



**TITLE: Media leaders are dead. Long live Leadership.**

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The digital sphere brings together “fragmented, individualized populations” that challenge traditional notions of collective identity (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p. 751). Instead new encounters take place bringing together actors from multiple spheres to voice common concerns around singular issues that are simultaneously place-based and networked across places.

In the campaign (2011-2015) against coal seam gas campaign in NSW a multi-voice and diverse line up of experts, farmers, local residents and women have emerged as spokespeople, each connected to local networks and identity groups such as the Knitting Nannas or farmers of the Liverpool plains. Rather than leadership defined by media promoting the charisma of a prominent individual (e.g. Gitlin, 1980; Lester, 2010) media coverage of the campaign has involved hundreds of spokespeople. How has this decentralised leadership enabled the campaign to build a far broader engagement than Australia’s traditional environmental NGO-led campaigns?

I analyse media coverage of the Fullerton Cove blockade in 2012 and the 2014 Pilliga protest camp to show the diversity of spokespeople used as sources in media coverage. I examine the relationship to social power and how it has contributed to resilience, sustainability and diversity in the campaign. I investigate how the connective is replacing the collective as the organising form in environmental networks of protest.