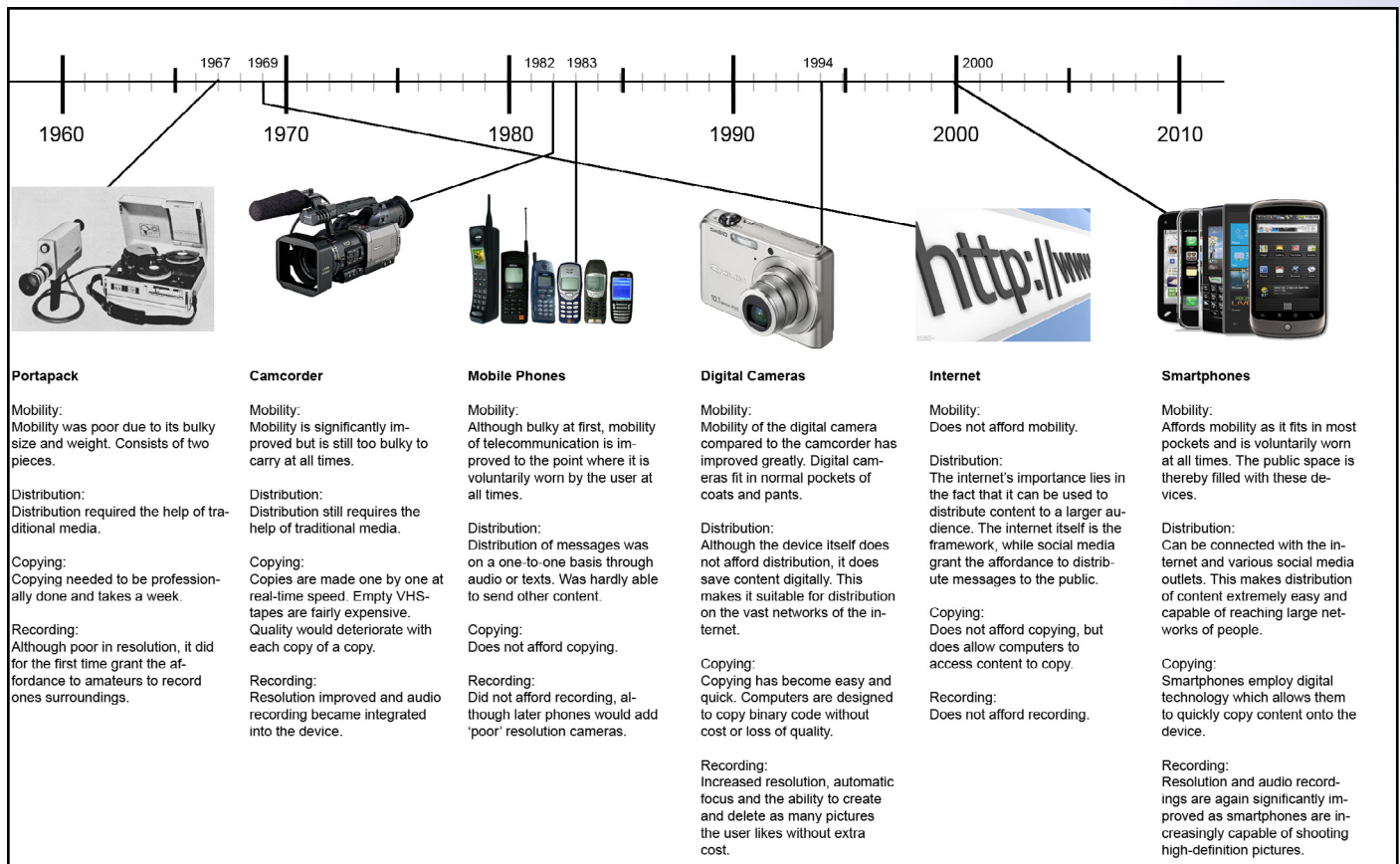
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Timeline years: 1960 | 1967 1969 | 1970 | 1980 | 1982 1983 | 1990 | 1994 | 2000 2000 | 2010

Portapack

Mobility:
Mobility was poor due to its bulky size and weight. Consists of two pieces.

Distribution:
Distribution required the help of traditional media.

Copying:
Copying needed to be professionally done and takes a week.

Recording:
Although poor in resolution, it did for the first time grant the affordance to amateurs to record ones surroundings.

Camcorder

Mobility:
Mobility is significantly improved but is still too bulky to carry at all times.

Distribution:
Distribution still requires the help of traditional media.

Copying:
Copies are made one by one at real-time speed. Empty VHS-tapes are fairly expensive. Quality would deteriorate with each copy of a copy.

Recording:
Resolution improved and audio recording became integrated into the device.

Mobile Phones

Mobility:
Although bulky at first, mobility of telecommunication is improved to the point where it is voluntarily worn by the user at all times.

Distribution:
Distribution of messages was on a one-to-one basis through audio or texts. Was hardly able to send other content.

Copying:
Does not afford copying.

Recording:
Did not afford recording, although later phones would add 'poor' resolution cameras.

Digital Cameras

Mobility:
Mobility of the digital camera compared to the camcorder has improved greatly. Digital cameras fit in normal pockets of coats and pants.

Distribution:
Although the device itself does not afford distribution, it does save content digitally. This makes it suitable for distribution on the vast networks of the internet.

Copying:
Copying has become easy and quick. Computers are designed to copy binary code without cost or loss of quality.

Recording:
Increased resolution, automatic focus and the ability to create and delete as many pictures the user likes without extra cost.

Internet

Mobility:
Does not afford mobility.

Distribution:
The internet's importance lies in the fact that it can be used to distribute content to a larger audience. The internet itself is the framework, while social media grant the affordance to distribute messages to the public.

Copying:
Does not afford copying, but does allow computers to access content to copy.

Recording:
Does not afford recording.

Smartphones

Mobility:
Affords mobility as it fits in most pockets and is voluntarily worn at all times. The public space is thereby filled with these devices.

Distribution:
Can be connected with the internet and various social media outlets. This makes distribution of content extremely easy and capable of reaching large networks of people.

Copying:
Smartphones employ digital technology which allows them to quickly copy content onto the device.

Recording:
Resolution and audio recordings are again significantly improved as smartphones are increasingly capable of shooting high-definition pictures.

Illustration 29: Timeline of new media technologies and their affordances.

The lens of the public – new media practices

Now that a timeline of affordances is presented which shows a trend of increased ability for consumers to produce, copy and distribute content. But before going into the conflict of representational images of law enforcement versus the public, this paper will focus on the new media practices that have come into life with the help of the affordances granted by the developing technology. The main focus of new media practices revolves around oppositional uses of new media to subvert messages of institutions or corporations. Expert on oppositional use of new media Leah Lievrouw states that there are several overlapping practices going on simultaneously to protest and oppose institutions and corporations. She mentions the four most popular genres which are culture jamming, alternative computing, mediated mobilization, and indymedia. Before going into how these new media practices are conflicting with the representation shown by the militarized law enforcement agencies, these genres will be briefly discussed.

The term culture jamming was coined in 1984 and has since then become a topic of great influence through the work of culture critic Mark Dery who wrote an essay by that name.

Dery defines culture jamming [sic] as "media hacking, information warfare, terror-art, and guerrilla semiotics, all in one," that captures and subverts the images and ideas of the mainstream media to make a critical point (Lievrouw, 2006, p. 117).

According to Dery, culture jamming is a form of semiological guerilla warfare designed to form a critical view on corporations while undermining the authority of oppressive ideologies. They produce noise between institutions and the public by altering messages with subversive meanings. "Ultimately, culture jamming is a technique that 'mines' mainstream media culture to criticize it" (Lievrouw, 2006, p. 117). The term jamming itself is actually derived from trolls on the ham radio that would disrupt or cause interference in the communication between people. However, culture jamming includes a wide range of practices such as hacking, slashing and transmission jamming. Although Dery considers hacking to be part of culture jamming, Lievrouw defines culture jamming and hacking as separate practices. This thesis will use Lievrouw's categorization of oppositional use of media as it is more inclusive to practices pertaining to the Occupy movement. Hacking will therefore be addressed after this section on culture jamming. Slashing the second part of culture jamming defined by Dery, also known as 'textual poaching' through which elements in popular texts are refashioned in a way that is incongruent with original producer's goals. The example that Dery uses of slashing is the creation of homo-erotic science fiction with popular Star Trek characters Kirk and Spock (Dery, Slashing the Borg: Resistance is Fertile, 1996). And lastly Dery defines transmission jamming as one of the potential practices under the moniker culture jamming. Transmission jamming consists of pirating television or radiobroadcasts and performing acts of counter surveillance to criticize governmental institutions and corporations. Especially counter surveillance is of key importance to the focus of this thesis as smartphones offer the unique ability to record, copy and distribute content in a single device.

The second genre used by Lievrouw is alternative computing which also encompasses the hacking practice described by Dery.

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"The goal of hacking is to expose institutional or corporate wrongdoings" by accessing their data streams and stealing information (Dery, Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, and Sniping in the Empire of Signs, 1993). One example that immediately springs to mind is the Cablegate affair when the whistleblower organization Wikileaks started leaking information on diplomatic affairs. The digital information in these cables was intercepted and then exposed to the public which resulted in media uproar and an enormous litigious and political backlash to their spokesperson Julian Assange. By intercepting and exposing potentially embarrassing secrets from governments, companies and diplomats, Wikileaks was able to subvert their work and their message. But apart from merely stealing information, hacking also refers to the process of creating and distributing encryption software that helps users remain anonymous while eluding surveillance by corporations, institutions or governments. Hackers are also responsible for fighting the culture industry by decrypting and unlocking copyright protected software. They thereby resist the old business model of the culture industry that is based on scarcity. And lastly, hackers are responsible for creating and distributing viruses and software that are used to perform Distributed Denial Of Service (DDOS) attacks "on the systems of organizations that are viewed as exploitative, unjust or corrupt" (Lievrouw, 2006, p. 118). Hacker culture thereby opposes corporate and governmental goals in order to punish and deter.

The third genre described by Lievrouw is that of mediated mobilization by which she means that new media are used as platforms for social networking, participation and coordinated action. Through blogs, chat rooms, video platforms and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, consumers are now increasingly capable of interacting quickly with many people at the same time. This makes the distribution of information, although without leadership, incredibly effective in organizing political and cultural events such as flash mobs, smart mobs and protests (Illustration 30 & 31).

A widely recognized example of mediated mobilization is the Arab spring of 2011 in which these technologies were used as instruments to organize protests and riots. Through social media, protesters were able to rally other protesters to a single geographical location while constantly adding international support for their cause by continually reporting on their plight against their respective dictators (Howard & Hussain, The Role of Digital Media, 2011) (Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Mazaid, 2011). The following graph shows that protesters and the public continually used Twitter to keep informed. Furthermore, important messages were also retweeted to increase the reach of these messages. Although it is hard to say whether or not these tweets were able to mobilize protesters, we can however safely conclude that these Twitter statistics helped inform the public of current events in Egypt (Illustration 32).

Illustration 30: Haka Flash mob. [25]
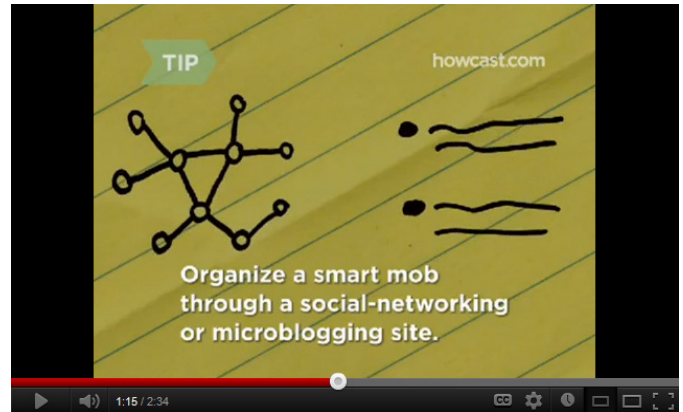Source: (Flash Mob Haka Surfers Paradise 11.09.11.MP4 , 2011)

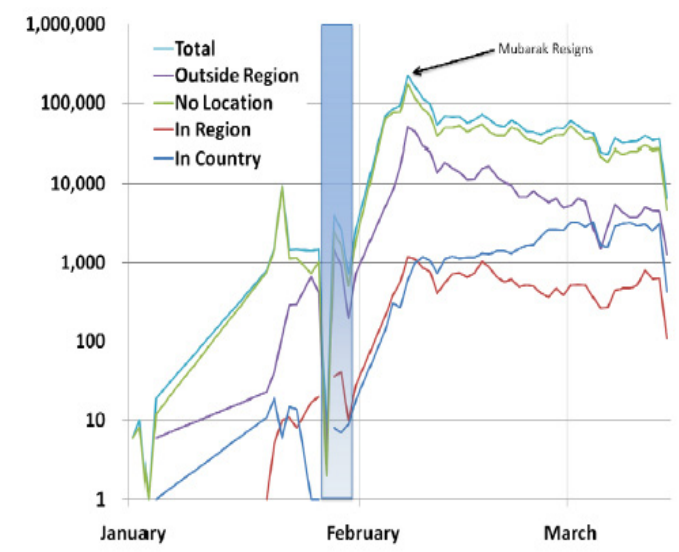Illustration 31: How to smart mob. [26]
Source: (Howcast, 2009)

Illustration 32: Amount of tweets on hashtag #egypt.
Source: (Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Mazaid, 2011, p. 17)

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[25] Flash Mob Haka Surfers Paradise 11.09.11.MP4 . (2011, September 11). Retrieved May 13, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmSNN7vZt_o&feature=related
[26] Howcast. (2009, Februari 4). How To Smart Mob . Retrieved May 13, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2prHm1BcU1k

The fourth genre is indymedia. Lievrouw considers indymedia to be news platforms being run mainly by amateur journalists and volunteer contributors. "the term indymedia [sic] has been applied to a variety of web-based alternative, radical or critical news sites employing the practices and/or philosophies of public, civic, participatory, or 'open source' journalism (Lievrouw, 2006, p. 119). To clarify, Lievrouw is only considering grassroots journalism to be part of the indymedia and leaves little room for the multitude of users who create meaning with the smallest of contributions. This paper will broaden this notion of indymedia to incorporate the efforts of these small contributors as their role has changed considerably since she wrote her article.

Illustration 33: Collage of quickmemes with politically based humor. Source: (quickmeme.com)

In the past 6 years there has been a development on the side of content creation. Blog culture and online communities in general are granting the affordance for quick fire content creation in the form of applications that allow for the quick reconfiguration of images through quickmemes (Illustration 33). Popularized by the image board 4Chan and community blogging sites such as Digg and Reddit, quickmemes are easy to use applications that allow users to create humorous and critical captions to images in the mainstream media. The online popularity of these memes is becoming so pervasive that they have become part of the newsreels in online communities such as Reddit, Digg and 4Chan. It is not uncommon for users to respond to newsworthy subjects with the help of these quickmemes in order to parody and criticize political leadership, institutions and culture as a whole. These quickmemes have thereby added an extra dimension to regular commentary. The added affordance of image creation is not new, but their new pervasiveness through ease-of-use has made it possible for the community to quickly create and distribute images throughout hundreds of thousands of users. Expert on youth and media Rebekah Willet describes that consumer culture is increasingly capable of creating their own bricolage of content through the affordances on the internet. They resist, rework and recreate content in order to develop the consumer culture into a new identity. By omitting and adapting images, videos and texts online, they become active agents in the production and representation of culture (Willet, 2008).

To summarize, new media have increasingly granted the affordance for consumers to record, copy and distribute content. This trend has culminated in the latest gadget of the information age, the smartphone. The smartphone combines the affordances of the camera, the computer, the mobile phone and the internet into a single device. The added affordances over the last couple of decades have altered media practices in a way that users are increasingly capable of creating their own content, evidence and news. One aspect of the enriched media practices is the oppositional use of new media to subvert and destroy oppressive institutions and ideologies. Through culture jamming, alternative computing, mediated mobilization, and indymedia, consumers are now taking back the power of representation by criticizing and competing with the texts produced by institutions such as the United States law enforcement. The next section will describe how militarized police forces and their power of image creation is now confronted by the newly acquired citizens' ability to record evidence, distribute and create meaning by themselves.

The war of images

Since the 70´s, the dominant representation of law enforcement in mainstream media is that of the omnipresent urban warrior, risking his own life for the safety and justice of others. Through the domestic wars declared by their leaders, combined with sensationalized footages for prime time television, police officers have been portrayed as urban warriors in a war within the United States border. This is then exacerbated as military equipment is sent by the government to local police stations as it validates this notion of the urban warrior. For the longest time, this is the image that had the upper hand. However, with the advent of recording devices for amateur use, users have been able to engage this dominant image by recording the darker side of the urban warrior as perpetrators of excessive violence. Oppositional uses of media have exploded as recording technology get cheaper, more mobile, better capable of distribution and more ubiquitous among the public. The following timeline places the timeline of militarized representation in relation to the advent of new media to show that these progressions in militarization and technology have been coexisting side by side (Illustration 34). However, as the ubiquity of amateur recording devices grew, these progressions have been clashing more and more.

At first, footages that damage the dominant representation of law enforcement, such as the Rodney King incident were rare. But nowadays, footages of police violence are overtly present on the web and the blogosphere. This is illustrated in the image below that represents the growing ubiquity of footage regarding police misconduct on the web. The following stills are merely a small sample of footage found online and are hereby used to illustrate the growth from the 1990's till now. We can see that footage from the last few years, from 2010 till 2012, is especially numerous and easily available (Illustration 35).
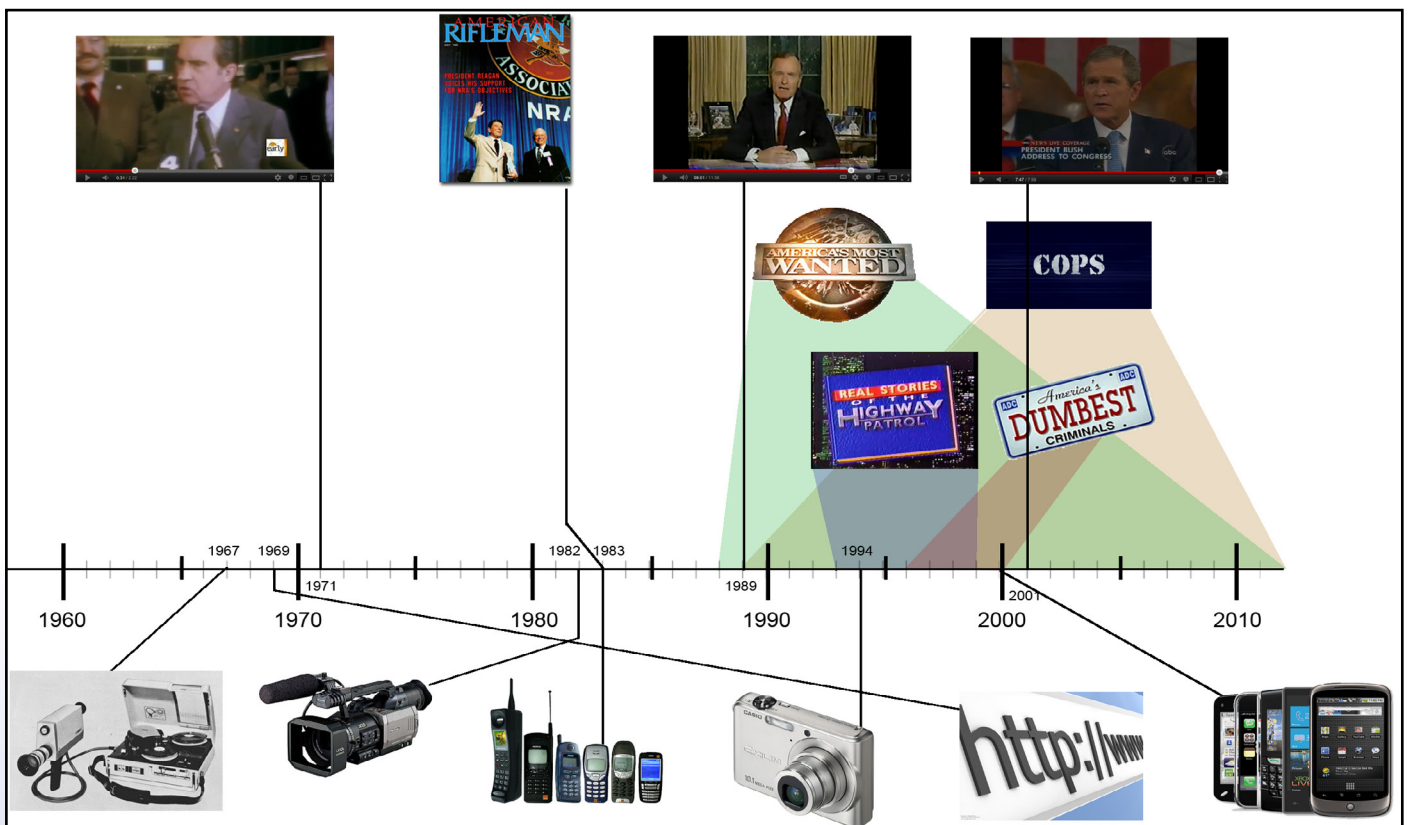

Illustration 34: Single timeline with presidents, cop shows and new media.
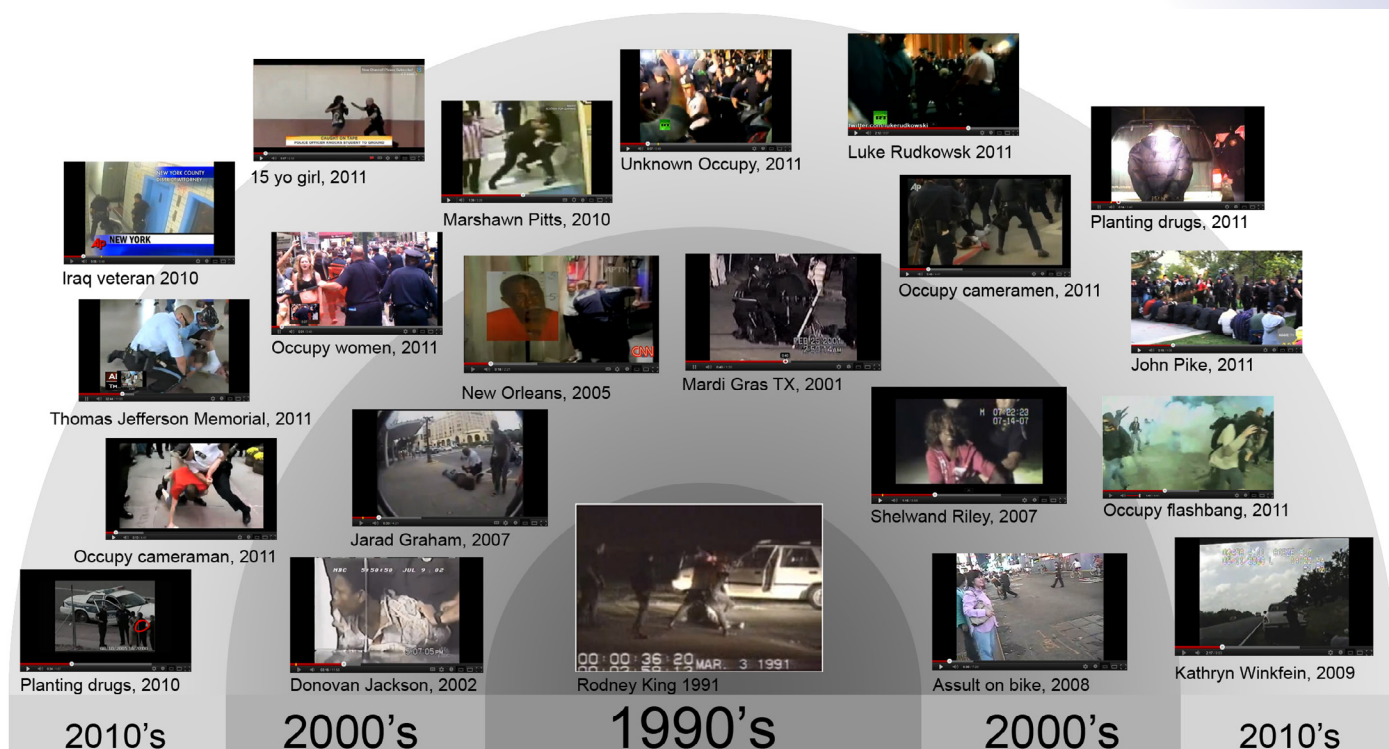
Illustration 35: increased amounts of police brutality videos. [27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40] Source: (Police plant drugs on homeless black woman, 2010) (KXAN, 2009) (Utica phoenix, 2011) (Info Wars, 2012) (TheOther99Percent, 2011) (Occupy Police Brutality Compilation, 2011) (RT America, 2011) (RT America, 2011) (UC Davis Protestors Pepper Sprayed , 2011) (CBS, 2010) (COPS Gone Wild , 2007) (15 year old knocked out by cop, 2011) (Associated Press, 2010) (Innocent people abused by U.S park police for dancing!!, 2011) (Court TV, 2006) (CNN, 2005) (NYC Critical Mass Police Brutality Compilation 2006-2008 , 2008) (police brutality - go skateboarding day: cop vs skaters , 2007) (Police Video: Mardi Gras Austin, TX 2001 , 2001) (inglewood 2002 police brutality mitchell crooks , 2002)

[27] *Police plant drugs on homeless black woman. (2010, Oktober 17). Retrieved January 23, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfQYBc3t8uw&feature=related*

[28] *KXAN. (2009, June 10). Elderly woman shocked with Taser. Retrieved December 24, 2011, from kxan.com: http://www.kxan.com/dpp/news/strange/strange_kxan_texas_Elderly_woman_shocked_with_taser_200906101250*

[29] *Occupy Police Brutality Compilation. (2011). Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45VGFgiFu7Y*

[30] *RT America. (2011, Oktober 6). Brutal police crackdown on Occupy Wall Street protesters . Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUpdRt_30UU&feature=relmfu*

[31] *RT America. (2011). Police brutally attacks Occupy Wall Street protesters -- raw video . Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTdbTIE8lrU*

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[33] *COPS Gone Wild . (2007, July 14). Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5MSdORQI_U&feature=related*

[34] *15 year old knocked out by cop. (2011). Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu-shg_yirY&feature=related*

[35] *Associated Press. (2010, June 22). NY Officer on Trial for Videotaped Beating . Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTipr2YvOJU&feature=fvwrel*

[36] *Innocent people abused by U.S park police for dancing!! (2011, May 29). Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAZTslKZNEI&feature=related*

[37] *Court TV. (2006). Police Brutality . Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibSwITK4jjQ&feature=results_video&playnext=1&list=PL074B6F0D6131B464*

[38] *CNN. (2005). Police Brutality . Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyy-Wq7y4yg*

39*police brutality - go skateboarding day: cop vs skaters . (2007). Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFUpa0OwlyU&feature=fvst*

[40] *inglewood 2002 police brutality mitchell crooks . (2002). Retrieved May 14, 2012, from youtube.com: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsW23kbVLs0*

These videos tell a story of police abusing their physical en legal power. They are part of a gradient of severity of police misconduct. Some videos are merely examples of people being forcefully put in handcuffs while others are more shocking with greater consequences. This is exemplified in the alleged police planting drugs video that is currently going viral. The video shows two police officers searching the car of an African- American couple while one of the police officers of the Utica police force appears to take a white bag out of his pocket before presenting it as drug evidence to the suspect (Utica phoenix, 2011). And even though the allegation were denied by the Utica police chief (LaDuca, 2012), it resembles a certain expectation of the United States law enforcement forged by other accounts; such as the one of Carlos Ferrell whom got pulled over by police officers. After using the k-9 unit on the man, the police officers are seen planting drugs on him (Cops Planting Drugs on Suspect, 2011). Something similar happens to the homeless woman seen in the footage of 10 august, 2005. Therein a police officer is handed a bag of drugs by his colleague before confronting the suspect with the alleged possession (Police plant drugs on homeless black woman, 2010). These cases are the exemplification of why we should not underestimate the power of the individual police officer. Without these pieces of footage, and remember that we have no way of knowing how often these practices occur without a camera present, the police officers could have simply lied in court to cover up their own wrongdoings whilst ruining some innocent person's life.

Another of such shocking examples van be found in the case of Kathryn Winkfein whom is a 72 year old woman who got pulled over by a Travis County deputy for a speeding infraction. However, she initially refuses to sign the ticket issued by the deputy and shows and overall absence of obeisance through non-compliance. Even faced with the threat of being tasered if she does not step back, she reminds the deputy that she is a 72 year old, implying that there is no need for the use of weaponry to sedate the woman. This does not deter the deputy from employing a 50.000 volt taser on the feeble woman causing her to fall down and scream in agony. We can only assume that the level of interest displayed by online communities and traditional media is because of the shocking use of weaponry on the elderly by a man twice her size. In a report from the NBC news channel, the constable is interviewed who defends the actions of his deputy by saying that "he mitigated the event safely, effectively and efficiently. Nobody sustained any injury" (Shachtman, 2009) (KXAN, 2009) What is most shocking about this examples is the face that the behavior of the police officers is being validated by their peers and their superiors through the rhetoric of war.

It is hard to mark a certain point in time when the militarization of United States law enforcement began, as both military and law enforcement share a common ancestor as servants of the king and keepers of control. However, in an effort deter the possibility of military rule; the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 was passed. United States citizens are not supposed to feel like "subject of an occupying force" (Kopel & Blackman, 1997, p. 1). However, since the 70's, a series of domestic wars were started that would alter the ideology and representation of United States law enforce-

ment. First there was the war against drugs in 1971, then crime in 1983, then drugs again in 1989 and now they are fighting terror since 2001. Through this metaphor, law enforcement took on the role as urban warrior complete with military weaponry, tactics, ideology and training whilst being glorified through traditional media. Law enforcement budgets increased to be used for this militarization whilst siphoning money away from social programs to help the underclass.

This was only possible because the public is was constantly barraged with a multitude of sources that represent police officers as just conveyers of the law in harsh situations (Langley & Barbour, 1989). They are represented as urban warriors against either crime, drugs or terror that are constantly engulfed in violent crime and dangerous terrorists. Through the rhetoric of warfare and the gathered footages of the most sensational and violent police recordings, the militarization and inherent violence thereof is represented as necessary and justified (Brown, 2011). The citizen is then left appeased with their moral conflict resolved, as public discourse on force by law enforcement is directed towards the hardened criminals instead of protesters, students and the elderly. It would seem that representation of heroic law enforcement officials in traditional media is part of a vicious circle of increased militarization of law enforcement. Through the glorification of law enforcement in traditional media police officers are encouraged to follow the shown example of force and heroism. This representation of criminals as some devious 'other underworld' also delegitimizes the efforts of criminals by dissociating them from the mainstream public. And lastly, the representation of law enforcement in traditional media expresses the notion that the use of force is completely justified and that members of the public had better behave according to their commands.

However, as United States law enforcement has become increasingly militarized in ideology and representation, new media have increasingly granted affordances to citizens to reclaim some ground in these destabilized power relations. Citizens now use social media in concordance with their smartphones to quickly organize protests and create public international attention to their protests (Lievrouw, 2006). This was the case in the Arab spring to which many authors ascribe social media to be a key factor in organizing and rallying support (Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Mazaid, 2011).

Citizens are increasingly capable of recording evidence of misconduct and distributing that content to the point where it can no longer be deleted. It was the camcorder that allowed George Holliday to record evidence of gross police misconduct suffered by Rodney King. The camcorder granted the affordance to record the beating and even though he was unable to distribute the recording himself, he brought it to the KTLA television station. It soon became a media sensation as the shocking footage confronted the general public to the gross misconduct that minorities were confronted with. Without the camcorder, the fraudulent police reports and incident would have gone unnoticed.

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The camcorder provided tangible evidence of police conduct through counter surveillance. The camcorder united minorities in Los Angeles through its iconic value to the plight they endure against the militarized police force. This unity then erupted in violence and public outrage when the impunity of police officers was exemplified to the public as most of the police officers involved were acquitted from punitive measurements. Public outrage ensued as United States citizens were shown the direction which law enforcement had gone. When the public, and namely minorities, were so openly confronted with a system that allows and accepts excessive force by law enforcement, they revolted. The Los Angeles riots were the result of that public outrage toward the imbalance in the power relations between law enforcement and minorities. And although it cannot be said that the plight of minorities versus law enforcement is over after a single violent burst of public outrage, the camcorder was able to present a critique to the established image of law enforcement through what Dery calls camcorder counter surveillance.

"Transmission jamming; pirate TV and radio broadcasting; and camcorder counter surveillance (in which low-cost consumer technologies are used by DIY muckrakers to document police brutality or governmental corruption) are potential modus operandi for the culture jammer" (Dery, Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, and Sniping in the Empire of Signs, 1993).

This iconic portrayal of excessive force thereby opened up discourse on the role of law enforcement by documenting the police brutality (Police State vs. Democracy: Culture Jamming as Creative Resistance #OpBART, 2011). Culture jamming thereby shattered the standard television image of law enforcement as heroic urban warriors.

The smartphone has this same potential. However, we should be wary of utopian notions of instant democracy and equality through technology. It cannot overthrow existing power relations with its mere technological characteristics, but it can be used to inspire, unite and organize the masses towards a single goal. Through the affordances of the smartphone, citizens have been able to relinquish themselves to from their dependency on corporate and governmental organizations to create and distribute content. Although it could be said that the public is now dependant of smartphone producers instead of television and radio stations, there is a significant difference which lies in the fact that smartphone producers generally do not control the production and distribution of content, this power has been transferred to smartphone consumers. In this transference of power, there is an inherent side effect prevalent. Citizens are capable of recording and distributing evidence of government officials using excessive violence (Dery, Slashing the Borg: Resistance is Fertile, 1996). The images are then molded and reconfigured by entire communities of people whom add to the cultural value of the image in public discourse. Although this does not bring about an immediate change in the conduct of police departments, it does warrant increased dissociation and animosity from the mainstream public as videos of minorities or protesters being abused is being spread across social media platforms and eventually traditional media. Law enforcement officials should therefore be wary

for increased levels of animosity from the mainstream public when they continue to direct themselves towards an ever more militarized code of conduct. Smartphones are thereby contesting the impunity of police officers through their ability to inspire animosity in the public by reporting abuse and their ability to identify and publically shame individual police officers. John Pike became one of those officers who have been the subject of extensive oppositional use of new media through parodies and memes.

When John Pike pepper sprayed those students at the UC Davis, he was filmed by dozens of bystanders from multiple angles in a form of counter surveillance. Through the ubiquity of smartphones, these bystanders were all capable of instantly recording and distributing the video over their vast networks of family, friends, coworkers and others in their social circles. The content spreads like a virus over blogs, websites and political satyr websites (Garber, 2011). This image of excessive force was then picked up by online communities such as Reddit and 4Chan, allowing a huge community to criticize John Pike through the use of image reconfiguration. Many users of these communities make small contributions, usually an ironic or cynical caption in exchange for community kudos or upvotes. (See illustration 1) A form of indymedia is born through the reconfiguration of images to tell a little story pertaining criticism towards law enforcement.

We can see several different oppositional uses of new media at work here that is trying to subvert power relations by damaging the image of law enforcement in the United States. Firstly, there is the ability of protesters to use social media and smartphones to organize and communicate more quickly. Secondly there is the ability of counter surveillance with the smartphone's inbuilt camera. And thirdly there is the affordance of contributing to newsworthy topics with the help of quickmemes. Through parodies, satyr and quickmemes, new meaning is created to events of interest to online communities. Citizens therefore no longer need to rely on institutions to produce meaning through traditional media, but they can actually create content that conflicts with traditional representations. The balance of power between law enforcement and the public is in constant conflict as citizens are continually employing their ability to record evidence and represent law enforcement from their point of view. The traditional image of law enforcement as heroic defenders of peace is thereby being subverted into an overly militarized bully of the masses. Public discourse is continuously being altered through the dynamics of culture, and this is exactly what the culture jammers aim to do. By criticizing and popularizing political topics of interest they shift public discourse to question the current role of law enforcement.

Law enforcement agencies in general, and especially in the United States, should be extra cautious in exerting violence as mobile recording devices such as smartphones become ever more ubiquitous. With the affordances of new media, the public is able to create their own representation which becomes newsworthy as it clashes with the dominant view of law enforcement as just conveyors of the law.

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Although the representation created by protesters is one-sided and equally spectacular in its display of excessive violence, it molds public discourse into a direction of the police state. Law enforcement should therefore look inward to reestablish their ideology and operations into something that is not in conflict with contemporary mores in order to divert the growing notion that law enforcement is becoming too powerful and militarized. They need to revert to their former glory as servers of the community instead of urban warriors. If not, then the ubiquity of police misconduct in traditional and online media will create animosity and resentment between law enforcement and the public.

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Appendix A: all video clips

The following list is a summation of all videos referred to in this thesis. It will stand as reference to the representation of law enforcement on the video sharing platform YouTube.

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Appendix B: the power of police

The following sections is there grant the reader more in depth information on the underlying shift in power that militarization has caused. It will focus largely on the power of the individual police officer and how this power is validated by the legal system itself in order to allow police officers to fight the domestic wars on drugs, crime or terror without fear of reprisal.

The urban warrior

As urban warriors, police officers are granted enormous amounts of agency under the guise of safety and efficiency. Meeks confirm that urban policing methods have undergone ideological and procedural changes that have changed the police officer's mindset to that of a soldier. Whereas the role of police used to be that of community service and peace keeping, it has changed into soldiers in a domestic war.

This transformation from a service-oriented policing model to that of a military operational model—the declaration of war on crime, and the militarization of the policing culture—have combined to encourage street-level officers, as well as law enforcement executives, to adopt the view that the inner-city urban environment is a war zone and the enemy is the urban underclass (Meeks, 2005, pp. 36-37).

Los Angeles Police lieutenant, criminologist and sociologist Daryl Meeks explains in his article "Police Militarization in Urban Areas: The Obscure War Against the Underclass" that inner-city urban areas are affected by 'The war on crime' which was supposed to do away with troublesome aspects of society. It was thought that 'cracking down' on crime by inflicting harsh punishments and increased surveillance would deter criminals from performing criminal acts. However, instead of solving the problem, he states that the urban underclass are being encapsulated and quarantined through an increased level of militarization of law enforcement. A militarization funded with federal money that has not gone into education or drug treatment facilities.

Although the main focus of Meeks' article is a post 9/11 situation, he states that even 20 years before; George Bush senior declared another 'war on drugs' causing $700 million of federal funding to shift from community support to the development of law enforcement. Meeks goes on to explain that this financial shift from education and drug treatment to law enforcement has further dissociated the inner city urban underclass. He thereby quotes the professor of law and criminology expert Markus D. Dubber to illustrate that the American justice system has been transformed to only focus on threat minimization and elimination. Through a war on a crime, the urban underclass is confronted with increased levels of control through federal funding that has stopped going to social programs to improve the situation for the underclass. So instead of helping the underclass, they are sweeping them in prison and jails by the thousands. The domestic wars have thereby lead to increased percentages of incarcerated individuals in the United States. Even to the extent where they have the largest prison population in the world. Whereas there were about 300.000 individuals in jails and prison in the 1970's, by 2003 this grew to 2 million individuals incarcerated and another 4 million people are under some sort of governmental supervision (Dubber, 2001). Among which 80 % consist of people of color (Martinot, 2003).

The problem with Profiling

Social philosopher and expert in United States class conflicts Steve Martinot gives a rather dialectical account of the role of law enforcement for minorities in his article "The militarization of police". He shows a genealogy of the militarization of the police structured on underlying conflict with the underclass and minorities in particular. He begins his argument with the notion of police profiling. Profiling is a way of determining suspicion solely on someone's appearance; it is therefore highly subjective and prone to the whims of the officer. A young black man driving a car is more likely to be pulled over because the police consider him to fit the profile of a car thief. The police will question him, inspect the car and request the registration papers for the vehicle. Profiling in itself casts a distinction between the mainstream and those that somehow stand out in the crowd which automatically bases it on visual recognition. Martinot thereby shows that profiling is inherently racial in nature. It also uses a circular argument in its construction which leads to hypercriminalisation. Criminalizing behavior associated with a very generic profile creates a situation in which minorities are ad hoc criminalized as police officers are more suspicious of behavior fitting the profile of crime. This makes police officers more likely to investigate cases with suspects fitting a certain profile, which will then in turn create a bias in the statistics. The statistics of crime regarding the profile will then eventually show a rise in crime by those who fit the profile which will in turn strengthen the profile, increase investigations regarding the profile and increase penal measurements in an effort to reduce criminal behavior. Profiling is therefore circular and self-referential. Through this effort, behavior associated with the underclass is hyper criminalized in court and in their representation in traditional media. As profiling targets certain groups of people, these people are more likely to be investigated and caught if they are indeed doing something illegal or something associated with illegality. In the meantime, all this effort placed into the 'problem' profiles takes away the attention from crime that is not directly linked to such a visually recognizable profile. White crime is for instance decriminalized by two reasons. The first reason is that the hypercriminalization of the underclass behavior acts as a buffer. It is deemed unnecessary by police and mainstream public alike to focus on speeding violations while there are dangerous drug dealers and criminals all focused in a specific area. Secondly, white crime is not profiled upon, making their crimes less numeral in court. As the judge then fails to see the social implications of the white crime due to the fact that it does not show up on the radar as a large social problem, the white crime will not be subject to be made an example out of such as the underclass crime. As profiled crime is hypercriminalized by the judicial system, it feeds into the autonomy granted to the police officers under the guise of probable cause through statistic analysis.

Martinot also illustrates the inherent flaws that deem the act of profiling immoral. Through profiling, a suspect is discovered without evidence for a crime.

When this suspect is found, police look for crimes that the person might have committed. The police commit an act of suspicion which is at a later time linked to a crime. "Profiling thus violates the tenets of law enforcement by making the police the active agent in the criminalization of a person" (Martinot, 2003, p. 207). And as active agent, their power has judicial merit. Through profiling, enormous power is granted to police officers as they are motivated to use their own judgment in assessing an appropriate response to victimless situations. This is further strengthened by notion of "probable cause" which is a legal construct that allows for searches and seizures to be made by law government officials when they feel that there is a reasonable expectation that someone is committing a felony. For example, when an individual runs from the police, the fleeing is considered probable cause that he is guilty of a felony, which subjects him to whatever force necessary to stop him from fleeing from the police.

The problem with Probable cause

The origins of probable cause are rooted long before the domestic wars of the late 20th century. In 1791, a fourth amendment was made to the United States constitution to limit the power of government institutions to perform general search and seizure operations without specific evidence that leads to a high a probability that the person is committing a crime.

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized (United States Government).

However, the term 'probable' is a vague term, a term that defines no specific level of probability that would suffice as adequate reason for a law enforcer to conduct search and seizure operations. There have been loose speculations as what defines probable. Professor of law, Craig Lerner, describes that the term 'probable cause' has seen several interpretations throughout history in different courts. In one court, 'probable cause' carries a probability of 'more than a suspicion'. Some define it as 'more probable than not'. While other courts find it necessary that criminal activity is taking place 'beyond a reasonable doubt'. This discontinuity in the legal definition of the term 'probable cause' has lead to the situation where citizens can be searched and seized on the basis of a hunch of the police officer (Lerner, 2003). The police officer is then properly legitimized in his conduct through the loosest legal abstraction of the term 'probable'. The only way for the citizens to object to search and seizure operations is through a complaint system and a lengthy and expensive legal battle. This is a battle in court against police officers and department criminologists who claim that there was probable cause while citing crime statistics on the level of crime in that particular neighborhood.
The section on law enforcement as an institution will go into more detail about on the legal shield police departments have created for themselves to protect their officers from reprisal. However, we cannot dismiss that individual police officers on the street have a tremendous responsibility not to let their subjective views interfere with rightfully ascertaining whether or not to spring into action. Through the legal concept of 'probable cause' police officers are granted with autonomy which allows them to be corrupted by the physical and judicial power he holds over the public (Martinot, 2003).

The notion of 'probable cause' then brings us to the topic of policing possession. Dubber illustrates that the war on crime is a strategy of social control over the underclass. Possession in itself is victimless and therefore not usually worth the time and effort of police officers to deter as police officers should be concerned with threat minimization instead of punishment. Police departments have therefore gotten overzealous in their quest to eradicate crime and drug use. This has left us with the following situation; 'probable cause' allows police officers to search citizens without evidence, while the employment of possession laws allow police officers to criminalize a suspect. This facilitates the law enforcers' ability to rapidly sweep undesirables to jail without the hassle of obtaining evidence before making someone a suspect of a crime. Law enforcement has thereby delivered a third strike to a healthy balance of power between police and public.

Power of law enforcement as an organization

Now that the level of individual power of police officers is discussed, there is still a question to be answered.
How come law enforcement as a governmental institution does not rise up to fight the overbearing power of police officers? Police officers that break the law and basic human right should be prosecuted like any other.

Offenders have learned brutality through the organization's failure to properly train officers on the importance of controlling situations by using minimal force. With few exceptions excessive force users are not punished. The manner in which police departments are organized encourages some police use of force through its lackadaisical inquiries of offenders (Mangan, 2000).

Although there are procedures and discipline boards for police officers who abuse their power, these are usually considered too lenient and ineffective in dealing with police brutality. There are for instance both civil and criminal statutes that specifically deal with police misconduct. Federal criminal statue makes unlawful to for anyone with policing authority to deprive a person of their rights protected by the United States constitution. It is also deemed unlawful for law enforcement agencies to engage in a pattern where persons are deprived of their constitutional right. Additionally, federal law prohibits any discrimination against race, gender, religion, origin and color (Legal Dictionary). These laws and statutes may seem very knowledgeable and a good guide through which the power of law enforcement institutes is limited to the extent where police officers can be held accountable for not obeying these laws. However, in practice it would prove very difficult to actually enforce these rules. There are several pragmatic issues that interfere with investigating and litigating against police misconduct.

First of all, police officers are prone to incite huge amounts of complaints due to the nature of their work. It might be that a citizen is not aware of any laws he is breaking and therefore feels disenfranchised when police officers confront him with the illegality of his actions. He might file a complaint out of spite. One can imagine a myriad of situations where it could be beneficial for a suspect to make claims of unfair treatment to enhance his own chances of either money or freedom. It could for instance be used to leverage a better deal with prosecutor, or it might just be to sue the police department for money.

This makes it difficult for internal affairs departments to differentiate between actual violations of the constitution or misguided attempts made by spiteful complainers.

Secondly, private litigation against either police officers or departments is very time-consuming and costly. Police departments spend huge amounts of money on legal protection, making it very hard to fight them in court if the citizens are not financially able. It is like David fighting Goliath and unless you have a shocking recording of your abuse; it will not stand up in court because police officers are usually given the benefit of the doubt. This is to make it increasingly difficult for citizens to sue law enforcement officials for destruction of property or violating constitutional rights. The idea is that police officers should be able to do their job without fear of reprisal (Legal Dictionary). Police departments have this leniency for police officers built into their system which grants them their autonomy.

Thirdly, there is the 'code of silence'. This code is very much similar to what one might find in prison systems where snitching is considered morally deplorable. This 'I scratch your back, you scratch mine'-culture will not allow police officers to testify against each other without reprisal from coworkers. "I am supposed to trust the guy standing next to me when I risk my life on the streets" is the usual response with which loyalty is prioritized above the testifying against police abuse. These factors discourage police officers from cooperating with investigations on fellow police officers. This then impedes prosecution of human rights violators within the force. There is a sense of solidarity and trust that is broken when one officer tells on another. This effect is further strengthened by police forces discouraging citizens from filing complaints. When complaints are filed, it is often not substantiated with evidence due to inadequate investigation resources. When sanctions are imposed on police officers, they have gone through a multi-layered appeal process to lighten the punishment, causing it to be ineffective as a deterrent for the police officer to stop their aggressive demeanor on the streets (Mangan, 2000).

Fourthly, local prosecutors are discouraged from pursuing criminal charges to police officers because they usually rely on police cooperation for their other cases. This means we can even detect a 'I scratch your back, you scratch mine"-mentality between different institutions in the justice system. "A similar view was taken by the US Commission on Civil Rights in a report on policing in Los Angeles published in May 1999, when it called for a special prosecutor to be appointed in police abuse cases, citing the low rate of prosecution of such cases" (Amnesty International, 1999, p. 27).

Fifthly, the legal minds of police departments have made recording of police behavior illegal in the states of Illinois, Massachusetts, and Maryland. Although there is no law in effect actually prohibiting the recording of images, it is illegal to record audio under their anti-wiretapping and eavesdropping laws (McElroy, 2010). (Sanchez, 2010) They have effectively employed a loophole to deter people from obtaining evidence of police abuse. And even though it is legal in many states to record police officers, as they have no reasonable expectation of privacy in their public function, the prosecutors in these cases have created an ambiguity whether or not it is legal to record police officers by overly punishing those who do not concede. Such was the case of Michael Allison who faces a life in jail

for recording police officers (Watson & Jones, 2011). Another example of overzealous prosecution is that of Anthony Graber who was stopped by an undercover police officer holding a gun because he was speeding with his motorcycle. Graber found the gun wielding cop so remarkable that he posted it on the popular video sharing platform YouTube causing the prosecution to charge him with breaking the wiretapping laws. A few days after, Graber was seized and his parents' house searched. 16 years was the maximum punishment he could receive (Dodge, 2010). Even though the case has been dismissed, it has once again added to the ambiguity of citizens' right to record in public places. This causes citizens to be deterred from obtaining evidence. This ambiguity is so extreme that even police officers do not always know whether or not recording is illegal. When they are then confronted by a camera, it is very possible that they will deny recording rights to a citizen, once again making it impossible for him to obtain evidence of police misconduct (Skehill, 2001). They thereby extinguish the citizen's power to jam culture through counter surveillance.

These five pragmatic aspects of policing the police are adding to the already ample power given to law enforcement agencies. The current situation is one of impunity; which is a situation in which the police stands above official police rules of engagement and other legal prohibitions such as the constitution.

'Impunity' is not simply a result of police departments offering internal solidarity to those officers who act with brutality or criminalize people. It names the hyper-political context in which the police not only stand above both police regulations and legal prohibitions against torture or murder, but become a law unto themselves, to which they can demand obeisance. It names the power given the police, authorized through the concept of 'probable cause', to brutalise or dehumanise a person at will, without accountability. This means that the person subjected to that power has no recourse, neither in the moment nor through judicial procedure (Martinot, 2003, p. 212).

Law enforcement as an institution facilitates police abuse by creating this judicial shield for police officers. Under guise of profiling and probable cause, they can justify their actions in any court without having to substantiate their gut feeling. The court tends to believe the police officer by giving him the benefit of the doubt to lessen the fear of reprisal. They are essentially untouchable. Police officers have no fear of punishment for their behavior due to the shield created for them by the police department. If it ever gets to the position where police officers are to be punished, they can start a multi-layered process of appeals for either amnesty or leniency (Amnesty International, 1999). Martinot claims that this context of impunity is characteristic to military operations and that it is consistent with the warfare rhetoric incited on a political level, weapons technology on a budgetary level and military tactics on a cognitive level.

Martinot claims that police officers have therefore started to embody the law. 'Probable cause' gives warrant to bring upon a profiled individual the full authority of the law. When a police officer detains an individual, then that person needs to obey any directive made by the police officer. Anything that can be construed as disobedience makes the individual liable for physical and legal punishment as it is illegal to disobey the police officer. At the moment that the suspect is detained, he is subjected to two different systems of law.

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On the one had there is the regular legislative body of courts and judges that determine guilt and punish accordingly, while on the other hand there is the law made by the police officers through his directives. The suspect "[I]n being constrained to absolute obedience, can be criminalized and subjected to arrest for defense of his/her dignity, self-respect, or sense of justice" (Martinot, 2003, p. 211). Police officers are thereby above the law. This is a situation that is strengthened by the extensive judicial shield created by law enforcement as an institution. There exists however one big difference between the military and law enforcement. Law enforcement is not unified under a single organization. Their organizational structure is "decentred among cities, precincts and districts, and finally, the autonomy of the individual police officer. [sic] police operations are not performed pursuant to pre-defined governmental ends, as are military campaigns. [sic][T]he police constitute a paramilitary rather than a military force. Paramilitary forces have capabilities denied both governments and legitimate armed forces, among which are an autonomy of operation, and an ability to violate human rights and terrorize people without accountability" (Martinot, 2003, p. 215). This means that law enforcement has moved beyond the law and the constitution and created a niche for themselves where they can act without fear of reprisal from outside of the police force. However, as the next section will illustrate, even the police is beholden to the public to some extent. This is properly exemplified when public outrage ensues when the public is confronted with shocking truths of police misconduct.

To summarize, the United States has been in a constant state of war, although this is often the case considering the United States foreign policy, this is also the case within their borders. A domestic war is constantly afoot warranting continuous forceful and tactical operations to deter criminals, drug users and terrorists. Through this metaphor, a new rhetoric formed deeming 'the streets' to be warzones and making excessive force justifiable for reasons of safety and efficiency. Budgetary means were created to support this militarization and with the help of probable cause, policing possession and profiling, enormous agency was granted to individuals fueled with the military spirit and encouraged to make numerous arrests. This power is then exacerbated as police officers are immune to criminal charges to conduct in the line of duty. Their impunity has been created through years of legal and ideological conflict. Through the rhetoric of warfare, the image of the police officer has been transformed to that the urban warrior risking his life for the safety of the American people. In this 'risky' endeavor, he is granted extra freedom to properly conduct his duties. In order to obtain public consent of this situation, police departments are more than willing to illustrate the dangers and exiting world of law enforcement exacerbating the rhetoric of urban warzone. The last section on the militarization of law enforcement will therefore focus on the manner in which aggressive police work is usually represented by traditional media with the help of footage obtained by police.