The Visual Memory of Protest: Introduction

Ann Rigney & Thomas Smits

Visuality and Visibility

During the 12th G20 summit held on 7 and 8 July 2017 in Hamburg, large numbers of protesters came into action. As they sought to draw attention to a variety of causes, from political apathy to environmentalism, there were multiple clashes and standoffs with the police. On 7 July, various news outlets reporting on this unrest illustrated it with variations on the image below:

Figure 0.1: A woman raises her hands in front of the police during demonstrations against the G20 summit. Hamburg, Germany, 7 July 2017. Photo: Antonio Masiello/Getty Images.

The viewer sees in the background a line of riot police, dressed in uniform black, wearing helmets, in some cases carrying shields. Not all police have

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adopted the same pose; nor are they standing at equidistance (the line-up is a bit untidy). But the overall effect is that of a phalanx. In the foreground, at a distance of around 20 metres from the police, a single woman wearing a headscarf and carrying a shoulder bag, sits on the ground with her back to the camera. Her hands are raised in a gesture that seems to be more of defiance than of surrender. To the left, in the middle of the picture, a photographer is crouching in front of the phalanx of police, apparently pointing a camera at the woman.

"Protesters are a common sight at G20 summits" read the caption to the version of this image used in the BBC report on events in Hamburg.[1] The composition of the image as well as the idea of a "common sight" serves as a reminder that protests, as recent work in social movement studies has shown, are profoundly visual in character (Doerr et al., 2013; Mattoni & Teune, 2014). To begin with, demonstrators make use of a variety of visual tools, including "visual symbols of injustice" (Olesen, 2015), to mobilize among themselves and to communicate their causes to the public at large. As has been noted with reference to the Civil Rights Movement, displaying images is a protest tactic in itself, "as effective as bus boycotts and as righteous as nonviolence" (Raiford, 2011). Visuals also play a key role in creating a sense of common purpose, in the form of leaflets or posters, and, in the digital age, of viral memes. In the aftermath of protest events, visual markers in the form of signage, colour, clothing, and accessories (for example the yellow umbrellas carried in the Hong Kong protests in 2014 and 2019–2020) subsequently help to create a shared identity and memory among those who have taken to the streets. Finally, as we will see over and again in this collection, images, specifically photographs, are a key element in the battle over the "visual representational control" (Memou, 2015) of protest and in the definition of its success or failure. Who gets to shape the public perception and long-term memory of a protest event by producing its defining image? This collection claims that struggles over the visual definition of events and for control of the public narrative—in the short term, in the form of news, and in the long term, in the form of cultural memory—is part of contention itself and not merely a by-product.

Visuality is all the more important because social movements essentially revolve around the power to be seen. Successful claim-making is linked to an effective "management of visibility" (Cammaerts et al., 2013, p. 4). Since attention is a limited resource, "being seen" and making oneself visible is a crucial part of claim-making in a highly mediatized world. Media uptake is crucial to the impact of demonstrations. If protesters remain invisible their

1 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40534768.

demands and, indeed, their very existence as political, claim-making subjects are compromised (McGarry et al., 2020). A detailed study of the Hamburg summit (Teune, 2013) has shown how demonstrators had to fight an uphill battle against the gravitation of the media towards formal photographs of government leaders and against police mandates that kept them away from the location of the summit.

However, visibility is not merely a matter of appearing at the right place at the right time. It is also linked to one's ability to "be seen." Sometimes people are simply overlooked and their presence fails to be registered. The "space of appearance" (Arendt, 1958) is not a level playing field, but is instead governed by "norms of recognition that are themselves hierarchical and exclusionary" (Mirzoeff, 2017). This means that some actors and their causes are systemically ignored or misconstrued. Racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and other exclusionary mechanisms, effectively render both invisible and inaudible certain actors and their political programme. The initially dismissive attitude of the mainstream media towards Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg and the massive school strike movement she inspired is a good example of this process. Protest, especially when it takes a spectacular or unexpected form, is one way of breaking through the habitual hierarchies to produce a "counter-visuality" (Mirzoeff, 2011) through displays of sheer numbers or through the deployment of eye-catching forms of "visual activism" (Bryan-Wilson et al., 2016). Recourse to violence has been construed too as "a crying out for visibility" (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 123). But, as this collection will show, this "coming into appearance" (Mirzoeff, 2017) of protesters is ultimately dependent on the production of a visual record, be this on the part of activists or of journalists. The visual record allows the protest to be witnessed later by those who were not there, sometimes at the cost of becoming "packaged" in a recognizable way.

The history of modern protest, and its underlying struggle for visibility, is thus closely aligned with that of media technologies. Although academic discussions of visuality in protest have gravitated towards "new media" (Gitelman, 2014) in the sense of digital media, the politics of visibility have been played out historically across different media regimes, from the age of print and photography to that of television and video and, only most recently, that of computer-mediated communication (Mattoni & Teune, 2014). In particular, the history of contentious politics (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015) has developed in tandem with the emergence of new technologies for the production and reproduction of images. The role of photography in the legacy of the Paris Commune offers an early illustration of the politics of visibility: the images produced by the pro-Communard Bruno Braquehais

have had to compete in the public arena since the defeat of the insurrection with the (often manipulated) images made by the anti-Communard Ernest Eugène Appert (Condon, 2020).

Given the importance of photography in ensuring representational control, it is not surprising that protests are sometimes performed from the outset "for the camera"—be that one held by professional news photographers, citizen-journalists, protesters or, as increasingly occurs, the police. Since at least the 1960s, when student protesters had to negotiate a modus vivendi with the demands of television, protest has been played out to an important extent while "the whole world is watching" (Gitlin 1980). Capturing protest in an image or video ensures that it will be seen at other locations as part of the news and at later times as part of cultural memory. Visual media thus amplify the claims to visibility made by the protesters by carrying visual information from the streets to a wider audience. This power to reach a wider audience, however, also comes with the risk of an event being filtered through the aesthetic and political priorities of the photographer and the press, rendering it susceptible to sanitization (Hristova, 2014) or spectacularization (Debord, 1970). Hence the kickback in the form of self-mediations (Cammaerts, 2012) on the part of protesters with access to their own digital platforms. One way or another, the visual mediation of protest is already embedded in the performance of protest itself including struggles over its future legacy.

It is impossible at this stage to determine if the protester in Hamburg who figured in the BBC report had sat on the ground with her hands raised because she thought that, in doing so, she could catch the eye of the camera. Equally, it is impossible to determine with certainty why the photojournalist (who presumably took many photographs that day), the AFP and then the BBC editors, chose this image to define what was happening around the G20 summit. But there are grounds for arguing that both the protester's pose and the photographer's framing of the event were shaped, not just by the contingencies of that moment, but by the fact that its visible logic was already familiar. It was literally déjà vu. Certainly, the BBC reporting on this event tended towards slotting the protests into a familiar template as evidenced by the caption "Protesters are a common sight at G20 summits." Instead of presenting it as a possible turning point or as the coming into visibility of a new set of claims or claimants, the reporting reduced the protest to the generic status of a "common sight." That the commonness of this sight should have been illustrated by a face-off between an individual protester and a phalanx of police had everything to do with the fact that such a composition had indeed become common currency, as Marco Solaroli

also shows in his chapter here, thanks to many earlier images of standoffs between protesters and police. These included most famously *Taking a Stand in Baton Rouge* (Jonathan Bachman, 2016) where Black Lives Matter (BLM) activist Ieshia Evans faced riot police, *The Tank Man* (Jeff Widener, 1989), depicting a lone protestor facing an array of tanks in Tiananmen Square, and *The Ultimate Confrontation: The Flower and the Bayonet* (Marc Riboud, 1967) where Jan Rose Kasmir famously held out a flower to a phalanx of national guards during an anti-Vietnam war protest in 1967. The Hamburg photograph was "premediated" (Erll 2009, p. 211) by these earlier images in the sense that they provided both the protester and the photographer with a model for bringing that particular moment into visibility. The mediated memory of earlier standoffs between police and protesters could be said to have shaped (premediated) the behaviour of the woman who, in facing the police in this dramatic way, placed herself in danger while also inscribing herself into an inspirational tradition of defiance. However, the repetition of the traditional model also came at the cost of reducing the new event in Hamburg to a "typical" G20 protest that, as such, was scarcely newsworthy.

Between Déjà Vu and the Strikingly New

Aesthetic theory can help explain this crux, whereby *aesthetics* is understood in its original meaning as "relating to perception" rather than in its everyday meaning of "pleasing" or "beautiful." In order for something to be perceived as deserving of attention, the argument goes, it must also appear in its *singularity* (Attridge, 2007). Singularity is the capacity to be striking: to be really seen and registered in memory, not just noted in passing. This capacity is always relational, however, since it entails making a difference with respect to a tradition. Following this logic, the "coming into appearance" of a particular protest as a singular event entails both the activation of visual memory and a deviation from it. Images of earlier protests create the horizon of expectations for later ones and offer a benchmark for noting new departures. For this reason, some protests may appear merely as a repetition of "the same old story" while others present as a unique moment of possibility; as a potentially transformative "event" with a before and an after (Wagner-Pacifici, 2017). Images can play a major role in inflecting protests in one direction rather than another.

The Hamburg example has served to bring to the fore the central theme of this collection: the role of visual memory in protest. Where earlier studies have focused on visual communication strategies and

how these might help bring hitherto marginalized groups and causes "into appearance" (Mirzoeff, 2017) this collection explores the interplay between visibility and visual memory. On the one hand, it explores how image-making actively contributes to making protests memorable; on the other hand, it explores how the visual memory of earlier protests informs the politics of visibility surrounding new ones. In this collection, experts in visual culture, cultural memory, social movements, and digital humanities explore the contested space of appearance between the déjà vu and the strikingly new.

The Memory–Activism Nexus

Underpinning this project is the contention that memory and activism work in tandem. At first sight this might seem counter intuitive since social movements are oriented towards the present and future. But as emerging debates at the intersection of cultural memory studies and social movement studies have shown (summarized in Daphi & Zamponi, 2019; Merrill et al., 2020) movements are also deeply entangled with the memory of past activism. Social movement scholars have by and large approached this entanglement by focussing on the way movements are remembered by actors and how this memory implicitly and explicitly informs later action (Zamponi, 2013; Zamponi & Fernández González, 2017). Cultural memory scholars have been more concerned with how semiotic carriers (texts, images, music, and so on) shape the memory of earlier protest and create common points of reference for both later activists and the public at large (Hajek et al., 2015; Reading & Katriel, 2015; Rigney, 2020).

Underlying these differences in approach and framing is nevertheless a common concern with what Rigney (2018) has called the *memory–activism nexus* (Daphi and Zamponi (2019) refers in comparable terms to the *movement–memory nexus*). This nexus represents the point of intersection between three lines of inquiry and provides a heuristic model for examining the entanglements between memory and activism. The first line leads into the *memory of activism* and the question of how protest events are collectively remembered, be this as "communicative memory" (J. Assmann, 1995) on the part of those who witnessed them or as "cultural memory" in the form of narratives and images carried by media (J. Assmann, 1995; Erll et al., 2008). The second line of inquiry leads into *memory in activism*, that is, the ways in which shared memory, the shared recollection of earlier

events, including protest, informs later protest cycles. Finally, the third line of inquiry leads into *memory activism*, cases where activism is itself directed towards changing collective memory and the priorities in public commemoration. The current campaigns to have colonial era statues removed from public spaces exemplifies the latter, at the same time as it shows how memory activism is regularly tied to political demands for the future (racial justice, in this case). As the term "nexus" suggests, these different forms of memory work feed into each other.

Mediation is a key element in the memory–activism nexus. As a growing body of literature in the field of cultural memory studies has shown, personal experiences crystallize gradually into publicly shared narratives thanks to complex processes of mediation and remediation (Erll & Rigney, 2009). *Mediation* entails using semiotic carriers to structure information in a meaningful and affect-producing way while also making it available in material forms with which people can individually and collectively engage. *Remediation* entails the iteration and adaptation of content across "plurimedial networks" (Erll, 2014) whereby memory becomes shared at different sites of knowledge production. This broad understanding of mediation includes journalism, focussed on the "news" and the emerging present, but also extends to cultural production more broadly and to retrospective representations in the form of memoirs, biographies, documentaries, movies, and exhibitions, and so on, which are produced by a variety of actors in the aftermath of events, together constituting the cultural memory of those events.

While acknowledging that cultural memory is produced through the interplay between different media and cultural forms, our collection nevertheless zooms in on image-making, specifically photography, and uses this as our lens on the broader dynamic. Although we do not go as far as to claim with Shevchenko (2014) that photography is "fundamentally constitutive of remembering in the modern age," (p. 6) there is no doubt that its current ubiquity, facilitated by the ease with which individuals make and share digital images, calls for extensive critical attention. Moreover, as was suggested earlier, there has long been close collusion between photography and contentious politics. Different mnemonic actors compete, even as events are unfolding, for control over the visual narrative and hence for control of the future memory of movements: What is to be recalled of the events unfolding, what images will define it, and who gets to steer this process? Insight into these dynamics can tell us more about the long-term impact of movements and about the memory work that occurs in the intervals between protest cycles.

Photography as a Medium of Memory

Theories of photography as a medium have been linked from the outset to what is perceived as its natural affinity with mnemonic processes of recording and documenting. Roland Barthes (1980) thus linked photography to the "having been there" (the *ça-a-été*) of things, with the image being an indexical trace of a state in the world at a particular moment in time. As material objects, photographs are powerful "vehicles of memory" (Zelizer, 2004), comparable to other sites or *lieux* where "memory crystallizes and secretes itself" (Nora, 1997, p. 7). A photograph's capacity to freeze moments in time gives it a distinctive power as well as limitations not shared by texts whose meaning unfolds across time. A photograph's survival as material trace makes it subsequently possible for earlier moments to be made virtually present at later ones. For this reason, photography has been recognized by memory studies scholars as "mnemonic at [its] core" (Olick, 2014). Although digitization has made it easier than ever to manipulate images and change them post-facto, photography has so far maintained its privileged role as a recorder of, and witness to, events.

Zelizer (2010) has argued influentially that photography's unique ability to freeze time makes it a powerful medium for capturing "unsettled moments" (in her analysis, when people are about to die). Photographs of violent and often traumatic events, such as the violent repression of protest or the death of protesters (Olesen, 2013; Rigney, 2020), play an important role in the memory–activism nexus by providing concrete evidence of injustice. Photography's ability to freeze time, however, also helps to capture hopeful moments—acts of defiance, unity, solidarity and victory—and offer them as objects of recollection independent of the ultimate outcome of the actions depicted; Zelizer (2010) has written in this regard of images having a subjunctive "voice." As Smits (2021) notes, following its ability to capture contingent moments, where the future of a social movements seems bright and its demands within reach, photography plays a vital role in the "cultural transmission" of hope alongside defeat (Rigney, 2018). This was borne out in the exhibition *Soulèvements*/*Uprisings* (2017) curated by Georges Didi-Huberman, which showed through an accumulation of examples how image-makers have sought to capture moments of hope during popular uprisings (the moment when a stone is about to be thrown and has not yet landed, for example, or when a group launches itself towards an obstacle), arguing that these images help transmit the mobilizing energy of people in motion to later viewers.

Didi-Huberman's exhibition was inspired by the work of Aby Warburg (1924–1929), who explained the appeal of well-known photographs by their

recycling of certain never-changing visual tropes or *Pathosformeln*. Other researchers, like Zarzycka and Kleppe (2013), have similarly attributed the power of certain images to their mobilization of particular combinations of form and content that resonate over the ages (a *pietà* for example). Nevertheless, as indicated earlier, contemporary aesthetic theory links the appeal of cultural artefacts to their singularity, that is, to the fact that they both resonate with tradition and offer something unexpected, a unique identifier that means that they can never be reduced to a pregiven schema. Accordingly, we argue here that photographs, while having a documentary function, are also potentially aesthetic artefacts that use framing, focus, composition, lighting, and texture to make the world visible in distinctive ways and to hold the viewers' attention. Artistry, typical of professional photojournalism but potentially also present in the work of amateurs, can thus be a key factor in the making of impactful images. As several of our contributors will show, most notably Erika Zerwes and Marco Solaroli, well-made photographs help in *making* events *memorable*.

Reproduction and Remediation

Recent theories of collective memory have established that repetition is at the core of remembering. Aleida Assmann (2008) has distinguished usefully between "archival memory" and "working memory," the former associated with storage, the latter associated with the reproduction and renewed engagement with an image or narrative from the past. If an image or other record is left to gather dust in an archive, it remains inert. Only if it is reproduced—be this in the original or in some modified form—does it become a constitutive part of cultural memory. Iteration can thus be taken as an observable measure of memorability. Images remain in circulation as part of "working memory" by appealing to viewers who are moved to preserve, reproduce, and share them—an activity which of course has become all the easier in the digital age.

If we are to grasp the role of images in cultural memory, then, studying the ways in which images are reproduced is as important as knowing how they are made. This move from production to reproduction is in line with recent theories of photography that have emphasized viewers' active responses as a key element of photography as a cultural phenomenon. The title of W. J. T. Mitchell's *What Do Pictures Want?* (1994) encapsulates the idea that pictures interpellate people; that the meaning of a photograph, like that of other cultural carriers, is never fixed once and for all but is the ever-renewed

outcome of a transaction between image and public. Although images indeed freeze moments in time and refer to a specific historical moment, their meaning changes in the eyes of their present-day viewers. Azoulay (2015) refers in this regard to the two "events" of photography. The first event occurs when a photographer and the camera capture a particular moment in a particular way. The second event occurs when the meaning of what is captured is shaped and reshaped by the actors who reproduce the image, the context in which this circulation takes place, and the different audiences that interact with them. Azoulay (2015) shows that these two events of photography are fundamentally connected, like the "two constituents of a mathematical equation" (p. 66). What is *captured* by a picture changes as a result of its *reception* by different audiences in diverse contexts. In considering photography as a medium of memory, then, it is important to see images in relation to both the original event in which they were produced and in relation to the renewed investment in those images on the part of those who become attached to them. As images reproduce across time in changing contexts, they carry the memory of the "second event" of photography as well as of their original referent. Displays of the image of Che Guevara, for example, now recall both the Argentinian revolutionary and the tradition of displaying his image both in left-wing networks and consumer culture (Casey, 2012).

Our collection is distinguished from earlier approaches to the visualization of protest by its double concern: with the production of images as well as with their reproduction over time. What makes some images "stick" longer in cultural memory than others? Is this a function of the properties of the image itself or of contextual factors? Tracking the afterlives of images (Azoulay's "second event") is accordingly a recurring theme in the essays that follow. As the chapters by Merrill and Smits and Ros exemplify, the ease with which images can be digitally reproduced makes it even more urgent to develop digital methodologies for studying modes of reproduction, proliferation, and canonization.

In line with insights from cultural memory studies, the notion of reproduction is extended here to include remediations (transfers to another medium) and reworkings (adaptations of the image to new contexts and material forms). Images that originated as photographs may later procreate in a remediated form as an internet meme, drawing, stencil, or mural. The transformation of George Floyd's photograph into a painted icon, which proliferated across the US and Europe in the summer of 2020, offers a good illustration of this process. As do the remediations of the photo-portrait of Turkish revolutionary Deniz Gezmiş in the form of a silhouette, discussed

below by Duygu Erbil, and the remediation of portraits of radical suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst in the form of a mural, discussed below by Clara Vlessing.

Legacy images can also be reproduced in a derived form in the making of new ones. The reworking of "standoff" photographs, such as that of the Tank Man in the G20 photograph, offers a case in point. So, too, do the multiple reworkings of Eugène Delacroix's famous painting *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (1830) in, for example, Jean-Pierre Rey's image of *La Marianne de '68* (Leblanc, 2015; and discussed further below by Antigoni Memou) and several images that circulated online during the Hong Kong protests of 2019–2020 (Smits, 2020). These reworkings are testimony to the memorability of the original painting as well as to the extent of its reproductions since 1830, which had made it familiar to the public at large. The formal and affective echoes between new images and historical ones serve to link one protest cycle to another through a specifically visual form of resonance (Armstrong & Crage, 2006).

Iconicity

How does the idea of the iconic photo fit into these dynamics? Since iconicity has been a central topic in discussions of public photography and public memory, and constitutes a particular form of reproduction, it deserves extra attention here. In the first instance, iconicity can be understood in terms of the relationship between an image and the event or persons it depicts. It pertains to photographs that have become "the defining, enduring image of an event" (Dahmen et al., 2018) and that are perceived as having captured the singularity of a particular moment or, as Sophie Dufays' discussion below of ID-photos shows, the essence of a particular life. For this reason, they can later come to typify or "sum up" events and the broader historical processes of which they are a part. As time passes, an iconic image in this sense becomes a "metonym that stands in for larger, more complex phenomena" (Dahmen et al., 2018, p. 271). This is what happened with the Tank Man: as the censuring of this image on the Chinese internet indicates, this photograph has come to serve as a visual stand-in for the Tiananmen massacre of 1989 as well as for contemporary resistance to the illiberal Chinese state (Hillenbrand, 2020).

As this case also shows, the aesthetic power of an image is a necessary but never sufficient condition for iconicity. An image's reputation, seen here as the outcome of repeated reproduction, also needs to be considered. Images only become iconic by being reproduced and remediated countless

times and, linked to this, by being frequently labelled "iconic." In common parlance, indeed, "iconic" is often used as synonymous with "very well-known." According to Hariman and Lucaites (2007), iconic images are "widely recognised and remembered, are understood to be representations of historically significant events, activate strong emotional identification or response, and are reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics" (p. 27). As Boudana et al. (2017) have noted, however, the cost of iconicity—and of the instant recognizability that this entails—may be a loss of meaning: "The more an iconic photo is circulated, the more it is recognized as iconic, yet the more it may become devoid of the significance that made it iconic in the first place" (p. 1227). Another downside is that the attention given to a limited number of extremely well-known iconic images comes at the cost of ignoring others. This is par for the course in cultural memory since, as Rigney (2005) has argued, the production of shared memory is governed by the principle of scarcity. It tends to concentrate in a limited number of canonical sites, which, by virtue of being limited in number and over-exposed, can become collective points of reference. As Memou shows here, the photographic legacy of 1968 has been largely reduced to a highly selective set of images that, in over-emphasizing the role of particular individuals, occludes the participation of women and the broader alliances behind the uprising.

There is also an upside to this concentration of cultural memory on a select number of images. Precisely because they are so well known, iconic images become easily available for adaptation and appropriation by others in their own claim-making. Duygu Erbil shows this below in her analysis of how an iconic photograph of student leader Deniz Gezmiş could be re-used by different parties: since it is so well-known it belongs to everyone and no-one. This public availability means that being associated with an iconic photograph is a mixed blessing for activists trying to control the legacy of their movement. An iconic photograph may preserve the memory of the movement but sometimes at the cost of dissociating it from its political demands or of limiting its value to the aesthetic realm of galleries and museums. Raiford (2011, p. 16) has similarly signalled "cooptation, de-politicization and commodification" in the case of iconic images of the civil rights and black power movements of the 1960s, which began to appear four decades later in advertising campaigns. However, as Cambre (2012) has argued with reference to what is probably the most commodified revolutionary photograph of all time, Alberto Korda's portrait of Che Guevara *Guerrillero Heroico* (1960), commodification does not necessarily mark the death knell for an image's radical force. This is also borne out in the present

collection in the essay by Thomas Smits and Ruben Ros, which shows how the hyper-canonical Tank Man could continue to be mobilized as a tool of contention in the context of recent protests in Hong Kong.

The literature on iconicity has largely coalesced around a small number of "super icons" (Perlmutter, 1998) for which "no caption [is] needed" (Hariman & Lucaites, 2007), such as the Tank Man or John Paul Filo's *Kent State Shootings* (1970), which are then discussed *as* icons rather than in relation to what they are icons *of*. Our volume embeds the issue of iconicity into a broader consideration of reproduction and, crucially, also considers images that are popular but not necessarily iconic in the usual sense; although they function as metonyms of particular events that are only reproduced over shorter periods of time or with a more limited circulation. In taking such images into account alongside hyper-canonical ones, we aim to open up new perspectives on the mechanisms whereby images gain and lose salience in cultural memory. This is important not only for deepening our understanding of how (iconic) images are reproduced and reworked, but also for exploring the cultural longevity of images, or lack thereof, in the digital age (Smits & Ros, 2021). Theories of iconic imagery were first developed around 2000 (Brink, 2000; Hariman & Lucaites, 2001; Perlmutter, 1998) and were modelled on the media landscape dominated by top-down mass media, such as the newspaper, the illustrated magazine, and television, which had blossomed in the decades following the Second World War. Since then, however, the digital media have transformed, not only the ways in which images are created, but also how they are selected, distributed, and reproduced (Dahmen et al., 2018).

As Edrington and Gallagher (2019) argue, the advent of digital media and mobile technology has "democratized" the battle over visual representational control by allowing activists to disseminate and reproduce visual messages without having to rely on traditional gatekeepers. But the very ease with which digital images can now be reproduced is also changing the very conditions in which visual memory operates. As mentioned above, iconicity implies scarcity. In the condition of "post-scarcity" (Hoskins, 2017) characteristic of digital media, however, where images seem to be in unlimited supply, memory is less likely to coalesce for a longer period around a single image. There is a widely shared concern that the digital circulation of digitized and born-digital iconic pictures leads to the "trivializing" (Boudana et al., 2017) or "collapsing" (Merrill, 2020) of the original meaning of "the iconic" as the memorable encapsulation of a particular event. Memeification of photographic icons has been described as the most extreme manifestation of this process (Boudana et al., 2017). The very pace at which "iconization"

occurs in digital environments—where images are labelled "iconic" almost as soon as they appear and are then rapidly reproduced across different platforms—seems to diminish the capacity of images to stay iconic in the longer term. While the affordances of digital media cause images to spread quickly and with ease, these "instant news icons" (Mortensen, 2016) or "speeded-up icons" (Dahmen et al., 2018) are believed to quickly rise to prominence, but also to be quickly forgotten. While digital media offer activists unrivalled opportunities for producing, selecting, and reproducing their own visual record, they may also be diminishing their capacity to transmit memory to the next generation of activists.

The visual memory of protest, linking generations and protest cycles, is dependent on images being continuously reproduced. At first sight, the ephemerality of "instant news icons" poses a serious threat to the very possibility of a shared memory being sustained over a longer period. Is the investment in a limited number of highly memorable images being replaced by other forms of visual memory, for example, by fluid "networks of photographs" (Smits, 2021), or visual "memory assemblages" (Chidgey, 2018; Merrill, 2020) that provide for continuity across time while changing and adapting to new circumstances? Clara Vlessing's study of the online reproduction of images of Sylvia Pankhurst has led her to conclude that image reproduction is still governed by the principle of scarcity, not least because of constraints placed by copyright and paywalls. Sam Merrill, in contrast, argues that the internet is also generating new forms of meaning-making in the form of image constellations thrown up by search engines, suggesting that visual memory-making is now happening in part through the combinatory potential of algorithms. So while our collection does not offer a definitive conclusion about the future of iconic images of protest in the digital age, it does identify some key issues for future exploration. In the meantime, we have subsumed the issue of iconicity as such into broader concerns about the reproduction, remediation, and reworking of images across time.

Visual Memory in Mobilization

A final set of issues addressed by this collection pertains to the way images—often well-known iconic images—are mobilized in the conduct of protest. What role does visual memory, specifically the visual memory of earlier protest events, play in activism itself? Zamponi (2018), as mentioned earlier in our introduction to the memory–activism nexus, distinguishes between the implicit and explicit memory of movements. Implicit memory

relates to the protest habitus of actors, and the inherited assumptions and repertoires that inform action. From the perspective of our collection, this habitus includes the visual memory of earlier protests as this has been mediated and transmitted through images. Thus, the G20 photograph from Hamburg indicated that the visual memory of earlier protest cycles implicitly shapes the performance of protest as activists (un)consciously recreate or restage earlier images, be it those that are well-known to the public at large or those that have a particular meaning within a movement (Raiford, 2011).

As the term suggests, "explicit memory" entails overt references to earlier protest cycles as a protest tactic, as a form of visual activism. Visual invocations of memory can take the form of historic names, slogans, and symbols being displayed on posters and T-shirts and stencilled on walls. More importantly from the perspective of our collection, explicit visual memory work involves reproducing and recycling historical images so as to build a visual–material bridge between "then" and "now." Displaying key events in the movement's history serves as a reminder of unfinished business or, indeed, of broken promises. Displaying the portraits of demonstrators killed by police or other victims of police violence is a common strategy in demands for those responsible to be held to account (Assmann & Assmann, 2010; Rigney, 2020) and is often linked to larger campaigns for civil rights and social justice. This is brought out by Sophie Dufays in her analysis of the mobilization of the photos of the disappeared in Mexico. The display of historical images in new contexts can also be a way to flag inspirational models and acquire extra symbolic power by grafting the new movement onto the old one and inscribing it into a longer tradition. This is shown here in Alice Mattoni and Anwesha Chakraborty's account of the mobilization by recent activists in India of the iconic image of Gandhi as a way of piggybacking on his symbolic capital. In such cases, the display of images gives historical depth to a new movement and, in doing so, adds to its weight, unity, and worthiness, key elements of what Charles Tilly would have called its "WUNC" (Tilly & Wood, 2016).

Overview

Bringing the different facets of the memory–activism nexus together, this collection explores the interplay between the visualization of protest, the memory work that is done in the intervals between protest cycles, and the visual memory work that takes place during protests. Written by an interdisciplinary team, the nine chapters are clustered into three sections each with its own focus.

Producing Memorable Images focuses on how images of earlier protest events are composed, exploring the correlation between the aesthetics of the images and their capacity to be "memorable"; that is, to stick in culture rather than disappear with yesterday's news. In the opening essay, *Marco Solaroli* investigates the institutional work of the World Press Photo awards in shaping the visual memory of activism, asking how protest imagery is produced, articulated, and valorized through the World Press Photo awards and, more generally, in the field of photojournalism. He argues that the awards simultaneously shape professional standards and aesthetic–stylistic trends, to the extent that the iconic power of prize-winning photographs risks tipping protest over into "mere" aesthetics.

In the chapter that follows, *Erika Zerwes* examines the work of Brazilian photojournalist Nair Benedicto. She shows how Benedicto used her photographic skills in the service of visual activism, acting as a witness to the several massive strikes in São Paulo between 1979–1981 and hence ensuring the visibility of these protests against the dictatorial regime. She shows, moreover, how Benedicto carefully composed her images in such a way as to resonate with the memory of earlier protest images, most notably those of the 1968 protests in Europe. Although it has not been widely reproduced, she concludes that Benedicto's work provides a visual archive of protest that could yet serve as a resource for a counter-memory of modern Brazil.

Finally, *Duygu Erbil* analyses the iconic portrait of the Turkish student leader and revolutionary Deniz Gezmiş taken at the moment of his arrest in 1971. She notes how this image has been reproduced and appropriated by a wide range of political groups, including during the 2013 Gezi Park occupation, and asks why this particular image has proven such a fruitful resource for later protesters. Why did this specific photograph become so attractive for reproduction by amateurs as distinct from the photojournalists that are the subject of the previous chapters? Erbil argues that the image became memorable not merely thanks to its subject matter, but above all thanks to its material qualities: its direct and simple composition, with the figure of Deniz Gezmiş front-lit and foregrounded, made the image available for amateur reproduction and remediation, whether as graffiti, posters, or fanart. Its memorability, in other words, lies in those features that meant that it could be easily reproduced in the DIY settings typical of protest.

Reproduction and Remediation focuses on the way images circulate, in their original or in an adapted form, in the intervals between protest cycles. Which images are recycled, which ones gain an iconic status, and how are they reworked in different media? In the opening essay, *Antigoni Memou* critically examines the visual legacy of May '68 in France, noting that the iconization

of a limited number of images has fed into a very narrow interpretation of the uprising as being a student affair, led especially by male students. She then zooms in on one of the most iconic photographs of May '68 in France—often referred to as *La Marianne de '68*. While noting that its memorability is linked to its resonance with Delacroix's famous painting *Liberty Leading the People*, Memou argues that the power of this visual memory ends up producing a very male-gendered view of the movement, one that effectively reduces women to symbols. Memou takes this photograph as a starting point from which to consider more generally the complex processes both of remembering and of forgetting behind the reproduction of photographs of May '68. She shows how the selectivity of cultural memory has colluded in rendering invisible not only women, but also striking workers. Like Zerwes, Memou ends by pointing to the possibility of historians and activists going back to the archives in order to actively promote an alternative visual memory of '68 by bringing other photographs into circulation again.

Clara Vlessing examines a mural of Sylvia Pankhurst (1882–1960) painted on the wall of a pub in East London. The mural presents a collage of remediated photographs of Pankhurst that were sourced from the internet. Vlessing uses these images to examine the long and often complicated pathways images take before they become carriers of cultural memory. While the internet supposedly ushered in a culture of "post-scarcity" and imagistic abundance, institutional, financial, and technological constraints continue to shape Pankhurst's image. Showing how memory in material and digital environments intersect, the chapter argues that the visual memory of activism continues to be governed by scarcity.

Finally, *Samuel Merrill* discusses the online circulation of *The Woman with the Handbag*—a photo from 1985 that shows a woman striking a neo-Nazi with her handbag during a rally in Växjo, Sweden. Exploring the conceptual edges between iconic and viral images, he studies the visual assemblages that have formed around this picture in the digital realm. The chapter notes how the algorithms behind search engines such as Google place images of protest into visual constellations that cross-over between different mnemonic contexts. Because these constellations frequently gravitate towards emphasizing the vulnerability and violence of *The Woman with the Handbag*, Merrill argues that algorithms have an agential role in promoting a specific type of action in collective memory.

Mobilizing Visual Memory focuses on the way visual memory is activated by protesters in an overt manner through the display of historical images. As the three essays show in different ways, displaying historical images not only helps directly in articulating claims, but, above all, in inscribing new protests

in a longer tradition. *Alice Mattoni* and *Anwesha Chakraborty* examine how visual memory operated in the India Against Corruption Movement (2011–2012). They show how activists combined the use of legacy photographs with other visual markers to inscribe their campaign within the Gandhian tradition. The leader of the protest wore a white cap, reminiscent of Gandhi, while a photograph of Gandhi was literally used to frame the platform from which campaigners spoke. They argue that the overt invocations of Gandhian memory not only helped to align the anti-corruption movement symbolically with a nationally recognized tradition of resistance to power, but also collapsed the distinction between past and present, making it seem as if the latest movement was also a continuation of the older one.

Sophie Dufays explores the display of photo-portraits of 43 "disappeared" students in Mexico in justice campaigns. The ID-photographs of the students, remediated on murals as well as reproduced in the form of silhouettes, have been a key feature of protests against their disappearance. Dufays explains the mobilizing power of these images by their resonance with national and international traditions of protest, as well as their resonance with religious iconography. They speak to a very broad constituency because they are carriers of the intimate attachments and religious beliefs of the local community, while also recalling other Mexican and Latin American campaigns against human rights violations.

Finally, *Thomas Smits* and *Ruben Ros* chart the online circulation of the iconic Tank Man photograph. Using the Google Cloud Vision API, to retrieve 50,735 online circulations of this image between 2013 and mid-2020, they use computational methods to study the relationship between its meaning and the (online) places where it is used to remember the Tiananmen protests. The chapter then zooms in on the connection between the online circulation of the Tank Man and the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests of 2014 and 2019–2020. They show how Hong Kong has provided an online space where differences between Western and Chinese interpretations of the image become apparent and where it has been a constant part of new waves of mobilization.

Across the different chapters, one conclusion stands out: that demonstrations do not finish when people leave the streets. Social movements leave visual traces. While some images end up in the archive, others are reproduced, remediated, and reworked to form a collection of images—a cultural memory—that can be mobilized in later protests. In the light of our findings, visual memory is certainly one of the most important conduits of the memory of activism and the most important resource for memory in activism. Hopefully, this collection will stimulate further work in this direction.

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About the Authors

Ann Rigney is professor of Comparative Literature at Utrecht University. She has published widely on theories of cultural memory and on memory cultures in Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. Her books include *The Afterlives of Walter Scott* (OUP, 2012) and *Transnational Memory* (co-edited with C. De Cesari, De Gruyter, 2014). She is principal investigator on the ERC-funded project *Remembering Activism: The Cultural Memory of Protest in Europe* (ReAct) (2019–2024). (a.rigney@uu.nl)

Thomas Smits is a post-doc researcher at the University of Antwerp. A historian with an interest in visual culture and computer-assisted methodologies, he is author of the prize-winning *The European Illustrated Press and the Emergence of a Transnational Visual Culture of the News, 1842–1870* (Routledge, 2020). Between 2019–2021, he worked as a post-doc researcher for the *Remembering Activism: The Cultural Memory of Protest in Europe* (ReAct) project. Recent work has been published in *New Media and Society*, *Memory Studies, Visual Communication* and *Social Movement Studies.* (thomas.smits@uantwerpen.be)