


Page Proof Instructions and Queries

Journal Title: Visual Communication

Article Number: 704633

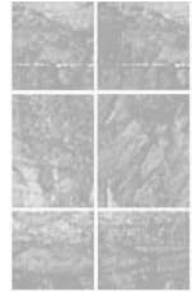
Greetings, and thank you for publishing with SAGE. We have prepared this page proof for your review. Please respond to each of the below queries by digitally marking this PDF using Adobe Reader (free at <https://get.adobe.com/reader>).

Please use *only* the circled tools to indicate your requests and responses, as edits via other tools/methods are not compatible with our software. To ask a question or request a formatting change (such as italics), please click the  tool and then choose "Text Callout." To access the necessary tools, choose "Comment" from the right-side menu.



No.	Query
Yes	Please confirm that all author information, including names, affiliations and contact details, is correct.
Yes	This proof represents your final opportunity to review your article prior to publication, so please send all your changes now.

Picturing protest: visuality, visibility and the public sphere



MARIA ROVISCO
University of Leicester, UK

ANASTASIA VENETI
Bournemouth University, Poole, UK

AIMS AND SCOPE

This special issue is concerned with how and why certain visual images picturing protest events and social movements are rendered visible or invisible in the public sphere. 'Picturing Protest' responds to the growing interest in a new protest culture and new ways of 'doing politics', ranging from Arab revolts to the Occupy Movement, the Indignados and anti-austerity protests in Europe. Since 2011 these new activisms have gained momentum in media and scholarly debates. Contemporary activisms are seen as powerfully tied in to the possibilities that social media platforms and Web 2.0 technologies offer to those involved in practices of dissent in physical squares and streets as much as in virtual environments. Of special interest here is how new forms of political participation and the practice of dissent go in tandem with the widespread use of visual images and internet memes facilitated by technological devices with documentation facilities (e.g. smartphones, tablets) and social network technologies (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012). Iconic images such as the image of dying Neda, a 26-year-old Iranian woman killed by a sniper bullet during a protest event, go viral on social media platforms and have the power to galvanize the attention of global publics. Hence, this new protest culture demands a different approach in the study of how protest images are constituted, analysed, interpreted and circulated in both old and new media environments.

Taken together, the different contributions ask how and why activists, photojournalists, citizen journalists and journalists use protest images – ranging from maps and posters to amateur and professional photographs – to communicate with a range of audiences within and beyond nationally-

Visual Communication 2017
Vol. 0(0) 1–7

© The Author(s) 2017

Reprints and permissions: sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI 10.1177/1470357217704633

 SAGE

defined public spheres. The contributors do so by employing theoretical tools and methods that originate from a variety of disciplines, including media and communication, political science, sociology, semiotics and art history. In pursuing their research, the contributors draw on a variety of political contexts, including Spain, Portugal, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Greece, Germany, Italy, Austria and the UK. One of the key aims of this special issue is to overcome the overemphasis on the intended symbolic meanings of protest images (Philipps, 2011) by directing the analytical lens to issues of image production and diffusion. This is in order to show how certain visual images and not others end up circulating in a range of traditional and new media environments.

VISUALITY, VISIBILITY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

This special issue is concerned with the intersection of notions of visibility and visibility in relation to contentious politics and the public sphere. While the field of contentious politics offers fruitful engagement with visual and the artistic as powerful cultural tools for political action (Parry, 2015), it is also the case that the analysis of protest images and visual protest material can foster a deeper understanding of the conditions of production (Philipps, 2011). Against the backdrop of a participatory media culture (Jenkins, 2006), increasingly dominated by the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, we cannot overlook a plethora of new producers of images and the ways in which protest images are created, appropriated and circulated across different media platforms. This is particularly striking in a context in which visual materials such as photos, internet memes and posters can be appropriated for diverse purposes and promptly 'shared' with vast numbers of others using Web 2.0 and social networks (Boudana et al., 2017: 2). This special issue adds to these debates by shedding light not only on how the protesters and professionals, like photojournalists, might use particular technical procedures and aesthetic and stylistic resources in terms of image production that might reveal the ideas or intentions of the producers (Philipps, 2011: 19), but also the wider contexts of production and reception where the protesters' struggles to become visible are played out.

This special issue takes as its starting point the assumption that if visual researchers want to understand how protest images resonate with bystander publics and dispersed audiences it is not sufficient to focus on the analysis of visibility, which involves exploring the symbolic meaning of protest images and how these are represented in a range of media. It is also crucial that visual research sheds light on how repertoires of protest acquire visibility in the public sphere. The issue of visibility is important because the ways in which protesters, like politicians, appear before others is shaped by new forms of mediated visibility created by both online and traditional media (Thompson, 2005). If we accept, as Dayan (2013) puts it, that visibility is about 'calling

attention to something by showing it, more attention needs to be paid to the ways in which certain visual images can demand attention to pressing issues of common concern in ways that news narratives and civic talk per se (Dalhgren, 2009) cannot.

In social movement research and media studies, there is a growing body of work that examines the relation between visual language, media environments and repertoires of protest (DeLuca et al., 2012; Doerr et al., 2013; Olesen, 2014; Philipps, 2011). This literature has shown how contemporary social movements and new activism use images and symbols to express their goals and identity, to mobilize new participants, to attract and shape media coverage and to win the support of a range of publics. Scholarship has also emphasized that visual images (e.g. image memes, photographs, posters, videos) have the potential to generate creative public debate and send messages that cannot be conveyed by words, contributing, therefore, to a more vibrant public sphere (Milner, 2013). In this context, Milner has argued, for example, that the production and consumption of images in participatory media helps new protest movements, like OWS, to more quickly spread their message and mobilize support, but also encourages active participation in the public sphere. Yet, the fact that there are many more voices engaging in public debate via the production and consumption of image memes, videos and photographs expressing and documenting a movement or a protest event, tells us little about why certain images end up circulating in transnational media environments. It also reveals little about why certain images and symbols end up being actively produced and discussed by supporters of the movement and bystander publics in a range of alternative media platforms, but fail to achieve visibility in a transnational public sphere.

Despite a growing body of scholarship looking at the production and mediation of protest images, not enough attention has been paid in visual research and social movement research to (1) how visual representations of protest actually succeed in galvanizing the attention of bystander publics and dispersed audiences, and (2) how the protesters' 'struggle to be seen' (Guidry, 2003) shapes and informs the creation and circulation of images picturing protest events or the movement in mainstream and alternative media environments. This special issue seeks to fill these lacunae.

Veneti's and Ruiz's articles direct the analytical lens to how changes in the ways contemporary protest images are produced and circulated have broadened public debate about dissent in the public sphere. Veneti's article revolves around questions of aesthetics surrounding issues of visibility and visibility in regard to the coverage of protests by photojournalists. By employing a qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews with Greek photojournalists, Veneti seeks to understand their perceptions, attitudes and decision-making processes regarding the photographs they take during protests. Drawing on theoretical insights from photojournalism and art photography, she argues that in addition to the presumption that photojournalists adhere

to the key principle of the objective recording of reality, more attention needs to be paid to the ways in which their practice becomes infused with a subjective language and influenced by art photography techniques. The article shows that the decisions made by photojournalists about what and how to photograph during a protest event are powerfully shaped by the employment of hybridized strategies, i.e. when the conventional forms of news photography acquire aesthetic dimensions that allow for a more nuanced depiction of protest events. The aesthetics of protest discussed in Veneti's contribution invite us to consider the ways in which visual representations of protest are capable of commanding the attention of wider audiences and become more visible when photojournalists decide to embrace art photography techniques in order to aestheticize their photographs and, in so doing, generate new ways of seeing and interpreting protest. In this context, the author shows how such protest images tend to spill out from the confines of mainstream media. Many of these photographs, which play out aesthetic devices that deviate from the conventions of photojournalism, end up circulating in alternative media spaces (e.g. blogs and photojournalists' social media accounts) and in this way enrich and widen the public debate of contentious politics and dissent.

Similar to Veneti, Ruiz is concerned with the ways in which contemporary visual representations of protest extend the visibility of particular protest events by shaping public debate. Using a combination of analytical approaches – thematic analysis, discourse and semiotic analysis – Ruiz's contribution is concerned with how the police are pictured in the coverage of protest. She examines the ways in which images of police brutality were deployed in news narratives surrounding the death of Ian Tomlinson in 2009, and the subsequent trial and eventual acquittal of PC Harwood in 2012. Against the backdrop of a number of high-profile investigations into the policing of protest in the UK, Ruiz goes on to argue that police officers are now being subjected to new kinds of distinctions between 'good police officers' and 'bad police officers.' These distinctions were made possible in a media environment where the images captured by citizen journalists played an important role in challenging and delegitimizing the police and journalists' construction of the initial public debate surrounding the death of Ian Tomlinson at the hands of PC Harwood during the G20 Protests. Ruiz shows how the images produced through mobile technologies and circulated through social networks foregrounded three interrelated anonymity tropes that highlight acts of concealment – the use of uniform, the masking of individuality and the failure to use identity tags. She compellingly posits that this is of particular importance in a context in which the advent of mobile technologies with documentation facilities has transformed the relationship between images of protest action and public legitimation.

The contributions of Doerr, Rovisco, and Ziv and Grinbaum are all concerned with struggles for visibility in a transnational communicative space. However, while Doerr's and Rovisco's articles shed light on how images that

are created by activists and political actors in locally and nationally-rooted contexts go on to address particular audiences in a transnational communicative space, Ziv and Grinbaum show how the work of the Activestills photography collective is a powerful tool for documenting and increasing the visibility of the struggle against Israeli occupation in a global public sphere.

Doerr's article examines how visual posters and symbols were constructed and circulated transnationally by various political actors to mobilize public debate on the issues of immigration and citizenship in Western Europe. Through a comparative lens, the article explores the transnational dynamics of visual mobilization by comparing the translation of right-wing, nationalist with left-wing, cosmopolitan visual campaigns on the issue of immigration in Western Europe. Using an interdisciplinary methodology of visual and discursive analysis, Doerr's article focuses on the discursive and visual practices of translation that underpin the ways in which right-wing and left-wing political actors appropriate visual campaign materials in other national contexts. She demonstrates how right-wing political activists create a shared stereotypical image of immigrants as foes of an imaginary ethnonationalist citizenship, which sharply contrasts with the ways in which left-wing counter-images construct a more complex and nuanced imagery of citizenship and cultural diversity in Europe. In so doing, she illuminates how the challenges that progressive activists face in order to translate cosmopolitan images of citizenship across different national and linguistic contexts markedly differ from the right wing's rapid and effective mobilization of sympathetic audiences across Europe by means of the translation of denigrating images of minorities in multicultural transnational public spaces.

Like Doerr, Rovisco is interested in how particular protest images produced by activists spill out from their original contexts of production to acquire social and symbolic significance in a transnational communicative space. Through social semiotic analysis and critical discourse analysis of textual and visual materials available in the blogs of the encampments of Lisbon, Barcelona and Madrid, Rovisco argues that the image of the occupied square is a global icon because of the ability of the Indignados social movement to produce for global circulation a generic and cosmopolitan image of the occupied square. She goes on to show how the multiplicity of images of the occupied square, made available on the websites of the encampments, bears witness to an experience of dissent that cannot be reduced to a single and situated iconic moment of dissent. In so doing, she shows how the iconic image of the occupied square becomes a universal model of citizen protest by tapping into a repertoire of culturally shared representations of non-violent occupations of urban space in the 20th century (e.g. Tiananmen Square and American civil rights' sit-ins) that is powerfully embedded in Western public memory.

Ziv and Grinbaum's visual essay offers a compelling visual and textual documentation of the expropriation of Palestinian lands as one of Israel's main tactics is to dispossess Palestinians of their rights while gaining more

control over the West Bank. This process involves buying Palestinian houses or lands from impoverished Palestinians and the construction of 'outposts'. Ziv and Grinbaum show how Activestills photography collective bears witness to how the Palestinian Popular Coordination Committee (an umbrella committee that unites activists against the occupation from various Palestinian villages) developed a type of organized collective action that includes the 'appropriation' of the Israeli outpost tactic. The Activestills photography collective took part in the protest action, which itself materialized, in the first instance, through the erection of the Bab Al Shams protest camp. However, Ziv and Grinbaum clearly show in their visual essay that their key aim was the visual documentation of everyday life in the camp. They show that while the Palestinian activists sought to express their grievances and reach out to international audiences by reporting the events live through social media platforms, Activestills remains firmly committed to highlighting the importance of the protest action through the power of documentary photography.

Our hope is that scholarship in visual communication and social movement studies takes up more seriously the ways in which protest images are created and diffused in more complex media environments and their impact on particular audiences in concrete places and times.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, we would like to thank Carey Jewitt for her enthusiasm and patience throughout the editorial process. We would also like to thank Patricia Routh for her research assistance and invaluable support in preparing figures for reproduction.

REFERENCES

- Bennett, W.L. and Segerberg, A. (2012) The logic of connective action. *Information, Communication & Society* 15(5): 739–768.
- Boudana, S., Frosh, P. and Cohen, A. (2017) Reviving icons to death: When historic photographs become digital memes. *Media, Culture & Society*. DOI: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0163443717690818> (accessed 6 April 2017).
- Dahlgren, P. (2009) *Media and Political Engagement: Citizens, Communication and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dayan, D. (2013) Conquering visibility, conferring visibility: Visibility seekers and media performance. *International Journal of Communication* 7: 137–153.
- DeLuca, K., Lawson, S. and Sun, Y. (2012) Occupy Wall Street on the public screens of social media: The many framings of the birth of a protest movement. *Communication, Culture & Critique* 5: 483–509.
- Doerr, N., Mattoni, A., and Teune, S. (eds) (2013) *Advances in the Visual Analysis of Social Movements*. Bradford: Emerald Insight.

- Guidry, J.A. (2003) The struggle to be seen: Social movements and the public sphere in Brazil. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 16(4): 493–524.
- Jenkins, H. (2006) *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press.
- Milner, R. (2013) Pop polyvocality: Internet memes, public participation, and the Occupy Wall Street movement. *International Journal of Communication* 7: 2357–2390.
- Olesen, T. (2014) Dramatic diffusion and meaning adaptation: The case of Neda. In: Della Porta, D. and Mattoni, A. (eds) *Spreading Protest: Social Movements in Times of Crisis*. Colchester: ECPR Press, 71–90.
- Parry, K. (2015) Visibility and visualities: ‘Ways of seeing’ politics in the digital media environment. In: Coleman, S. and Freelon, D. (eds) *Handbook of Digital Politics*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 417–432.
- Philipps, A. (2011) Visual protest material as empirical data. *Visual Communication* 11(1): 3–21.
- Thompson, J.B. (2005) The new visibility. *Theory, Culture & Society* 22(6): 31–51.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

MARIA ROVISCO is a Lecturer in Media and Communication at the School of Media, Communication and Sociology, University of Leicester. She has research interests in migration, cosmopolitanism, new activisms, arts and citizenship, and visual culture. She is currently researching the artistic and civic practices of UK-based migrant and refugee artists, and investigating anti-austerity activisms in the European context vis-à-vis new modes of citizen participation. Among her recent publications are the co-edited books *Cosmopolitanism in Practice* (Ashgate, 2009), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Cosmopolitanism* (Ashgate, 2011), *Cosmopolitanism, Religion and the Public Sphere* (Routledge, 2014) and *Taking the Square: Mediated Dissent and Occupations of Public Space* (2016).

ANASTASIA VENETI is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing Communications, Faculty of Media and Communication, Bournemouth University. Her research focuses on political communication, media framing, protests and social movements, visual communication and photojournalism. She has written on the use of social media in political communication, political advertising, selfies, the media framing of protests and social movements (Greek Indignados, OWS, Hong Kong protests, etc.). Her work has been published in edited volumes and academic journals. Books include *Political Advertising and Citizens’ Perceptions* (Nisos, 2009, in Greek).

Address: Bournemouth University, Weymouth House, Talbot Campus, Fern Barrow, Bournemouth, Poole BH12 5BB, UK. [email: aveneti@bournemouth.ac.uk]