Abstract

Social Movements have always used visual codes to establish a collective identity, to underline their claims and to mark their visions. The movements’ imagery, however, does not evolve independently. It makes reference to a culturally shared iconic stock, it is limited by discursive constraints (e.g. laws and other norms) and it is part of a struggle over meaning in which mass media, counter-movements and political institutions act as adversaries, amplifier, commentator, etc. The conflict over the G8 meeting in Heiligendamm/Germany in June 2007 is a case in point for these struggles. This paper analyses different motives in which the contention over images materializes. It aims at decoding the language of the images and contextualizing them in the framework of the conflict. The fence that surrounds the venue of the summit, for instance, is used by protesters to frame the summit as elitist and illegitimate. Police and officials, by contrast, evoke images of violence and disorder to legitimize repression and to channel the protests. The last section of the papers deals with the transnational aspects of the visualization strategies. Are they designed and conveyed for a transnational public or are they limited to the domestic context?
1. Introduction

When world leaders met in the immaculate sea resort Heiligendamm in June 2007 the venue was not just chosen to please hard-working decision-makers. The choice was a matter of image politics. The classicist Hotel at the Baltic Sea represented sobriety and generosity. This stage for the annual Group of the Eight (G8) meeting in Germany was set very carefully. Every photo that was shot in the maximum security zone of Heiligendamm was prefigured by the arrangements made by the federal public relations office. Every step that journalists made was monitored and channelled by pre-planned photo opportunities and according photo points which allowed a limited set of motives from specific angles of vision. The arrangement of images was more than the solution to a logistic problem, namely to allow a considerable number of photo journalists to take pictures of summit participants with a tight schedule. While only a limited number of hand-picked photographers were allowed at the alleged centre stage in Heiligendamm, left-leaning journalists were already denied accreditation to the press centre in the town of Kühlungsborn, eight kilometres away from the summit venue. Controlling the gaze on the governmental summit was a necessary measure to have it received in a positive way and thus to sustain support for the heads of government. Showing a combination of severity and relaxation the photos preconceived by PR professionals were to underline the legitimacy of the G8 summits and their competence in dealing with global problems such as climate change, financial regulation, intellectual property rights and the international debt regime.

![Fig. 1-2: Heiligendamm, 7 June 2007. G8 heads of state in the focus of press photographers (Federal Public Relations Office)](image)

Eventually, the manufacturing of Heiligendamm images was successful. As figure 1 shows the German chancellor Angela Merkel was pictured as a leader of a dynamic meeting that made progress in the solution of world problems. In fact, no photo of the meeting was published that could have disturbed the officially desired image. This success is, however, to be put into perspective by zooming out of the venue. In a photo taken from the reverse angle (see fig. 2), the wideness of the sea that matches the official story suggesting openness and liberty of action is stained with four boats with security forces who keep the
maritime space clear for the staging of world leadership. Navy and water police were part of a stupendous security force of 17,500 police officers and 1,100 soldiers. Only half an hour before the pictures of the official meeting were taken, the maritime security stopped eleven boats with Greenpeace activists who entered the military area to deliver a petition to the G8 meeting. But this was only the most venturesome attempt of protest groups to have a say in the presentation of the summit. At the same time, Heiligendamm was cut off from the outside world when some 10,000 demonstrators blocked the roads to the resort and the rails of the steam train that was supposed to carry journalists inside the red zone.

In politics, the visual realm is a site of constant struggle over meaning. This is especially so in moments in which controversies are focused in one event. More intuitively than arguments images move people and let them take sides. Political actors who are well aware of the power of images shape their activity accordingly. Since the mid-1980s the sleek images of self-styled world leaders are contested in an “imagineering of resistance” (Routledge 1997) that has accompanied more or less all international meetings. While the hosts of these events have been successful in keeping protesters away from the immediate sites of their summits iconic struggles are fought from a distance. Protesters use the public space around international summits to make their dissent visible. They aim at representing disadvantaged parts of the world and at promoting alternative ways of globalization. Some of the opponents are prepared as professionally as the conveners of G8 summits. They stage events and design images that cannot be faded out. As a consequence, protests are part of the publicly conceived image of international summits.

The arena where the official imagery meets these alternative proposals of interpretation is primarily commercial and public mass media. It is up to them to disseminate and comment on images. Scenes from the summit venue on the one side and from the barricades on the other are cut short in news programmes and on title pages. Both summit participants and activists need the media to get their message across but they cannot determine if the images they offer are accepted at all, nor do they control the way in which these images are contextualized.

This paper aims at decoding the language of the images that are produced and diffused in the contention over the Heiligendamm G8 meeting. Which messages are sent through the images that are brought out? How does the visual terrain look like that emerges in connection to the G8 summit? Taking the official staging of world leadership as a background, the focus is on the visual presentations that critics of the G8 try to circulate. Owing to the central role of commercial and public mass media, the analysis is limited to photos taken in this context to be distributed in this context. Press photos cover certainly only a small section of the imagery that has been circulated in the mobilization against the 2007 G8 summit. A more comprehensive analysis would also include other visual media such as posters and websites, objects (such as puppets) and (individual and collective) bodily gestures. (see Doerr & Teune forthcoming for a systematization).

2. A tableau of different gazes

To understand the visual struggles over Heiligendamm it is important to stress that there is no way to identify an undisguised image of the events. What becomes visible in this contentious episode is structured by a tableau of different gazes each highlighting different aspects of reality. These gazes are selective and self-sustained. They produce evidence for a specific take on the events. In a nutshell, the gaze of the police
focuses on security and hazards, protesters shed light on critical aspects of global governance and point to the restrictions of civil rights. Mass media oscillate between the stances of documentation and control, frequently taking over either perspective mentioned above.

While it may be possible to identify the logics of different gazes, these are partially intertwined in the interaction between police, protesters, journalists, and local residents, to name a few of the actors that incorporate separate logics of vision. The perspective of the other is obvious but usually it is not made explicit. Nevertheless, it is taken into account and it shapes actions. As suggested in the introduction, both organizers of the summit and of the counter-summit allow for the journalist gaze to be successful in transporting their message. However, the journalists’ visual filter is not a fixed entity but a dynamic system that protesters and officials try to affect. Protest groups, for instance have been very successful in offering journalists the opportunity of “embedded journalism” (for the use of this strategy by Attac during the G8 protests in Genoa see Kolb 2005). Journalists who follow the activist track are more likely to adopt their interpretation and, literally, to see things that are invisible or even covered up from the other side of the barricade.

The journalist vision of Heiligendamm is typically and not surprisingly guided by the commercial logics of mass media. The images that journalists put into circulation have to sell. Thus, editors select photos and film sequences that catch the attention of consumers because they are rare, emotional, shocking, or connected to news values. Obviously, the need to sell a product is not the only motivation to disseminate certain images while others remain unseen. The journalist gaze is characterized by at least two objectives. The emphasis of either one moulds the vision of individual journalists. The first objective is the pursuit to constitute the “fourth power” that controls executive state power. Journalists who emphasize this aspect of their work are likely to be critical about the staging of world leadership in Heiligendamm, to give dissenters a voice and a face, and finally to monitor the policing of protest (see fig. 3). This objective is also appealed to by activists who support the presence of reporters as a way to safeguard protesters from police violence. The second objective is a thorough documentation of the event. This claim includes a selection of those pictures that are needed to understand and evaluate the happenings. Even though this objective seems to advance a neutral image of the events, it tends to result in the adoption of official versions of events as long as it is not combined with a critical stance. When, for instance, protesters on the one side and government or police officials on the other produce different stories, the latter are generally considered more reliable. In Heiligendamm, critical journalists reported about a neglect of both objectives. According to them, the bulk of their colleagues did not leave the press centre in Kühlungsborn to write their stories. Instead, they interpreted the televised images projected on flat screens all over the place.

In any way, images are supposed to capture the story that is intended to be told. In an analysis of the photos showing the death of protester Carlo Giuliani during the G8 summit in Genoa 2001, Perlmutter and Wagner (2004) contend that the bulk of the mass media chose the photo of Giuliani holding a fire extinguisher in his hands rather than his dead body. The photo of an activist allegedly attacking the police matched the spin of those media outlets that wanted to extend the blame for the death to the protesters. This perspective which is at least close to the gaze of the police, was also imminent in Heiligendamm. Many of the journalists embraced the spin suggested by the police in the general perspective on protest as well as in acute situations of conflict.
The gaze of the police is directed to whatever could be regarded as a security threat. The police divides protesters in two groups: those who are potential offenders and those who are not. This dichotomy is to a great extent based on and sustained by visual techniques. Personal searches in the run-up to demonstrations, for instance, are based on appearance. Officers select those demonstrators that they suspect to be prone to violence on the basis of their outfit. The gaze of executive authorities represents what Foucault (1977) identified as the panoptic model: citizens are potentially monitored in every aspect of their lives. They are seen by controlling agents whereas they cannot respond to this gaze. The most obvious manifestation of this visual relationship is the videotaping of radical demonstrations that has become part and parcel of policing protest. Protesters, by contrast, have no chance of controlling the use of the material that is produced. However, the panoptic gaze of the police is not a property of the security forces. Rather it permeates the activity of other players. Protesters act as if they are under surveillance and they plan their actions accordingly (see Scholl 2009). Either this means that illegal actions are organized in a conspirative way or forms of action that might be subject to police action are discarded altogether.

The gaze of the police has been a reality especially for protesters of the radical left. Security forces employed different techniques to take insight into radical dissent. In the run-up of the G8 protests, the police raided several venues of the radical left on the basis of anti-terrorism laws. A spokesperson of the federal prosecution office said explicitly that the aim of the raids was “to shed light on the structures and composition of these groups [and] not to prevent concrete attacks” (ZDF heute journal, 9 May 2007). Even though the raids were deemed illegal by a federal court ex post they constituted a controlling gaze in the very moment of the searches that penetrated the life of activists. A similar but more remote measure was deployed during the protest week when the police used military intelligence to gain insight into the activity of protesters. Reconnaissance vehicles and Tornado jets were used to picture activities in one of the camps and in the woods and fields of the area. The aerial photos taken by the air force show the urge to an extensive vision of what is happening (see fig. 4). Just like the raids, the deployment of military forces to monitor protesting citizens was criticized in parliament but the preventive use of such techniques allowed to install a panoptic gaze.

The panoptic gaze goes beyond the relationship of dissenters and the police. It is prolonged to public discourse about protest. In the context of Heiligendamm, the police have been proactive in evoking the image of violent protest (see Backmund, Donat & Ullmann 2007) not only by staging empty media
events\(^1\) such as the raids but also by a policy of desinformation. During the protest week the press office of the police launched a number of press releases that contained unproved information about the protests exaggerating the potential for violence. The representation of allegedly violent-prone protesters was on the one hand evoked in public statements. The press release about violent clashes at the central demonstration for instance, referred to “3,000 perpetrators of violence” amongst a total number of “30,000 demonstrators” (Police press release, 2 June 2007). Observers estimated a couple of hundred violent protesters among a total of 60,000 participants. On the other hand, the police produced material images of hazardous protest, for instance with police ranks enclosing (parts of) a demonstration. The manufacturing of dangerous protesters improved the standing of the police when they employed harsh security measures.

The journalist gaze and the gaze of the police are only the most momentous perspectives that structure the perception of both the summit organizers and their counterparts in the global justice movements. In the following chapter the focus is at the visual language that protesters use to make a difference. In their activity we can also identify different gazes that add to those identified before.

3. Picturing protest: how demonstrators design dissent

A massive steel fence topped with razor barbed wire is hard to portray in a positive way. Labelling it “technical barrier” the police tried to put it at least in a neutral framework. However, they could not avoid that the thirteen kilometre fence became a motive in the contention over the summit long before the event had started. When the first element was erected on 15 January 2007, activists fixed a simple banner to it reading: “fence in capitalism” (see fig. 5). With a minimum effort and in a situation where journalists were attentive to the preparations for the summit, activists were successful in visualizing the motto of the protest organizers: “who invites the summit, also invites the protest”. With activities like these, protesters reminded journalists that the summit could hardly be covered without referring to the demonstrations that targeted the meeting. At the same time, this early comment on the fence was part of a delegitimation strategy. The fact that summit participants met behind barbed wire was taken as a metaphor for their alleged isolation vis-à-vis the rest of the world. For protesters the fence was a material evidence for the slogan which was used at least since the protests against these summits in Genoa 2001: “you are G8, we are 6 billion” (Neale 2002).

The motive of isolation was complemented with the imagery of imprisonment. In the simplest visualization the lettering “G8” was drawn behind bars. Similarly, on a demonstration in Cologne on the third day of the official summit, activists with photo masks depicting the G8 leaders were trucked in a cage made out of fence elements. Thus, the G8 meeting was associated to a criminal endeavour and their imprisonment emerged as the appropriate reaction to their racketeering. A less offensive interpretation of the fence was offered by the Green Party that engaged in the protests more or less detached from the global justice movements. They lured attention through prominence sending party officials to expressive events including one at the fence (see fig. 6). Witnessed by photo journalists two members of the party executive committee presented a banner in front of the fence behind which cardboard characters of the G8

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\(^1\) The raids constitute an empty event in the sense that the only basis for them was suspicion. There was no legal need to realize them but a gain in legitimacy for harsh security measures.
heads of government had been placed. The banner read “you won’t get out lower than 30%”, demanding the commitment to a cap on CO2 emissions by the G8 meeting. While the reference to imprisonment followed a radical rejection of G8 politics, the Green Party appealed to the summit participants picturing the need of democratic control.

Both scenes set at the fence were staged primarily to produce press photos and newscast sequences. Contrary to what will be described in the remainder of this section, they are not emerging from protest events, but they are protest events with the objective to produce an image. Nevertheless, both events were embedded in very different performances. The earlier picture (fig. 5) was shot by photographers who came to document the start of construction works. Knowing that the date would be newsworthy for journalists, anticapitalist protesters used this stage to give it a critical spin. They held an ironic speech mocking a ministerial euphemism of the fence that was hardly noticed by the press. The photo opportunity offered by the Green Party was more of an open-air press conference. Claudia Roth (fig. 6, left), the party chairwoman, invited journalists to a location that had been prepared by local party members. As a celebrity she had the journalists’ attention throughout her presence. After giving a statement and posing for the cameras she answered questions and eventually left the stage again.

What comes into view in the visual re-interpretations of the fence is the fact that different groups of protesters have different messages to send connected to the G8 summit. Activists’ particular interpretations of the summit, their self-image in a contentious political field and their visions of social change go hand in hand with distinct communication strategies (Teune forthcoming, see also Yang 2006). These ways of communicating materialize in corresponding visualizations. Thus, we can identify different visual clusters related to groups within the global justice movements. The visual is an expression of a specific group culture and their mindset but it is also a marker for identification both from within and from the outside. Symbols, colours and graphic styles are guideposts that create community and allow for immediate ascriptions.

The main demonstration against the upcoming G8 summit that was organized in Rostock on 2 June 2007, some 20 kilometres away from the summit venue, may serve as an example for the visual differentiation of protest. Demonstrators arriving at the starting points of the two marches used their eyes to find the block that they wanted to associate themselves to. Some blocks, for instance, were easily identifiable because of similar clothes. Moreover, groups had flags and banners not only to communicate a
message beyond the demonstration but also to provide orientation for participants. The police had their eyes first and foremost on the black block, because they expected participants in this formation to be most likely a threat to public order. So obviously, the visual makeup of protest guides perception and it welds together communities of protesters. Some major clusters that played a role in the contention over Heiligendamm will be portrayed in the following paragraphs.

![Fig. 7: Rostock, 2 June 2007: Make Capitalism History block (unknown source)](image)

![Fig. 8: Rostock, 2 June 2007: masked protester throwing stones at the police (ap)](image)

The first visual cluster is marked by the colour black. Over years, this has become the marker for autonomist and anarchist groups that define themselves in opposition to the state. Not only is black – combined with red – the colour that dominates posters and banners of that spectre. It is also worn during demonstrations, including face cover, because this kind of uniformity is a way to resist the panoptic gaze and ultimately identification through the police. With arms linked and demarcated by banners at the front and at the sides, the black block is a compact collective body that visualizes determination and antagonism to the outside world (see fig. 7). The protest gear appears also in the imagery of publications and mobilization posters. Masked faces and militant gestures are common features to call for action. In the run-up to the G8 summit the police confiscated a banner displayed at a squat in the city of Potsdam that showed a scene at a demonstration where masked protesters confronted a police line. Since one fist clearly held a stone ready to be hurled, the police considered the banner to incite violence.

The iconic figure of the street fighter is a long-standing leitmotif of antagonist protest (fig. 8). It is coupled to performative violence that emphasizes the expression of an antagonism while the injury of human beings is not a priority (Juris 2006: 415). In this sense, the enactment of the street fighter pose at protests events prolongs the claim to fundamental difference. These images are very likely to be circulated widely, because they match the selection criteria of mass media. Because of this characteristic pictures of violent conflict tend to eclipse other images of protest.

However, the predominance of a certain visual code does not mean that the group using this language can be identified with the implied habitus. When several hundred demonstrators clashed with the police at the end of the march on 2 June, they were only a small fraction of the people from the black block that marched under the motto of “Make Capitalism History”. The machismo and the indiscriminate lust for aggression that is also expressed in the primarily male action form of the street fight have been criticized from early on. The unease with a militant orientation that was also predictable and isolating activists from the lion share of the populace was one of the reasons to organize mass civil disobedience on the occasion of the G8 summit.
The alliance “Block G8” considered mass blockades of the venue that would eventually disrupt the very summit as a powerful symbol of radical dissent. On the one hand this form of action would hamper a discriminatory classification of the protesters that was so common in violent confrontations. On the other hand blockades would bring together organizers and activists from different strands of the movement. A clear action consensus that combined determination and the rejection of escalation lowered the threshold for participation. The fact that the action consensus was announced in advance and blockade techniques were rehearsed publicly in the presence of journalists made the protest of Block G8 more predictable and less threatening.

If there are pictures that are iconic for the 2007 G8 protests, it is those of blockers roaming the fields to reach the roads to Heiligendamm while they evaded the police (see fig. 9). After the mass media had been dominated by images of violence taken at the main demonstration, the blockades succeeded in turning the public image of the protests. In contrast to prior summits the fence was not attacked even though the critical mass to do so would have been in place. Instead, images that could be used to denounce Block G8 were impeded by reminding participants of the action consensus. While the unusual images of protesters in barley fields emerged more or less by chance, organizers appealed to autonomist participants to leave their black clothes in the camp in order to avert a clear front that had made ascriptions evident in the antecedent street protests. The fact that activists identified undercover agents, allegedly acting as agents provocateurs added to the spin that left the police in a dubious light while the protesters were mostly perceived benevolently.

The light spirit at the blockades was pictured in many of the photos. The self-limiting imagery of siege without assault was more appropriate to resonate with popular unease with the summit. The images that dominated the news showed a joyous resistance (see fig. 10) even though the police continued to act brutally when they eventually pushed back blockers. The visually heterogeneous composition of participants furthermore supported the impression that there was not one group trying to impose their ideas to others but a number of different people who united to challenge the ban on demonstrations around the red zone.

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2 As a survey sponsored by the magazine Der Spiegel showed, 66% of the Germans was critical about the potential of the summit to “improve the just distribution of wealth and chances for development” (Der Spiegel, 4 June 2007: 20).
Part of the visual language of colourful and restrained protest is the imagery of “tactical frivolity” (Chesters & Welsh 2004, Starr 2005: ch. 26). It is related to a set of protest tactics that on the one hand avoid ritual confrontation with the police while, on the other hand, they evade definite ascriptions. These tactics rely especially on the visual messages that are sent out in the interaction with the police. Facing the public image of omnipresent offenders, these tactics produced dissonance and highlighted the martial presence of riot police. Building a semiotic link to the demonized black block, some activists of the radical left undressed and confronted the police as the “naked block” (see fig. 11). The majority of the officers felt insecure and partially withdrew at the sight of the approaching protesters. But more than a tactical means the naked body was used as a basic symbol of vulnerability inverting the image of violent protest.

An effect similar to the naked block is intended by the Insurgent Clown Army that has been established as a part of the action repertoire used in the global justice movements and in the peace movement. While the naked block combines militancy (in the sense of an offensive and determined action) and vulnerability, clownery is a humorous tactic that aims at ridiculing hierarchical and violent executive force. Reinterpreting uniforms in combinations with non-martial colours such as pink and red clowns are a unwelcome company of the police at demonstrations since the 2005 iteration of the G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland. They mimick the behaviour of the police and parody commands, arrests or poses of threat (see fig. 12). In their parody clowns tap a popular resentment vis-à-vis the police rendering them overly serious and stuffy. Thus, the clowns challenged the evidence of restrictive policing.

The dominance of an interaction between protesters and the police dilutes from the content that is visualized in the demonstrations against the G8 summit. For radical protesters who deny the legitimacy of the G8 process altogether the main aim was to picture a critique of the meeting as such. The negative repercussions of the politics made in the G8 process were spelled out in texts and preparatory events, but – after specific issues had been raised in action days (war, agriculture, and migration) preceeding the official meeting, a substantial critique of G8 politics was not the central focus of the radical left.

Quite contrary, moderate protesters, among them the church as well as aid and trade organizations, aimed at setting specific demands on the agenda of the G8 meeting. As mentioned earlier, Greenpeace did so by presenting simple text messages (e.g. “G8 act now”) in spectacular actions. Their strategy was to produce attention with media-savvy images of boats and a balloon entering the red zone (see fig. 15) while the content of their message would be delivered in subsequent press releases. Adding to this, Greenpeace produced images that visualized a claim intuitively. Penguins and snowmen, for instance,
symbolizing the need for action against climate change were part of the Greenpeace block at the demonstration on 2 June 2007.

Fig. 13: Rostock, 2 June 2007: Oxfam puppet show (unknown source)  
Fig. 14: Rostock, 2 June 2007: giant puppets presented by aid and trade organizations (ap)

Similarly, aid and trade organizations were trying to make unjust world trade an issue. Part of this objective was to represent those people who are not visible in the official version of global governance. On the 2 June demonstration, for instance, Oxfam staged a governmental negotiation in which one player, according to his skin colour and clothing representing an African state, was ripped off by activists wearing the paper maché heads of the G8 leaders (see fig. 13). This happening suggested the joint action of the most potent economies dictating the rules of the game to poor countries that are already in an inferior position. Several motives collide in this image that are specific for a moderate critique of neoliberal globalization: capitalist greed, capitalism as a game and the victimization of Africa. Continuing a form of action that has been used since the 1980s, some Christian development organizations produced giant puppets representing the G8, people in the Global South who are disadvantaged by current world trade structures and the resources that are exploited in the dominant model of production (see fig. 14). The puppets spearheaded the main demonstration attracting many photographers and cameramen. Those figures picturing the G8 had their ears plugged symbolizing the egoism of the winners of globalization.

In conclusion of this section it is important to take a glance on the organizational logics that also impact on the way dissent is made visible. Institutionalized organizations, characterized by a high degree of division of labour, professionalization and consequently dependency on donations, aim at maintaining a positive image. Thus, they usually brand their activities by using a logo, a consistent design and a specific form of action. In their intrusion of the red zone, Greenpeace made sure that the boats that they used, the clothes of their activists and their banners were branded (see fig. 15). The opposite approach to visualization could be found in some of the vertical networks of the radical left. The network dissent emphasizing non-hierarchical decision-making and distance vis-à-vis the moderate left, tried to deconstruct the journalists' wish to identify speakers for every segment of the global justice movements. In their press relations which were organized professionally they used pseudonyms for interchangeable speakers. On a press conference during one of the preparatory action conferences, the Dissent activist painted her face white to emphasize her opposition to the evocation of leadership.

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3 The artfully produced “heads of state” were also used in a photo opportunity staged at the Rostock harbour. That day they were dressed like Pinocchio to call attention to a number of G8 promises that had not been kept.
However, a radical left stance and the strategy of branding are not mutually exclusive as figure 16 shows. The alliance Block G8 deliberately popularized an icon (the semaphore signal for “interruption”) and the combination of blue and white as a brand for the mass action of civil disobedience obstructing the summit. The logo was spread well in advance on T-Shirts, leaflets, posters and webbanners to mobilize a large number of participants. In the choice of colours as well as in the visual language the alliance evaded connections to preexistent movement imagery to support the breadth of the alliance from autonomist groups to Pax Christi as well as the low threshold character of the action.

4. The visual transnational

The G8 summit is an international event, but also the activists challenging the meeting convene at the site of the summit from all over the globe. But is also the visual language used in the contention over Heiligendamm understood beyond the borders of the host country Germany? This question may be approached by comparing the imagery of Heiligendamm with antecedent (counter-)summits. Protest in Heiligendamm was not invented from the scratch. Quite contrary, it was a continuation of earlier challenges to international summits and it was based on learning processes connected to prior experiences. Nevertheless, it was planned and organized mainly by German actors who tapped a specific iconic stock where images are connected to a certain collective knowledge that may also differ from other countries. My assumption is, however, that national particularities introduce only marginal variation from an established visual language of dissent which is, of course, open for innovation.

In the decade since the Battle of Seattle in 1999, the imagineering of global justice street protests has developed a fairly stable repertoire that is reappearing at least in Northern America and Europe. Antagonist imagery as produced by the black block and in performative violence are seen in almost every counter-protest. Especially, in the Genoa protests 2001 this segment of protest has been broadly represented. By contrast, the fact that segments of the social movements that had used violent action before had turned to non-escalating forms of collective action was hardly noticed. Journalists chose to pick images of violence to picture summit protests. Among the forms of action developed to break with the ritual of confrontation is the pink and silver tactic. It gained prominence in the protests against the joint International Monetary Fund and World Bank meeting in Prague 2000 and has been used ever since. Pink and silver denotes a tactic that is marked by a transgender dressing in the colours of pink and silver and it
involves Samba percussion and dance performance. Representing another frivolous tactic, the clown is a rather recent icon of protest and he or she seems to be endemic to Northern Europe.

Generally, a black block wearing balaclavas, gender-bending pink and silver activists and glossy banners presented by professional climbers on trees or bridges are transnational images of dissent but they are far from being a global phenomenon. They go back to the specific constellations in which protest has developed in Europe and Northern America. Beyond these countries, the targets of protest may be the same but they are not countered with the same imagery. In other parts of the world indigenous self-assertion, struggles over land constitute a rich source for counter-images that has no match in the countries referred to earlier. They mirror different grievances and, according to them, a different emphasis in the critique of neoliberal globalization.

5. Conclusion

The G8 summit in Heiligendamm was a media event that was pictured in rivalling visions of a governmental meeting that claimed to tackle global problems. In a basic constellation the hosts of the summit were interested in producing a favourable image of the event whereas protesters wanted to give the summit a different spin emphasizing the illegitimacy of the summit and its failure to improve the situation of large parts of the world population. The mass media and the police shaped this basic constellation by introducing their specific gaze on the events.

Mass media are the arena in which the visual struggles are ultimately fought. But they are not neutral ground as they follow their own logic that is permeated by commercial interest. Viewing figures and sales figures are dependent on spectacular images. Thus, the aspiration to control the state and to inform citizens comprehensively tends to be clouded. The police emphasize security and public order. Accordingly, they envision those protesters as dangerous who are willing to break laws to send their message or those who refuse to act in a predictable way.

Since the variety of protest groups was so large and the tactics they employed so diverse the picture emerging around the G8 summit may be a mosaic but the individual elements do not add to an integral whole. The images that stand the test of time are probably closely related to a preexistent evaluation of the summit. What adversaries of the G8 and the regime connected to these meetings have in mind when they think of Genoa 2001 is probably the images of dead Carlo Giuliani and the bloodsmeared Scuola Diaz where the police assaulted protesters. Critics of the protests, by contrast, will remember Giuliani attacking the police, the black block smashing windws and demonstrators shaking the security fence protecting the red zone. Even though the images produced in Heiligendamm were not as drastic as in Genoa the supply is probably diverse enough to meet different demands.
References


