Making Sense of Communication Repertoires in the German Global Justice Movements

Paper to be presented in the Marie Curie Conference and Training Series
European Protest Movements since the Cold War: The Rise of a (Trans-)national Civil Society and the Transformation of the Public Sphere after 1945

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Abstract
This paper outlines a research project that aims at understanding the diversity of the German global justice movements by looking at the communication repertoires single groups resort to. It is argued that the way political groups relate to external environments – within and beyond the movements – mirrors their perception of political reality and helps to position them in a contentious political field. Starting from an interactionist notion of ideology, the proposed project seeks to overcome a functionalist bias in the research of social movements that has privileged the analysis of instrumental practices and, in this vein, actors that primarily follow this logic of action. By contrast, an overview of the actual breadth of communication repertoires will bring communication strategies to the surface which have been more or less neglected so far.
1. Introduction

Compared to political institutions, parties or interest groups, social movements are characterised by traits that hamper scientific explanation. Fuzzy boundaries and a multitude of actors with differing interests make it hard to describe social movements without forcing the object under study. What we call a social movement is a network of networks comprising a variety of actors with goals and beliefs that intersect only partially. To make it even more complicated, those constellations that are subordinated to a unifying notion of “social movement” proof to vary significantly on the local level. Local traditions and the related perception of problems are an important factor to shape the dynamics of movement networks (Roth 1994).

While the complexity of social movements is a fact acknowledged by everyone who deals with the issue, studies dedicated explicitly to grasping that trait and portraying the broad range of positions within a movement are rare (e.g. Edwards and Foley 2003). The diversity of the components subsumed under the label “social movement” has been proved for one-issue-movements such as the feminist and it applies most obviously also to the global justice movements (GJMs)¹ that have been attached this label at the turn of the millennium. Within these movements, activists with diverse thematic interests and ideological backgrounds unite to resist what is perceived as neo-liberal hegemony. At a closer look, the “movement of movements” which is supposed to bridge differences between social movement groups is structured by acts of delineation and at times even the refusal to communicate. Both parallel, sometimes even competing coalitions and different approaches to express protest are an indication for the salience of disagreements between global justice activists.

One could think of many different ways to allow for the variety of political groups engaged in the context of the GJMs: Their critique of the economic and political system, the different ways to organise their own affairs, or the strategies to solve the problems they lament. This paper argues that much of these and other differences are mirrored in the way movement groups communicate with the environments that surround them.

To express and promote their ideas of social change, political groups interact with other social movement groups, bystanders, mass media, and decision-makers. On the movement level communication preferences can be observed in the way movement groups engage in joint campaigns and mobilisations. They consider certain groups as partners while they refrain from collaborating with others. On a more general level, beyond the movement context, there are several forms to communicate with parts of the society a group might want to address; for instance: mobilising for demonstrations, lobbying a bill, spreading information or organising seminars among others. In both contexts, within and beyond the movement, political groups develop enduring strategies that determine the

¹ Rather than being a single movement the GJMs are a movement family interconnected by the master frame of anti-neoliberalism (the term “movement family” is coined in della Porta and Rucht 1995). Hence, the plural form will be used throughout this paper (for the rationale to refer to the GJMs in plural see Rucht 2005).
interactions with their environments. These communication strategies will be at the centre of the proposed research project.

What does the notion of communication repertoires tell us about the initial problem of complexity in social movements? All forms of communication are selected on purpose, because they fit a certain notion of social change. Communication repertoires, understood as sets of actions which political groups resort to, might help us to reconstruct the respective rationale behind actions that are obviously very different. Decisions about how to communicate with other social movement groups, bystanders, mass media, and the political elite are shaped by a shared understanding of the group’s position in a contentious political field. Thus, this paper outlines a research approach to make sense of differences in communication repertoires by emphasizing the cognitive and relational context of a group’s acting.

The aim of the project is twofold: (1) to map a political field in which social movement groups are located depending on their relationship to other actors and (2) to explain the plural forms of expression referring to the actors’ perception of the world they interact with.

2. The functionalist bias of social movement research
In its early phase, the analysis of social movements was developed against the dominant concept of mass behaviour as a pathological phenomenon. Following Le Bons characterisation of The Crowd (1903) people who were acting in the context of a large group were denied the capacity of rational thinking. This idea was not only applied to panics and riots but also to demonstrations and mass gatherings. By contrast, early scholars of social movements showed that collective behaviour was understandable only with reference to rational thinking and shared beliefs of the individuals involved. Especially the epoch-making resource mobilisation approach, that dominated the analysis of social movements for quite a while, embraced Mancur Olson’s (Olson 1965) notion of rational choice. With reference to the rational choice concept the protagonists of resource mobilisation theory proved that the opposite of the common interpretation of collective action was true (McCarthy and Zald 1977). People’s engagement in social movement turned out to be perceived as a rational strategy to organise peripheral interests and leverage neglected demands. Once established in academic research, the analysis of social movements diversified in the 1980s with concepts that underscored the political opportunities of a movement, its interaction in a political process, the strategic use of cognitive frames and the cohesive force of a collective identity.

Yet a certain focus continued to shape the access of much of the mainstream research to the field. The emphasis on rationality countering the distorted picture of irrational collective action was inherited in subsequent research in a twofold manner. First, resource mobilisation theory adopted the restricted anthropological assumptions of the rational choice paradigm. Human behaviour was explained primarily in an economist framework of a rational pursuit of benefits. At first, facets of identity, bonds and ideology were largely neglected. But even when they were incorporated in social movement analysis at a later
stage, the aspect of goal-orientation prevailed in the analysis (Ferree 1992). This leads to the second point: The rationalist turn in the analysis of social movements spurred a functionalist bias that narrowed the perception of the object under study. The bulk of research concentrated on *Realpolitik* seeking to understand social movements as political actors which played a corrective role in the political tableau. Without doubt there are good reasons to ask for the chances of a movement to influence public opinion and eventually political decisions, but this approach favoured a perspective on social movements from within the polity. As a consequence, the radical impetus of certain strands of social movements and their utopian surplus was systematically understudied. Of course, scholars referred to the expressive character of collective action as opposed to the instrumental logic (e.g. Rucht 1990). This aspect was especially underscored in the European discussion dealing with new social movements which obviously did not aim at material benefits for a certain part of the populace but referred to universal goods. But still, in most of the research the instrumental aspect of social movement strategies clearly prevailed. Without doubt analysts have proved social movements to be important in the political and cultural dynamics (primarily for Western democracies), but very much of the research tended to understand movement activity from the result. On the one hand, this lead to a focus on those movements that turned out successful (Kolb 2005). On the other hand, those segments of social movements that showed no interest in a dialogue with political actors or solutions within the framework of the given political and economic regime remained largely unseen (Fitzgerald and Rodgers 2000).

Referring to the lack of resources that social movements notoriously suffer from, their rationalist potential has been underlined. Finding and communicating the better argument is certainly the dominating strategy within social movements. Engaged citizens produce counter-expertise and use the established channels of mass media and public action to spread the word. So obviously, much of the communicative activity within social movements can be framed as persuasion. But there is also a remainder that does not follow the persuasive logic. On the contrary, the idea of deliberation is challenged by the refusal to play a part in a setting defined by dominant discourses that symbolically marginalise deviating positions. Groups that stick to this position seek for communicative strategies that challenge and deconstruct the predominant rationality. Consequentially, certain groups tend to reject contact with mass media or decision-makers. Instead, they prefer other forms of communication. They may express their arguments preferably in confined circles sharing their critique of the status quo. Toward the exterior, they symbolically underline the radical and irreconcilable nature of their opposition. Or a political group may communicate subversive, ambivalent messages that put common knowledge and related interpretations of reality into question.

A comprehensive analysis of social movements’ external communication that requires a differentiation of the various segments active in a movement has been hampered by a functionalist bias. The focus of attention has been put primarily on those aspects of communication that fit the instrumental logic. By contrast, the purpose intended by the
actors themselves has not attracted too much attention. As a consequence, much of the motivational reservoir that fuels political engagement has been faded out. The same applies to those forms of expression that are not primarily intended to trigger change on the policy-level. Eventually, the analysis of social movements tended to portray a certain set of actors and actions while others remain more or less unseen. To counterbalance the specific perspective on movements’ external communication, the research project aims at portraying the entire set of communication strategies within a movement, their situational use and their cognitive base. To explain the observed differences between communication strategies, the concept of ideology is considered central. The reference to shared interpretations allows reconstructing the meaning social actors attach to their action.

3. Bringing ideology back in
Defining the neglect of ideology as one of the shortcomings of a resource-oriented approach, Mayer Zald (2000) has invited social movement scholars to systematically include the ideological dimension in their analysis. The salience of shared beliefs in mobilising processes used to be one of the major explanatory factors to collective action. But this cognitive dimension has lost significance since resource mobilization theory focused on the organisational structures within social movements. Accordingly, most part of the research underemphasised ideological factors. However, the “cultural turn” in social movement theory has brought ideology back in. While Zald’s ubiquitous concept of ideology has been contested (Diani 2000; Klandermans 2000) a focus on shared beliefs seems particularly conductive to understanding movement groups’ diverse approaches to interact with other segments of society. In his programmatic article, Zald pleads for understanding social movements as ideologically structured action (ISA), a notion that has been introduced by Dalton (1994) in his quantitative analysis of European environmentalist groups. Dalton’s main finding is that ideology rather than resources or forms of organisation is the explaining factor to understand the strategic choices social movement actors make. Using a qualitative method and focussing on two environmental groups, Carmin and Balser (2002) have strengthened Dalton’s claim. To understand the choice of communicative repertoires in groups of the GJMs, Dalton’s ISA-model will be taken as a starting point (see fig. 1). The model explains structure and action of social movement groups as dependent from a shared ideology. Forms of organisation, the choice of issues and action repertoires are influenced, but not determined, by a certain ideology. In fact, similar ideological positions may result in diametric strategic decisions. An anti-capitalist group, for instance, may engage in a pluralist campaign together with liberals and Christian groups in order to increase the visibility of their stance. Vice versa, the group may also reject cooperation like these in general assuming that radical critique is absorbed and powerless when brought into these contexts.
While Dalton’s model is certainly useful to understand political groups’ strategic choices the very core of the model, the concept of ideology, remains underspecified. In his study, Dalton does not go beyond the vague idea that ideology “provides a framework for organising and interpreting the political world” (Dalton 1994: 12). A look back to the history of the notion of ideology shows that the discussion has long been dominated by pejorative concepts. But recently interactionist approaches to ideology have come to the fore. Several social movement scholars implicitly underline the impact of a set of shared interpretative patterns (e.g.: Carmin and Balser 2002; Freeman 1999). They trace back decisions and actions that can be observed within social movement to experiences, values and systems of reference. Fine and Sandstrom (Fine and Sandstrom 1993) refer to ideology explicitly as a connection of interpretations of the world and values that guides action. According to their definition, ideology is “a set of interconnected beliefs and their associated attitudes, shared and used by members of a group or population, that relate to problematic aspects of social and political topics. These beliefs have an explicit evaluative and an implicit behavioural component.” (ibid.: 24) What seems important here is the interactionist origin of ideology. Shared perceptions and evaluations emerge in group discussions. But not only does the in-group influence coinciding patterns of interpretation. This cognitive common ground is also shaped by out-group ascriptions to the collective. To strengthen the interactionist aspect, I define ideology as a largely shared system of interpretation that is reproduced in group processes and serves to construct and evaluate political reality. Understood this way, ideology is the cognitive basis for decisions and

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2 This is particularly true for the German debate where Ideology continues to be understood as a political religion (with the major confessions of liberalism, conservatism and socialism) or, in the Marxist tradition, as a structure of deceit.

3 This clarifies also the difference between Ideology and framing-processes: while ideologies are rather stable and complex systems of interpretation, framing is a simply-structured tactic to produce plausibility.
purposeful action. If, for instance, the most important objectives of a political group are grassroots democracy and the absence of hierarchy, activities will be structured accordingly. Joint attempts to minimise hierarchies in processes of organisation will be the touchstone for the group’s engagement in networks or campaigns. On the level of domestic politics the group is likely to reject representative models and participation in elections. The group might even mobilise for protest against elections, e.g. alienate election posters. The rationale to choose these interactions can be understood only with reference to shared patterns of interpretation.

Having this as a goal, it is not obligatory to understand the emergence of shared ideologies by observing instances of communication that result in a shared perception of reality. Rather, the product of these processes will have to be reconstructed to explain external communication. Of course, constructing a shared ideology is a dynamic process. Never will the interpretation of reality be identical for all members of the group, the less so in heterogeneous networks. If the intersecting set of perceptions is not considered satisfactory for collaboration, this will result either in controversies and ideological adjustments or in the exit of single activists or even a split-up of the group.

Presuming that the engagement in political groups is meaningful to the individual activist in terms of ideology and identity, the suggested research project takes groups as the analytical unit of analysis. Political groups are typically made up of people who share a similar view on society and social problems. The action of a group at the same time serves to reaffirm this perception defining the group’s identity and its position in a political field. Part of this common epistemic ground are assumptions about the distance of a group vis-à-vis other actors and its opportunities to affect the wider societal context. The sum of the perceptions shared within a group shall be referred to in this paper as ideology.

4. Political groups in a contentious field
If a group’s perception of its environment is considered central to explain strategic decisions about acting, this environment has to be referred to more in detail. The political and economic regime marks the basic constants a political group relates to. A movement group may be supportive or critical towards the basic societal features or it may reject it altogether. According to this basic position, the group can be analysed with reference to its “membership in the polity” (Gamson 1975: 140). The distinction between “members” and “challengers” of the polity was introduced by William Gamson in opposition to elitist and pluralist concepts of democracy. He confronted these theories with the fact that groups that may not play a role in the common process of negotiating could under certain conditions gain leverage. While Gamson initially drew the line between institutional political actors as members of the polity on the one side and social movements as challengers on the other, the distinction is much harder to make when we look at the GJMs. Part of the actors engaged in the GJMs have to be considered as members of the polity. Apart from parties, trade unions and Charity organisations which are important allies, several global justice movement organisations (GJMOs) cease to challenge the cornerstones of the regime.
The distinction between challengers and members of the polity is even more important when the discursive construction of a position is considered. According to what has been said above, the perception to be a challenger on the one hand moulds the action of the group itself. But on the other hand the external ascription of the challenger role serves to reaffirm frontiers. What large parts of the society consider sayable in the context of legitimate criticism is subject to an ongoing process of self-ascertainment. Accordingly, a group that holds a certain position is either constructed as a legitimate speaker or not. The self-image of a political group and the reaction to the public construction of its political position (e.g. in press coverage or in judgements of politicians) is an integral part of the strategic determination of communicative repertoires.

This relational concept of the determinants for a communication strategy incorporates the context social movement groups interact with instead of reifying the observed action as a detached phenomenon. Thus, the interactionist concept of ideology allows for the knowledge that „the totality of a given empirical collective action is usually attributed a quasi-substantial unity, when it is instead the contingent outcome of the interaction of a multiple field of forces and analytically distinct processes.“ (Melucci 1996: 4). The environments political groups interact with are not extrinsic systems, but they are part of a political field that can be restructured in action. Thus, political constellations are both the starting point and the product of a group’s interpreting reality (Crossley 2003).

5. Communication repertoires

Having defined ideology as the central explanatory concept, we shall turn to communication repertoires as the result of ideologically guided decisions. As indicated above, the full spectrum of communication repertoires used in a social movement has hardly been subject to research. Although specific forms of communication have been ascribed to certain groups or parts of a movement, an analysis that explains communication strategies for single groups within a movement is yet pending. Having this as a goal, it is essential not to narrow the focus to goal-oriented communication, but to be aware of the fact that also the refusal of interactions and seemingly absurd communication have a purpose and are part of a communication strategy.

When single groups are observed, the strategic nature of their external communication will be visible in the communication repertoires they make use of. Out of a multitude of possible modes of interaction that are available in a given cultural set, political groups choose only certain tactics while they refrain from using others. These deliberate choices are the key to understand the underlying strategy. For the purpose of this paper, a communication strategy is defined based on Rucht’s definition of strategy as a conscious, planned and integrated long-term conception of interaction with political environments (cf. Rucht 1990: 161). At the centre of the analysis is the question to which extent political groups get involved in communicative contexts and how these are referred to. In this regard, the comparison of the movement level and the general political level should provide a deeper insight into the modality of strategic choices in two different systems of reference.
5.1 Communicating within the global justice movement
The external group communication within the GJMs will primarily be found in coordination efforts made in the framework of networks or campaigns. The engagement in alliances and the position towards intermediate networks such as social forums (or, in Germany, Attac) mirrors the group’s position vis-à-vis other movement actors. Thus, the main questions regarding communication in the movement are: To which extent does a group engage in the available networks? In which way are other actors referred to? And does the reference to movement alliances aim at agreements or delineation? However, reference to other groups, be it delineation or alliance, is the main source to understand the political field a group acts in. The way a groups perceives its own position within this field will have a major impact on the communication with the outside.

In the interaction of movement groups ideology obviously plays an important role. If the perception of reality is not shared at least to a certain extent, this will lead to conflict which impedes collaboration and/or fosters factionalism. Social movement scholars have early referred to the dichotomy of radical and moderate forces to understand divisions of a movement (see for instance Roche and Sachs 1965). On the one hand, communication between radicals and reformers might be inhibited provided that ideological differences are perceived as meaningful. On the other hand, there is evidence that factionalism does not preclude the survival of a movement. If a radical faction underlines the acuteness of the claims made by a movement, moderate actors might enjoy a radical flank effect that improves the bargaining position vis-à-vis their addressee (Haines 1984). Reflection about communication strategies will yield evidence how factionalism is perceived by social movement actors and if the division of labour within a movement is referred to as positive or negative.

5.2 Communicating beyond movement boundaries
When interaction beyond the movement sector is considered, the moderate and the radical faction of a movement are usually associated with a corresponding dichotomous set of communication strategies – collaboration and confrontation. Both approaches to interact with social environments are normally understood as modal strategies applied by social movement actors depending on the specific situation. But while collaborative communication is likely to be associated with moderate movement groups, confrontational interaction is considered a characteristic of radical parts of a movement. When we look at the diverse groups that make up a social movement, reality seems to be by far more complicated. Even groups that reject the status quo might under certain circumstances cooperate with state institutions to realise short-term objectives (cf. Haug, Teune and Yang 2006). Adding to this, neither confrontational nor collaborative logics might dominate the substantiation of communication strategies. Deconstructive approaches for instances, that have emerged in the wake of new social movements, hardly attracted any attention in the study of social movements. This communication strategy is based on the idea that both collaborative and confrontational forms of communication are problematic. While the former tends to be imbibed by mainstream politics and thus de-radicalised, the latter serves as an
instance of demarcation, thus backing hegemonic discourse. As a consequence, social movement actors have developed forms of communication that question the common models of perception as such (Teune forthcoming).

Differing communication strategies are mirrored in the forms of protest a group makes use of. In the GJMs there is a broad range of protest tactics from lobbying to arson attacks. Movement groups will make use of them according to their ideological preferences. This is supported by Dalton in his analysis of ideologically structured action. He claims holds that “patterns of political action” are “the most direct test for our framework of ISA” (1994: 178). The classical account to understand forms of action in social movements is the notion of repertoires. The term was coined by Charles Tilly (1977) to point out the historical conditionality of contentious action. In a given period and a given space, citizens resort to a limited bundle of means to deal with a conflict. But repertoires of action can not only be defined for large social entities. As an intersection of the means available, repertoires may be identified for groups that act in the larger societal framework. Political groups choose only certain forms of action from this tableau to reach their aims, namely those they consider appropriate to express their political position (Ennis 1987). A synchronous analysis that includes the entire spectre of a movement which is suggested in the research project can prove if the use of a certain set of means coincides with ideological denominations.

The addressee of protest might be a political institution, a large public or neither of them. Then, mobilisations might be oriented to the own community only. Whom to address is, however, a decision that mirrors the position an actor has – or, more accurately, perceives to have – in a contentious political field. Thus, the choice of a certain repertoire of action allows tracing the relationship between a political group and the environments it is facing: political institutions, elites, mass, media, ad-hoc or alternative public spaces.

Given the little knowledge we have about communication strategies for the different strands within a movement, the research project aims at explaining the rationale for the choice of a certain communication repertoire more in detail. In this context, three aspects are of special interest: (1) what are the determinants to adopt a certain strategy? And what are ideological differences in perceiving and evaluating a political situation that influence the strategic choice? (2) What is a group’s rationale to prefer a communication strategy to another? Do instrumental considerations (communicate to reach a certain goal) play a large role or is the expressive aspect (communicate to articulate the group position) perhaps even more important? (3) How do deconstructive communication strategies (communicate to question the given rationality), that have been faded out in social movement research due to the functionalist bias, fit into the picture?

6. Particularities of the global justice movements
Having elaborated the perspective the research project will take on the GJMs, it is essential to consider the particularities of this movement family which will affect the objective of the study. The most important features attributed to the GJMs are (1) a genuinely transnational
structure, (2) the importance of persistent intermediate networks, and (3) the salience of the unifying meta-frame of anti-neoliberalism. All three aspects should have an impact on the interplay of ideology and communication strategies.

The transnational character of contemporary social movements challenges the concepts social movement theorists developed within a national context (McCarthy 1997). The transnationalisation of social movements does not only imply a more intense collaboration of movement groups beyond national borders, thus constructing new public spaces. Political groups also have the opportunity to address audiences in other countries. The Zapatista movement, for instance, raised much of its support from Europe and North America via the internet (Olesen 2005). Thus, groups that perceive their domestic situation as marginalised will discover new affiliations and common perspectives on the political reality on the transnational level. In a nutshell, communication strategies are no longer limited to a national public sphere. Even small groups might cooperate with groups in other countries they perceive as ideologically cognate rather than collaborating with a group in their own country that appears to be distant.

Networks and campaigns are considered an important organisational backbone of the GJMs. In Germany, attac and the social forums play an important role in connecting actors with diverse backgrounds in the long term. This has lead to processes of adjustment and moderation. Compared to predecessor movements, the GJMs have achieved an intense exchange between ideologically distant groups. Because this conglomerate of actors does not promote and follow a binding ideology these networks have been called “ideologically thin” (Bennett 2004: 134-136). But the lack of a common world-view or an ideological mission does not preclude a continuing effect of ideology. Parallel mobilisations against a common target, for instance, are telling evidence for differences in handling the political situation.

Similar considerations apply to the anti-neoliberal meta-frame. Even though it suggests a high degree of unity, the notion of anti-neoliberalism is not uncontested within the GJMs. Radical groups particularly suspect the frame to be prone to an authoritarian critique of globalisation that favours state interventions. But even if the anti-neoliberal meta-frame is an important point of reference for quite a lot of activists, it does not absorb the differences that continue to shape the GJMs.

7. Sampling
The relevant characteristic for sampling is the ideological profile of a group. Twenty to thirty groups that cover the full ideological spectrum of the GJMs in Germany will be chosen to analyse their respective communication repertoires. In order to identify meaningful cases for the German context, I will be able to hark back to previous research made in the project “Democracy in Europe and the Mobilization of Society” (Demos). Not only will the criteria –

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4 The Demos project studies the GJMs in six European countries (GB, F, IT, ES, GER, CH) and on the transnational level. The focus of the project is democracy as it is practised and evaluated within the GJMs (http://demos.ieu.it).
mobilisation for global justice protests, engagement in global justice networks – be the same to consider a group being part of the GJMs. The knowledge gained in the project also facilitated structuring an ideological field along two major axes: radical vs. moderate and spontaneistic vs. organised (Rucht, Teune and Yang forthcoming). Both axes describe a space in which every political group can be located. This allows identifying the different perspectives present within the GJMs (see figure 2). The horizontal axis distinguishes between organisational principles. Groups tending towards the right pole emphasize the efficacy of their organisation. They favour representative structures, the division of labour and clear-defined hierarchies. The achievement of goals is considered a priority to the chosen means. Summing up these characteristics, groups in this area are organised. At the opposite pole the means-end relation is reversed. Groups leaning towards this pole reject all organisational structures that delimit the autonomy of the individual member. Accordingly, these groups are spontaneistic.

The second axis that spans the field differentiates the range of criticism. Either the groups’ critique is reformist aiming at dysfunctions of the political and economic regime or it is radical focussing on the totality of social organisation instead of single problems. The latter
axis refers to the dichotomy of radicals and moderates, but both positions are considered as poles with actors located somewhere in between.

Within the ideological space described above, two subfields can be identified that combine different characteristics. In the moderate field a tempered criticism matches with an emphasis on organisation. A case in point for this field is a trade union. The radical field, by contrast, combines the opposite attributes: grassroots democracy and anti-capitalism, represented, for instance, by the network Peoples Global Action (PGA). The axes that serve to structure the field go back to the main cleavages within the GJM. Frequently, conflicts go back to the scope of criticism, hierarchies in self-organisation (e.g. large organisations dominating small ones), and the choice of means.

Beyond these sub-fields there are groups that are guided by different principles. On the one side there are grassroots groups rooted in new social movements or Christian faith. They tend towards the pole of moderate critique, but keep distant from strict organisational principles. On the other side Trotskyite and communist groups add to the global justice groups. While they stick to a critique that transcends the given political and economic system, these groups underline the efficacy of firm organisation.

Intermediate networks play an important role to connect many of these different actors. In Germany, two kinds of organisations, Attac and local social forums, serve this purpose. Both are a mixture of organisation and network. While the original idea was to establish networks representing the entire spectre of actors who are critical towards neo-liberal politics, especially the local groups have developed a continuous structure and a distinct identity. Due to their nature as spaces to connect different actors, the cleavages within the GJM play an important role in the discussion within intermediate networks. The ideological differences between movement actors is probably applicable to both the local and the national level. As the conditions for groups on both levels produce different dynamics, it is important to include either type in the analysis. This is obvious not only for the potential public that might be addressed, but also for the alliance structure, because ideological differences might play a minor role for collaboration on the local level.

Following this preliminary construction of a field of actors, the research project will focus on individual groups to reconstruct their communication strategies. First, this will result in a portrait of the plurality of communication strategies. Second, the construction of the field itself will be corrected with reference to the information gathered. As a political field, the GJM are structured by the relationship of actors (Bourdieu 2001), that will be derived in the course of the study itself.

8. Methods
The questions posed above will be answered with a qualitative method. Primary sources are interviews with representatives and texts published by the respective groups. This material will be used to portray forms of external communication and reconstruct the rationale behind them. In a first step documents from the group’s context are gathered to
describe it and elaborate the specific communication repertoire (for both the movement level and the general political level). This includes the following questions: Which other actors has the group established relations with? And what kind of relations do they sustain? What are the forms of action the group uses? And who is the addressee of these actions? At this stage, also documents from other groups and press articles may help to understand the portrayed group. Taking this knowledge as a basis, interviews conducted with representatives of the analysed groups will follow as a second step. Beyond the documents, these interviews serve to visualise conflicts and delineations in the movement. Adding to this, interviews are essential to trace the reasons for preferring one form of communication to another or to deal with voids in publicly available information, for instance if contact with the authorities is rejected implicitly. The analysis of the collected material will then have to identify patterns of communication and delineation, relate them to underlying conflicts and finally explain behaviour as a deliberate choice against the background of a certain ideology that is shared within the group.

9. Future perspectives for social movement research
The proposed research project might help to fill a gap in the knowledge about social movements and open up new perspectives on the field. The all-embracing approach covering the entire spectre of groups within the GJM contributes to verify the plurality of viewpoints present in the movement family. The analysis of communication repertoires that will be substantiated on the basis of rich material allows showing the diversity of groups subsumed under the label GJMs in a concrete perspective. Moreover, an account of the ideological heterogeneity of the GJMs helps to put the relations between different movement actors into perspective. One of the central aims of the research project is to extend the analysis of the GJMs to all types of action instead of focussing on communication that aims at being heard in the framework of the current polity.

One of the phenomena that will be visible due to the comprehensive approach is communication that is critical towards rationality. While previous research focussed on either collaborative or confrontational forms of communication, the research project aims to open the perspective on the meta-level of communication that was faded out in the analysis of social movements because of the rationalist tradition of social movement theory. To express their criticism, groups of the GJMs resort not only to forms of communication that rely on arguments and opposition. They have also developed subversive tactics to challenge common patterns of perception and interpretation.

The knowledge about repertoires of communication will also amend the understanding of repertoires of contention. The research project will reconstruct a grammar of protest for the broad range of GJMs. From this tableau different actors chose a certain set of actions they consider appropriate. These group-specific repertoires will be explained as a result of the group’s ideological position. The comparison of two different levels of communication – within and beyond the movement – will help to explain the modality of action repertoires.
While certain modes of interaction might be considered inappropriate on the movement level, they could make sense to the group when communicating with a larger public.

The differences in constructing political reality are another field where the research project might fill a gap. Showing the acting of a group in its political context seems to be an important step to understand the actors’ motivation. The strategic choices to interact with different environments show how reality is constructed in varying segments of the movement and which consequences for action result from these shared perceptions. Even though the set of opportunity structures seems to be the same for the GJMs as a whole, the actors show very different reactions to them. Thus, the perspective on communication repertoires might help to show that opportunity structures are not universal frames but dynamic relations that are remodelled in contentious politics. Especially if the aspects of repression and access to the polity are considered, it is important to include in the analysis processes of mutual construction between members and challengers of the polity.

References


