Introduction

Political Power, Visual Communication, and Public Space

To succeed in political conflict, people must make their claims visible. They struggle over visibility and the legitimacy of power in different arenas, including political institutions, mass media, and public space. Although we often use the term *visibility* in a metaphorical sense, just like *vision*, *imagination*, and *representation*, in politics it matters in the truest (visual) sense of the word. Visual media heavily influence both everyday and political communication. This is why political actors, whether marginalized or in high-power positions, aim to produce strong images to convey their ideas, mobilize support, and attract the attention of the public and the mass media.

Aiming to create powerful statements, visual political communication often employs a certain set of aesthetics. Depending on the intended message, the aesthetics allow the viewer to sensually experience and recognize political statements or worldviews. They make visual expressions of politics appealing through sensorial pleasure and with the help of certain tastes, styles, and symbols (Camnitzer 2009; Rancière 2004; Steyerl 2010).

In political struggles, particular aesthetics also convey different ideas of resistance. For a political resistance movement, it is crucial that it be able to represent itself both in political and in visual terms. Typical visualizations of discontent range from raised fists and waving banners to masked demonstrators fighting heavily protected police forces. Popular examples of catchy visual symbols are Pussy Riot's colorful ski masks, Banksy's flower thrower, the Guy Fawkes mask from the Occupy movement, and the clenched fist in a Venus sign visualizing feminism. Some activists support their arguments by showing the individual faces of historical resistance icons, such as Angela Davis or Ernesto "Che" Guevara, on banners, posters, or photographs. Others prefer the image of the anonymous mass of "the people" that aims to demonstrate public support (Fahlenbrach 2016a: 248–49).

At the same time, the aesthetics of resistance are fashionable and ambiguous. Not only do activist groups and resistance movements successfully catch the attention of traditional and social media with the help of powerful imagery, seemingly subversive aesthetics are also used in political marketing and public relations, advertisements, and popular culture to attract the

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audience. The range of producers, financiers, and interests behind such imagery is extremely diverse. For instance, the street artist Shepard Fairey got wide public attention for his iconic "Hope" poster during Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. The artist's subversive reputation in the street art scene and his aesthetics of stencil style, pop art, and Russian revolutionary constructivism give the artwork a sort of "street credibility" and a taste of social change. However, it was only in the beginning that Fairey distributed his posters independently; later he was officially commissioned and paid by Obama's presidential campaign.[1] Therefore, the "Hope" poster no longer represented independent popular support or genuine subversive endeavors but served the interests of an established political party in the run for one of the world's most powerful political offices. While the aesthetics seem to come "from below," they actually come "from above"—or at least from a combination of both. Apparently, although the style and iconology of an image may come with an aura of resistance at first sight, a closer look at its producers and its purpose all too often reveals its entanglements with power structures. Some might say that powerful players appropriated the aesthetics of resistance. In turn, one may see a risk of depoliticization and a potential devaluation of the political power and the efforts of "real" visual activism.

The diverse producers, uses, and interests involved in contentious imagery demonstrate that it is far from obvious whether an image is indeed an expression of "genuine" political resistance. Is it even possible to distinguish the "aesthetics of resistance" from the "aesthetics of rule," given the assumption that resistance and rule are dialectically entangled phenomena? What exactly makes one image resistance and others not? Is it its specific visual content or the oppositional position of its producers? There is the vague feeling that the function and effect of these images "depend on the context"—a quite unsatisfactory response. In any case, it remains blurry as to what exactly characterizes visual expressions of resistance.

This book investigates the phenomenon of visual resistance and its entanglement with power structures. Drawing on approaches in visual culture, I aim to better examine how visual political communication works and to increase visual literacy in our everyday image use and consumption. Who is behind the production of the images we see in everyday life, and who has, thus, the power to influence their content and dissemination? How are images used to legitimize political power, and how is this power scrutinized with the help of the visual? Which specific visual techniques are used to make political claims aesthetically persuasive, and how do aesthetic choices reflect political attitudes and arguments? Images convey political narratives and ideology just as written and oral stories do. But we barely perceive these visual persuasion strategies in a conscious way because we did not consciously learn

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"seeing" as we learned reading and writing. This is true for images in news media and in political election campaigns, just as it is for images we see in Netflix shows and in movies, in WhatsApp chats, in Instagram feeds, and on YouTube channels. Everyday images in social media, in popular culture, on the streets, or in other pre-political spheres heavily influence our world-*views*—even if in a more subtle way. Therefore in our media consumption we should be more aware of how visual political communication works. A perspective of showing, seeing, and being seen can help us better understand relations of power, as they are addressed by resisters and rulers alike. Such a perspective—as it is offered by the research field of visual culture—goes beyond the rather institutional concept of "the political" that is commonly employed in political science and merely considers the political impact of everyday practices, let alone images. Therefore, based on existing approaches, I develop an understanding of political resistance and rule that is informed by visual culture approaches.

Beyond the rather "impressionistic" approach we would use in non-academic debates about political images, I suggest in this book a scientific approach to systematically analyze images. Therefore I will introduce an analytical framework and explore whether it is useful to understand the interrelation of resistance and power structures. Since street art is a visual medium that perfectly illustrates this mutually constitutive relation, as I will argue, I take it as an example for empirical analysis.

The central question of this book is twofold: First, which forms of visual resistance are there, and which visual strategies of persuasion do different political actors employ to express resistance, legitimize themselves, and foster social identification and mobilization? Second, what can we learn about the intertwined relationship between rule and resistance by examining visual material?

Furthermore, for rather scholarly readers of this book, I aim to make a methodological contribution by finding out whether my analytical framework and the suggested tools for data collection and interpretation help answer these questions. Therefore, unlike in many social science books, methodology is much more than just instrumental in reaching valid results. Rather, elaborations on the empirical application of research methods are a central contribution of this book (especially in chapters 1, 4–7, and 8). Thus my intention is to provide interested researchers among the readers—those who want to analyze images themselves—with a comprehensive framework and specific methodological tools of visual discourse analysis.

How can we approach contemporary forms of aesthetic visual resistance while simultaneously paying tribute to its interrelation with power structures and institutions? As Helle Malmvig points out, much of the existing

literature "assumes that visual representations readily serve as emancipatory tools that can be appropriated against relations of power and established visual-discursive fields" (Malmvig 2016: 259). By contrast, she calls into question the assumption that the visuals used by a presumed group of dominated subjects—"the people/activists/artists" (Malmvig 2016: 261)—are a democratizing force per se and stand in binary opposition to the ones utilized by a powerful political elite or state agencies. And yet, many scholars claim that activists may contribute "to redefining military, political, and economic power via new visual narratives, which . . . address consumers and citizens in battles for eyes and minds" (Fahlenbrach et al. 2014: 206; see also Nye 2011). To understand how this process works, and to explore the context on which the meaning of an image depends, political scientists, especially, need to widen their disciplinary perspective.

In recent years, the political power of protest imagery has received increasing attention in social science, and "art activism" is an emerging research field. However, very little theoretical and empirical work on the specific characteristics of visual resistance has been done so far. Particularly in political science, a field that should inherently be interested in how the political is negotiated in all forms of communication, visual protest media are commonly taken as "byproducts," fulfilling a merely illustrative role for "real" political resistance.

Beyond the social sciences, several scholars have already provided their specific conceptualizations of visual resistance within political power relations. For instance, the visual culture scholar Nicholas Mirzoeff introduced the concept of "countervisuality" to describe how, in times of colonialism and imperialism, the oppressed used visual technologies and media to make visible their claims and their versions of history. His work *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (2011) was an essential source of inspiration for writing this book on the interplay of visual power and resistance with a focus on discursive practices and (anti-)imperialism. In this work, Mirzoeff retells the history of imperialism with a focus on how visual technologies and media were employed in the struggle over power between "visuality" and "countervisuality." He considers visuality to be a power tool used by the Global North to legitimize its hegemony and make it self-evident—it is a "discursive practice that has material effects" (Mirzoeff 2011: 3). However, Mirzoeff assumes that history is not monolithic but structured in conflict. Striving to establish a counterhistory from the perspective of the oppressed, countervisuality scrutinizes that visual classification, separation, and aestheticization of these social differences is as "natural" as it seems. The "right to look" of the oppressed entails as well "a right to be seen" and thus to represent oneself and gain visibility as political subjects. At the same time,

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practices of visual resistance are operating in an intertwined relation with power structure. They are therefore at risk of being appropriated and may be "a trap as well as a resource" (Mirzoeff 2011: 150). In this way, he agrees with Michel Foucault in that power always provokes resistance and a "resistance that succeeds simply becomes power" (Mirzoeff 2005: 25).

While Mirzoeff's approach is rather genealogical and focuses on historical forms of visual resistance, he does clearly not intend to systematically analyze empirical visual material of contemporary politics. By contrast, Gillian Rose offers one of the most helpful *methodological* frameworks in critical visual culture. In *Visual Methodologies* (2016) she suggests thinking about visual material in terms of four sites: production, the image itself (i.e., its visual content), circulation, and what she calls "audiencing" (i.e., the audience's active reception and reactions). Inspired by this differentiation into sites, I argue that the resistant character of an image might manifest on various levels or dimensions, which we need to distinguish for analyzing the political context within which the image is operating.

Various scholars have already contributed to enriching political science perspectives with theoretical and methodological concepts from visual culture (e.g., Hansen 2011, 2014; Bleiker 2001, 2015; Eder and Klonk 2016; Heck and Schlag 2020). Drawing from diverse academic traditions and disciplines, this research field examines what images tell us about the cultures and the political and economic power structures in which they are produced and perceived. Visual culture approaches do not reduce images to merely illustrating social phenomena. By contrast, they consider them key to how we perceive politics.

Visual culture assumes that everyday images inform how we *see* the world and thus literally shape our world*views*, or world *visions*. Images are considered part of a visual discourse in which political meaning-making is constantly negotiated. While things are made visible in particular ways, others are made invisible (Rose 2016: 188). At the same time, regarding the entanglement of rule and resistance, "visual culture would highlight those moments where the visual is contested, debated and transformed as a constantly challenging place of social interaction and definition in terms of class, gender, sexual and racialized identities" (Mirzoeff 1999: 4). In this perspective, it is the researcher's task "[to] explore the ambivalences, interstices and places of resistance in postmodern everyday life from the consumer's point of view" (Mirzoeff 1999: 9).

Against this backdrop I developed my own analytical framework based on visual culture literature to empirically examine visual forms of resistance and its ambivalences. I argue that we can analytically distinguish between seven dimensions of visual media in which resistance can be expressed and,

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in turn, limited by power structures. More precisely, I look at the iconological content of the image (I level), its spatial location (S level), the social position of its producers (P level), its material conditions (M level), its legal status (L level), its reception and reactions by the audience (A level), and the political circumstances of its time (T level). Contradictions arise if an image seems to express resistance on one level but is limited by power relations on another.

Given the manifold forms of visual expressions—ranging from photographs, videos, and memes to flash mobs, posters, and banners—we need to focus on a specific medium to exemplify these seven analytical dimensions. Most of the typical protest iconography is derived from images of demonstrations and clashes on the street. Street protests always pose the questions of whose street it is and who claims their right to appear in contested urban space. The artist and author of *The Aesthetics of Resistance* ([1981] 2005), Peter Weiss, declared in one of his anti-imperialist speeches against the Vietnam War that the streets and public spaces are the legitimate mass medium of the people, offering a counterweight to powerful media monopolies (in Schmidt 2016: 209).[2] The global protests triggered by the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 are a case in point: in various cities across the world, people defaced or tore down monuments honoring colonial or pro-slavery "heroes" and partly replaced them with statues of Black freedom fighters. This way they aimed to challenge—and eventually stop—the ongoing symbolic representation of (postcolonial, White, and male) domination in public space.[3]

Linking both the urban space of the *street* and the visual *arts*, street art is a medium that perfectly illustrates the constant appropriation and reappropriation of visual means between actors of power and resistance. Street art images often come with an aura of resistance. They are frequently associated with illegalized or subversive activities by critical artists or marginalized groups. Assuming this medium was freely accessible for producers and universally understandable for the viewers, it is often celebrated as democratically and creatively representing diverse social actors, which even include illiterate populations who commonly do not consume mainstream media or go to art galleries (Reed 2016: 84; Chaffee 1993; Mirzoeff 2015: 264). However, regarding street art within political conflicts and protests, it is necessary to scrutinize who exactly produced these images, what visual narratives they actually convey, and whether they are indeed political or, by contrast, only utilizing the medium's subversive label while indeed depoliticizing it.

For decades there has been a vivid debate on the increasing co-optation and commercialization of the "street credibility," hipness, and "resistance

chic" associated with street art. It is commodified on the art market, and corporations excessively use it in advertisements, while city administrations have discovered it as a tool for branding cities and gentrifying urban space. In view of this governmental utilization, it is necessary to ask *why* states seek to appropriate and neutralize street art (Ryan 2017: 5). Apart from its economic value, do state players consider it a means to maintain their power, a risk for their power, or both? While street art used by state and business players is recurrently criticized as "taming it and making it a part of the system" (Aksel and Olgun 2015: 182), it is often overlooked that street art has never been a genuine resistance medium reserved for use by the marginalized. By contrast, I argue that the powerful have always used wall paintings to convey their ideology and to legitimize their power. For instance, Holly Eva Ryan notes that, in Latin America, political street art has a long history, providing a "mobilizing tool for pro-system and anti-system forces alike" (Ryan 2017: 5; see also Chaffee 1993). In the early days of colonialism, as she underlines, the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church commissioned wall paintings to present their doctrines to the indigenous population. In the more recent past, muralism was inherent in both authoritarian and socialist revolutionary endeavors (Ryan 2017: 6–7). In this regard, street art is a visual medium that illustrates how images are positioned within power structures, making it sometimes hard to distinguish between the aesthetics of rule and the aesthetics of resistance. In any case, by exploring street art, we can learn something about the political opinions, problems, and struggles in a society. Since, in Latin America, street art has a long tradition as a source of both political power and opposition, I will empirically apply my analytical framework with the example of street art in Latin American urban space. Applying a mixed-methods approach of visual analysis, I will analyze images in the streets of Buenos Aires, Bogotá, Caracas, and Mexico City.

Considering various dimensions before assuming an image is a form of visual resistance is particularly crucial to examining the entangled relation between resistance and rule and the image's situatedness in power relations. Such an analytical framework is a useful tool, enabling us to locate, describe, and differentiate an image's characteristics on certain levels and thus helping us explain contradictions with more analytical clarity. For instance, one such ambivalence is that the authorities benefit from "supporting" street art—which symbolizes cultural creativity and artistic freedom—while they control which visual (iconological) content (I level), which authors (P level), which spaces (S level), and which specific techniques (M level) are permitted in public space, and which are, in turn, illegalized (L level). In this way, the authorities often aim to neutralize visual resistance by supporting and authorizing street art that is merely beautifying and less political, benefit from

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labeling it "art," and, in turn, delegitimize images that do not meet their expectations.

However, a seemingly "unpolitical" use, when taking a closer look, often turns out to be a subtle strategy of controlling the access to free public political expression and simultaneously bears the risk of depoliticizing a potentially powerful tool of political communication. In other cases, while images convey the aesthetics of resistance by carrying certain iconological content (I level) or material features (M level), they might have been produced with the support and in the interest of the authorities or commercial enterprises (P level). Therefore, they are far from either reclaiming space for activists' visibility (S level) or questioning law and order (L level).

My analysis reveals that street art images express forms of resistance in each of the dimensions. Resistance is frequently directed against the dominance of the monopolized mainstream media, and street art is considered an adequate weapon to circumvent, criticize, and oppose this media control. On the iconological level, many images visualize figures of Mirzoeff's (2011) countervisuality. These visual figures include "the people" or "the popular hero" as political subjects who are able to represent themselves, as well as anti-imperialist indigenous resistance and "the South" as a site of collaborative solidarity (see chapter 1). By approaching political discourse and conflict through the visual, this book aims to help understand which discursive strategies of persuasion and meaning-making are employed by both rulers and resisters to foster identification and mobilization. To legitimize their power, political elites and economic profit makers visually interlink different discursive strands to subtly convey their narratives and present them as being self-evident. Independently from their social authority and positions of power, producers utilize street art's "street credibility," claiming to speak on behalf of "the people" and thus employing the media of the people on "their" streets.

How a Visual Culture Perspective Helps Understand Political Rule and Resistance (and Its Entanglement)

In political science the understanding of "the political" has for long been an institutional one, without giving much attention to everyday and discursive forms of political power and ways to challenge it—let alone visual forms of rule and resistance. In critical visual culture studies, however, most scholars apply a discursive understanding of the political, often drawing upon post-structuralist assumptions: "Politics is not only fought out in state houses, workplaces or on battlefields, but also in the language we use, the stories

we tell, and the images we conjure—in short, in the ways we make sense of the world" (Duncombe 2015). Although many social scientists acknowledge that the "power of images" plays a significant role in political communication, the research field of visual culture may still be unbeaten territory for most of them. Before I do my own empirical analysis, it is therefore worthwhile to take a look at the central concepts used in this book—most importantly resistance and rule—to have a joint theoretical starting point for the question of *how* a perspective of showing, seeing, and being seen that is common in visual culture studies can enrich a social scientist understanding of rule and resistance and their entangled relationship.

How we see the world is affected by how we make meaning through images, although we are commonly unaware of that process. Visual culture is an interdisciplinary, subject-oriented research field that aims to understand both this meaning-making by visual media and technologies and the social practice of looking in its political, social, and economic contexts. Studies in visual culture may either focus on images themselves and what they tell us about society, on spectatorship and responses by the audiences, or on the circulation of images across social arenas, institutions, or national borders in a globalized world.

Visual culture examines how this meaning-making operates in visual, pictorial systems of representations. To explore how images (more or less subtly) convey ideology and how representation is political, we need to look at the basic idea of semiotics.[4] As we live in a world of signs that we interpret to make meaning of them, we constantly use semiotics, although we are commonly unaware of our interpretative labor (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 29). From a semiotic perspective, a sign's connotation (that is to say, what we associate with it) depends on the social, historical, and cultural context of the image and its perception and varies individually according to the spectator's personal knowledge and experiences. Further, it depends on the context in which the image is presented and in which the audience perceives it. The crucial point here is that meanings are often made to seem universal and "naturally" given, although they are socially and historically specific and follow a hidden set of norms, rules, and conventions. Understood in this way, it becomes clear that seeing is a social practice that needs to be learned and that involves relationships of power. We can only see the world through these systems of representation, be it linguistic or not, which mediate and construct our understanding of the world and influence our emotions and imagination (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 13, 19–20).[5]

Just like Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright do in *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (2001), most approaches in visual culture assume that images are produced within dynamics of power relations. For

many, the potential of images for maintaining authority and power structures lies in their ability to convey ideology. Ideologies are systems of belief and values that help us interpret and assess our everyday lives and the world around us. They are formed and affirmed by social institutions, such as the entertainment and media system, where visual representations are utilized to categorize behavior as "good" or "bad," to provide evidence, and to foster identification. People and institutions use images and media representation to persuade others to see the world through their eyes. Hence the key characteristic of ideologies is their subtlety, because societies function by masking their ideologies as being "natural," for instance in the case of nationalism or monogamous romantic love. In the vocabulary of semiotics, "ideologies are . . . connotations parading as denotations" (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 22). Consequently, we tend to be unaware of our own ideologies and only recognize them when looking at other contexts, cultures, or times in history.

In this understanding of ideology, the "power of images" is often explained by its ability to make things look evident and natural—or in Antonio Gramsci's words, to make it "common sense" in the struggle for hegemony (Gramsci [1971] 2014: 323–33). Images play an instrumental role in discourses of knowledge and truth. We commonly think we can only know something for sure if we can "see it with our own eyes" (Kamecke 2009: 11; Schade and Wenk 2011: 98, 103). For instance, photographs are attributed with documentary quality when we assume that they are evidencing reality. And yet, images are never "reality" but representations of it and, accordingly, are anything but "innocent" and merely illustrative.

This (neo-Marxist) understanding of ideology may sound disempowering because it leaves no room for escaping dominant ideologies and ubiquitous power structures.[6] However, many approaches in visual culture assume that we are always part of a power structure but can simultaneously *oppose* it through small interventions. The entanglement of rule and resistance is emphasized by theorists who focus on more subtle forms of domination, in which the governed citizens cooperate with the power institutions to some extent. Most notably, numerous approaches to power and visual categorization and representation build on Michel Foucault's discourse theory.

Foucault's thoughts significantly influenced visual culture approaches to the (discursive) power of images even before visual culture was institutionalized as a research field; thus, they serve to theoretically bridge social science and visual culture understandings of visual resistance. At the same time, both research fields often refer to Foucault's famous quote: "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1978: 95).

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Foucault believed that the governed individual is subjugated and objectified through relations of power and knowledge (Rose 2016: 188; Fuery and Fuery 2003: 2). He argued that, in democratic political systems, power structures are subtle because they work through cooperation instead of coercion and make citizens self-regulate their behavior according to dominant norms, values, and laws. In terms of images, the power to shape visual discourse determines what can be thought and said, seen and shown, and what is made invisible (Evans and Hall 1999: 311; Rose 2012: 191). Foucault considered the visual to be one of the regulating and ordering techniques employed by institutions, such as the "medical gaze" as applied in the clinics' visual categorization of bodies into "normal" and "sick" (Foucault 1963), public punishment in cities' marketplaces for display and deterrence, or his concept of panopticism to effectively surveil and (self-)control a society (Foucault 1975). From a Foucauldian perspective, during their creation of subjectivity, individuals may produce antagonistic strategies by refusing objectification and thus shift power relations of what can be seen and shown in the struggle against domination, exploitation, and subjection (Fuery and Fuery 2003: 1, 3).

At this point, the question of what exactly I mean when I talk about resistance, and what "rule" means for me, arises. If a Foucauldian view sees resistance *everywhere* where there is power, what do I include into my considerations when I discuss these political phenomena? In this book, I understand "rule" to be "a structure of institutionalized superordination and subordination through which basic goods and influence are distributed and expectations are stabilized, regardless of whether these structures are primarily of a sociocultural, an economic or a military nature" (Daase and Deitelhoff 2014: 1).[7]

Regarding the definition of resistance, some scholars see it everywhere, while for others it needs to fulfil a lot of criteria to qualify as "genuine." Since in this book I aim to include a variety of phenomena, I draw on a rather broad concept: resistance is an *action/active behavior*, whether verbal, cognitive, symbolic, or physical, and a form of *opposition* that is thus directed *against* something (Hollander and Einwohner 2004). For this broad understanding, the action does *not* necessarily need to be *intended* as resistance by the persons who carry it out, nor does it need to be *recognized* as such by the target group or the public.

However, the aspect of recognition (that is often used interchangeably with *visibility*) does play a role when differentiating resistance from protest as another related term that is frequently used in the context of the aesthetics of resistance and visual activism. Especially in social movement studies, *protest* is investigated as public and collective activities by nonstate players express-

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ing dissent and critique related to a social or political concern (Neidhardt and Rucht 2001: 537). As I will, in this book, limit my attention neither to collective action by nonstate actors (but potentially consider actions by individual artists or state actors too) nor to strategically developed or planned repertoires of contention,[8] I prefer to speak of resistance instead of protest. Studies of contentious politics and social movements commonly assume that it is exclusively nonstate players who take measures of protest. However, when looking at the entanglements of resistance within power structures, it may be exactly these state players who frame their opposition to other more powerful and dominant actors as resistance. For instance, in the context of global power relations, state agencies may resist each other's policies, when governments disagree with each other's foreign politics, such as trade or environmental policies of other states or international nuclear nonproliferation (Chin and Mittelman [2000] 2005: 26; Daase and Deitelhoff 2014: 13).

At this point, it is important to emphasize that resistance is far from referring to only progressive actions demanding social change and liberal freedom. Rather, the term encompasses emancipatory and revolutionary movements as well as status-quo-oriented and reactionary ones. For instance, opening an umbrella of ideological directions, Owen Worth distinguishes three types of resistance: progressive internationalism ("from the left"), national-populism ("from the right"), and religious fundamentalism ("from above") (Worth 2013: 42).

Another social scientist concept that naturally comes to mind when thinking about visual culture's everyday understanding of power and resistance is the idea of "everyday resistance." This concept provides some helpful clues because it takes into account actors who do not necessarily employ formal kinds of politics or publicly recognizable means of contestations (de Certeau 1984; Vinthagen and Johansson 2013: 9). Moreover, it deals with the mutually constitutive relationship between resistance and rule, since nonformal contestation partly complies with the power structures within which it is embedded. Unlike public and collective demonstrations, riots, or rebellions, everyday resistance as a way to undermine power might not be as easy to recognize. Such individual behavior—be it the way we dress or in our routines in private life or the workplace—is much less dramatic and not politically articulated or declared but rather anonymous and typically hidden or disguised (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013: 2, 4). Albeit small-scale in the individual case, everyday techniques may evolve into a "pattern of resistance" (Scott 1989: 36) and thus become powerful due to their quantity. In this sense, Ryan sees street art interventions as hidden transcripts or "infrapolitics" (Scott 1990), given their potential to do "everyday politics" and question hegemonic conventions and dominant cultural codes (Ryan 2017: 8).

However, in my view, visual forms of resistance—given their visibility (above all, when in public space, such as street art)—are anything but hidden and therefore do not fit the common understanding of "everyday resistance." By contrast, the claim to public visibility is key to visual resistance.[9] Although "everyday resistance" is not the central concept of this book, it helps us to think about the key questions of this book. As becomes clear in Foucault's abovementioned quote, resistance and rule constitute each other and are no dichotomous, clean-but categories. This entanglement has been referred to as ambiguity, accommodation, assimilation, complicity, or co-optation.[10] Although people may (even successfully) contest a system of power, they will always remain part of that very system. Or, in other words: "Every moment of resistance was shaped by the very structure of power against which it rebelled" (Mamdani 1996: 24).

Additionally, it must be taken into account that neither dominators nor resisters are monolithic entities. Neither are resistance and compliance mutually exclusive binary categories, nor is resistance always nonstate in opposition to state power. Power and resistance have a cyclical relationship because domination always provokes opposition, which, in turn, leads to stronger efforts to maintain power (Hollander and Einwohner 2004: 548; Amoore 2005: 7). Learning plays a central role in that cycle. For instance, rebel groups who claim legitimacy by opposing (illegitimate) regimes have to find a new narrative once they are successful and become part of the (new) government. While in their self-portrayal, former anti-system fighters fluctuate between maintaining their narrative of resistance and proving their ability to rule, they may oscillate between rebellion and government (Hensell 2015).

As should have become evident, social science concepts of resistance that take into account its entanglement with power structures are partly building on the same basic theoretical assumptions as visual culture approaches to power and resistance. Both Foucault's and Gramsci's work is key to non-institutional, cultural, and discursive perspectives on power in pre-political spaces. In Gramsci's post-Marxist understanding of hegemony, different groups of society are constantly struggling over hegemony. Hegemony is achieved neither by physical force nor by mere economic dominance but by the consent among the dominant class and the majority of the population. This consent is only reached with the help of ideology. For political opposition, Gramsci views the "war of position" to be key to winning hegemony, which includes more implicit forms of protest, partly on the level of everyday life, including boycotts, public contestation of certain policies, etc. In liberal democracies, "common sense" is constructed and ideas must win in the civil society, where leaders must secure hearts and minds through popular consent (Worth 2013: 56; Gramsci [1971] 2014: 229, 333). Gramsci's thoughts on

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resistance, hegemony, and ideology allow for a discursive understanding of the political as a struggle for cultural hegemony and visibility. This is because he considered popular culture and folklore to be central tools in the "war of position."

Just as for Gramsci ideology is a battlefield of continuous struggle over hegemony, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985: 105) conceptualize "the political" as an antagonistic battlefield over ideological hegemony with the help of "structured articulatory practices"—discourses. This idea of the political beyond institutional politics allows for examining street art as a potential site of resistance *and* co-optation. In that sense, I follow Ryan in that we must "propose wide and encompassing parameters for what constitutes politics and who counts as a relevant political actor" (Ryan 2017: 1). Therefore, "doing politics" means showing that what was formerly considered social, domestic, or economic may indeed be political as well (Ryan 2017: 1–2). For this understanding of the political as a struggle between resistance and rule, the tradition in which the field of visual culture stands is a case in point.

Research Design: Analyzing Street Art in Latin American Urban Space

To make the phenomenon of visual power and resistance more tangible, in this book I look at empirical forms of visual resistance in the case of street art in Latin American big cities. Although my research aims to contribute to conceptualizing visual resistance in a general understanding, and not just regarding street art, it would be both theoretically too abstract and empirically too broad to examine visual media in general. Therefore, I concentrate on a specific medium whose characteristics must be carefully taken into consideration in the empirical analysis.

I consider the term "medium" to be broader and more adequate than, for instance, the concept of "art." Assuming that the "art" in "street art" is a strategical label that entails the problematic question of what is art and what is not, to engage the concept of art (instead of medium) would limit my research scope in an unnecessary way. A medium, in the most general sense, is something that is transmitting information between two or more entities (Fahlenbrach 2016b: 94). Mass media allows for diffusing information beyond distinct local public spheres, which are thus broader "arenas of discursive conflict and struggles" (Fahlenbrach 2016b: 95). Calling for more interdisciplinary research, Kathrin Fahlenbrach stresses that

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> discourse analysis and cultural studies provide important approaches to investigate the discursive conflicts and power relations between different actors involved in contentious communication. Accordingly, a public sphere might be understood as an arena of contestation, where hegemonic and nonhegemonic actors fight for accomplishing their readings of a conflict, including its identification, interpretation, and solution. (Fahlenbrach 2016b: 108)

Consequently, street art images (and photos of them) operate in the interrelated public spheres of the street and the virtual public sphere of online and mass media. In this study, I understand street art to encompass various techniques of visual representations applied to surfaces in urban outdoor areas. These techniques are stencils, murals, stickers, paste-ups, and written phrases. In Latin America, both state institutions and a broad spectrum of nonstate groups traditionally utilize street art to communicate, to inform, and to persuade others. As a politicized medium, it fulfills a variety of functions, ranging from general public information and announcing of events to an advocacy forum for social commentary and the articulation of political agendas (Chaffee 1993: 3, 8). Although Latin American political activists have long been underlining the political power of street art, social movement scholars have for long almost completely ignored it (Ryan 2017: 21).

Consequently, Latin American urban and political hubs are promising empirical examples for examining forms of visual resistance. As I must focus on certain locations but simultaneously aim to avoid results that are too particular in their local contexts, I chose four metropolises in Latin American countries: Buenos Aires, Bogotá, Caracas, and Mexico City.

Since the walls in these capitals are full of images and slogans, I further limited my material thematically. Therefore I focus on street art that refers to (neo-)imperialism and potentially expresses anti-imperialist resistance. In her work, Ryan confirms the importance of the imperial experience for Latin American street art, which still influences how a broad range of actors is included into visibility, representation, and claim-making or, conversely, excluded from it:

> The emergence of political street art as a contentious performance in Latin America therefore takes place against a complex backdrop that includes the transfer of people, ideas and images horizontally, across the Atlantic and also vertically, between the Americas. . . . It includes processes of nation-building that have, at times, involved the importation and emulation of Western political institutions, and at

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> others involved endeavors to subvert, purge and replace European and North American influence. (Ryan 2017: 7)

Similarly, in his account of countervisuality throughout history, Mirzoeff (2011) focuses on the (former) colonies in the Americas in which the "counterhistory" against (neo-)colonialism and imperialism is embedded in the context of North-South relations. In his works, he repeatedly mentions the visual power of resistance movements in Latin America ranging from the 1994 Zapatista uprising against free trade to the December 2001 protests in Argentina against external debt (Mirzoeff 2017: 216).

To analyze which forms of visual resistance street art constitutes in the interplay with political power relations, I apply my analytical framework with the help of a mixed-methods approach. Combining methods from various disciplinary strands in visual culture, I first established a photo database of 1,710 street art pieces and subsequently took this photo material as an entry point to examine the political expressions along the seven dimensions of analysis. The visual content of the image (which I call the iconological dimension or I level) is taken as a starting point to explore the political context within which the images are operating (that is, the other analytical dimensions). More specifically, I first used a quantitative content analysis to find general discursive strands and visual patterns (utilizing the software MAXQDA) in order to subsequently choose one image per city to be analyzed in some depth. Triangulating different methods and sources, I mainly drew upon data gathered during my research trips. Besides my own photo material, these sources include twenty-two interviews with artists and other experts (e.g., from cultural institutions), three focus group interviews, four street surveys in front of important images, ethnographically inspired methods such as field notes, as well as primary and secondary literature.

However, I am aware of the limitations of the results. First and foremost, differentiating seven dimensions of the image may help understand it in an analytical sense, but this necessarily entails an artificial separation of the complex interplay of characteristics in the empirical world. Commenting on her own analytical levels, which inspired my framework, Gillian Rose reminds us that they are in practice difficult to distinguish from one another and that the lines of her analysis are "misleading solid" (Rose 2016: 374). Scholars from art and art history may find this separation of "content" and "form" even scandalous. The analytical separation of an image's production (P level) and its audiencing (A level) may be challenging given that increasingly "participatory" digital spheres make it hard to distinguish who is a producer and who is "only" the audience. Additionally, the framework is shaped by the specific characteristics of the medium street art, and it surely must be

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asked whether it is applicable to other visual media beyond the particularities of communication in the (physical) public space.

Roadmap: The Content of the Book

Visual culture has long been considered a distraction from "serious" scientific analysis of politics. However, also in the social sciences, the role of the visual is gradually being acknowledged. Political scientists have long been reluctant to seriously address the role of images, even though political communication is one of their central research areas. By contrast, visual culture takes images seriously, whether they appear within "high" politics or in everyday life. It enables us to extend an institutionalist or even state-centric understanding of the political to questions of visual representation and interpretation in everyday culture. In his plea for an "aesthetic turn" in international relations (the academic discipline), Roland Bleiker sees representation as being an act of power (Bleiker 2001: 515). Assuming that there is always a gap between a representation and what is supposed to be represented, he states: "Rather than ignoring or seeking to narrow this gap . . . aesthetic insight recognises that the inevitable difference between the represented and its representation is the very location of politics" (Bleiker 2001: 510).

In this book, I demonstrate how we can increase our everyday visual literacy and how political science can learn from visual culture in broadening our perspectives on political phenomena by including both textual and visual data and by employing visual culture theories and methodologies. This way, the political strategies and narratives of social actors may be made accessible from another perspective through examining processes of meaning-making and persuasion.

For this purpose, I proceed as follows: in the next chapter, I introduce my analytical framework with its seven levels or dimensions, which I derived from existing theoretical visual culture approaches on visual power and resistance. In addition, I present my mixed-methods approach of visual analysis, including the operationalization of the seven analytical levels as well as possible tools of data collection and interpretation, namely photo documentation, visual discourse analysis, and auxiliary methods of data gathering (chapter 1). In the subsequent chapter I conceptualize my understanding of street art and look at how it is used as a medium of visual political communication worldwide (chapter 2). The next chapter serves to set the scene for the case studies and briefly explain what I mean by (anti-)imperialism as a thematic scope of my empirical analysis (chapter 3). In the four subsequent chapters, on Buenos Aires (chapter 4), Mexico City (chapter 5), Caracas (chapter 6),

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and Bogotá (chapter 7), I investigate street art in the four cities and illustrate with the help of visual material. The findings across the cities will then be summarized in a more general and comparative view on the data material (chapter 8). Finally, the conclusion will come back to my key questions and discuss further implications of the results.

Notes

1. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/joshuah-bearman/behind-obamas-iconic-hope_b_143148.html (retrieved 2 May 2020).
2. Being one of the most ambitious accounts on this topic, Weiss's epic novel inspired the title of this book. While he reflects on artistic resistance against the German Nazi regime from the perspective of the working class, I here aim to complement my interest in the aesthetics of resistance by learning about the aesthetics of rule as well.
3. https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20200612-black-lives-matter-protests-why-are-statues-so-powerful (retrieved 23 October 2020).
4. When he declared the "pictorial turn" in humanities, W. J. T. Mitchell suggested to transfer the semiotic perspective of linguistic and discursive (post)structuralism from *reading* to *seeing*, or more precisely, to *spectatorship* (in terms of "the look," "the gaze," surveillance, or visual pleasure), because "visual literacy" might help understand processes beyond our usual text material (Mitchell 1994: 16).
5. Visual culture is related to the field of cultural studies. For instance, Stuart Hall and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) examined how media representations are controlled by ideological implications of culture, power structures, and social authority, e.g., how marginalized groups were represented in British mass media, particularly in everyday and popular culture.
6. For this neo-Marxist understanding of ideology, see Althusser (1970); Evans and Hall (1999: 321).
7. In the Latin American context of the "coloniality of power," Aníbal Quijano (2000) has a similarly general understanding of rule as an asymmetrical relation in which one group controls the actions of the other (see Quintero 2013: 56). In this sense, rule would be a form of structural power that is employed by groups and institutions in asymmetrical relations.
8. See Tarrow (1993); Taylor and Dyke (2004); Tilly and Tarrow (2006: 27–44); see also Rucht (2015); Stanisavljevic (2016).
9. However, while practices of everyday resistance may be actually (sensory) visible, they "might also be *made* invisible by society, by not being recognized as resistance" (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013: 10).
10. For the co-optation of critique in order to optimize power, see Luc Boltanski's and Ève Chiapello's *Le nouvel Ésprit du Capitalisme* (New spirit of capitalism, 1999). Boltanski and Chiapello assume that social and artistic critique of capitalism lead to its revival because claims—for more autonomy, creativity, and mobility, for instance—have been fulfilled and integrated into management strategies.

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Chapter 1

From Conceptualizing to Analyzing Visual Power and Resistance

Visual political communication lies at the interface of various research areas. To explore what different strands in visual culture offer regarding dimensions of potential visual resistance, I assessed literature from disciplinary backgrounds such as art history and aesthetics, media and cultural studies, as well as feminist studies, art history, and film theory.[1] These contributions address questions that are central to my research interest: which features of an image express its political character and tell us something about its potential to either express resistance to or constitute a tool for maintaining power structures? Which power relations are in play in situations of showing, seeing, and being seen, and which opportunities of resistance do they, in turn, offer? The review showed that existent approaches differentiate between *what* (or *who*) is represented, *how* it is represented, *who* represents it, and *who* sees it. In other words, from a perspective of power relations, it is crucial to determine *who* has the power to produce images, and thus represent oneself and others, and who does not. At the same time, it is important to understand *how* social groups are represented in the image itself, and who is assumed to be the *audience*—or, as Mirzoeff puts it, who has the right to look and the right to be seen (Mirzoeff 2011: 4, 148, 221).

With more methodological clarity, Rose (2016: 25) provides a valuable way to structure our thoughts on visuality by differentiating four sites of the image: the production (who made the image of which genre, why, when, and for whom?), the image itself (visual meanings and effects, composition), the circulation (who organized it and why? How does it change the image?), and audiencing (how is the image interpreted by whom, where is it displayed, and which viewing positions are offered?). In line with this, I argue that visual resistance manifests in different dimensions of the image, which we need to identify and distinguish for analyzing the political context in which the image is embedded. However, in order to grasp visual power, resistance, and their entanglement, Rose's dimensions need to be differentiated. Therefore I derived seven dimensions of the image that make up my own analytical framework.

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In the following, I first introduce these analytical dimensions. Subsequently, in order to make the framework applicable to empirical cases, I will introduce a methodological approach with specific tools of data collection and interpretation to empirically analyze images according to the seven levels.

A Visual Resistance Framework

The theoretical accounts on visual media are conceptually and philosophically diverse. However, it is possible to derive a framework that offers a structured approach to analyze the different characteristics of an image. Inspired by Stuart Hall's distinction of "moments" of the communication process (Hall 1993) and Gillian Rose's "sites" of an image in critical visual methodology (Rose 2016), we may think of images in terms of seven dimensions in which resistance potentially manifests. These dimensions are the iconological content of the image (I level), its spatial location (S level), the interests and social position of its producers (P level), its material conditions (M level), its legal status (L level), its reception and reactions by the audience (A level), and the political circumstances of its time (T level). Contradictions arise if an image seems to express resistance in one of these dimensions, but on another level, it is limited by power relations.

To describe the distinctive but interrelated moments of communication, Hall (1993) suggested replacing the common unidirectional and linear model of the communication process (sender-message-receiver) by a circular one that differentiates four moments: production, circulation, use (consumption/distribution), and reproduction. This already demonstrates that the notion of the audience as (passive) "receivers" needs to be replaced by a more active understanding of "audiencing" (Rose 2016). This entails active use of media and its re-production, challenging the rather outdated differentiation between producers and consumers, which have become increasingly blurred in the age of the YouTube, TikTok, and smartphone (video) cameras. However, I opt for distinguishing the dimensions of production (P level) and audiencing (A level) for the sake of analytical clarity (see below).

When describing the main characteristics of each dimension, I offer a brief view into the visual culture literature that guided my differentiation of the seven levels, providing some first concrete examples of potential visual resistance. Later, in the empirical part of this book, I will come back to these approaches during the analysis and interpretation of images in my case study. Concepts of resistance differ in their "specific understandings of what power means, how it is exercised, and what is the nature of politics and political

life" (Amoore 2005: 3). Therefore, I will consider not only approaches that describe visual resistance but also those that conceptualize visual mechanisms of power and rule.

The order in which I introduce the seven dimensions does not imply any hierarchy in terms of relevance or chronology of analytical steps. Still, I take the iconological dimension as a starting point, since the content of an image is the most obvious and usually the first aspect people see, without having much background information.

By offering an analytical tool for a differentiated examination of the visual, I do not pretend these dimensions were mutually exclusive, clear-cut independent categories. Still, I assume that the framework will demonstrate how resistance may show on one level while ambivalences and contradictions may be identified on another one. In other words, while one level indicates a resistant character, another level might reveal the simultaneous entanglement of the image within power structures.

The Iconological Dimension

Most obviously, the content of the image regarding both *what* is depicted and *how* it is done so may indicate symbolic meanings of resistance in an iconological dimension (I level). Since visual representations support discursive truth claims and make things appear evident, they are used to convey narratives in line with certain ideologies. Psychological effects of shared emotions are triggered by specific characteristics of visual stimuli that are responsible for the affective qualities of images.[2] Social groups are made visible in particular ways with the help of visual features, such as body posture, hand gestures, facial expressions, and clothes. Strategies of persuasion are pursued using iconological symbols and visual tools (color, composition, perspective, artistic style) as well as by depicting famous individual icons that personify charismatic leadership. Other visual tools of persuasion are "do-it-yourself" aesthetics and affective archetypal narratives of "good" versus "evil," or "self" versus "other" (Fahlenbrach 2016a). Simultaneously, for the purpose of external communication, protest imagery must respond to established news values that, often unconsciously, account for visual attractiveness and provide a personalized approach.

In order to challenge hegemonic narratives and provide alternative representations and versions of history, signs and symbols are appropriated, reframed, and recontextualized by humorous subversion, often referring to popular and everyday culture (Bhabha 1983; Fahlenbrach 2016a; Malmvig 2016). For the viewer, the prospect of becoming part of a "cool," "epic," or "sexy" community is enhanced by symbolic and visual strategies of engage-

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ment, as reflected in the joyful and humorous aesthetics of some protest groups. Particularly humorous intertextual references to popular culture may inspire some to hope and to act upon political problems. Harnessing the logic of the media system by recontextualizing symbols and reframing dominant narratives from mainstream media and popular culture, groups challenge the control over signs and symbols by hegemonic discourses and claim the right to access formerly elitist channels of circulation (Ferrada Stoehrel and Lindgren 2014: 258–60).

Aiming to reach and mobilize audiences (even with limited literacy), public protest images (e.g., posters) must condense complex ideological positions into simple and catchy messages in order to "sell a story quickly, dramatically, and primarily visually" (Reed 2016: 83). In doing so, mobilization and consciousness raising works through at least two different modes of affective visualization: one that triggers negative feelings (and thus works through anger-related energy) and one that evokes positive feelings (such as being represented as a political subject, belonging to a strong group, or imagining a positive future vision) (Adami 2016: 73). Positive visual-discursive strategies encompass ridiculing and appropriating the old symbols of the regime, comedy, and laughter as a strategy to evoke feelings of agency, belonging, and new subjectivities, as well as points of identification or role models through depicting persons with aspirational and empowering characteristics (e.g., through affective facial expressions) (Malmvig 2016: 268–69, 273–77).

These counternarratives in the content of an image may raise political awareness and develop "aesthetics of resistance" by launching counterinformation operations to oppose the government's publicity and the official culture machinery, as Luis Camnitzer explains in the Latin American context (Camnitzer 2009: 64). Nonetheless, protest aesthetics have an ambivalent relationship with mainstream media aesthetics and are therefore prone to be co-opted (Fahlenbrach et al. 2016).

For Mirzoeff, negative framings of oppression can be visualized through "realisms," i.e., the documentation of violence without aestheticizing and thus legitimizing or "normalizing" it. In the (post)colonial, (neo-)imperialist context, he emphasizes that global links between situations in the Global North and the Global South can be made visible by what Achille Mbembe (2001) called the "entanglement" between European modernity and the colonized societies (Mirzoeff 2011: 83). On the other hand, positive framings appear in the form of specific visuals that symbolize the powerful struggle against imperialism and colonialism in different historical eras. These figures of "countervisuality" include "the South,"[3] "the biosphere," the "indigenous countervisuality" (what Eduardo Viveiros de Castro calls "Amerindian

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perspective"), and the "proletarian countervisuality" as well as "the popular hero," "the people," or the assembled multitude (Mirzoeff 2011, 2016; see also Mitchell 2012). Throughout history, autocratic heroism was challenged by the personified resistance of the vernacular hero, the African hero,[4] and the feminine heroine.[5] Developing a new imaginary of "the people," marginalized groups—formerly colonized, enslaved, racialized, or so-called "primitives," etc.—visually represented themselves as new political subjects, social agents, and right holders who were actively "making history" instead of merely following history and requesting emancipation from their masters (Mirzoeff 2011: 78–79, 186, 221). Here it becomes obvious that the iconological potential of an image lies not so much in what is represented but *how* it is represented. As feminist and postcolonial approaches emphasize, visual representations of a social group are not inherently empowering, for there is the risk of stereotyping and thus misrepresenting (Mulvey 1975; Bhabha 1983).

The Material Dimension

The material features of the medium, such as its technological components, quality, and quantity, influence whether the image exposes a resistant character (M level). The physical characteristics and technology of a particular medium determine whether it is accessible for a nonelitist audience. While the technical quality and mode of presentation affects how an image is perceived by the audience, the repetition of small-scale interventions enhances the potential effect of the images in terms of quantity. As Hall (1993) reminded us, how a "story" or narrative is perceived and whether it persuades the audience is crucially influenced by its material "form of appearance," relying on the technical tools of transmission and mode of presentation. In this sense, specific (material) visual technologies, such as impressive artistic quality and modes of spectacular presentation, enhance the persuasiveness and social authority of images.

To explain how the power of images is shaped by their mode of presentation, the film theorist and semiotician Christian Metz (1975) introduced the concept of the "scopic regime." For him, the dominant regime of his time was the modern cinematic apparatus, because it facilitates disseminating the ideologies of the dominant society and culture industry. Through the typical cinematic ambience and experience, including the darkened auditorium, the spectacular sound, etc., "the viewer suspends disbelief in the fictional world of the film, identifies not only with specific characters in the film but more importantly with the film's overall ideology through identification with the film's narrative structure and visual point of view . . ." (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 72).

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In terms of technology and digital mediation, in order to make countervisuality visible, it is crucial to employ a technology that is accessible for marginalized people and eligible for mass distribution. For instance, long before today's online media, lithographs visualized the heroic popular figures of the Haitian Revolution and the perspective of the Third Estate in the French Revolution.[6] At that time, lithographs were a completely new technology of mass reproduction and circulation that became a popular print medium allowing the dissemination of reproductions of vernacular images in huge numbers within the Atlantic triangle. Similarly, during the Paris Commune, posters and banners played a key role in the ideological struggle of the historical event (Mirzoeff 2011: 184).

From a postcolonial perspective, Bhabha (1994) argues that in Indian colonies, everyday resistance consisted of mostly tiny but reiterated interventions, which, in sum, were able to cause slight shifts and contribute to a subtle process of subversion or transformation. This "performative power of reiteration" (Bhabha 1994: 190) hints at the importance of quantity, although there might not be large-scale, overt expressions of resistance.

The Spatial Dimension

Images express resistance through their spatial location, which potentially indicates a political purpose and/or symbolic occupation of space (S level). In this regard, certain artistic images leave the restrictive space of galleries or museums to both physically and symbolically reclaim and appropriate space. For Camnitzer (2009), in Latin American art history, resistant art needed to leave the showplace of the gallery or the museum, where it is only accessible for an elite public. While public art is available for everyone, the idea of art as property bears the risk of ignoring class issues related to art and of being coopted by the art market as a globalizing commercial enterprise (Camnitzer 2009: 68, 72).

The dimension of space is key to reaching public visibility. For instance, the huge impact of Latin American political muralism, such as in postrevolutionary Mexico and Nicaragua, is largely attributed to its success in reaching large parts of the population (Reed 2016: 84). The creation of political subjects is closely intertwined with the creation of physical space for political debate and locations for visual discussion, such as by wall painting in the 2011 Egyptian uprising (Abaza 2012). Both in the Egyptian uprising and the 2011/12 Occupy Wall Street movement, the occupations of Tahrir Square and Zuccotti Park symbolized that mere visual and physical presence in the public space may demonstrate that space should not be private property but instead a place where average people claim their right of being seen

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and heard.[7] The "rhetoric of public space" (Mitchell 2012: 10) profoundly influenced a new protest iconology (see I level above): instead of (individual) faces, the occupation of space itself was the central icon of the protests. Either the anonymous protestor or the mass—the assembled crowd, the multitude—symbolized the power of occupation and leaderless democratic power.

In a similar vein, drawing on Hannah Arendt and Judith Butler, Mirzoeff explains his concept of "appearance" (in space) as follows:

> Who has the right to appear in urban space? "Whose streets?" people ask in protests. . . . In claiming the intersection in both physical space and political understanding, the space of appearance counters the built environment that forms spaces of nonappearance. . . . The space of appearance is a claim to space that is not subject to the police. Yet in the Americas space cannot be so claimed without reflection because it was all Native land first. (Mirzoeff 2017: 21)

But resistance through the visual occupation of space is not a mere phenomenon of contemporary urban protest movements. In the history of colonialism, visual means were used to maintain order, mark territory, and define zones of authority and prohibition (e.g., by flags, mapping, and history painting). Simultaneously, they served as a potential technique for remapping social space (Mirzoeff 2011: 61, 203, 221). In the plantation complex, for example, the enslaved turned the overseer's techniques against him by drawing maps themselves in order to enable space for their own commerce and entertainment (dance, singing, carnival, inter alia). More specifically, the Jamaican Maroons and their leader "Queen Nanny" facilitated resistance or escape by symbolically creating "free zones" in which slavery was illegitimate (Aikins 2009; Mirzoeff 2011: 60, 61).

The Time Dimension

Regarding the historical moment in time, the situation in which the image was produced and/or displayed may indicate a certain occasion of resistance (T level). Images need to be analyzed with regard to their specific social and political circumstances in their historical eras.[8] This includes political events, trends or incidents as well as the question of which government was in power at that time, and which narratives were dominant in political discourse.

Although the dimension of time is probably the most obvious aspect that we need to take into account—or precisely because of that—it is also the aspect that is least explicitly distinguished in existing approaches. Still,

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authors such as Malmvig (2016)—with regard to the Syrian uprising in 2011—and Camnitzer (2009)—concerning Chile under Pinochet in the 1980/90s—underline that in times of authoritarian rule or dictatorship, artworks or images criticizing the government are much more obvious indicators of resistance than in times of democracy and freedom of expression. Judgments about which content and forms are considered a threat against the state or that challenge existing hegemonic ideas of what is "normal" and how something should look (e.g., representations of colonialized populations, see Bhabha 1983) vary over time, depending on the political and social circumstances. However, many of these examples, for instance when related to censorship, depend as well on the legal conditions at a given time (see below). Concerning the wider historical frame for contextualizing image interpretation, the dates of production may indicate a specific occasion or event that is criticized or protested by the image.

The Legal Dimension

The legal dimension implies whether the production, display, or distribution of an image is authorized or breaks the law, and if it thus may itself be viewed an act of resistance or not (L level). What is allowed to show and to see is legally controlled by social and judicial norms and public authorities. Production of critical images may be legally restricted, and political expressions (about certain topics or people) may be illegalized, most obviously under conditions of formal or informal censorship.

Particularly in authoritarian regimes, an image's content is directly influenced by legal restrictions of the freedom of expression. However, visual resistance may attempt to circumvent censorship. For instance, socialist artists under Pinochet's military dictatorship in Chile developed ambiguous visual codes that made their political critique clandestine. Simultaneously they managed to appeal to the snobbery of the intellectual elite in the regime with the help of internationally applauded avant-garde styles and thereby made their art officially acceptable (Camnitzer 2009: 69). This ability to negotiate visual language (see the iconological dimension above) demonstrates how resistant endeavors must keep the balance between critique and the risk of being punished by the ruling system.

The example of the protest movement Anonymous sheds light on the legal dimension of visual activism as well. As its name implies, the movement prefers the anonymity of both the producers and the depicted persons in their visuals to a personalized iconography. However, this is not only to highlight their rejection of personalized leadership; it is also because their approach includes illegal hacking activities. While this subversive aura may

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for some even upgrade the "forbidden" pleasures, it also entails a serious legal risk (Ferrada Stoehrel and Lindgren 2014: 240).

The legal aspect is crucial for several approaches that build on Jacques Rancière's (2004) "distribution of the sensible," meaning who is allowed to sense (e.g., to see) what. Who has the power to represent oneself in public space depends on whether the audience—"the emancipated spectator" (Rancière 2011)—decides to accept the "distribution of the sensible" and thus a state's legal prohibitions and police control.

Building on this approach, for Sofia Sienra Chaves (2015), breaking the law is only one of the possible ways for potentially subversive art to escape from what she calls "domesticated subversion." Following the tradition of Debord's Situationists and other political art groups, she argues, "artist-activists" aim to leave the restrictive artistic realm of the entertainment and culture industry and employ various legal or illegalized techniques—reaching from irony to vandalism—to establish a "subversive" discourse. However, most of them are absorbed by official discourse because all subversive potential gets lost once the logic of "the spectacle" is entered, and most artists within the art system lack the will to actually produce radical gestures and risk severe conflict by confronting the law. Therefore, for her, the problem with political art is not only that it is far from being an actual threat or causing a revolution of the established order but that it is, by contrast, absolutely functional for this order (Sienra Chaves 2015: 67–68).

An illustrative example of image production as an act of political dissent and legal persecution are the uprisings in the MENA region starting in 2011 (the so-called Arab Spring): due to dissident digital videos and photos, image producers are in constant danger of being arrested, humiliated, and even killed, because the authorities have recognized how important image making is in the struggle for visibility and legitimacy (Adami 2016: 73). If free expression in public space is legally restricted, even small-scale breaches of law can have huge effects. Although causality is not proven, an often-referred-to example is the youngsters who supposedly triggered the Syrian uprising in March 2011 by painting a graffito on a public wall in the city of Dara'a that said, "The people want the regime to fall" (Malmvig 2016: 258).

The Dimension of the Producers

The social position and the ambitions of the producer(s) may reveal a potentially resistant intention of the image, encompassing both the authors themselves and, if there are any, the financiers and/or institutions behind the production (P level). The dimension of the producers reveals their political interests as well as the ability of social groups to represent themselves (both

in a visual and a democratic way), including groups that are marginalized, stereotyped, or made invisible.

The contentious potential of an image strongly depends on the interests of its producers, why for many researchers it indicates a key question of potential visual resistance. Regarding power struggles over media narratives, the visual hegemonies of monopolized (Northern) media corporations have long "determined the formats and contents of representation in accordance with their own perspectives and interests and in the defense of their worldwide political power and privileges" (Fahlenbrach et al. 2014: 203). These (more or less) hidden financial capital powers and interests (more or less) subtly influencing global visual discourse are among the most pressing issues for investigation, since the "battle for hearts and minds" has turned into a "battle for eyes and minds" (Fahlenbrach 2016a: 206). The extended access to online media production has the potential to redefine political and economic power with the help of visual narratives. Still, it is debatable whether new visual information technology can actually democratize or even revolutionize traditional ways of representation and image circulation. Therefore, critical research in visual discourse needs to inquire about key visual narratives and the economic, political, and ideological interests in media production as well as the underlying rationales, worldviews, and values of the producers.

Regarding activist image production, visual communication does not only serve for external visibility and reaching political decision makers. It also matters for internal mobilization and identification by reinforcing a movement's collective identity and its participants' commitment (Fahlenbrach 2016a: 248). Visual resistance may thus not only be "effective" if it changes the minds of politicians, mainstream media makers, or the broader society. The adherents of the activist group themselves are also part of the audience, and they are targeted by their own imagery as well.

Similarly, the production of a certain visual rhetoric and aesthetic may foster collective identity by giving the producers themselves the feeling of belonging to a group. The potential of affect, "passion," or "joy" to mobilize resistance is highlighted by an adherent of the activist movement Anonymous in an interview: "Boredom is counterrevolutionary. Political resistance needs to be fun, or no one will want to participate" (cited in Ferrada Stoehrel and Lindgren 2014: 252). This focus on the "joy of resistance"[9] highlights how important the social dimension of image production is for community and identity building. For some activists, engaging with "the political" and fighting for social change may only be attractive if, in their political communication, social movements combine rational and cognitive issues (human rights, inter alia) with an aesthetic and affective policy.[10] Accordingly, regarding access to image production, Anonymous' communication may be

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considered "alternative media," "claiming access to visual truths by providing and distributing forms of citizen journalism, visual leaks and grassroots visuals that compete with the visual narrative of state and commercial media" (Ferrada Stoehrel and Lindgren 2014: 260).

Anonymous and collective image production have a certain contentious potential. An anonymous producer might simply indicate an unauthorized and potentially subversive act, in which the producer wishes to remain unknown. For Sienra Chavez (2015), anonymous or collective authorship is one of the very few ways for the arts to overcome its domestication by "the spectacle." Here the artist drops their protagonistic aspirations and economic remuneration and stays anonymous in favor of collaborative and clandestine actions (e.g., memes, creative commons arts, hacking actions) (Sienra Chaves 2015: 84). In revolutionary art in Latin America, image production was often shaped by collective authorship, e.g., in mural painting, film, or print media, that avoided a possible co-optation of an individual artist. A collective production process and authorship may indicate that the producers scrutinize or even reject individual artistic fame and economic profit. At the same time, such joint actions and performances may enhance the cohesion and mobilization of the group and serve internal group communication (Castellanos 2017; Camnitzer 2009: 68).

Similarly, the collective production of (almost) invisible expressions of resistance is important to the idea of everyday resistance (see introduction), beyond spectacular uprisings and revolts, that is not necessarily intentional. In colonial societies, as Bhabha (1994) underlines, the colonized used humor to empower themselves by enhancing their feeling of collective agency, regardless of its actual effect on the dominators. These small but shared positive everyday experiences, means of mockery, and instances of comic subversion primarily intended to foster solidarity among the colonized and contributed to the symbolic transfer of rebellious agency while also strengthening the sense of community among the colonized (Bhabha 1994: 85, 200).

This postcolonial perspective demonstrates that a crucial aspect of using images as an instrument of power is that representation differs from self-representation. Being able to represent oneself, a person or group can actively produce images on their own terms without becoming a passive object. With regard to resistance against hegemonic instruments of visualization, the categorized and objectified (sexualized, racialized, exoticized, etc.) people may actively oppose being represented by someone else.[11] Most significantly, bell hooks's (1992) "oppositional gaze" calls for opposing the dominant White and male culture by a "countergaze" in film production, changing the idea of who has the power to produce and represent social subjects and who is assumed to be the audience.[12]

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The concept of "the gaze"—a look that is at the same time desiring and objectifying a person—originates in feminist visual culture studies and film theory. Most prominently, Laura Mulvey (1975) and other feminist scholars (e.g., Nochlin 1971; Williamson 1978) examined the ideological and political power relations of representing women in Hollywood movies, advertisement, and the visual arts. In these industries it was (and still is) primarily men who possessed the visual means of production and the power to produce images, and where heterosexual, cisgender men were assumed to be the audience as well. Women's poor representation in public life and politics, as they argued, is reinforced by the powerful "male gaze" that reduces women to restrictive cultural attributes—"mother or sex symbol, virgin or vamp" (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 40).[13] With regard to subtle visual dissemination of (patriarchal) ideology, Donna Haraway declared that, throughout the history of male supremacy, militarism, colonialism, and capitalism, "the gaze" has helped image producers mark and categorize other bodies while they remained unmarked themselves (and thus mark "the norm"), legitimizing their "power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation" (Haraway 1991: 188).

In the twenty-first century, however, it is obvious that the boundaries between producer and consumer are constantly blurring. Thus a differentiation between (active) producers and (passive) spectators/audiences may be replaced by the concept of "prosumers" (Canclini 2013). In the age of mobile devices and online image and video sharing platforms, this concept blurs the lines between those who benefit from the "spectacle" and those who do not, and between those who determine what is sensible, sayable, or visible and those who do not. However, for Canclini, the inclusion of the population through "participatory" art is a mere demonstrative act of democratic integration and commonly a government's attempt to control resistance or a company's tool to legitimize itself through cultural marketing (Canclini 2013: 21). This perspective demonstrates how difficult it is to distinguish who is actually producing images and who is intended to see them, let alone to think of clear-cut boundaries between producers and an "audience."

The Dimension of Audiencing

An image may be understood as resistance due to the way it is perceived by the audience, which meanings are ascribed to it, and which social, political, economic reactions it evokes—in short, what Rose (2016) calls its "audiencing" (A level).[14] The audience's possibility to not only passively consume but to actively intervene in visual communication allows for appropriating and

negotiating dominant meanings. Parts of the audience may as well react by rejecting an image by means of destruction or punishment. In other cases, images that were intended to be resistance are utilized for economic profit, like in city marketing or in the art economy.

(Visual) media's effects on the audience, their perception, and their reactions are commonly crucial aspects of visual political communication. However, the boundaries between producers and consumers are merging. Given today's interactive media and increasing possibilities of producing and distributing media without having any significant economic or political power, many approaches abandoned the (Althusserian) understanding of the audience as passive receivers of ideology. They rather build on Hall's (1993) circular model of communication, which always considers the "recipient" a potential "sender" and "re-producer" and thus assumes a (re)active "audience." Similarly, Rose underlines that audience studies—a large field in media and cultural studies—has turned to investigating interactive "prosuming," such as in fan cultures and by online "users" (Rose 2016: 258–59).

With regard to the resistant potential of audiences, Hall examined questions of representation and ideology, cultural hegemony and counterculture from a post-Gramscian perspective. Aiming to detect and understand this ideological effect, Hall stresses the potential discrepancy between the content of the sign, the interests of its producer(s), and the interpretation by the spectator(s). Whereas the producers *encode* a sign according to their hegemonic definitions and interpretations to bring across their intended message, it only persuades, instructs, entertains, or acquires the intended political effectivity if the viewer *decodes* it in the same intended way (Hall 1993: 92–93). Hall distinguishes three different potential positions of an audience to "read" the codes of a message: First, in the *dominant-hegemonic position*, the viewer perceives the code as it was intended by the producer and thus reproduces its dominant or preferred meanings. In a *negotiated position*, the viewer affirms the hegemonic definitions on the abstract level but does not accept them as applying to their own realities and truths. Finally, in *oppositional decoding*, the viewer interprets the message in a contrary way that may entirely go against the interests and the intended message of the producer: "Here the 'politics of signification'—the struggle in discourse—is joined" (Hall 1993: 103). With these different ways of decoding, Hall provides space for agency by the audience who is anything but doomed to unquestioningly consume intended messages of hegemonic visual communication but may interpret it in a way that does not persuade them. The idea of "oppositional looking" therefore allows space for resistance to dominant visually communicated ideologies through potentially subversive messages (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 58, 63).

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In a similar understanding of active audiences, the Situationist International suggested concrete measures to win the ideological struggle against the capitalist ideological system. In *Society of the Spectacle* ([1967] 1983), their artistic head, Guy Debord, highlights possibilities for the audience not simply to accept unilateral communication but to interrupt the "traditional definitions of the aesthetic" (Debord [1957] 2002: 44). Their revolutionary artistic alternatives to the ruling culture include the technique of *détournement* (French: misuse, hijacking). *Détournement* employs a parodical mimicry of hegemonic communication in the urban public space, e.g., advertisement and billboards, by subtly altering it and thus turning its intended message against the producer. This "unitary urbanism" to reclaim public space inspired the later *adbusting/culture jamming* movement of the 1980s. Such appropriation of a visual symbol by "borrowing" or "stealing" it from its original context and changing its meaning by reversion or recontextualization, possibly in a humorous, ironic or parodic way, is one of the diverse forms of oppositional audiencing by means of visual appropriation.

Although both Hall's and Debord's approaches highlight the potentially resistant audiencing of an image through interpretation, they were well aware of the entanglement between resisting and affirming hegemonic culture within ideological struggle. Especially Hall points out the necessity to negotiate within and to appropriate hegemonic signs and narratives. Negotiation is a helpful analytical concept shedding light on the intertwined, sometimes contradictory relationship between power and resistance, and, on the level of audiencing, as a potential site of resistance (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 57).

Regarding contemporary global diffusion and perception of images in the digital sphere, the audiencing of an image on both the local and the international level may have a crucial impact on the perception of political struggle and the need for resistance: "Without this self-representation and broad dissemination, it would seem as if the protest had not taken place" (Adami 2016: 73). Despite the global diffusion of images on the internet, aesthetic practices are still produced and viewed in specific geographic locations and may influence how the political events are globally perceived and how urgent an external intervention appears to be (Adami 2016: 70–71, 76). In this regard, visual media also have documentary potential when it comes to mobilizing against oppression, by recording witnessed injustice and making it visible to the public.

However, it should not be assumed that protest visuals have an emancipatory effect per se. On the contrary, for Canclini (2013) it is delusive to expect "resistant" art to fulfill the pedagogic expectation that showing "unshowable" images might turn the spectators into rebels; nor does it lead to

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a collective emancipation or mobilize people to take radical transformative decisions outside of the museum. Still, art can be "contagious" and infect us with its indignation if its language detaches itself from being complicit with the dominant social order (Canclini 2013: 29–30).

One example that illustrates the ambivalences of urban artistic resistance is the 2013 Gezi Park protests in Istanbul and how they were appropriated within art economies. The political economy of the "cool" helps explain the "hipness" of resistance aesthetics and how subversive art contributes to a city's or country's marketing strategy (Özgün 2015; see also Bogerts 2018). Aiming to create economic value by being "different" from other cities, communal administrations—often in cooperation with companies—appropriate potentially subversive practices for the "cool" branding of a city. Since post-Fordism strives to overcome and circumvent resistance against the workflow of modern capitalism, contentious contemporary art is particularly attractive for co-optation. Consequently, even critical, subversive, and edgy statements and technologies are welcome due to their "potential for eventfulness" (Özgün 2015: 57).

No doubt, this theoretically derived analytical framework needs to be applied empirically in order to prove helpful. These different levels on which an image makes meaning enable the researcher to systematically assemble relevant information on the political, social, or economic context in which the image is situated. At the same time, this heuristic approach allows for identifying specific indicators for visual analysis. In the following section, I provide an overview of these concrete characteristics of images that I synthesized from the literature above and suggest methodological tools for examining these indicators with the empirical example of street art.

A Mixed-Methods Approach of Visual Analysis

While my analytical framework provides a systematic structure to examine the political characteristics of images, it remains to be clarified how the—somewhat abstract—seven dimensions can be operationalized for empirical studies and which tools of data collection and analysis can be employed. This section aims to propose a methodological way to deal with these manifold characteristics with the example of my case study, which is street art in Latin American metropolises. The indicators (see table 1.1 below) are derived from the literature from the previous section (on images and visual culture in general) and the subsequent chapter (on street art in particular). While the following detailed explanation of my own empirical procedures may be helpful

Table 1.1. Dimensions, operationalization of indicators, and methodological tools.

	Dimension	Operationalization/Indicators	Methodological tools
1	**iconology** (*I level*)	**I1: key visual elements/subjects** • persons • objects • symbols **I2: key themes** • (anti-)imperialism themes • general political themes • conceptual themes **I3: image-text relationship** **I4: title** (if known) **I5: colors** **I6: composition** **I7: style/genre** **I8: intervisual/-textual references**	• photo documentation • content analysis • visual discourse analysis • compositional analysis • focus group discussions • interviews • primary and secondary literature
2	**material** (*M level*)	**M1: technique** **M2: size/quantity** **M3: material/quality** • tools • color type • quality	• photo documentation • ethnographically informed observations
3	**space** (*S level*)	**S1: surface** • usage and function of building/surface • visibility • owner/user (and political relevance) **S2: location** • address • environment: street and district (public or private space, socioeconomic level, political relevance, art presence, etc.)	• photo documentation • ethnographically informed observations • interviews
4	**time** (*T level*)	**T1: time of production** • date of production/documentation • political circumstances/symbolic meaning **T2: duration of existence/changes over time**	• photo documentation (date in image) • interviews • primary and secondary literature research
5	**legal** (*L level*)	**L1: general legislation** • relevant laws • practice of law enforcement **L2: legal basis of the image** (unauthorized/authorized, contracted, or commissioned)	• ethnographically informed observations • interviews • primary and secondary literature research

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6	**producer(s)** (*P level*)	**P1: author(s)** • name (if known) or anonymous • individual or collective/institutional affiliation • local affiliation (local, national, or international) • artistic background • political orientation, power position, and social authority **P2: performative framework** • political or artistic action related to production **P3: principal/client** • institutional interest • local affiliation (local, national, or international) • political orientation, power position, and social authority **P4: assignment/contract (between P1 and P3)** • way of awarding, value of order • working relationship (regular or selective) • impact on content	• photo documentation (signature in image) • interviews • primary and secondary literature research
7	**audiencing** *(A level)*	**A1: local community** • reactions by dwellers, potential constituency, and civil society **A2: political authorities** • reactions by political institutions • surveillance, repression, criminal persecution • cleansing, destruction, censorship **A3: economic reactions** • economic utilization/commodification (marketing, tourism, art market, etc.) **A4: media circulation and attention** • circulation • reproduction • attention by press, online media, etc.	• interviews • focus group discussions • street surveys • primary and secondary literature research • ethnographically informed observations

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for readers who aim to do empirical research themselves, others may prefer to simply skip this part and continue reading the case study itself (chapters 4–7). Before introducing the indicators and the methodological tools, I will briefly outline which previous methodological contributions inspired my own approach.

Given the growing interest in visual analysis within the social sciences, a number of scholars sought to make visual culture methodology applicable for a political science and sociologist perspective (Hansen 2011, 2015; Doerr et al. 2013; Doerr 2017; Heck and Schlag 2013, 2020; Heck 2014, 2017; Bogerts and Fielitz 2019, 2022, forthcoming). While the employed methods range from semiotic analysis and Erwin Panofsky's three-step iconological interpretation[15] to (quantitative) content analysis, for my own study a combination of these methods with a discursive approach is most suitable. This book aims to examine how images operate within a political discursive field that is shaped by power relations and thus focuses on analyzing "visual political narratives" (Heck 2017; see also Hansen 2014: 3).

This discursive understanding of visuality goes back to the predominant poststructuralist paradigm in (critical) visual culture. For Rose, "both what is seen and how it is seen are culturally constructed" (Rose 2016: 3). In this poststructuralist tradition, her abovementioned textbook *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (Rose 2016) sheds light on the process of meaning-making through visual representations, the interests pursued by the involved actors, and the power relations within which images operate.

While for the establishment of my body of data I use the method of photo documentation and for the general analysis I employ a content analysis, the overall approach to my visual material is a discursive one.[16] In this visual discourse analysis, I aim to identify narratives and discourses articulated in images and their intervisual/-textual references and address questions of power/knowledge and regimes of truths, focusing on the *social modality* of images rather than on the technological or compositional modality (Rose 2016: 193). In my case study, I take the visual content of the images (meaning: the iconological dimension) as a starting point and consider social institutions to be relevant for the question of which power structures and interests are involved in the image.

However, since I take into account a complex set of different dimensions of street art images, I triangulate various of the abovementioned methods in a mixed-methods approach. Following Rose, mixing methods is particularly adequate for the exploration of ambivalences and contradictions that I aim to examine here with regard to the entangled relation between resistance and rule:

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> It allows a richly detailed picture of images' significance to be developed, and in particular it can shed interesting light on the contradictory meanings an image may articulate. The visualities articulated by producers, images and audiences may not coincide, and this may be in itself an important issue to address. (Rose 2012: 349)

Before elaborating on the triangulation of methods, I offer an overview of my mixed-methods approach (table 1.1). Column 1 contains the seven dimensions (introduced in the previous section); column 2 contains the concrete aspects potentially indicating resistance (derived from visual culture and street art literature in the previous section and the subsequent chapter 2); and column 3 contains the methodological tools used for collecting and analyzing relevant data in my own empirical work. In the next sections, I explain how exactly I applied these tools in empirical analysis of street art in Latin American cities.

Taking the I level as the starting point, I am aware that photos are themselves already a reproduction of the original street art image transformed into another medium (the manual or digital photograph). Therefore, my analysis was not based on photo material found on the internet (e.g., the producers' websites or in online forums such as Flickr or Pinterest) or in print publications (e.g., street art books) but on photographic material that I took myself. As table 1.1 demonstrates, analyzing an image with regard to all of the seven dimensions and its indicators requires various kinds of data and several technical tools for its collection and interpretation. Since photographic material alone never provides enough background information on the different levels, it was necessary to gather context information on-site. Consequently, I collected almost all additional data during a research trip to each of the four cities—Buenos Aires, Bogotá, Mexico City, and Caracas—between October 2016 and July 2017. In the following sections, I introduce the tools for data collection and analysis as presented in the table:

- The primary data was provided by *photo documentation*, compiled into a digital database of photos that I took during my research trips.
- Focusing on the discursive production of social effects, I conducted a *visual discourse analysis* of the images (on the I level). For the general analysis and the identification of visual discursive key themes, I used a *content analysis.* For the detailed analyses, I triangulated iconological interpretation, compositional analysis, and other tools (on all seven levels).

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- In order to gather context information both on the symbolic meaning of the I level and for the other levels, I used *auxiliary methods of data collection*, such as interviews (with artists and other informants), focus group discussions, and methods inspired by ethnography, such as field notes and participation in local events.

Photo Documentation

Photo documentation is a method in which the researcher takes photos in a systematic way to collect data for analysis (Rose 2016: 310). Digital photos are the primary data of my analysis. As a means of documentation and preservation, they make ephemeral street art images researchable through their digital representation (de la Iglesia 2015: 46). Focusing on the photographs taken during my research trips, I automatically limit the time period of my empirical study to the moment of my research stay. While I analyzed only images that existed at that point in time, I took into account other images (which I did not photograph myself) only for a broader view following references in the images concerned. Therefore, starting with these photographs, I further extended the scope of material by following the traces of intervisual/-textual references (I level), the work of the artists (P level), or other stories related to the piece.

This limitation of the body of data draws on Rose's and Hansen's recommendations to start with a particular limited set of data and then systematically extend it by following intervisual and intertextual references. Rose recommends taking material that is likely to be particularly interesting and informative as a starting point and later widening the range of archives (Rose 2016: 195). As Hansen reminds us, the majority of sources "should be taken from the time under study, but historical material that traces the genealogy of the dominant representations should also be included" (Hansen 2006: 82). Regarding the choice of material for (textual) discourse analysis, Hansen distinguishes three intertextual models of foreign policy discourse: besides official government documents (model 1) and the media debate (model 2), the third model includes popular culture (model 3A) and marginal political discourses (model 3B) as well. She further argues that these models allow for considering different types of actors and locations of political debate. The more we include nonofficial discourses, the more likely we find sources that contest and challenge the hegemony of the official political discourse of the government (Hansen 2006: 74).

In my study, I employed a version of model 3, for I am interested in official government documents and the media debate only for context information. However, although these models are helpful in differentiating the wide

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range of actors involved in image production, it is hard to distinguish official from marginal discourse, because we do not always know who produced the media we are examining. While one might think of street art as a medium of popular culture and marginal discourse (that clearly belongs to model 3), I assume that it is utilized as a medium of official government discourse as well. In this view, Hansen's approach already illustrates why governmental actors may utilize cultural means like street art: to give the impression of articulating marginal, popular voices that are more credible for nonelitist audiences than official governmental documents.

When images are photographed and digitized, they are taken out of their original context and undergo a transformation. With regard to my photo database of street art images, I thus aimed to document some meta information about the images, including the date of production, the size, the authors, and the specific medium/genre, etc. Photographs are "seen as especially valuable in urban research because they convey something of the feel of urban places, spaces and landscape . . ." (Rose 2016: 308). Therefore, I took photographs from different angles (general street view, overall view, detailed view, human scale in photograph, inter alia) to document the spatial environment (S level) and material features (M level) of street art as a site-specific medium as well as accompanying text elements and metadata, e.g., the artist's signature or the character of the surface and building (Nowak 2015: 14–22; de la Iglesia 2015: 46).[17]

A systematic photo documentation needs to follow guiding questions to limit the scope of data and to make transparent which images I chose to document and which, in turn, I did not include. Rose uses the example of Charles Suchar's (1997) study on gentrification, in which he examines social relations, identities, and (in)visibilities in urban spaces. His work not only demonstrates how photo documentation can offer a way to explore social difference and hierarchies, including marginalized spaces and people, but also shows that he selected his motifs according to what he calls a "shooting script." This is a list of subquestions generated by the initial research question, which guide the choice of which images are relevant and which are not (Rose 2016: 311–12).

Altogether, my selection of photos following my own "shooting script"[18] led to a photo database containing 3,914 photos, including photographs of the images' surroundings and metadata, taken from different angles. I took 1,087 of these photos in Bogotá, 417 in Caracas, 1,292 in Buenos Aires, and 1,118 in Mexico City. In order to limit this huge body of data to a manageable number of pieces to be analyzed, I selected one photograph of each relevant street art piece with the help of the software MAXQDA. Accordingly, the data corpus for visual analysis encompasses photographs of 1,710

street art pieces (ordered by city and city district). In a two-step process, I analyzed these images in a general analysis (including the content analysis) and a detailed visual analysis of one representative piece per city (see below).

Visual Discourse Analysis

The body of data in the MAXQDA photo database required a specific method of visual analysis. As it must be compatible with the theoretical assumptions implicit in my research design, I chose a discourse analytical approach as a "hinge" between theory and empirical analysis (Nonhoff 2007: 184). Building on post-Marxist and post-Gramscian perspectives, approaches of (critical) discourse analysis commonly assume that hegemony and its contestations can be analyzed by examining the orders of discourse (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe [1979] 2013; Hall 1993; Nonhoff 2007; Fairclough 2001). Although a hegemonic discourse of social difference may contribute to legitimizing a common sense in order to sustain relations of domination, it is not a rigid but rather an open system that can be interrupted and contested (Fairclough 2001: 124).

In this book, I understand a *visual* discourse to be a set of visual statements or narratives that structures the way we think about the world and how we act accordingly (Rose 2016: 187). A discourse is always shaped by the institutions and conventions within which it is produced and circulated. In a Foucauldian understanding, certain discourses are dominant not only because they are located in powerful institutions (e.g., the government or the police) but also because they claim that the "knowledge" they convey is true (Rose 2016: 190). From a political scientist perspective, Heck (2014) combines discourse analysis with an iconological method of visual analysis. He sees the link between iconology and discourse analysis in that the latter examines how claims of meaning-making—in which ideological convictions are articulated through narratives—are socially negotiated. These narratives work according to the patterns, rules, and conventions of a discourse and may be accepted, rejected, or marginalized by society, depending on how much power and authority they have. For Heck, iconology can offer hermeneutical tools for examining visual political narratives by reconstructing strategies of persuasion and meaning-making, which allows us to examine political legitimacy of power and oppositional opinions in civil society (Heck 2014: 319, 334).[19]

Following this understanding, the key questions in my visual discourse analysis are: Which narratives, truth claims, and strategies of persuasion and meaning-making are employed? And what, in turn, is made invisible? If we accept the theoretical assumption that images discursively inform the ways

we see the world, and if street art is part of this visual discourse in public space, which political actors, claims, and constructions does street art discourse make visible and how? In my empirical analysis, I aim to answer these questions in a twofold procedure: First, in a general analysis, I examine the whole body of photos for each city. Second, I select representative images to analyze them in detail.

General Analysis

The general analysis consists of two steps: First, for an overview of the visual content—i.e., the common motifs, narratives, strategies, and key themes—I conducted a content analysis on the I level. Second, I extended the analysis to the other levels of my heuristic framework. In the *content analysis*, I examined all 1,710 images in the MAXQDA database. This quantitative method breaks the data material down to its visual elements by counting their frequency and then analyzing these frequencies. It allows for systematically dealing with a large number of images and for revealing empirical patterns and conventions "that might otherwise be overwhelmed by the sheer bulk of material under analysis" (Rose 2016: 87). Knowledge about the relative frequencies of visual representations of certain people, roles, claims, or narratives can help us understand how visible they are in public discourse, whether representations are biased, or how they historically changed over time (Bell 2004: 10, 14).

Content analysis is based on the *coding* of image data with descriptive categories. Due to the coding process, the statistical method of content analysis is neither purely quantitative nor as "objective" as one might suggest. As I build the codes on the basis of my theoretical concerns, they are already the result of my interpretation. However, codes must be exhaustive and enlightening (Bell 2004: 15–16; Rose 2016: 92, 96). Therefore, in several rounds of the interpretation procedure, I revised the categories in order to make them applicable to the empirical conditions on the ground. To build codes, in the first round, I went through the photo material with what Rose calls "fresh eyes," trying to leave aside my theoretical preconceptions (Rose 2016: 205; see also Schnettler and Raab 2008). Approaching the material openly allows for identifying recurring elements, themes, and patterns that I would otherwise have overlooked. In a second round, I coded the images according to *key visual elements*, or subjects (indicator I1, see table 1.1) depicted in them, and marked textual elements (indicator I3) as well. In a third round, I coded the images with *key themes* (indicator I2) according to recurring visual elements and (written) keywords. The codes correspond to the indicators on the I level as introduced above.

Regarding the motifs of the image—or what I here call visual elements or subjects (indicator I1)—I distinguished between persons, objects, and symbols. Each code contains several subcodes (or "values") (see Bell 2004: 15). While the code "person," for instance, encompasses subcodes related to professions (e.g., "security personnel," "worker," or "*campesinx*")[20] or to cultural or ethnic groups (e.g., "Indigenous person"), inter alia, the code "objects" contains subcodes such as "weaponry" (with values ranging from "slingshot" to "bomb"), or "animals." As "symbols" I coded visual elements that were neither persons nor objects, such as the combination of certain colors in the form of "flags" (e.g., national flags or flags of particular groups), "logos," or graphic signs such as "$."[21]

The key themes (indicator I2) derived from both the visual subjects and the text are divided into three groups. The first group of key themes includes images referring to my thematic focus. These *(anti-)imperialism themes* serve to assess which relevant topics the images actually refer to and contain values according to the aspects I will introduce in chapter 3 (e.g., "colonial legacy" or "military interventionism"). Second, to find other potentially interesting content, I identified several *general political themes*, such as "state oppression," "freedom of expression," or "nationalism/patriotism." Third, I developed *conceptual themes* following my theoretical interest in identifying ways in which the codes "resistance" and "rule" are visually represented. In addition to these two key concepts, another conceptual code is "confrontation" between resistance and rule, drawing on the understanding of the political as a conflictive space between different actors (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Nonhoff 2007). In counterpoint, I also coded depictions of "cooperation" between different actors in the empirical material. Another conceptually relevant theme that is mentioned by several scholars in visual resistance is "the people," meaning nonhierarchical groups of (mainly anonymous) people (e.g., Malmvig 2016; Mirzoeff 2011; Mitchell 2012). At this point, it is crucial to acknowledge that these theme codes are already an interpretation of what meaning I see in the subjects depicted, and thus the content analysis reveals its inherent qualitative character. Since it is of interest for me how much street art advertisement there is, I use an "advertisement" code as well.

With the help of the content analysis, I gain an overview of *what* the images represent and a first impression of *how* they represent it. The quantitative identification of dominant discourses and narratives enables me to think about connections between visual elements (and the accompanying text elements) and how particular images are given a specific meaning within the discourse. Coding all the visual content of an image (be it relevant for my initial research questions or not) allows me to reveal patterns that may

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be "too subtle to be visible on casual inspection" (Lutz and Collins 1993: 89), and thus protect me against an unconscious search for patterns that would only confirm my initial assumptions of what the images show. At the same time, we must keep in mind that "numbers do not translate easily into significance" (Rose 2016: 102). Therefore a critical qualitative interpretation is of crucial importance to analyze and contextualize the quantitative results beyond mere frequencies.

However, by coding subjects, objects, symbols, and themes, in my content analysis—as the term implies—I only take into account the content of the images (on the I level). To understand "how the codes in an image connect to the wider context within which an image makes sense" (Rose 2016: 99), I need to extend my view to the other dimensions of my framework. Analyzing the general situation in a city, I aim to triangulate different methods and sources to make general statements on how street art is employed as a means of visual political communication and resistance and is thereby entangled within power structures in each of the cities. While I approach the P level by coding the images regarding their authors (as far as they are identifiable, e.g., through signatures), I explore the other dimensions with the help of context information from other sources, such as interviews or literature research (see table 1.1).

Detailed Analysis

Although the general analysis may be enlightening with regard to the general presence of street art in each of the cities, I needed to interpret individual key images in order to understand the particular narrative structures, strategies, and characteristics of visual resistance. Concerning the selection criteria, I chose images that function as nodal points within the intervisual web of debate and that are frequently quoted (Hansen 2006: 82).[22] Therefore, after having identified the quantitative weight and relative importance of particular codes/visual contents, I selected key images according to their representativeness indicated by their codes and their potential to serve as a starting point to follow intervisual references. The four selected images thus serve as "nodes" and promise to tell us "stories" about potential forms of visual resistance and its entanglements. This way the detailed analyses allow us to explore the situation more intuitively and be open to potential surprises.

The detailed analyses deal with the question of how exactly street art images discursively construct meanings, how a particular narrative works to persuade, and how it produces its effects of truth. I aim to investigate patterns, similarities, or differences of visual rhetorical strategies that assert the truth (what is "real" or "natural") of a particular narrative or political

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claim. More precisely, concerning my research question of which forms of visual resistance and its entanglements can be found, the subquestions put to the images are: Which references to (neo-)imperialism are made? How is resistance depicted? How is rule or authority depicted? How is confrontation or cooperation depicted? However, we should bear in mind that some of the visual narratives in the images might be complex and incoherent, and internal contradictions might be discovered. In addition, the analysis also aims to reveal what is *not* seen or shown: "Absences can be as productive as explicit naming; *invisibility* can have just as powerful effects as visibility" (Rose 2016: 213).

In the detailed analysis, I proceed in two steps. First, I describe *what* is depicted in the image with "fresh eyes" and as objectively as possible in order to raise awareness of every visual element depicted in it. In doing so, I seek to approach the image regardless of my theoretical preconceptions and thereby avoid excluding other possible interpretations a priori. Although the mere description might seem abundant, it is inevitable for becoming aware of every detail, as neglectable as it might seem. However, to improve readability, I moved the image description for most images to the appendix (see appendix A) and only kept it in the main text in the chapter on Bogotá (chapter 7). After this description of the I level, I provide context information on the other dimensions, such as the location, the producer (if known), etc. In the second step, I consider *how* subjects are depicted and thereby offer an *interpretation* of the image. Proceeding in a less structured and more intuitive way, I will here follow the codes and intervisual references to interpret the image within the wider body of material.

On the I level, besides the subjects (indicator I1), the themes (indicator I2), the image-text relationship (indicator I3), and the intervisual/intertextual references (indicator I8), I take into account the title (if known) (I4), the colors (indicator I5), the composition (indicator I6), and the stylistic genre (indicator I7) (see table 1.1). These indicators are analyzed with regard to their symbolic meaning. For this purpose, I apply different methodological tools such as iconological interpretation and composition analysis (forms, lines, rhythms, static/dynamic, angles, and perspective) (Rose 2016: chapter 4).

On the other levels, the indicators introduced in table 1.1 also come into play. Certain discourses may have different effects and become more dominant than others due to their institutional location. Therefore, one needs to locate the speaker position from which the statement is made and the social authority of the producer(s) (Foucault 1972: 50–52). In addition, the material aspects such as the technique (M level) and the style (I level)

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may vary depending on which audience is targeted and assumed by the image producer (Rose 2016: 215). The necessary context information will be obtained from various sources, including different types of literature, such as publications by the producers themselves (e.g., brochures or websites), secondary literature on the particular local situation (e.g., street art books or blogs), media reportage, and art historical literature on visual political symbols. Further, I gained valuable knowledge by several "auxiliary methods" that I will introduce next.

Auxiliary Methods of Data Collection

For as Rose reminds us, "Not everything that is of interest to a social scientist is necessarily visible in a photo, and projects using photographs as part of visual research methods therefore have to think quite carefully about the relation between the visible and the social" (Rose 2016: 328). To gain context information on the seven dimensions of the image beyond my photographs, I used ethnographically informed observations, semistructured interviews, focus group interviews, and street surveys with pedestrians.

During my research stays in Bogotá, Caracas, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City, I explored the spatial environment of the street art pieces by visits to certain venues, streets, and districts. I also participated in organized events such as guided street art tours and panel discussions on art and/or politics. During these activities, I noted all relevant information, my observations, and my thoughts in a field diary, which served as an auxiliary source for my analysis. Although participation, observation, and notes from the "field" are, originally, ethnographic methods (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995), in my study I prefer to call them *ethnographically informed (or: inspired) methods*, because the way in which I used them does not suffice the standards, presumptions, and long-term conceptions of actual ethnography as used in ethnology.[23]

In total, twenty-two *semistructured interviews* provide another important auxiliary source for my analysis. Interviews with artists and other persons from the street art scene helped me in making sense of the images and learning about the interests behind them, and to jointly develop possible interpretations. Opening room for these dialogues, in each city, I interviewed various producers (artists or art collectives) to learn about their work, their political intentions, their artistic background, and other experiences. For more general information about the artistic-political situation and important locations, artists, and institutions, I interviewed other key actors of the street art scene in a more informal way.

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In addition to these interviews with key actors, I included more sources of local knowledge by conducting *focus group discussions* with inhabitants of the respective city. Despite all my efforts to systematize and operationalize visual analysis in this book, I do not aim to obscure that image perception and interpretation is inevitably highly subjective. Especially due to the worldwide sharing of images through online media, street art images are "being reinterpreted by increasingly diverse audiences, each of which brings its own culture, experiences and machinations to the decoding process" (Ryan 2017: 142). Despite the context information I gained from literature, observations, and interviews on the ground, my image interpretation will still be shaped by my own geopolitical and sociohistorical locality, particularly as a (White) researcher from the Global North investigating phenomena in the Global South (Swadener and Kagendo 2008: 35).[24] Although we cannot transcend from the backgrounds and contexts we are situated in and that inevitably inform our reading (Adami 2016: 74; Matar 2014: 167), I seek to address this issue by including the views of persons from the local and national contexts in which the images were produced.

For each focus group discussion, I invited three to five persons currently living in the respective city—who were not active in the (street) art scene—to a venue, where I moderated a joint discussion and audio recorded it.[25] During the meetings, I presented visual stimuli to the group members and invited them to jointly interpret them by sharing their ideas and associations with the depicted symbols, subjects, and themes (see Kühn and Koschel 2011).[26] These discussions not only helped me to understand how other persons perceive the images and allowed for alternative meanings and interpretations but also provided me with valuable information about associations and symbolic meanings in the local or regional context, which I had not been aware of before.

Additionally, to learn more about the local audiencing of the image and the perception by the dwellers and inhabitants, I conducted *street surveys* (see Barbour and Schostak 2011: 61). For each survey, I stood in front of a street art piece with a representative visual content and interviewed random pedestrians for their views about the image, asking them what they would see in the image. However, since these surveys are not representative and provide a very limited amount of data (twenty to twenty-five persons per city, except for Caracas),[27] these samples of reactions only give me a first impression of how the image is perceived in public, or whether people are even aware of it. This way, it contributed to the triangulation of methodological approaches and the plurality of sources, which I collected to gain plausible findings in my empirical analysis of street art in Latin American metropolises.

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Notes

1. For a more detailed overview of visual culture approaches to visual power and resistance, see Bogerts and Shim (2023, forthcoming).
2. For the "emotional turn" in social movement studies, see, e.g., Jasper (1999, 2011). For the role of emotions and images in social movement studies, see Bogerts (2015).
3. "The South" symbolized both oppression and resistance, most importantly for Antonio Gramsci (in fascist Italy) and W. E. B. Du Bois (in the early twentieth-century US civil rights movement). Walter Mignolo called "the South" "a metaphor for human suffering under global capitalism" (Mignolo 2002: 66).
4. For instance, during the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804), "the African hero" was visualized on an anonymous color print with an equestrian portrait of the revolutionary leader Toussaint Louverture. His pose represented him as exercising horsemanship, a key feature of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century charismatic authority, and "as having mastered several codes of conduct that were typically held to be beyond Africans," such as holding a sword, riding a horse, and wearing European clothes (Mirzoeff 2011: 107)—just as Napoleon Bonaparte in his famous equestrian portrait by Jacques-Louis David: "Toussaint was visualized as having authority over colonialism and slavery, in direct contrast to the subservient imaginary of White abolitionists such as the 'Am I Not a Man and a Brother?' motif showing a kneeling African man requesting emancipation" (Mirzoeff 2011: 109).
5. With regard to the "feminine hero," Mirzoeff highlights the example of Sojourner Truth, who scrutinized that heroes were inevitably masculine (Mirzoeff 2011: 147). In the United States of the 1850s, Truth took advantage of her power as a spokeswoman for the abolitionist and women's rights movements in order to sell photographic self-portraits "as evidence of her own right to look and right to be seen" (Mirzoeff 2011: 147).
6. More precisely, Mirzoeff (2011: 83) mentions the famous lithograph *The Awakening of the Third Estate* (1789).
7. For a similar view on the occupation of Gezi Park in the 2013 protests in Istanbul, see Özgün (2015: 56–57).
8. Looking back in history, Mirzoeff differentiates three primary "complexes of visuality," that is particular modalities, historical periods, or worldviews, in which visuality authorized itself by techniques of classifying, separating, and aestheticizing: the plantation complex (1660–1860), the imperialist complex (1860–1945), and the military-industrial complex (1924–present) (Mirzoeff 2011: 3–4).
9. This idea draws upon the "pleasures of protest"; see Jasper (1999).
10. For the interplay of affect and effect in artistic activism, see https://artisticactivism.org/aefficacy-2/ (retrieved 16 June 2020).
11. For the "feminine gaze" in queer theory, see Butler (1990). For a feminist view on the "imperial gaze," see Kaplan (1997).
12. Regarding Latin America, but still from a White European perspective, Peter Beardsell (2000) reflects on Latin American practices of "returning the gaze."
13. Just as feminist studies revealed how seemingly individual "social" or "domestic" issues are indeed structural and political, feminist visual culture helps us be more aware of subtle means of disseminating patriarchal ideology. In the products of

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(moving) images themselves, the binary opposition between active male (whose realm was the political, public sphere) and passive female (whose realm was the private sphere) was constantly being reproduced by restrictive visual representation (Mulvey 1975: 839). This is why, throughout history, as John Berger famously put it, "men act and women appear" (Berger [1972] 1976: 47). In a more general view, such critical approaches demonstrate how social difference is visually constructed through the categorization of social subjects, aiming to order social life according to hierarchies of class, race, gender, sexuality, etc. (Rose 2012: 28).

14. The term *audiencing* was originally coined by John Fiske (1992) to describe the process in which an image's meaning is actively made, renegotiated, or rejected by its audience.
15. Heck and Schlag (2013: 899) helpfully summarize Panofsky's three-step iconology, which consists of (1) the pre-iconographic description, (2) the iconographic analysis, and (3) the iconological interpretation.
16. Rose (2016) dedicates a chapter to each of these methods. For photo documentation, see chapter 12; for content analysis, see chapter 5; for discourse analysis, see chapters 8 and 9.
17. For the specific characteristics and theorization of photos as data material and the possible gap between the photographed object and its visual representation, see Rose (2016: 309, 328), Tulke (2014: 9), and Evans and Hall (1999: 2).
18. During my research trips, I took photos of street art pieces according to this shooting script (see appendix A), which must fulfill one of the two following criteria: pieces should refer to the topic of anti-imperialism (as operationalized in chapter 3); and/or pieces should help answer my research questions by depicting other forms of resistance and rule or exemplifying the diversity of producers (authors and principals), reactions, and spaces occupied by street art. Particularly, I aim to document images that tell us something about the contradictions and ambivalences of street art within the entangled relationship between resistance and rule.
19. For one of the very few previous works that actually conducts an empirical discourse analysis of visual material, see Cynthia Hardy and Nelson Philips's (2002) study on the social construction of "refugees" in cartoons.
20. The term *campesinx* (with the ending "-x") indicates that we assume to talk about a mixed group of people (in this case: peasants), including female (*campesina*), male (*campesino*), and non-binary genders.
21. Although, in Charles Pierce's semiotic understanding, a "symbol" is only one of three categories of visual signs (besides "icons" and "indexes") (see Fahlenbrach 2016: 244), I here use the term in a more general way.
22. More precisely, I selected one street art piece per city following five criteria: (1) it must refer to the *(anti-)imperialism theme* and hence carry at least one of the subcodes related to anti-imperialism, because this thematic scope is in the focus of my study; (2) it ought to contain at least one of the *conceptual theme codes* and thus help us in understanding how resistance, rule, confrontation, or cooperation are represented in the urban public space; (3) the image must carry several of the most frequent codes on the I level and thus depict *subjects* (persons, objects, or symbols) that are common in the respective city. And (4) the images from the four cities must

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shed light on the broad range of producers and their interests and thus vary on the P level.

23. For a more elaborated approach to visual ethnography, see Tulke (2014: 7).
24. On power inequalities, (self-)reflexivity, and the researcher's speaker position, see, e.g., Swadener and Kagendo (2008) and Hamati-Ataya (2011).
25. Unfortunately, due to my relatively short stay in Caracas, I could not conduct a focus group interview there.
26. For the general design of a group discussion, see Kühn and Koschel (2011: 74–86); for moderation techniques, see Kühn and Koschel (2011: 139–71), for discussions with visual stimuli, see Kühn and Koschel (2011: 117).
27. I conducted one street survey each in Buenos Aires and Mexico City and two in Bogotá. Due to recommendations regarding the security situation in Caracas, I could not realize a street survey there.

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