

The Mediation of Affect  
Security, Fear and Subversive Hope in Visual Culture

Rodrigo Ferrada Stoeihrel



**Department of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå  
University, Umeå, Sweden.**

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For Esther, Marcel, Astor



## Abstract

This thesis is divided into five major parts. This introductory chapter, three published journal papers, and one forthcoming paper (accepted). The overarching purpose of this study has been to problematise and throw light on the way in which visual practices and the mediation of affect is linked to the capacity to produce (new) perceptual realities, sensations and imaginaries, ultimately aiming to legitimate or counter-legitimate the hegemonic discourses and practices mobilised in the name of security; here defined as those praxes that protect social order. The first part of my thesis approaches this matter through an analysis of media cultures and discursive systems circulating within the court and the state military. Here, I discuss the impact of affect in the judicial-policial production of visible evidence (paper 1; published in the *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*) and the state military (visual) narrative of threat (paper 2; published in *MedieKultur: Journal of media and communication research*). That is, within two fundamental components of the judicial and executive power of the state at the level of court and military activity. Additionally, as affect runs counter to hegemonic power relations as well as reinforces them, the second part of my thesis focuses on the way in which different resistance collectives cultivate affective dimensions through aesthetic practices in order to foster political attitudes that contest the established discourses of the (in)secure. Here, I examine the online activist group Anonymous' visual political communication (paper 3; published in *TripleC - Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*), and the Spanish movement Podemos' visual and verbal discursive strategies (paper 4; forthcoming in *Cultural Studies*). In terms of theoretical and methodological approaches, I have my roots in, among others, Mouffe's (2005) notion of conflict and (political) affect, Foucault's (1980) concept of power/knowledge, and Thompson's (1984; 1990) three-dimensional framework of ideology-analysis, where text is considered in relation to a social-historical dimension, and a production-technological (and consumption) context. In paper 1, my findings suggest that camera-produced images and technical and dramaturgical elements may have unintentional judicial consequences when they are read as evidence. I detail how this production of visible evidence can potentially stimulate and elicit emotional reaction, as well as discussing the degree to which pictorial crime evidence fails to be an instrumental and neutral representation of truth. I argue that the organisation of elements within the image frame and the technical and dramaturgical components assign an extra narrative and affective value, and are all significant in (trans)forming legal meaning and decision-making beyond the image's explicit evidentiary or identifying purpose. In paper 2, my findings point in the direction where the military representation of the 'Other as threat' connects to aspects of economic globalisation and the (inter)national production of defence materiel. Here I argue that military forces and expert authorities are now following the course of (visual) social media marketing in order to encourage users on the level of

affect to participate in the (armed) distribution of democracy; from which the big business of security is unable to be separated. Moreover, by analysing specific visual texts in detail I also discuss how political (war) propaganda is both connected to the art of seduction and intimately related to a politics of exclusion; this is where propaganda is that which tells only part of the truth and deliberately leaves out and censors other signifiers. In article 3 (co-authored with Lindgren 2014) my findings suggest that citizen participation in public matters can be made engaging through the mobilisation of that which Anonymous calls ‘the lulz’; a tickling joy/pleasure (also, a sense of meaningfulness) of standing against power abuse through, for example, online direct action and culture jamming practices. My study shows how this specific form of political contention and pleasure is moving at an affective-discursive level where hegemonic concepts of security such as mass surveillance and control are not only visually contested, but where the leaking of classified data in particular is able to alter the hegemonic processes of visibility. In this context, I argue that information leaks are not in itself enough to produce social change since citizens also need to be inspired and mobilised toward hope. Paper 4 explores the relationship between the affective and the visual using a broader security framework. My findings indicate that Podemos’ discursive battle for social protection and economic security in a context of the crisis of political representation, is no longer framed through the traditional left-right conflict, but within the post-ideological (affective) articulation of ‘the new’ versus ‘the old’ and/or other discursive differences such as the ‘99-1%’ or the ‘change-continuity’ divide. More specifically, I show how affect works as a potential for social change, by analysing the strategic production of a ‘We-Them’ discourse using Podemos’ take on social media and the media logic of mainstream television. By this, I mean the conventional codes of dramaturgical conflict and recognition that the group systematically practices in its representation (creation) of the social world. From here, I argue that if politics has become a mediated spectacle, the politics of change might just as well learn to refine the underlying affective rules and symbolic system of this spectacle. In particular, then, I emphasise the importance of understanding how affect may function, not only in the production but also in the subversion of different regimes of truth, and how these regimes interact with cognitive representations of social reality. I also stress the need to place the (aesthetic) production of truth/realism and the (affective) management of (in)security within a broad social-political context.

**Keywords**

affect; emotion; aesthetics; visual culture; discourse; Otherness; power; security

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## List of papers

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<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11196-012-9280-y#page-1>
2. Politics, Pleasure, Violence: Swedish Defence Propaganda in Social Media,  
*MedieKultur. Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 29 (55): 21-42 (2013).  
<http://ojs.statsbiblioteket.dk/index.php/mediekultur/article/view/8020/13611>
3. For the Lulz: Anonymous, Aesthetics, and Affect,  
*TripleC - Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*, 12 (1): 238-264 (2014) (w. Simon Lindgren).  
<http://www.triple-c.at/index.php/tripleC/article/view/503/540>
4. The Regime's Worst Nightmare: The Mobilisation of Citizen Democracy. A study of Podemos' (aesthetic) Populism and Production of Affect in Political Discourse,  
*Cultural Studies* (forthcoming).  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rcus20>

In the articulatory practices of security that are currently circulating at different levels of the social network – the individual's relation to cultural and institutional bodies through which knowledge is produced – the affective notion of threat and fear is always implicit.<sup>1</sup> It may be in the representation of the criminal, or the foreign or political Other. However, the judgement of the sovereign – its definition and creation of the real – is intrinsically contingent, although it may be masked as if it is not. Set against this observation, this thesis considers, as its title suggests, how the mediation of affect within a set of visual representations of the real may work to establish or subvert relations of power connected to the conflict between security and insecurity, conservation and transformation.

## **Introduction and purpose**

*The overall purpose, on a theoretical level, is to examine and problematise how the relationship between affect and cognition can be produced and act in and through visual representations. As a consequence, my objective is to discuss and explore the way in which the aesthetic-affective relationship is connected to the capacity to engage and create (new) perceptual realities, sensations and imaginaries, which, on a societal level, aim to support or challenge hegemonic discourses and practices mobilised under the authority of security. To be specific, the central research question is as follows:*

*In what manner are aesthetic and affective strategies, tactics and techniques, based on the aesthetics of conflict, used in order to legitimate or counter-legitimate the hegemonic discourses, practices and decisions which strive to protect the social order and society's sense of safety? This may be in terms of legal punishment (paper 1), military interventions (paper 2), mass surveillance (paper 3), or the austerity politics linked to macro-stability and cuts to social safety nets.*

Here, if I may reflect on the importance of such a question, allow me to say that if we perceive and understand the world not only through our conscious or cognitive faculties but also through embodiment and layers of affect, it seems to me that a discussion of how visual perceptions and affective sensations interact in the production and mediation of social reality is crucial. Indeed, perhaps more than ever, when we move within narratives and representations of the secure-insecure. That being said, all papers included in this thesis start from the notion that it is power – defined here as a cluster of expert knowledge-authorities – which has the capacity to promote and create what is (true and important) knowledge and what is not as well as how this knowledge will come about. In the context of my study, this suggests that there is an authoritarian

relationship between what realities will become visible and what realities will not (cf. Foucault 1981; Rancière 2004; Mirzoeff 2011). Meaning-making processes, or any formation of discourse, are thus not merely organised by the established media's repeated dramaturgy or conventional aesthetic codes, but also – as I will detail through my analysis – through institutional aesthetic practices which can influence public knowledge through their authority as 'truth-tellers'. It is with this focus in mind that I explore the way in which the collective (albeit subjective) sense of threat, security and (in)justice – at bottom, the protection of democracy – is structured and may intensify through aesthetic practices beyond the mass media and cognitive alone.<sup>2</sup> To put it differently, rather than focusing on the capacity and power of the mass media to construct discourse, *it is the way in which different institutions and social groups make use of (visual) media and its affective components to support or challenge the idea of how society must be defended, which in my analysis, is the object of attention.*<sup>3</sup>

For example, the first paper, 'The Legal Image's Forgotten Aesthetics', analyses the production and consumption of visible evidence in adversarial courtroom trial practices. That is, how the judicial system articulates truth-seeking (affective and visual) narratives in order to establish relations between threat and safety, antagonism and order, guilt and punishment. Here, my research question asks: *Can, and if so, how, may the construction of visible evidence and the mediation of affect potentially influence, bodily and mentally, the legal (and public) perception of threat and/or the event (of fear/justice) being narrated in a court of law – and what consequences may it have on the final judicial decision?* To clarify for the reader, when I henceforth say 'bodily' I do not suggest that I have carried out a reception study but rather that I discuss how the aesthetic experience is also a meaning-making process which is potentially felt (in the body) and therefore not *only* a process which is thought (see, e.g. Pisters 2003).

The following text, 'Politics, Pleasure, Violence' (paper 2), explores the way in which the Swedish Ministry of Defence and ultimately the Swedish Government is entwined in lucrative deals with large arms manufacturers by the way in which its armed forces adopt visual social media tactics in an aesthetic and affective orchestration of the fundamentalist 'Other' – the global terrorist threat to (the Western way of) life – in order to justify overseas operations.<sup>4</sup> Thus, my basic research questions here are: *How is the image of conflict and the Other structured by the Swedish Armed Forces' aesthetic-affective acquisition of new media technologies, and what potential spin-off effects may the representation of international conflict and security have on the defence equipment market?*

The third paper, 'For the Lulz: Anonymous, Aesthetics, and Affect' (Ferrada Stoeckel & Lindgren 2014), discusses in what manner counter-hegemonic discourses can be mobilised through the aesthetics involved in hacktivist culture in general and the Anonymous group in particular. Here, I argue that the antagonistic actions of Anonymous such as opposing state-corporate surveillance practices, making sensitive

data visible to the public through leaking actions or remediation, etc. is of course crucial for the democratic project in terms of its potential capacity to stimulate action and public conversation on delicate topics. But at the same time I argue that the production and diffusion of information is not of itself enough to produce social change or shift public opinion; this is, since citizens also need to be inspired and mobilised toward hope, projected, if you will, into a new imaginary. In the context of the above, the research question asks: *In which ways may the production of affect and the political aesthetics of Anonymous invite popular engagement and participation in politics and grassroots action?*

Finally, 'The Regime's Worst Nightmare: The Mobilisation of Citizen Democracy' (paper 4), examines how in an era in which the neo-liberal project and the tearing down of social protections seems to have become mere common sense, the counter-hegemonic strategies of the Spanish upstart party may effectively be produced and distributed. That is, by using a politically transversal but defined (and thus affective) antagonistic populist discourse that is relayed through the media and the aesthetics of popular culture. Here, the existence of 'the mass' ('the people') is articulated as in conflict to the (elitist) 'Other' and the 'different'. This creates a psycho-political discourse, if you like, where the relation to oneself is constituted in the imaginary clashing counterpoint to an articulated (constructed) 'Them'. This is where the popular majority is given the possibility of visibility and recognition (as protagonists of change). Here, the following research question asks: *How is Podemos' antagonist discourse – as is communicated through (visual) media – part of the mobilisation and circulation of affect as a counter-hegemonic strategy?*

All in all, then, it is my wish and hope not only to explore a number of contemporary relevant cases but to holistically unite their contribution to the contemporary and always unfolding critical literature of visual culture studies in relation to affect research – how affect is produced and create meaning in the visual representation of the real and the way in which its intersection is significant in understanding the creation of discourse and counter-discourse. As Dahlgren (2013: 156) notes, '... the main problems confronting researchers are not so much about specifying injustice per se, but rather about finding possible paths for implementing change.' Thus, as I argue, this is where affect research is key; in the study of the way in which visually designed strategies and (emotional) discourses – of, say, antagonism, hope and fear – may have the capacity to empower or disempower action; to provoke agents in increasing or diminishing ways to engage in social conflict.<sup>5</sup>

Let me stress, however, that this introductory chapter will focus on the theoretical and methodological framework of my publications, for my objective here is to clarify and elaborate on the fundamental concepts upon which I build and structure my research. In this chapter, I will also reason about how the included studies fit together, and discuss my contribution to the field of visual culture studies.

### *Defining security*

In what follows I will introduce the unifying theme in my work, namely, the way in which the notion of security (and thus also insecurity) is constructed and visualised through diverse affective practices and discourses in contemporary culture. My interest in the security machine is therefore not related to its being (what is and what is not security, or whether we should or should not have a security apparatus, etc.) but to its *discursive system* – its techniques and ways of seeing; its ability to make visible and/or its capacity to articulate a historical (affective) ‘truth’. Now, if the question is ‘why security?’ my response is that the framing and legitimising of that which is said to be secure-insecure is not only relevant in contemporary political terms, but also that the affective and aesthetic in the representation of hope and fear (specifically) is quite richly brought together in the politics of protection (albeit in other contexts, see, e.g. Massumi 1993; 2010; Butler 2004; 2009; Coaffee, O’Hare & Hawkesworth 2009; Evans & Reid 2013).

There is, then, in the context of this thesis an idea of security as something productive: a provider of social good in its emphasis on control, the protection of life and underpinning of social-economic stability. Here, the securing of social and economic stability is framed as the fundamental basis for the protection of life, health, and progression. Indeed, a Foucauldian notion of bio-power, if you like, which inclines around a version of security where the life of the population is defended in terms of institutional (regulative) control mechanisms that are put into practice in order to safeguard the wellbeing of the population (see, e.g. Foucault 1978; 2007; Dean 2010). From here it follows that I translate the notion of security into the strategies, tactics, technologies and rationalities that animate modern practices of control as productive and central to the protection of any given social-economic order; to avoid instability, a state of decay, or political unrest. In my work, therefore, security is defined less in terms of a sovereign governmental and imperative modality of power than as a mundane and institutional practice in which norms and the mechanisms of control are standardised. I should explain that my use of the term ‘bio-power’ (or, bio-politics) is thus not only related to ‘life’ (bio) and the techniques (politics) of liberal state-power – the political-economic processes and arrangements in society within which ‘the living’ or (biological) life itself appears as target – but also to the way in which the protection of ‘happiness’, ‘living standards’ or the ‘way of life’ of the population as a whole is made into an object of management. Indeed, securing this is, again, the very condition needed for any political and economic order to survive (also see, e.g. Deleuze 2006 [1986]; Dean 2010). It is in this way that I regard the function of security apparatus as a way of protecting (the concept of the Western way of) life, operating for the removal of possible obstacles and threats that may hinder its development. Hence, I discuss the concept of security not only in the light of how hegemony tries to conserve and

reinforce its own status through affective meaning-making mechanisms (to legitimise institutional praxis) but also in terms of how the narrative of the dangerous real (in which the Other's exclusion is framed as a condition for the secure) is allowing society to function and proceed. Indeed, in my work, there is always a double movement in the production of security-insecurity, and this is also why I think bio-power cannot simply be seen as a politics of selection and the exclusion of life and death, but also as this productive power that 'wishes well', as it focuses its efforts on behalf of the safety, health and progress of the population.

For example, judicial practices (see paper 1) do not use visual and inherently affective techniques to provide visible evidence in terms of guilt and punishment only, but to fundamentally protect the social order and the personal security of the individual. In this context, security is a created concept potentially related to institutional structures of power that deal not only with the present or the past but most of all with what might happen. As Colebrook (2009) puts it, 'legal cases have their own drama and style, with the narration of cases often creating affects of pity and horror and with legal judgements, possibly, imagining or creating worlds not yet lived' (15). In terms of law practices, the affective politics of (in)security is, then, as Colebrook seems to touch upon, also a question of creating public imaginaries in their administration of preventive defence; an idea of prevention fundamental for impeding social disorder, or a world of chaos 'not yet lived'. Something similar can be said about the military-industrial (affective) discourse of protection and preventive defence, as its function is structured around an agenda which in simple terms insist on defending society by hindering the invasion of potential threats and/or by securing global economic stability (see paper 2). In these two examples, the theoretical concept of preventive defence is not just 'top-down' or 'sovereign' (subjected to law or state power) but immersed in the consensus of the social body, that is, in terms of social utility, since society cannot work without legal mechanisms or civil or national protection.

As we shall see, however, the notion of security is also subject to counter-hegemonic movements: practices and discourses that work to subvert the very same dominating ideas that claim to serve the general interest. An example of this can be shown in paper 3, where cyber activists make use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in order to mobilise citizen participation in social justice struggles and/or in order to overthrow the hegemonic discourses which integrate and normalise mass surveillance technologies in contemporary society. In a broader context, paper 4 explores how the Spanish newcomer party, Podemos, organises and directs social security rights in terms of the right to access well-functioning social services; that is, in opposition to the politics of austerity that imposes social security cutbacks by alleging fiscal discipline or economic prevention. However, in terms of Podemos' counter-hegemonic strategies it should be noted that, in this context, the discourse of security also relates to 'conservation' – the protection of the status quo. Whereby 'fear' and

‘insecurity’ connect to ‘transformation’ – which in the alternative domain equates to the hope and struggle for social change.

At the most basic level, then, as the subject is immersed in relation to the never-ending discourses that ‘in-form’ (in the sense that discourse production and power is formative to the subject; it ‘in-forms’ through knowledge production; cf. Massumi 2002a: 223), it is precisely the way in which a sum of aesthetic practices and the mediation of affect may constitute public knowledge – and nurture the (counter-)hegemonic discourses which claim the protection of society – which is the object of my concern.

### *Structure of the thesis*

In the following I review the literature in the field (chapter 2) and lay out the theoretical framework of my studies (chapter 3). I do this by mainly discussing the role of affect in visual culture. In this section I also introduce some basic concepts of discourse theory in which I deepen, specifically, what I call ‘discourse (psycho)analysis’ – the psychopolitical field which is developed in the intersection between psychoanalytic theory and discourse theory. Thereafter, in chapter 4, I discuss methodological issues, which in the context of my work means, in particular, Thompson’s (1984; 1990) framework for analysing ideology. From here I introduce the specific techniques that I have used to collect source material and information. I end this section with a reflection about the working process itself. The final part (chapter 5) summarises the included studies (article 1-4) in a more detailed manner and provides a concluding discussion of the findings.

## Research review

This part aims to provide an overview of the visual culture field in association with affect research, which is the academic context in which I situate my work. I focus on different scholars' reasoning in which I do not only give an account of their thoughts but also problematise them as I think necessary.

Thus, as intersectional research on visual media and affect has different empirical and theoretical tendencies, I would like to underscore the potential impact of the screen on the body (affective responses gained from the aesthetic, but not necessarily cognitive, experience) as well as the representation of the 'Other', that is, 'our mediated relationship to the other [foreign] person' (Silverstone 2007: 6). In the following section, I will break down this general classification into subcategories such as (1) 'affect and visual representation of crime' (the production of affect in the representation of crime and suspects in judicial and media discourse); (2) 'the spectacle of war, threat and suffering in popular (visual) culture'; (3) 'the aesthetics and affects of contemporary protest'. There are of course more tendencies, but these are the ones that have most inspired my work.

It should be noted, however, that I focus less on the (intrinsic) 'power of images' – why certain pictures are especially moving while others are not – than how the strategic use of images may sustain or subvert a discourse of truth and antagonism within a frame of (in)security. In empirical terms, the included studies are not just pieces of a puzzle, but contribute to the understanding of the field of visual culture studies as a whole. This becomes clear as I explore the way in which the intersection of felt experience and aesthetics may operate to support or subvert the exercise of both power and resistance. I would also like to say that it is precisely here, in its empirical diversity, that I hope my work makes a contribution to a range of disciplines and practices, not only within media studies but also within judicial and forensic settings (paper 1), military propaganda (paper 2), social movement and civic engagement studies (paper 3, 4), and political (strategic) communication (paper 2, 4). In this way, my wish is to help place the visual-affective relation into contrasting and even clashing areas of interest that can be useful to a plurality of research activities.

In the following section I will concentrate on highlighting specific empirical results and conclusions, addressing these in a context where the role of the visual and the affective is discussed in broader terms – albeit always in a context of security-related concern (representations of crime, war, terrorism, civil uprisings, state power abuse, etc.). In this sense I aim to provide a critical revision of the literature – a discussion, or, a review if you like – of the main findings within the field(s) in which I circulate.



### *Affect and visual representations of crime*

If one of the main objectives within the field of visual jurisprudence is to study both how law is communicated through (moving) photographic material and the way in which media representations of crime operate in culture, then we may turn to scholars such as Peelo (2005; 2006), Karstedt (2006), and Kohm (2009). They suggest that representations of crime (re)shape public narratives not only by investing in emotions such as fear – for example, the Other as bearer of hostility, danger and horror – but also in affects such as empathy, compassion, shame or grief (cf. Katz 1987; Presdee 2000; Dahlberg 2009). As a consequence, spectators are not just informed of a particular crime when consuming a certain (visual, truth-seeking) story but are told how to identify, pity and feel as well (also see, e.g. Horeck 2014). However, as Kohm asserts in dialogue with Karstedt (2002), ‘Despite an inherent link between emotions and the enactment of criminal law, the long-term trend in western democracies has been to minimise explicit appeal to emotions and to refashion punishment as a technical and rational enterprise’ (2009: 190; cf. Dahlberg 2009). In this context of emotional (legal) representation, Stevenson (2000) argues that the modern trial process is not isolated from affective underpinnings as there is always a cultural (constitutive) imaginary circulating in court, which inevitably structures the common idea of how victims should behave and look in order to be considered trustworthy. As a case in point, Stevenson studies the way in which *The Times* (UK) has been able to articulate a historical mystification of femininity linked with emotion and passivity – and, of course, masculinity with rationality, objectivity and activity –, that, in turn, has tainted the judicial gaze and horizon of the female rape victim and the crime of sexual violence (cf. Young 1998; Duncanson & Henderson 2014). This produces a mediated construction of a courtroom mythology that holds the view that only the true complainant resists, and will have the (visible) bruises to prove it (2000: 363).

To stay with this aesthetic or cultural turn of law and criminology, Carrabine (2012) seeks to examine the impact of visual documentations of suffering and violence across new and old media. His conclusion is that subjectivity and truth are formed through the cultural production of Otherness (in which the subject is positioned as different to the Other). As such, the spectatorial engagement with visual representations of crime and suffering should not be simplified to a package of aesthetic concerns; i.e. as emotions are connected with a longer chain of identity construction (467). Similar to Stevenson, Carrabine argues that cultural norms, techniques and discourses of truth are based on a historical (visual) politics of selection and exclusion which helps to shape and sustain relations of power and domination through (re)presenting the Other as distant and different (470). On this reckoning, Carrabine claims that the production and reception of texts – may it be in terms of visible evidence or any mediated representation of the Other – are never neutral but socially organised, influenced by certain cultural conventions in which an ethical framework – the (self-reflexive) question of ‘What right

have *I* to represent *you*' (Carrabine 2012: 486; cf. Levi Strauss 2003: 8) – is imperative to the politics of representation; to produce 'just' images.

Young (see e.g. 2005; 2007; 2010a; 2010b) examines the cultural texts of crime, violence and horror as constitutive to the collective imaginary of (in)justice through (cinematic) affective experiences. In a context of visual criminology, Young looks at the way in which the spectator may feel connected with an action on the screen at a level of affect and embodiment rather than cognition (Young 2010a: 87; cf. the section 'The link with affect' in this introductory chapter). Against this backdrop, however, Young also notes that affect is not culturally independent, residing as interpretation, even if bodily it is intrinsically bound up with the subject's historical enrolment in discourse production in general, and the polarised visual narration of crime (and the criminal Other) in particular.

Perhaps more 'hands-on', Biber (2007) identifies law's conventional (uncritical) use and interpretation of photographic identification evidence through an in-depth analysis of a bank robbery case in which she gives special attention to visual surveillance footage and how dimensions of race, neo-colonialism and culture are entwined and unconsciously present in Australian criminal trials. By drawing both from semiotic principles and psychoanalysis, she considers 'why the law imagines that the rules of evidence are capable of controlling the fantasies that compete when we look into a photograph [to establish guilt and punishment], as if the criminal courts are neutral in the face of racial constructions and representations' (ibid. 2007: 11; also see Biber 2009; Edmond, Biber, Kemp & Porter 2009). In addition to these issues, Biber (2013; cf. Biber & Luker 2014) also examines 'the cultural afterlife' of criminal evidence; how the photographic evidence of crime and the criminal subject is used in post-judicial proceedings. She proposes a 'jurisprudence of sensitivity' which is capable of establishing limits upon the use of visual texts in order to protect those involved in criminal cases, and moderate the affective harm that may arise when visual criminal evidence leads to a 'cultural afterlife' (2013: 1033). However, this is not to suggest that the release of criminal archival sources should be stopped from further extra-judicial development, for Biber claims that it is exactly when this legal and *objective* evidence is placed in another context and read through different lenses than the law's that one might gain a new understanding of the event and thus the cultural-aesthetic production of truth (see paper 1 in this thesis).

Likewise, Silbey (see e.g. 2009; 2010; 2012; 2014) challenges the concept of video (film genres) and photography within law as a truth-telling mechanism, by arguing that, 'The power of both film and law derives at first from the intensity of the personal faith in believing what we see' (2014: 26) and where 'the overwhelming influence of both film and law in our culture is to tell (or manufacture) the *definitive* story' (28). Hence, close to my own understanding, Silbey considers how, rather than being recorded testimonies, film and (legal) film memories are acts of construction and myth-

production that ‘may communicate more convincingly than do live witnesses’; and yet, the law has not learned to analyse film or how film works in terms of highlighting or repressing certain memories (2014: 41). Also, Sherwin (2007) discusses how visual literacy may contribute to grasping the different ways in which legal visual evidence is addressed, more specifically, how aesthetic and dramaturgical techniques can influence decision-makers’ choices (179). As an example of what he calls ‘a naïve realist perspective’ (180) in the production (and reception) of visual criminal evidence, Sherwin criticises how the video of the Rodney King beating was presented in court. By changing the sequential flow and repeating the clip systematically, Sherwin explains that, ‘The defence had effectively re-narrated the scene to establish that King’s own movements caused the batons to strike him ... in direct response to King’s aggressive resistance of arrest’ (ibid.).

In short, the common thread for all of these authors is not that the ‘form’ or ‘medium is the message’ but that there is always an unconscious link between context, media, presentation, style, narration and content; whereby each part is linked to the other and able to produce meaning in their own unique way. And by acknowledging this (constitutive) dialectic feature and the image’s capacity to create meaning and persuasive affective impact on several levels, the traditional linear reading of the legal visual archive becomes contested.<sup>6</sup> Hence, if I may say something on how my own work (paper 1) connects to the literature above, I would like to identify my contribution in terms of my discussion of affect as that which is constantly recreated and thus formative in the production of meaning when the footage is used as evidence, which suggests that legal punishment is not, if ever, a ‘technical and rational enterprise’ (cf. Kohm 2009; Karstedt 2002). Also, in line with Carrabine (2012), Biber (2007) and Stevenson (2000; also see, e.g. Ahmed 2004) I point to emotions as going beyond individual dimensions, for not only is fear, rage or (the desire for) revenge, something which may be shared in court but also because the fact that the production of affect in trials cannot, I argue, be disconnected from the cultural world in which we are immersed. Indeed, this makes the representation and identification of the criminal Other a signifier with a series of meanings already attached to it. Let me now move on to the next category of this research review, in particular:

### *The spectacle of war, threat and suffering in popular (visual) culture*

At this stage of the early 21st century, quite a lot has already been written about the emotional, dramatic, and ‘spectacle-friendly’ (Malik 2006) destruction of the Twin Towers on 9/11, the ‘(un)just’ war in Iraq and the following, gruesome Abu Ghraib pictures. However, different from the 1991 Gulf War – where the flow of news was monopolised by CNN – the 2003 war in Iraq was also characterised, by the rise of al-Jazeera. As Abdel-hai (2006) notes, ‘There are two [satellite news network] wars going on in Iraq’, the first ‘a gripping made-for-TV show starring brave US and British troops

putting their lives on the line to bring freedom to oppressed Iraqis' and where 'little blood is spilled on camera' (105), while the 'other war is waged by Iraqis, desperate to protect their homes' (106). Here, the dominant (US-UK) perspective is filtered against a clinical ('just') war narrative and the discourse of democratisation, while the stories of al-Jazeera are, to the contrary, visually narrated around (the otherwise absent) signifiers of pain and human suffering – the mediation of 'wounded and screaming Iraqi women and children, captured or terrified Iraqis' contextualised and banded together by Arabic expert interviews and US and Western European analysts 'in a lively, conversational style, much like the one used by American media' (ibid.). In a way then, al-Jazeera seems to tell us that visual counter-narratives can, or perhaps 'should', be mediated in popular formats and be keen to mainstream aesthetics, although the content might be 'alternative' (cf. paper 3, and 4 in this thesis).

Also in relation to Iraq, but within a context of online alternative media, Andén-Papadopoulos (2009) explores how digital communication networks are 'opening up a new window on modern warfare' which she argues, are throwing 'into sharp relief the ways in which mainstream media and governments cover the reality of war' (921). Here, she claims that 'soldiers' online communication ... reveal aspects of the war that are fundamentally taboo in the eyes of the US military and media elites' as 'the soldiers portray modern warfare as a venture in excessive violence and blood, showing in detail what its weaponry does to fragile human tissue' (934). In other words, resistance is not always intentional nor rational, but also accidental, informal and, in this case, certainly affective, as the referent of war – the enemy and the threatening (foreign) Other – is to specific online visual communities present in the gory (inside) representation of war; which, one could argue, undermines hegemonic mass-mediated war reporting through a set of visual artefacts showing the brutal massacre of the Other. Another way to put it is that if the horrifying referent is constantly absent in the visualisation of the conflict which produces and diffuses the imagery of a 'just war' – as a necessary war against global threats in which killings are clean and rationally motivated (also see, e.g. paper 2 in this thesis) – then shocking images of corpses may indeed also be considered visual contra-narratives to these simplifying hegemonic discourses and visual orders, that is, rather than being regarded as merely obscene, or attention-seeking (Andén-Papadopoulos ibid.).

In a way, one might say that visual war propaganda is tied to (feel-good, or feel-bad) visible evidence – to that which is able to intensify pleasant or unpleasant feelings and emotions elicited from the set of war images which are systematically displayed as historical evidence, where the depiction of blood, bodies and body parts, etc. function as indicators of truth. In this context, Griffin (2010) argues that we should not get carried away by such (bloody) signifiers for 'we must remain conscious of the fact that contemporary news operations, driven as they are by marketing concerns, routinely exploit fear, voyeurism and emotional fascination to boost circulation and ratings' (35).

That is (with the risk of being obvious), although images of human suffering and tragedy may strike us as ‘authentic’ in their physical depiction, they are at the same time part of a wider media logic, whereby spectacular and attention-grabbing images sell and attract the public. Hence, as it is evident that many images remain unseen by the general public, ‘we need to view war photographs not as reflections [or evidence] ... but as the results of a continuing practice of cultural production that is also a tool of government management, media business and political persuasion’ (ibid.). In a similar vein, Smit, Heinrich and Broersma (2015) problematise the ‘up-close and seemingly truthful recordings of events in “witness videos”’ and/or the way in which these have become prominent in news reports, serving as authoritative resources in the ‘construction of memory’ (1). The authors point to the fact that once these witness videos ‘are uploaded to video-sharing sites and popular archives such as YouTube, they are being reassembled and remixed by distinct actors, along the lines of their own ideological agendas’ (ibid.). The general conclusion is that contemporary citizen witnessing videos, for example, may have the capacity to tell us something about presence, but that the construction of collective memory is ‘simultaneously influenced by actors who know how to curate effectively and by the algorithmic logic and infrastructure of YouTube’ (16). In this way, video witnessing and memory-building is foremost a social practice closely related to discursive battles both in the field of production (recording) as well as through post-production; in ‘remixing, tagging, titling and describing’ specific content ‘according to existing professional and political ideologies in a struggle for meaning and attention’ (ibid.).

Another form of witnessing is also discussed by Silvestri (2013) who analyses emotional online surprise homecoming videos in which individual cases of soldier’s and their families’ physical-emotional reactions (hugs, kisses, cries, laughs) are placed at the centre of the audio-visual-affective experience, but where ‘very little context other than brief titles, tags, or descriptions’ is provided (112). Thus, as Silvestri notes, ‘The videos typically represent apolitical, sentimental, patriarchal family values’ which reinforce ‘hegemonic American ideals’ that encourage ‘viewers to identify emotionally with the onscreen family and create a sense of national belonging’ (101, 102). Additionally, ‘in this affective model of nationhood, citizenship is ... a matter of social membership upheld by personal acts and [liberal and conservative] values, especially acts originating in or directed toward the family sphere’ (ibid. also see, e.g. Berlant 1997: 5). That is, where the narrative of the horrific threat posed by the Other to affective core values such as the (protection of the) family (and happiness; achieved through liberal democracy) justifies institutional violence, and overseas (armed) conflict.

In terms of the representation of suffering in particular, however, Höijer (2004) poses the question, ‘how do people react to the emotional engagement that [the] media offers by focusing on innocent victims of political conflicts, war and other violence?’ (513). Based on two reception studies, Höijer claims that ‘we see a two-sided effect of

global compassion on the one hand, and ignorance and compassion fatigue on the other' (528). She goes on to explain that 'Crimes against humanity such as encroachment and violence against people and populations have a strong appeal for ... the female audience' (ibid.). While, 'The other reaction to the media focus on distant human suffering, that is, turning away and not letting oneself be moved, is more common among the male audience ... [and we] may find part of the explanation for this in the cultural expectations of boys and men, and ideals and myths of manliness' (529).

Chouliaraki (2008) in turn argues that 'the media confront us with the suffering of distant others, throwing into relief the most fundamental tension that mediation has brought about in our culture: the experience of connecting us with people around the globe without, at the same time, giving us the option to act on their situation' (Chouliaraki 2008: 832; cf. Chouliaraki 2006; 2010; Tomlinson 1999). However, this does not mean that mediated suffering is not capable of cultivating affective connections, as the aesthetic path through which the representation of suffering is constructed (and, of course, contextualised, or backed by authorities) contributes to increase or diminish the spectators' capacity to 'develop caring relationships with vulnerable others' (846). Hence, the reporting – not only in the news, but also in popular entertainment genres (fictional and otherwise) – which depicts the distant Other as an abstract category may not stimulate collective solidarity or action (cf. paper 2). Yet, when the distant Other is humanised and where spectators are taken seriously and not simply 'addressed "en masse" but as singularities or as individuals – for example, as informed citizens' (Chouliaraki ibid.), the conditions of action may transform (for a further discussion on media witnessing and distant suffering, see also, e.g. Ellis 2000; 2009; Peters 2001; Sontag 2003; Seu 2003; Frosh 2006; Frosh and Pinchevski 2009; Beck 2006; Allan 2013; Scott 2014).

Informed by the authors discussed here I consider the notion – perhaps foremost from Abdel-hai (2006) and Andén-Papadopoulos (2009) – of how kills are framed as clean and rational (yet compassionate) in the Western mainstream media narrative and representative of a just war. However, in my studies, I connect this idea not only to current trends in social networking, for example, in the production of interactive mobile phone apps and online video marketing, but also to the big business of security; in this context, the mass production of defence materiel (see paper 2). Now, in general terms, I would also like to stress that the digital (visual) culture of surprise homecoming videos, or, rather, the way in which these may create a sense of national belonging which is *felt* rather than thought (through pictures showing a father/soldier-children/wife crying and hugging each other) connects to my discussion, in paper 2, on how the military framing of the nation and national security is constituted around affects which go beyond the concept of the threat. That is, as the military imaginary of the nation and participation in conflict (also) moves within the terms of desire; in which recruits are given the possibility of reaching a promised reality of happiness and being recognised as subjects

as they ‘make a difference’ (also see, e.g. Glynos & Howarth 2007 on the fantasmatic dimension of political discourse in terms of terrorism).

### *The aesthetics and affects of contemporary protest*

To finalise this section, I will turn to the literature dealing with how the production of affect and the aesthetics of antagonism may be used as a way of resisting hegemonic discourses on security (the protection of the so-called social order). Specifically I outline a discussion in terms of (digital and physical) visual/affective politics and strategies surrounding the ‘Arab Spring’ (2010-2012), ‘los indignados’ in Spain (2011), and ‘Occupy’ (US, 2011) – the set of contemporary social movements that have been most relevant to my research.

I will also provide some examples of the way in which visual media works to amplify a new collective imaginary, or, in Mitchell’s (2013) words, ‘the extended social space’ made possible by (social) media (110). This, however, may not be enough to induce progressive change although if the limits of the imaginary can transform – multiply and expand – at least we may acknowledge its (radical) potential. Thus, Tilly and Wood (2013) speak of ICTs as a tool for social movements, whereby ‘3G or 4G web connections allow cell phone users to post photographs, messages, and video clips to blogs and websites’ (97, my rephrase). For example, in Egypt and Tunisia (2011), activists have used their ‘smartphones to update participants about the locations of protests and security officials, as well as to spread news, photos, and video clips [also to mass media]’ (ibid.). Here, the authors argue that, ‘Such intense media coverage and surveillance may put pressure on authorities to avoid visible confrontation’ as video live streaming or photographic distribution may ‘make authorities increasingly aware of the perceptions of their actions’ (ibid.).<sup>7</sup>

However, even if it is true that social relationships are mass mediated by images (Debord 1967), the flow of structured images of conflict cannot, of course, explain the whole complex process of political dissent. Without going into the structural injustices which caused the Arab Spring revolutions, it may be worth noting, as Khatib (2012) puts it, that the ‘importance of the image should not be dismissed as it helped to bring other Arab citizens closer to this experience’ (119, my rephrase). That is, as ‘images of victimised, unarmed, yet high spirited Egyptians resorting to “primitive” non-violent methods of self-preservation ... made the experiences of the Egyptians emotionally closer, more subjective and thus more open to identification’ (142). Likewise, empirical research has shown that ‘the majority of Twitter images of the 2011 Egyptian revolution contained more efficacy-eliciting content (crowds, protest activities, national and religious symbols) than emotionally arousing (violent) images’ (Kharroub & Bas 2015: pp.1, 15, my rephrase). The authors are not suggesting that visuals of violence are unable to motivate, intensify or transform affects, but rather that it is not necessarily negative content or affective arousing images depicting state violence and abuse, for

example, which encourage an increased degree of online participation and action in terms of symbolic resistance. As Kharroub and Bas note, it is not only that ‘violent content did not predict image retweeting’ in the context of Egypt 2011, but more broadly speaking, in terms of popularity, that ‘humorous text tweets are retweeted more often than other tweets’ (2015: 16; cf. Starbird and Palen 2012). Thus, in a quick remix, ‘positive content (e.g. crowds, symbols) might be popular as motivational and uniting images’ in contrast to the strict ‘violent content that might discourage people’ (2015: 16). However, as mentioned earlier, the research discussed above merely illuminates democratic potential and capacity in terms of symbolic resistance and collective action – the affective potential of visual media to stimulate autonomous political participation, without the guidance of a traditional centre, and without the use of ICTs or the visual as synonymous with social change.

Similar to the Arab Spring, Castells (2012) addresses ‘los indignados’ as a self-mediated movement (166) suggesting, in dialogue with Toret (in Castells 2012: 116-122), that ‘15-M has shown that the capacity of mass self-communication and self organisation online can overcome a media block through the production of videos, slogans, posters, banners and digital viral campaigns which are open for identification to many; a wide group of people from different social backgrounds and ages.’ This view echoes strongly with Hardt and Negri’s (H&N 2000; 2004; 2009) concept of the ‘multitude’; the capacity of social agents in late capitalism to organise and interchange images, affects, codes and ideas in an autonomous and self-regulating manner (without clear political leadership), through online social networks. As Castells notes, the messages distributed through YouTube, Twitter and the like, went viral because their narrative connected with people’s personal (but shared) experiences and feelings of having been let down by traditional (top-down) political symbols (2012: 122). Also, as scholars such as Fernandez-Planells and Figueras-Maz (2014), Micó and Casero-Ripollés (2014) have remarked, the Spanish 15-M protests – in spite of their mobilisation of ‘outrage’ – were utterly peaceful. Additionally, the occupying of squares served not only to highlight the protests’ visibility or point to a crisis of political representation as such, but also to engage in dialogue with citizens passing by (off- and online) in order to discuss new (participatory) solutions and mechanisms to old (representative) problems. Here, due to the peaceful character of the protests, the mainstream media found it hard to depict 15-M ‘as violent or anti-systemic’ (Castañeda 2012: 315). So, when the police tried to remove the protestors by force it ‘backfired as thousands of supporters descended on the squares after eyewitness videos [of excessive police brutality] were uploaded to YouTube’ (Hughes 2011: 408).<sup>8</sup>

However, in terms of the image’s ability to go viral, Mitchell argues that those images which depict hope and joy in the middle of political turmoil (as well as some of the pictures that show state violence against nonaggressive protesters) have the potential to be shared more often than others (2013: 107) – these are images which distinguish



themselves as they emphasise and reunite a sum of visual and affective contrasts. For example, pictures which depict love, solidarity, unity and so on, in a context of fear and conflict, or, again, pictures that provide visible evidence of state abuse (against peaceful demonstrators, for example.). In this sense, as scholars such as Creech (2014) argue, the latter is important, for if state power mechanisms become (too) visible, they may also undermine the notion of power as that which is natural or absent (invisible).

Here, in this finishing section, I will import and amplify my own voice to introduce some notes on culture jamming. In Jenkin's terms, (modern) culture jamming is defined both as a form of participatory culture and cultural resistance (2014). Lasn (1999) and Philipps (2015) explain this in terms of practices which work to subvert meaning through visual forms of remediation, parody, pranking and disfiguring. Hence, although it is difficult to actually trace the concrete effects of culture jamming practices (see, e.g. Robinson & Bell 2013), one may say that pictures such as Adbusters' Ballerina on the Bull poster – which is claimed as the first viral call, and a catalyst for the Occupy movement (Castells 2012) – certainly contributed to the politicisation of citizens; not alone, but through its role as a co-actor, helping to spark resistance and spur new (subversive) meaning-making communities (Lasn & McLauchlan 2013; Mitchell 2013). Therefore, what seemed yet another insignificant protest march expanded – by, among other things, autonomous social networks and the constitution of powerful slogans and visuals (Castells 2012) – into mass demonstrations across the country. These, at least partly, continue to influence contemporary democratic debates. The effect of culture jamming practices are thus not only unpredictable as such but their consequences may still carry the potential to be subversive when they pass through traditional ideological frontiers and claim a space in the canon of 'folk humour' (Wettergren 2009) or pranking aesthetics of social media networks (Harold 2004).<sup>9</sup>

In my own study (paper 4), I connect to Castells' (2012) thoughts on how political messages distributed through social media have the capacity to go viral when the words and images relate to 'the common' people's personal experiences and sentiments in a crisis of trust; here explained in terms of how the social bonds between an individual and state power are falling apart due to a series of events rooted in corruption, inequality, territorial conflicts and so on. The organisation of the trust-distrust conflict (between an individual and the state) certainly interacts with affective dimensions and is indeed also an underlying component in Anonymous' visible circulation of wrongdoings – distributed online in order to mobilise resistance (see paper 3). However, as the findings of Kharroub and Bas (2015) indicate, symbolic resistance through online practices is not limited to the production and distribution of visible evidence in terms of violent content, as humorous and satiric texts have also been shown to be effective, that is, in terms of (social) media-sharing and/or activating participation. In turn, this may help to partly explain how the mobilisation of joy as an affect seems to have the capacity to engage politically (cf. paper 3). In the field that exists between satire and

political resistance there is of course a vast amount of literature available, where the discussion of culture jamming has been fruitful to my work in the context of how graphics, videos and other visuals are produced, and whose signs and symbols are twisted, ironized and disfigured by singularities (which may multiply) through the wave and potential of participatory culture. (See, specifically, paper 3 and the way in which Anonymous remediates visual media and hegemonic discourses in subversive patterns; also see, e.g. how the Podemos-collective distributes sarcastic images of the political Other through online memes and digital video platforms.)

## Theorising the field of visual culture

This section looks more closely at the analytical terminology that I use to analyse my empirical material. I do this by critically examining theoretical research in the arena of visual culture, especially its connection to discourse theory and affect. In order to explain which, and how, theoretical frameworks have provided me with different perspectives, I will begin by first contextualising ideas and concepts in relation to specific authors, and then exemplify with my own texts. I consider it important to stress that my articles have their own format, and that I think of this introductory chapter as a space where it is possible to be more extensive and reflexive in order to develop some of the theoretical thoughts the article format does not allow. In a way, there is also a specific writing style that I wish to underline here, one where the disposition of the text is executed through the way in which the reader is provided with a theoretical discussion from the outset.<sup>10</sup>

For example, W. J. T. Mitchell's (see, e.g. 1986; 1994; 2005; 2011; 2013) contribution to 'iconology' in which he studies the 'general field of images and their relation to discourse' (1994: 36) has been influential to my work in the sense that I look at what way images, as an ensemble of regulated elements, give shape to – or, deconstruct – the sum of articulations (social practices) that frame and constitute collective ideas, feelings and ways of knowledge within social and political domains. If we take the latter, how image practices may be active in strategies of subversion, Mitchell notes,

As Occupy events metastasised in scores of cities across the United States, the [visual] repetition [and distribution] of militarised police violence ... expanded the perceived magnitude of OWS in a national movement. When linked, as it obviously was, to the series of events inspired by the Arab Spring ... Occupy Wall Street seemed to many the culmination of a global process. And crucial to the question of scale was ... the question of the *image*, both verbal and visual, and its potency as a multiplier of meaning, power, and emotion. ... – a description of an event, a scene, that merely has to be mentioned to stir a sense of outrage (2013: 96).<sup>11</sup>

What I take from Mitchell here – beyond the explicitness of signifiers being capable of provoking emotional reactions (which, for example, influence the imagery and narrative of things) – is that the study of the image in relation to discourse is fundamentally connected to poststructuralist thought; or more specifically, the dialectic between image

and language (images as language, language as images) and, hence, language as constitutive – symbolic forms as immanent to the formation of the subject rather than being reduced to formal linguistic activity alone.<sup>12</sup> Another way of putting this is to say that I am not merely interested in the ‘critique of universalism’ as such but also in how social structures and specific practices between and across cultures influence the consumption of the image more deeply. Indeed, how the production, distribution and consumption of the signifier (words and images) (re)constitute thoughts, dreams, desire, and identity, in short, the political ‘common sense’. A perspective that is close to the Lacanian notion whereby the unconscious is structured by and as a language and that language is never neutral or absolute. I will come back to Lacan in a moment, but in the context of my work, this simply suggests that if words and images are culturally anchored but the signified is not definitive, then words and images are also open for dispute. However, not all signifiers are equally easy to contest – think of, say, ‘democracy’; a (floating) signifier which allows itself to represent contesting meanings and be positioned in different contexts, while ‘communism’ is somewhat more difficult to redefine. In relation to this, I argue for example that Podemos (in paper 4) seems to regard the left signifier as especially (culturally) stigmatised because of the way in which institutions were influenced by the Franco era and/or by how large global media conglomerates have framed the left symbol through history. With this knowledge in mind, Podemos opts for suspending the left signifier in favour of other symbolic struggles, for example, the ‘people-elite’ or ‘democracy-austerity’ conflict, etc. in order to create new collective subjectivities beyond the traditional left-right divide. In this context, symbolic forms are not only those put into practice in order to depict a specific content or the real as such, but also those forms which participate in the very creation of it. This is something that I also discuss in papers 1 and 2, in my analysis of how the use of visual signs and symbols and affective interactions never just describe a criminal or terrorist event but are active in producing a new lived experience of it, stretching to the series of mundane imaginaries and perceptions which build the formation of subjectivity itself.

However, the type of poststructuralist arena in which I move emphasises the field of visual culture both in terms of the ‘literal’ (denotative) and symbolic/cultural figurative (connotative) study of the image-object (text analysis), as well as the abstraction of the visual sign. The latter suggests a focus less concerned with the level of intentions in texts than the series of regulating practices which have the potential capacity to constitute a collective (mental) ‘picture of’ history and knowledge. For example, in my study of legal visible evidence, I focus on the visual material that is claimed to identify or prove the notion of guilt in a context of personal security (paper 1). However, in paper 2, I problematise the way in which surrounding discourses of identity, nationalism, security/defence and democracy interact in the (trans)formation of the gaze, rather than limit my discussion to the image-object as such (as it is always through

in-between cumulative discourses and social practices that the gaze – and, thus, subjectivity itself – is modified and constituted).

Here, in analytical terms, I draw from Mitchell's (2005; 2008) notion on 'the everyday practices of seeing' (2005: 343) as well as Bal's invitation to 'give attention to the various framings not only of the object but also of the act of looking' (2003: 9). That is to say that I have considered it as important to discuss not only a particular visual property, field or genre as to discuss how cultural norms and narratives influence interpretation, fantasy and the gaze in ways which go beyond consciousness. Another example of this is found in paper 4, where I stress the need to pay attention both to Podemos' mediated messages (the visual object; how Podemos makes use of new symbolic strategies in popular media to build a different political discourse) as well as to how a range of (historical) social practices interact and build upon each other, together structuring perception. As we shall see in the methodology section, this is basically the 'text, (social) practice, context' triad of critical discourse analysis, and/or the '(text,) articulation (social practice), context' of discourse theory. However, let me first introduce the concepts 'visuality' and 'counter-visuality'. Or, which is the same thing, the 'right to look' in dialogue with Mirzoeff (2011; 2013), and Rancière (2004; 2010).

According to Mirzoeff, critical visuality studies aim to explore the process by which history is made (in)visible to its citizens – where the 'West historicises and distinguishes itself from its others' (2011: xiv). Hence, what I take from this view is the idea that the visual – and of course (in)visibility – is subject to authority. That is, the notion that the public perception of history is structured as a conflict (in the context of this work; between security-insecurity, right-wrong, truth-false, etc.) by a group of narrators with the privileged right to the mechanisms of knowledge production; and, henceforth, the authority to regulate the visible ordering of reality – that which we experience as normality (cf. Mirzoeff 2011: 22). This is made clear, for example, in paper 3, in which Anonymous' leaking of sensitive data and remediation of power abuse subverts an order visibility – what type of knowledge should be set free and which not. In this context then, a counter-visuality, to use Mirzoeff's analogy, is thus this 'right to look'. That which 'confronts the police who say to us, "Move on, there is nothing to see here". Only there is, and we know it and so do they' (ibid. 1). In a similar vein that locates my work in terms of existing theoretical discussions on visuality, Rancière (2010) argues that,

The police is that which says that here, on this street, there's nothing to see and so nothing to do but move along. It asserts that the space for circulating is nothing but the space of circulation. Politics, by contrast, consists in transforming this space of "moving-along", of circulation, into a space for the

appearance of a subject: the people, the workers, the citizens. It consists in re-figuring space, that is ... a dispute over the distribution of the sensible. (37)

It should be clear, that here, the police are not the police force as such, but the privileged authority who are in possession of the ability to regulate public perception/knowledge, while politics is this 'right to look'; the right of the ordinary people to participate in public affairs – the right to be seen/look, listen and be listened to. On this basis, in my work, such an order or hegemony of visibility (and the audible) is not only challenged through Anonymous' remediation and leaking of classified information (paper 3) but also through Podemos' appropriation of the production channels which make the introduction of a new political discourse possible. As I discuss more specifically in paper 4, a distribution of the sensible is an aesthetic distribution of the sayable and the seeable and has not just to do with aesthetics in ornamental terms (cf Rancière 2004).<sup>13</sup> Through such definition, my take on aesthetics is linked to how repetitive articulatory practices can frame, form and structure perception – altering or modifying the subjective but also collective imaginary – rather than with manipulative or suggestive effects only. And it is this definition of aesthetics as that which influences and orders our (sense) knowledge of the world, creating new affective experiences of it – where the perception and expression of the possible is orchestrated by certain powers – that I discuss in all my texts; be it in the representation of security and threat, or in resistance towards specific hegemonic discourses. For example, in my analysis of Podemos' discursive strategies (paper 4) one can see how the party disputes political hegemony by creating and visualising a new imaginary around the hope for democratic regeneration in which citizens are invited to decide upon policy – that is, where the popular masses are highlighted as protagonists of change. This is not only done by administrating the mainstream media's thirst for conflict, or by using specific social media channels, but (also) through producing new symbolic forms and strategic ways of representing and labelling – disrupting – the real.

My point here is that Podemos (as well as the visual strategies used by Anonymous) symbolises the dispute between visibility and counter-visibility 'precisely at the point in which people's sense of reality and realism is at stake' (cf. Mirzoeff 2011: 5). Here, the use of symbolic forms as a way of resistance is about learning how to challenge hegemonic discourses not by a connection to a naturalistic or decorative aesthetic, but through its use of specific technologies, symbolic tactics and (affective) strategies which help to (re)structure felt experience and the order of the visible itself. In other words, the way in which reality is perceived and sensed through a set of signifiers that previously have been excluded within conventional political discourse and public spheres, but are now able to create new dimensions of conflicts and differences, for example in terms of alternative 'Us-Them' relations.

Let me now conclude this section by remarking that if one accepts the hegemony of the (in)visible as that which is organised to protect ‘the authority of leadership’ (Mirzoeff 2011: 23), then I would like to argue that such an order of (in)visibility can certainly be found when the state military, together with large arms firms, are allowed to portray their actions in the name of democracy. By this, I mean as an institutionalised praxis of defence, but where only a strategic selection of signifiers is exposed (paper 2). In a similar line of reasoning, my thoughts on visuality also reside in judicial systems which have the authority to position themselves as neutral and objective, and, hence, have the capacity to present not only the legal outcome as apolitical and acontextual but also (sovereign) power as natural – and invisible (paper 1). This is not to suggest that military action or judicial procedure is no longer appropriate to society’s security. Rather, it is to say that any institution which has ‘the right of death and power over life’, to borrow from Foucault (1978), invites us to revise some of its given practices.

### *The link with affect*

In this section I will introduce concepts and discussions about affect and emotion, and how they relate to my analysis. Here I consider the difference between the terms, how they have been used within segments of cognitive film theory, and how they have been discussed in terms of embodiment and visceral processing, in relation to the aesthetic.

In their study, ‘Affect as a Visual Source of Attention’, Weierich and Barrett note (2010: 125) that,

Affect is any state that represents how an object or situation impacts a person. At its most basic, ‘core affect’ refers to a psychological primitive state that can be described by two psychological properties: hedonic valence (i.e. degree of pleasure/displeasure) and degree of arousal (i.e. physiological activation). In other words, when people experience affect, they experience a unified physiological, or somatovisceral, state that can be described in terms of how pleasant or unpleasant it is, and how much physiological activation is experienced in the moment. ... Human responses to all objects and events in the world can thus be described along these two continua, from pleasant to unpleasant, and from no arousal to high arousal.

The authors argue that affect and affective states or experiences are, or can be, simultaneously somatic (bodily) and psychological, unconscious and conscious, pleasant and unpleasant, biological and cultural: affect thus as a bodily and mental state produced by the way in which a situation impacts an individual at the level of intensity, and simultaneously, the emotional reaction such aesthetic or human experience may provoke. In this context, Hemmings (2005) notes that ‘affect broadly refers to states of being, rather than to their manifestation or interpretation as emotions’ (551). Also

Massumi argues that there is ‘a distinction between affect and emotion, with emotion being the expression of affect in gesture and language, its conventional or coded expression’ (2002a: 232; also see, e.g., Massumi 1996: 228; Gould 2010: 27). This is not to suggest that affect is rooted primarily in biology (cf. Tomkins 1962; 1963; 1991; 1992; Sedgwick 2003; Cartwright 2008)<sup>14</sup> in contrast to emotions, which are strictly culturally constituted, but rather that they are rendered in inter-connection, or, at least, this is how I use the terms.<sup>15</sup>

However, I would like to argue that if one considers solely the expressive nature of emotions; the way in which our emotional system interprets and make visible parts of affects in action through the manifestation of anger, joy, fear, and so on, rather than considering the whole more silent complex picture, then I think that affect can at times be more suitable than emotion for describing the way in which situations strike us both physically and psychologically, albeit invisibly and in different *intensities* within the aesthetic-affective experience. Thus, this is how I roughly consider and deploy the term(s): affect as a potentially intense bodily and mental state, and emotion as a more or less intense expression of affect. I say ‘roughly’ since affect and emotion are, as we have seen, inevitably woven together. An example of this can be found in paper 1, in relation to my exploration of the way in which part of the knowledge gained from legal visible evidence is intimately tied to an affective and embodied meaning-making process, which cannot be disconnected from the judicial evaluation of the real that is (re)presented. That is to say that I analyse and carry out a discussion on how the latent technical-dramaturgical components of legal evidence footage can produce an affective impact and an emotional reaction – an intense sensation of disgust, fear, or danger, etc. – within an intended recipient, that may later influence the (cognitive) legal diagnosis itself. Such a connection between affect, emotion and the cognitive is also made quite clear in paper 2, where, for example, I discuss how the state military’s production and distribution of recruitment-based mobile role-playing games (app games) transmit not only a mental picture but also a bodily sensation and understanding of the assumed soldier experience in its own right. I must re-emphasise that I do not explore the potential impact of affect in terms of established audience or reception studies. My idea is rather to problematise how the aesthetic experience in concrete settings is also a matter of sensation, for it has the potential to produce emotional reactions and affective states, which, in turn, may influence specific meaning-making processes and public perceptions of truth (of which I critically discuss some possible consequences).

That said, within the affective sciences, an extensive amount of research has been done on the connection between brain processes in the domain of neuroscience (quantitative, measureable responses to stimulus), and the psychoanalytic theories of affect.<sup>16</sup> It is also the findings from neurology, together with contributions from cognitive psychology, which have influenced the wide field of cognitive film theory.<sup>17</sup> Common to these disciplines is a focus on affect in relation to the mind; how affective



or emotional responses contribute to the subject's ability to interpret and make sense of screen experience via the intellect. Thus, in any visual representation – where the limits of the (in)visible are always structured (cf. Mirzoeff 2011; 2013 above) – cognitive and bodily activities inherently interact, but in different intensities. For clarity, allow me first to discuss the cognitive dimension of film theory (albeit briefly), before considering the relation between cinema and embodiment.

In general terms, the cognitive elements of emotions may involve a belief or an evaluation. This may entail a perceptual process in which emotional responses are played out in relation to narrative content (and, of course, style) – the way in which the spectator engages with specific characters and the story in terms of identification (empathy; fear, suffering, joy) and learning, and so on (cf. Thomson-Jones 2008). Another way to put it is that the aesthetic experience transmits thoughts and imaginings and these in turn may arouse or stimulate specific affective states, and vice versa. That is, where an affective-intense film experience (involving unconscious bodily states and emotional responses) can affect the mind and inspire thoughts, or, for example, influence and alter fantasies, beliefs or repressed memories. In short, art can change the emotion and the emotion can change the thoughts (Lu 2013).<sup>18</sup> Hence, this is precisely one of the points I make in my discussion of slow motion as a judicial presentation technique (paper 1), noting how the presentation and technical aspects of the legal image also influences the impression of reality along with the subjective (filmic) experience of time. In this context I discuss how witnessing an audio-visual recording that displays a horrific event – here, documentary scenes of violence in a stretched out, cinematic tempo – can provoke unpleasant affective impacts. For example, fear and the feeling of danger as well as concrete physical reactions such as stress and nausea, etc. which then may create and (trans)form the intended viewer's interpretation and reflection process. Of course, this may also occur conversely, that is, with the subject's cognitive system influencing its emotional development (see, e.g. paper 1, p. 563). What I find interesting to discuss in detail here is not, however, how specific emotions may be elicited from mundane (legal) visible evidence which is put into practice in order to represent a historical reality but that the evidence of guilt and truth in the context of audio-visual meaning-making processes is complex (and non-linear), with perception (and thus judgment) being ultimately an embodied process as much as a mental one.

However, to return to the key issue of identification, cognitive film and art theorists, such as Richard Wollheim (1984), have introduced the term 'centrally imagining' as that which is able to imagine from the 'inside'; within the human experience, affective register, or the point of view of the character. This encompasses the capacity to share and adopt the concern of others (74; also see Thomson-Jones 2008; Gaut 1999).<sup>19</sup> In relation to my papers, this notion is important as the legal film does not only aim to provide visible data as such but also to create that which may help to form a judgement, or, in context of the above, a dimension of empathy with the victim, and distance or

hostility towards the prosecuted. And perhaps one could argue that it is this degree or capacity for felt engagement (empathy) that in the end makes the legal film an effective or ineffective piece of evidence.<sup>20</sup> In any case, it is clear that affect is not immanent to film experience but must be set up or manipulated by the narrative and the selection of different technical-dramaturgical components or choice of characters, and so on, in order for emotional reactions to be drawn in one direction more than another. Here, the legal film's evocation of empathy, sadness, fear, anger, hatred, or (a desire for) revenge are not given but shaped, directed and produced in relation to a certain narrative and style. I think Carroll (1999) makes a fine observation on this in terms of noticing that the affective dimension in (Western) movie experience works somewhat as a leitmotif. Affect as the 'glue that holds the audience's attention to the screen on a moment-to-moment basis' (21), as the audience engages in the narrative and waits for the main conflict to occur and (and hopes that it will) be resolved. One may thus argue that the basic dramaturgical-emotional structure of the fiction film – introduction of conflict, climax, and resolution – works just as well in adversarial trial processes and in the legal film in particular.

Now, I have previously mentioned that emotions can respond to certain presentation techniques and signifiers or, as Thomson-Jones (2008) says, according to the cognitive tradition, emotions have a 'focusing function' (124) in terms of the way that affective impacts are 'typically ... prompted and modulated by what is on screen' (Carroll 1999: 23). The perceptual sense of threat in the legal film (paper 1) or in the military representation of terrorism (paper 2), for example, is thus an emotion and/or an affective state directed towards an object which is placed and depicted by specific actors; this, in turn, can be significant in advancing the beliefs or imaginings of the spectator toward potentially high-intense emotional responses (shock, fear, rage, or retributive justice e.g.) and/or a specific (low-intense) kind of mood.<sup>21</sup> Here too, then, one might argue that the efficacy of legal visual evidence is about the capacity to produce particular sensations in different degrees of intensity via content and form – narrative and style – which lead the intended viewer in the direction of specific pleasant or unpleasant affective states.

However, if cognitive film theory concentrates on how the (positive or negative) affects may respond against a reference on the screen – where the relation between the aesthetic projection and mental perception (thoughts, imaginations, beliefs, judgments, associations, etc.) is key – bodily (visual) theories consider the act of meaning-making; that is, in terms of how the sound-image may provoke impulsive responses in the spectator beyond (*but not excluding*) psychological activity. We do not *only* interpret and understand with our mind, we *also* do it more or less instinctively with our body. For example, implicit in all my papers is an idea of cinematic perception and bodily action as that which is multi-sensorially processed rather than strictly cognitive or bound to ocular vision; where vision is always functioning in cooperation, to echo

Sobchack, ‘with other sensorial means of access to the world’ (2004: 59). Here I draw from Sobchack’s idea that the body is an instrument for knowledge due to its capacity to experience sensations and respond to a set of cinematic sensibilities ‘that makes meaning before it makes conscious, reflexive thought’ (ibid.). That is, sensibilities where meaning is felt and lived (experienced) through increasing or diminishing levels of intensity and sensation, and not just bound to the process of thinking or reasoning (also see, e.g. Massumi 1996; 2002; Clough 2000; 2007; 2010a; 2010b; Pisters 2003; Brennan 2004; Thrift 2008). To stay with the legal film and footage as evidence in particular, I point in paper 1 to the problem of regarding vision as tied to knowledge – as that which we can know is restricted by what we can observe (cf. Baggott 2011: 110). Because not only is the gaze that which is culturally constituted but also because sight itself is connected to the rest of the senses, with the visual perception of light and movement, etc. able to stimulate the interpretation of sound, and vice versa (making the aesthetic experience a potential blur between perception and fantasy). Thus, I follow Sobchack’s argument that it is this synaesthetic power of cinema that creates the potential of experiencing film in terms of ‘a certain pre-logical and non-hierarchical unity of the sensorium’ (2004: 69). When applied to my own writings, however, this is less to suggest that footage cannot serve as visible evidence than to propose problems in the judicial reading of the image; this is because, as we have seen, the visual reading is never direct or linear.

Using a similar theoretical frame, Marks (2000) also speaks of the cinematic experience as somewhat pre-reflexive and multi-sensory, a space in which embodied memories – memories embodied in the senses and motor capacities, for example – can be resurrected and redefined via sensual acts. For example, our immediate perception of fear mediated through shape, light, colour and sound may reactivate the skin senses; a specific bodily sensation which may bring back memories, or produce new realities. This flags up my discussion on how the state military’s role-playing game is capable of activating new experiences of combat and security through bodily activities and narratives of adventure (in paper 2, p. 26ff).<sup>22</sup> In this context one might say that memories and fantasies are not only a process of remembering or imagining (mentally), but, as Casey (2000: 149 [1987]) puts it, this ‘active ingredient in bodily movements’ in which unconscious corporeal reactions and emotional responses have the power to (re)construct our perception of the past and present. Reality and visibility – in the context of my writings: visible evidence, propaganda film, and counter-hegemonic visual strategies – thus not only refer to a discussion of how the world is made visible or invisible, or what type of signifiers may be absent and prioritised in a context of power. Rather, in my work, reality and visibility refer fundamentally to an exploration of the way in which the production of *a new space of experiencing the senses comes into being* – how new realities and attitudes are created and continuously modified via felt engagement in a space of security.

For example, in paper 1, when I discuss how legal film footage is used as evidence, I argue that the filter/texture of the camera image and/or the sound of the film (the recorded scream and movements of the killer e.g.) are not only filmic components used to describe an event but also layers of sense- or meaning-making which contribute to create affective experiences of this event. This, however, is not a static experience but one that evolves and mutates – an aesthetic-affective experience that strikes the body on the plane of affect and is as such not automatically accessible to critical thought. Nonetheless, as I insist, when the spectator engages through the layers of affect that create meaning through bodily sensation, this may have consequences for specific legal decisions. To quote Carroll, ‘Through the montage of sound and image, filmmakers often address audiences at a cognitively impenetrable level of response, as loud noises can elicit instinctual responses from spectators as can the appearance of sudden movement (1999: 22, my rephrase).<sup>23</sup>

Whether we may reflect on affect in regard to technical-dramaturgical components or as a force that has the capacity to alter our relationship to the world, it seems to me, drawing from the authors discussed, that ‘the affective’ (as such) has the potential to crash into the body on intense, visceral terms and by so doing, (trans)form the subject in any given situation. Hence, this is where I invest my interest – in reading mundane visual, affective strategies in a context of (in)security production (that works to maintain or contest existing practices and discourses) through a theoretical basis which is often reserved for the aesthetic experience. Why? The reason is simple. Even if not all art is (a priori) politically framed, all politics and relations of power (and their mediation through symbolic forms) are in one way or another structured and ordered and thus also aesthetic; that is, subject to sense experience.<sup>24</sup> Put differently, as soon as symbolic forms and the ordering of the (in)visible and the (in)audible are framed and moulded into a narrative and subjected to mass mediation (and mass perception), they become part of that which is able to structure our shared knowledge and the feelings we have regarding particular (economic, cultural and political) domains.

## Discourse theory

As I will specify under methodology, I have used Thompson’s (1984; 1990) and Fairclough’s (1995; 2010) notions of critical discourse analysis as an underlying methodological framework, while I in many ways connect my overall theoretical discussion to Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) ontological view of discourse, where subjectivity is considered as formed within and by the symbolic order. Here, in this context, symbols are neither givens nor are they mere tools for mediation, instead they are constitutive of subjectivity itself. This means, however, that the subject cannot escape discourse, only reframe and contest its signified order – or, indeed, invent new symbolic forms (cf. paper 4). *In my articles, then, I do not consider discourse as merely contexts of language used in a linguistic manner but rather as the systems of reasoning*

*which circulate within different domains* and which are embodied by subjects, as a result of articulatory practices across time. Also, as I point out throughout this introductory chapter: My take on discourse production (and formation) is intrinsically woven with aesthetic practices – a politics of what will be (in)visible, (in)audible and (un)sayable – which thus, essentially overlaps with dimensions of affect in the arena of perception. Let me clarify, however, that for Laclau and Mouffe, practices of articulation are social practices that construct – order and transform – particular signifiers into a larger narrative and, at least, temporary orders of significations (1985: 105ff). In the context of my work, then, I refer to social practices as a series of active relationships which form and transform meaning; may it be in the context of judicial or military praxis, politico-economic policies, the entertainment industry, television mainstream media, or social movements. Overlapping social groups that have the capacity to administrate, create or change social imaginaries and public conversations.

A starting point in this thesis is that power relations are connected to the production and distribution mechanisms of knowledge, and by specific authorities that have the capacity to contribute to the creation and reproduction of the dominant ideas that circulate within different domains. In other words, the relation between power/knowledge is not only framed by the political status and the ideological functions which knowledge can serve, or by the fact that knowledge production in practice is ‘linked with a whole range of institutions, economic requirements and political issues of social regulation’ (Foucault 1980: 109); rather, this cumulative flow of knowledge that we acquire through life shapes ‘cultural laws’ and, hence, disciplines us as subjects (ibid.). In such a power/knowledge-nexus it is power that decides what is knowledge and what is not. If one accepts that as soon as we (the collective subject) becomes involved in systematic outflows of knowledge – and that we thereby consume an ordering and an administration of this – then this means that it is this precise power/knowledge relation that partly constitutes us as beings (when we are immersed in the process of socialisation). That is, where only some social groups and individuals have the capacity to structure and organise an order of (in)visibility and (in)audibility. For example, where the discourse of the ‘terrorist threat’ is a symbolic space occupied by certain – specific – forces (paper 2), or where the emergence of a populist (alternative) politics is a threat to the security of order (paper 4).

On my reading, this is what Laclau and Mouffe (1985) also basically suggest when they frame discourse or the order of it as the result of social practices which work to establish and fix larger patterns of meaning; for example, the articulatory practices which struggle to create, connect and modify ‘floating’ signifiers and particular elements into threads of temporal significations. ‘Floating signifiers’ then, I might add, are symbolic elements which are not stable and which open themselves to different political or ideological fields; signifiers that not are ‘discursively anchored’ (cf. Laclau 2005; Žižek 2012a). More specifically, as my analysis of Podemos’ counter-hegemonic

strategies indicates: If there is a potential space for an alternative politics due to the lack of trust in the establishment, then this implies, given the crisis of political symbols (from left to right), that this space ought to be filled with new signifiers. It follows that in order to disrupt political hegemony, Podemos has decided to dispute the floating signifiers that are at stake. The concept of democracy, popular sovereignty, social protection, etc. from a new, post-ideological point of view in which traditional left-wing symbolic forms are somewhat left out, is caused, I argue, by its cultural association and link with the communist spectre (and thus that which is unable to build cross-sectoral alliances). Of course, there is more to it (see paper 4) but that said, I hope, here, to have contextualised and defined the way in which I use specific terms and concepts belonging to the field of discourse theory. It is also within this context of discursive struggles that I am inspired by Mouffe's (2002; 2005; 2013; 2014) thoughts of conflict and passion in particular; where an agonistic model of democracy is considered a necessary component to the political in the way that it is only by tension and (discursive) clashes that the democratic project is able to develop (cf. paper 3, 4 where hegemonic discourses are contested through the mediation of affect and counter-visuals). In what follows, I stress the need to understand discourse from a broader perspective in which the aesthetic and the affective intrinsically circulates. I will do this by discussing the notion of democratic conflict in relation to my work – as an affective force in counter-hegemonic discourse.

### *Passion, agonistics, and antagonism*

In my analysis of Anonymous' symbolic (and affective) activism (paper 3), as in my exploration of Podemos' counter-hegemonic strategies (paper 4), I elaborate on the concept of passion and antagonism in relation to Mouffe's idea that democracy can only develop in a state of tension and/or through a clash of opinions and ideas. Here, the democratic project is obliged to revise its own boundaries in response to a political force which, in one way or another, disputes hegemony. This is to say that I discuss counter-hegemonic strategies in terms of extra-parliamentary activity (paper 3), and, of course, within the parliamentary system (paper 4). In both cases, as we shall see, passion and antagonism are two fundamental constituents of resistance. In the mobilisation of affect, I relate political passion on the one hand to the passion of activists (Anonymous) or other actors (for example, Podemos) which dispute the hegemonic discourses, not only because there is a desire for social change, but also because there is a dimension of pleasure in resistance itself. Here, the collective struggle for social justice can provide a sense of belonging or meaning to one's life as well as a sense of satisfaction in its own right – in terms of opposing the abuse of power. On the other hand, I relate (political) passion to one of the necessary components in the construction of (political) collective subjectivities, where the axis between an 'Us' and a 'Them' moves within a level of affective involvement (rage, distrust, desire, etc.), inviting the diverse but collective

subject to take a stand and gather against a common frontier; an antagonist Other. In order for the reader to understand the theoretical context of my study, I will subsequently engage in a dialogue, even if briefly, with Mouffe's take on passion, antagonism and that which she names 'agonistics'.

Although Mouffe makes a division between 'an antagonistic friend/enemy confrontation' and an agonistic 'confrontation among adversaries' in which the opponent (the rival) is perceived as legitimate, the agonistic dimension inherently includes several levels of antagonism and a notion of 'the people' as socially divided rather than merely plural (if plurality, here, is seen in terms of that we would all be able to co-exist in society in spite of the fundamental conflicts which divide or bring us together; see, e.g. Mouffe 2014: 150-151). In this context, Mouffe argues that the 'crucial question for democratic politics is to construct the We/They conflict in a mode which is compatible with democratic institutions' (150, my rephrase). Or, as she elaborates,

The agonistic model of democracy ... is an analytical approach, formulated as an alternative to the aggregative and deliberative models. ... By envisaging this confrontation in terms of adversaries and not on a friend/enemy mode that might lead to civil war, it allows such a confrontation to take place within democratic institutions. (154)

In my reckoning, Mouffe is underlining two things. The first is that institutional (but alternative) politics 'must' establish a clear antagonistic frontier which make the potential electorate identify with A in opposition to B (since we are what we – think, have been taught, or fantasise – are not), but always inside, or, at very the borders of democracy. And in a way in which the current institutions of the democratic system can progress and develop. As I examine in greater detail in paper 4, this is explicitly illustrated by the way in which Podemos has set up a collective will to change, constructed around the televised mediation of a corrupt political establishment, where the privileges of 'the 1%' is framed as antagonistic to 'the 99%'. Next, at the same time, Mouffe urges counter-hegemonic movements that, in relation to conflict and antagonism, mobilise beyond the solely extra-institutional form of protests (Anonymous, 15M, Occupy, etc.), or, at least, enter into dialogue with institutions, in order to achieve social change (cf. Negri 2015; L&M 1985).<sup>25</sup> Stated another way: institutional politics should, according to Mouffe (and Podemos), be less institutional – less attached to formal bureaucratic rules – and connect more to civil social justice movements, and vice versa. To exemplify with my own writings, it is quite explicit that Anons' digital counter-visuals which seem to engage the on- and offline crowd into resistance, moves within the extra-institutional sphere, although its political core – containing digital privacy, free speech, and counter-censorship and so on – is also taken

up by singular political parties which articulate their politics around such issues (paper 3). However, what Podemos does (paper 4), is take the struggle for digital privacy, free speech and the like and synchronise it through its appropriation of alternative and mainstream media with other social justice struggles – feminism, anti-war, environmentalism, anti-eviction movements, etc. – uniting the different but overlapping democratic struggles into a ‘chain of equivalence’ (in this context, into a larger chain of institutional and extra-institutional resistance articulated against an oppressive Other), which is a key condition for challenging political hegemony (cf. L&M 1985). Furthermore, it is not hard to see that a win-win situation is created between Podemos’ antagonistic discourse and its politics of recognition and the media logic of mainstream media, which holds that a story is engaging and thus can increase viewing rates only insofar as it offers a dramaturgy of conflict in which the spectator is invited to identify in opposition to an Other. Thus, if it is through political tension that democracy may gain the ability to continuously shift, change and redefine itself, then this is why Mouffe’s notion of conflict behaviour and the political passion carried by activists, can be seen as utterly important in the radically democratic process; that is, due to its capacity to force a discussion and re-evaluate a given hegemonic order. Additionally, this is why conflict and consensus are reciprocal; they both need each other in order for the democratic project to advance and contribute to a productive political dialogue (Mouffe 2005; 2013; also see paper 3, 4 in this thesis).<sup>26</sup> Of course, neither Mouffe nor myself is suggesting that confrontation, antagonism and the mobilisation of social conflict, where the notion of ‘the people’ is defined against the powerless Other (read far-right populism), is producing the kind of conditions from which the democratic project can develop. Rather, the argument is that affects such as collective economic rage and social dissatisfaction can be (democratically) channelled in a way that alters dominance.

Allow me to end this section by connecting the Lacanian notion of the Other and my previous discussion of affect to Mouffe’s (2002; 2005; 2014) take on passion, which I mentioned at the beginning of this section, and seek to develop further in papers 3 and 4. That is, where the mobilisation of this ‘Us-Them’ conflict moves into a level of sensation rather than of thought. In this context, Mouffe speaks of passion as a fundamental layer and ingredient in the political constitution of collective subjectivities; where a sense of belonging and identity can rise out of the construction of difference and Otherness – through, as discussed above, the articulation and incorporation of an ‘Us-Them’ discourse. In order to more fully explain what difference and Otherness is one could say that there is a constitutive dimension in the discourse of exclusion. For example, the aesthetic experience and the mediation of affect that interact in the production of realities of inclusion/exclusion frame the ‘Us’ as that which stands in opposition to something else (a ‘Them’). The ‘Us’ and the ‘Self’ is thus defined in terms of difference (to a foreign ‘Other’).



To be precise, as I note in paper 4, there is a distinction between the ‘Other’ (with capitalised ‘O’) as the foreign (non-ordinary) subject or symbol (cf. Lacan 1993: 56 [1981]) and the ‘other’ (lower case ‘o’) as ‘just another person’ (Fink 1997: 32). In terms of constitutivity, however, they overlap. Podemos, for example, builds a (populist) self-image which insists on the notion that the group is constituted of ‘normal and decent people’ in opposition to the ‘caste’ – the political-economic bureaucratic top dwellers who have distanced themselves from ‘the people’ and the people’s needs (paper 4). This strategy permits the masses to identify themselves in association with this ‘others like him- or herself’ concept (Fink 1997: 96), which at the same time stands in contrast to the foreign ‘Other’. That is, where the (imaginary) ‘other’ (Podemos; the ‘normal people’, etc.) is in conflict with a symbolic antagonist; an opposite reflection of the Self. Now, there is implicit in this ‘Us-Them’ conflict a circulating discourse of disharmony which, in essence, suggests (or promises) that the harmony that is absent can only be overcome through the defeat of the Other (also see, e.g. Laclau 2005; Glynos & Howarth 2007). In such discourse, the bottom line also contains a desire which is constituted so that the desire to master the Other leads, or so it is said, to happiness (harmony). Theoretically speaking, this idea goes back to Lacan’s theory of the loss of mother/child unity and the subject’s entrance in the symbolic order. But before I excavate this, let me just say that such political discourse of ‘joy to come’ – where the tickling desire to overcome the Other is indeed affective and intense – can, of course, be mobilised by different types of political forces, all with different political aims. Thus, it is this mobilisation of affect which has the capacity to produce bonds between subjects and bodies (connected in affect; in rage, fear, hope or desire, for example.) through the articulation of difference and Otherness that Mouffe refers to passion; in which the production and mediation of affect has the ability to stimulate the collective subject in one political direction instead of in others. Indeed, if the idea is to produce an intense sensation of social division which is capable of producing a deeply felt political energy in the collective subject, then there is also political potential here, as the affect can be transformed into a dimension of political identification that serves (or undermines) democratic purposes.

In the following and as a last theoretical consideration, I will now concentrate my discussion on the psycho-political terrain of discourse theory, which has been fundamental to my reasoning in terms of affect and political discourse.

## **Discourse (psycho)analysis**

Here, I seek to present and develop the specific theoretical terms I have used in my research that are directly linked to psychoanalytical theory and discourse theory: The contingent signifier, symbolic constitutivity, the notion of lack and fantasy. To do this I go through parts of Lacan’s thinking on how the subject is formed via symbolic structures. I will start from the beginning with Lacan’s rather complex idea of how the

subject exists in a tension between nature and culture, or as he says, between the ‘real’ and the ‘symbolic’ order. It should be noted, however, that I write on the Lacanian influence on discourse theory in paper 4 as well, which means that in the following I will be as brief as I can. I might add, however, that Lacan’s poststructuralist theory is situated at a quite high level of abstraction, which means that I have considered it necessary, at times, to be extensive in terms of context.

### *The anti-essentialist character of symbolic constitutivity*

To explain how I use the idea of contingency – or, rather, why I see discourse as a site of struggle – it seems to me that one has to grasp the intersection of psychoanalytic theory and discourse theory, which relies on a fundamental emphasis on the ‘anti-essentialist, anti-objectivist character of constructionism’ (Stavrakakis 2002: 66 [1999]). In other words, one must go back to what Lacan terms the real (nature) and the symbolic order (culture). To keep it as simple as possible, ‘the real’ has its origin in ‘the domain of that which subsists outside of symbolisation’ (Lacan 2006: 324 [1966]). In general, this refers to the first months of an individual’s existence and where reality is stable; i.e. before the development of the ego and the formation of subjectivity (which, in turn, is inherently related to language).<sup>27</sup>

When I say, in dialogue with Lacan, that the subject is born into language, I should make clear that the symbolic order, here, is that which connects the subject with culture, conventions and rules. And the shared meanings of culture, as is known, are operative through non-fixed symbolic forms. This means not only that reality and desire (for these, read subjectivity) is articulated through language but also that *the symbolic order moves within a field of contingency; offering an always possible, or never complete, definition of human reality*. Let me exemplify: I discuss Podemos’ use of symbolic strategies in relation to the Lacanian idea which presupposes that symbolic forms are constitutive to the subject as we read the world unconsciously through metaphors and metonyms in which words and images do not culminate in secure signification. As the signified (meaning) in symbolic forms can never be guaranteed, there is also a lack of absolute sureness in subjectivity itself. Allow me to put it this way: If meaning is never total, the way in which the subject experiences social reality and itself is not total either. There is instead a constitutive and eternal gap in the subject that (s)he tries to fill with (temporal) meaning and (partial) satisfaction throughout life. A desire (stimulated by the producers of discourse) to reach plenitude and total harmony that is impossible to attain and fulfil completely since we are doomed to live in symbolic abstraction. Theoretically speaking, however, it is precisely this contingent character of culture, human reality and symbolic forms which signals and makes possible the dispute of signifiers and political subjectivities.<sup>28</sup>

It is then from this theoretical backbone that I discuss Podemos’ dispute of the politics of austerity – the decline of social protection and the public social security

system – through a new, affective political grammar which, as indicated, places democracy against social cuts and ‘the people’ (the ‘Us’), against the politics which favours a ‘Them’ – those at the top (but not the social majority). Here, the non-fixity of the signifier makes words and images open to a series of redefinitions and disputes, particularly during situations of crisis. However, and although I have already dealt with this, even in a context of a political representative crisis, not all symbolic forms are equally possible to redefine. I suggest this explains why Podemos mobilises resistance not only by cancelling the use of the left signifier – which I argue is culturally stigmatised – but the whole classical left-right dispute in general in favour of introducing a post-ideological counter-discourse through (visual) popular culture (talk shows). Here, subversive hope and social change is connected to the capacity of directing the collective outrage stemming from the economic crisis towards a common enemy: the old and oppressive Other (the crisis of the two-party system).<sup>29</sup>

### *The creation of lack, and the fantasy to overcome it*

In the next section, I will discuss the notion of lack in the way it interferes in the production of political fantasy; that promising world of harmony and safety that can be created once the notion of Threat is excluded. According to Lacanian theory, there is, as indicated, a ‘lost’ satisfaction that arises when the mother/child dyad is interrupted (by the Father, who forces the child into the symbolic order), which suggests that it is this precise passage from the real into the symbolic that creates a sense of lack in the subject. As a consequence, there is – as the subject is being formed in culture – an unconscious desire to find it again (to overcome dissatisfaction, to be recognised, to feel meaningful, and so on).<sup>30</sup> Translated into the discourse-theoretical framework which contextualises my discussion in paper 2 and 4, I explore how this specific type of political narrative comes into being, highlighting the way in which explicit political forces make use of aesthetic and affective strategies in order to stimulate a political discourse in which fulfilment and harmony is depicted as accessible by locating the elimination of the Other as a condition of harmony. For example, in paper 2, this is shown in how political subjectivity is mobilised through the production and reproduction of this foreign Other Threat and as a result, a will (disguised as a need) to stop it. In this context, I explore the visual-affective strategies of the military-industrial establishment where the subject is addressed within a political frame of belonging in which ‘We’ all can make a difference in the war on terror (see, e.g. paper 2, p. 32).<sup>31</sup> Once this ‘difference’ has been made, the fantasy that is stimulated is the one that ‘promises to cover over our lack’ (see, e.g. Stavrakakis 2007: 240). Thus, the fantasmatic dimension of politics is a process of political constructions that promise to extinguish the lack but ‘as soon as we buy the product we find out that the enjoyment we get is partial, that it has nothing to do with what we have been promised’ (Glynos & Stavrakakis 2004: 210). In Lacan’s words, “‘That is not it’ is the very cry by which the

jouissance obtained is distinguished from the jouissance expected' (Lacan 1998: 111 [1975]).<sup>32</sup> In summary, my take on Lacanian theory functions as a tool in my analysis of, specifically, the state military's narrative of threat and Podemos' construction of an antagonist Other; this is where I discuss and explore how desire and fantasy are promoted in order to do away with the lack that is so troubling to subjects – the lack that is said to block social harmony.<sup>33</sup>

## Methodological framework

I have used the work of Thompson (1984; 1990) and his methodology of interpretation as an underlying research guideline to interpret and make sense of data in relation to context. Thus, in this section I will present the methodological research framework research by reading the included studies in dialogue with Thompson (1984; 1990) alongside fragments of Fairclough's critical approach to media discourse (1995; 2010). That is to say, on how texts might overlap but also the way in which text, action and context should always be examined in relation to each other, together with the ways in which meaning-making serves to sustain (or subvert) relations of domination. Here, I discuss my work specifically at the level of the text (text analysis; semiotics, narrative structure; dramaturgy; argumentation) as well as the level of production, technology and contexts of consumption (media logics; technological conditions; interactive dynamics; media formats), plus the cultural, social, political and economic level at which texts and media technologies circulate.

### *Interpretation, ideology, and critique*

In the main, I have used Thompson's (1984; 1990) interpretative framework for the analysis of ideology based on the study of symbolic forms as an overarching methodological approach. This is as it is, fundamentally, within words and images that meaning is mobilised (albeit unconsciously) in the interests and values of specific individuals and social groups (see e.g. 1984: 73; 1990: 265). Indeed, the way in which meaning is mobilised in the service of particular interests, to the extent that certain signifying practices contribute to sustain specific relations of domination, is that what Thompson defines as the 'critical edge' of ideology, and is hence a definition that echoes my own thoughts and application of the concept. In my view, the notion of an ideological critique has to do with how 'the constitutive power of representation' is arranged and structured in ways whereby a range of everyday relations of domination are supported. However, I would also like to say that just as it is necessary to study ideology in terms of sustaining the status quo, it is also important to understand how counter-hegemonic strategies may function. (On a personal note I prefer the term counter-hegemony to 'counter-ideology' as it seems to me that the latter may be associated with value-free resistance.) Hence, if I may extend this thought, ideology and counter-hegemony are both connected to the symbolic strategies, interests and values embedded in these that (as in the case of the former) serve to sustain or (as in the case of the latter) subvert specific relations of domination. For example, the supreme right

occupied by the law and the state military, which allows them to judge, classify, ‘in-form’, historicise, define, regulate, control, command and normalise life (see paper 1, 2) and/or the way in which social movements actively struggle to (trans)form cultural experience and the hegemonic discourses by the production and diffusion of discursive forms (paper 3, 4).<sup>34</sup> On a further note it is also this critical approach that partly connects my work to CDA, in terms of the idea that ‘social theory should be oriented towards critiquing and changing society, in contrast to traditional theory oriented solely to understanding or explaining it’ (Wodak & Meyer 2009: 6).

That said, let me subsequently clarify some of Thompson’s central claims and then detail how I have applied them.

### *Text is context, context is text*

The kernel of this thesis, which I base on Thompson’s (1984; 1990) methodological proposition, mainly consists of three different phases (social-historical analysis; discursive analysis; interpretation/re-interpretation). Here, the relation between text, action (the production, distribution and consumption of language and representation) and social structure (the institutional, structural and cultural practices which condition the very emergence of meaning-making processes) is examined in terms of how and why some interests and values are represented as legitimate while others are excluded (see, e.g. Thompson 1984: 131). As the name suggests, the first phase, the dimension of ‘social-historical analysis’ (1990: 281; 1984: 135) focuses on analysing the context – the particular social-historical conditions and situations – in which a text is produced, circulated, received and interacted with. That is, illuminating the concept whereby the meaning of one part ought to be understood in the context of the whole, which in turn is only accessible from its individual components (Wodak & Meyer 2009: 22).

As we shall see in a moment, it is this precise and constant dialogue between text and context that structures the basis of my work. In paper 1, for example, I read the visual material against the specific forensic context and judicial logic of which it is part. In other words, I do not only discuss the visual, narrative and affective components of visible evidence as such but also the ontological and epistemological assumptions of legal reasoning, looking also, at the particular political context surrounding those cases I analyse in depth (which I here argue is inherently attached to the judicial diagnosis). In paper 2 then my (visual) analysis is rendered against an underlying economic context of defence industrialisation twisted around global economic ‘stability’ and the need to ‘secure democracy’ and, of course, a discourse of identity. By that, I mean the protection of an ‘Us’ as well as subjects’ chance of ‘making a difference’ – to matter, to be visible, to be recognised – when participating in international (armed) conflict. In paper 3, I study how Anonymous’ production and distribution of symbolic forms challenges the transmission of hegemonic discourses in the context of societies of control and state-corporate security. Finally, paper 4, examines Podemos’ affective and

aesthetic-discursive strategies in relation to the 2008 financial crisis in general and the (Spanish) Eurozone crisis in particular. Thus, to study the production of symbolic forms is then not only to analyse text or action (production, circulation, reception contexts or interaction) but also to consider the historical (cultural, economic and political) processes – and the specific institutional apparatuses – which regulate the selection of discourse production.

In any case, this social-historical dimension – that which in Fairclough (1995) would correspond to what he labels both as ‘discursive practice’ and ‘sociocultural practice’ – is by Thompson divided into subfields in which I actively considered that what he calls ‘fields of interaction’, ‘social institutions’, and ‘social structure’ (1990: 281).

Let me discuss these one by one. The first; i.e. the fields of interaction, are seen by Thompson as the ‘relations between individuals and some of the opportunities available to them’ (ibid. 282). Thus, in my work, I have tried to analyse the material beyond mere representation in order to consider, as well, the social context in terms of reception-action. For example, as argued in paper 3, the possibility of the subject interacting with symbolic forms of resistance – the democratic potential of internet-based information, for example – is, of course, not a given as such but depends to a high degree on that which Bourdieu (1986), for example, calls the accumulation of cultural (and social) capital, which is essentially unequal and shifting in character as it is an accumulation of resources and network assets that depends on different geo-social and historical conditions such as social heredity, class, education, etc. (cf. paper 3, p. 254). Here, the conditions of resistance – symbol-production as cultural struggle, for example – are never given as such as there are always different social-historical contexts that diminish or increase the possibilities of contestation. In Fairclough, however, the field of interaction is less concentrated on cultural and social capital as such (as this would accord with his definition of sociocultural practice), although I have found it important to acknowledge the way in which social media – or the nature of its production and consumption level – works as a signifying practice through its own special qualities (cf. Fairclough’s ‘discursive practice’). That is, by considering properties such as interaction and accessibility together with technological possibilities such as (live) stream features, the coordination of hashtags and (sharing) speed, etc. become meaningful components that may go beyond mere semiotics (text).

But let me not mix things up here too much, and instead continue with the next level of Thompson’s social-historical dimension. My thesis stresses the usefulness of analysing social institutions and the ‘reconstruct[ion of] the cluster of rules, resources and relations which constitute them’ (see Thompson 1990: 282). Hence, the practices and techniques of (media) institutions, which is part of the empirical material of my work, should not be considered as a particular event or singular property, but part of a larger historical body of implicit rules, conventions and guiding principles (as there is

always a relationship between production, distribution and interaction). For example, since the guiding principles of mass media are there not only to inform but also to compete for ratings and advertising revenue, mainstream media is drawn into pursuing ratings through an established rule, implicit and dominant, whereby a story is engaging in so far as there is conflict between different antagonistic sides. In such media logic, dramatic scenes – of war, political disputes, or thrilling crime narratives, etc. – tend to get (media and thus public) attention. To exemplify with paper 2: when the military produces and diffuses their own visual material to the media they are obviously also conscious of this media logic – what pictures may ‘sell’, and which ones are more likely than others to be published (see, e.g. paper 2, p. 33). However, this knowledge of media logic can also be used to serve counter-hegemonic purposes. For example, in paper 4 this is revealed when I discuss how Podemos’ antagonist discourse – where an ‘Us’ (the impoverished middle class) is articulated against a ‘Them’ (the corrupt and self-enriching political class) – takes place in commercial television talk shows which adopt conflict dramaturgical structures in the race for TV ratings. Thus, similar to Thompson, I consider the (media) text in connection with (media) logic, for they are intertwined, with this logic – the underlying rules of mainstream media, for example – having an affective and propagandistic potential which can be used both to reinforce and challenge hegemonic discourses.

Finally, the level of social structure in Thompson focuses on ‘which asymmetries are systematic and relatively stable – that is, which are manifestations not simply of individual differences, but of collective and durable differences in terms of the distribution of, and access to, resources, power, opportunities and life chances’ (Thompson 1990: 283). Now, my reading of Thompson suggests, however, that the asymmetries of social structure connect to the reproduction of social classes as well, meaning that not only is ‘class’ a category to consider in terms of its interactive possibilities (the structural asymmetries of citizens’ possibilities, remembering the discussion of cultural and social capital above) but also, I think, in terms of subjectivity. I mean, that although the notion of class is intimately connected to uneven distribution mechanisms, ‘class’ is not a stable category in terms of identity. For example, on the one hand, the ‘worker’ does not necessarily define him or herself in strict relation to economic exploitation (which, in turn, may contribute to maintaining the current structural gaps), however, as we can see in paper 4, it is precisely because of this lack of ‘class consciousness’ that Podemos has succeeded in mobilising a transverse (post-ideological) discourse. This has been done in order to unite the collective but diverse subject against a new antagonist frontier; that is, rather than addressing the subject (the ‘worker’) in terms of class essentialism.

Of course, there are more levels than this in Thompson’s social-historical scheme and I have expressed only those that have had the most relevance to my writings.



### *The dimension of discursive analysis*

Permit me to start with a quote,

The forms of discourse which express ideology [and counter-hegemony; my remark] must be viewed not only as socially and historically situated practices, but also as constructions of symbolic representations, which display an articulated structure. Hence, forms of discourse may be studied as narratives because ideology [or counter-hegemony], in so far as it seeks to sustain [or, as I add, subvert] relations of domination by representing them as legitimate, tends to assume a narrative form. Stories are told which glorify [or condemn] those in power and seek to justify [or oppose] the status quo. Moreover, the stories, which are relevant to the analysis of ideology, are not only the myths of official political discourse. They are in the narratives of everyday life, the anecdotes and jokes, which fill so much of the space of social interaction. (My rephrase, cf. Thompson 1984: 136; 1990: 284)

Thus, one might say that this second phase, which Thompson calls the dimension of formal or discursive analysis, synchronises principally with Fairclough's (1995) level of text analysis, as well as resonating with his level of 'discursive practice' (the production, distribution and consumption practice of texts). This is because, basically, the 'narratives of everyday life' (Thompson above) are a multitude of texts and myths in different shapes being constantly distributed, shared and remediated in the space of social interaction between producer-consumer (see, for example, paper 3 on how online activists transform and remediate information through web-specific properties). Also, as Thompson notes, 'the analysis of ideology must address both the [construction or deconstruction of] symbolic forms [the text level] which are produced and diffused by media institutions, and the contexts of action and interaction within which these mediated symbolic forms are produced and received [the 'discursive practice' level]' (1990: 265).

Now, in my analysis of the narrative structure of texts, I have tried to reconstruct – and here I am inspired by Thompson's take on narrative analysis – the way in which a group of characters with different qualities are defined against each other. This is illustrated in papers 2 and 4: indeed, how is the protection of a 'We' created in a space of antagonism alongside the threat of a 'Them'? Thus, roughly speaking, this kind of analysis – a deconstruction of narrative structures – can be seen in the way in which Podemos (paper 4) constructs a liberation narrative based on the struggle between moral forces; where the popular masses are set against the (harsh) rulers, and/or when key political actors, together with the military-industrial complex, articulate a story about the defence of 'liberty' and 'stability' against the (threatening) power of 'extreme forces' (paper 2).

Closely connected to the narrative structure, however, is the argumentative dimension of discourse where the idea is to map out the chains of reasoning which consist of ‘a series of claims or assertions, topics or themes, strung together’ (Thompson 1990: 288, 289; cf. Wodak & Meyer 2009: 28-30). Hence, if the narrative dimension is the structure of the text, how the story is divided into parts with the construction of conflict (and resolution) between A-B perhaps being the most important one, every story is also filled, as Jensen puts it, with ‘generalisations (summary statements); substantiations (the supporting reasons or examples given for a generalisation)’ and ‘implicit premises (the unquestioned point of departure for an argument)’ (2002: 249). This is not to say that I have made a classical rhetorical analysis of all the particular cases I have studied, but rather that I have used this argumentative dimension as a reference point; as directions to pay attention to. Here, within the narrative and argumentative dimension, I would therefore like to add the importance of dramaturgy as a broader definition; this is because texts are not only composed of a chain of signifiers and varying levels, in terms of storytelling (introduction, presentation of characters and conflict, climax, etc.), but also through the absence of specific signifiers. Or, to put it another way: as dramaturgy is in many ways a technique and process of exclusion and simplification, I have tried to consider the way in which a story can be engaging through that which is left out as well (motivating us to ask why and how conflict and resolution are articulated around certain signifiers instead of others – cf. for example, the video ‘Swedes Under Fire in Afghanistan’ in paper 2, p. 33, in which the story of the Swedish Army’s behaviour in a crisis situation, depicted as rational and at the same time empathic, is essentially mired in selection and montage). When it comes to semiotic analysis, however, in my research, the icon-index-symbol trichotomy together with other traditional concepts such as intertextuality and/or the notion of myth (within my reading of the syntagmatic/diachronic and paradigmatic/synchronic level/dimension of semiotics) has been somewhat basic. Also, inspired by Thompson (1984: 137; cf. 1990: 287; cf. Jensen on the use of impersonal grammar/passive sentences to signal different grades of distance, 2002: 250), I have considered the diminishing of agency in relation to the concept of reification – how certain practices, activities and decisions are systematically narrated and presented as if they were natural or ahistorical (cf. the ontological view of legal visible evidence in paper 1, or Podemos’ post-ideological discourse in paper 4).

Allow me to conclude by briefly considering some points. First, I would say that CDA is not, fundamentally, emphasising the notion of affect in discourse analysis, that is, how the mediation of affect in political discourse may have us (intensively, bodily) incline to one discourse more than another. This is why I have considered Mouffe’s (see, e.g. 2002; 2005; 2014) take on political passion, threat and hope as main affective components in discourse (see paper 4). Next, and here I also hope to make a contribution, there is an important piece of (audio) visual understanding and expertise

missing from both Thompson (but also Fairclough) and Mouffe, as in the work of many traditional (critical and non-critical) discourse analysts (with, perhaps, Kress & Leeuwen 1996; Chouliaraki 2000; 2006 being somewhat of an exception). In my view, discourse production should not merely be regarded as the relationship between a group of related sentences in the linguistic sense, as signification rests and slides within practices of articulation, indeed, within the (historical, cultural) social practices which struggle to construct (and fix) meaning (cf. Laclau & Mouffe 1985: 105; also see, e.g. Lacan 2006: 419 [1966]; Fink 2004: 112). Thus, the production-consumption of symbolic forms interferes and constitutes whole systems of reasoning (cf. Fendler 2010: 35ff) which are figurative as well as non-figurative (literally biased). Again, the production-consumption of discourse is intrinsically intermeshed within aspects – the production, consumption and regulation – of the visual and the affective too, and this is basically what I explore; how the production of truth – conflict and security – does not move within linguistic forms only, but also through the visual, the affective (rage, hope, fear, and so on), and the popular.

## **Material selection and approach**

I will divide this following section into four parts as I discuss each paper separately. Here, I will not only reflect on the procedure as such but also consider the motivations behind my selection and exclusion of material in relation to the methodological ideas used as reference points.

### *The Legal Image's Forgotten Aesthetics*

In paper 1 I analyse a selection of four different judicial cases, all of which have had wide media coverage and thus whose messages have potentially been received and interpreted by many. This diffusion is important since any group of individuals can acquire a selected piece of information on social reality by consuming mass media products. That is, many of us use the already produced and interpreted messages of social and mainstream media as a primary reference of information and knowledge (see, e.g. paper 1, p. 558; Sontag 2003: 63 [1976]; Thompson 1990: 279). It is then through this criterion of media coverage, where relevance is connected to public exposure (cf. Jensen 2002: 239), that the selection of criminal cases is defined according to my purpose. That is, to study how the image may be used as legal evidence, focusing in particular on those criminal cases which have relied on a clear and concise style to handle the image's evidential-claiming function. In this context, when I considered the visual material of each case and made a transcription of its content and form – in relation to how its narrative was structured and depicted in linguistic as well as visual, technical and dramaturgical terms – I found certain meaning-making elements. These included the use of the point-of-view shot in the 'Anna Lindh case' as well as the (bad

quality) surveillance footage of the ‘Arboga case’, and/or the analogue, hand-held recordings of the Thomas Quick reconstruction, and so on. This means a series of meaning-making elements that are operating as a base from which to discuss the way in which certain judicial discourses of truth and threat are acting on an aesthetic-affective level that might influence and intensify the judicial evaluation and sensation of crime and guilt.

Thus, here, I consider the syntagmatic dimension of the texts; how the narrative is structured in parts – what (is happening), where, when, and how (cf. Selby & Cowdery 1995). More specifically, my analysis explores the way in which different signs may relate to each other, looking at textual organisation in terms of its internal structure (whether it may be in terms of words or images). As I mainly focus on the latter – specifically, videos – this means that my reading moves around the way in which dramaturgy (that which structures the events) is constructed in regard to time development; that is, the diachronic level in which the story unfolds. Obviously, in this context, I look at the evidence material in connection with its paradigmatic dimension, the way in which the crime event is portrayed, in terms of not only linguistic elements but also camera shots, sounds, editing, tempo, *mise-en-scène*, sound, silence, texture, colours, and so on. Put differently, the ‘look and feel’ of the texts in their own right, independent of the role these elements are able to exert on the process of the development of the story (the synchronic level; cf. Selby & Cowdery 1995: 61). In this case, however, my analysis has not only been on the internal relation of signifiers, but also that which Saussure (2011 [1916]) calls a system of differences, where the inclusion and conventional understanding of signs is based on the exclusion of others.

It may be worth noting that, for a number of years, I have been involved in the production of many different mainstream television formats and genres (news media, commercials, reality shows, etc.) as a director-editor. This level of practical knowledge helped me to analyse and deconstruct the data in a way in which probably would not have been possible otherwise. As an analyst, I was able to study the material in order to acquire a set of concerns from a quite practical point of view, for example, as in what (audio-visual) techniques were (not) used and how they were (not) used in order to persuade the judicial spectator, or in what way might the use of techniques A and B contribute to the stimulation of interpretation and perception and/or how (or if) this signifying practice is one that is taken into consideration (or not) by the judicial actor, etc.

In the middle of this research process, however, I also carried out (February 2012) a telephone interview with the attorney, Peter Althin, in relation to the Anna Lindh case (B 2957-04). Althin suggested that the disagreement between the Swedish Supreme Court and the National Board of Health (Socialstyrelsen) was politically influenced; indeed, the judicial outcome would probably have been different, if, according to Althin, the victim had not been yet another Swedish politician. (In this conversation,

Althin also spoke of judicial visible evidence, in general terms – pictures, videos, drawings, etc. – innately connected with meaning-making; see a copy [in Swedish] of the whole conversation in the following endnote.)<sup>35</sup> In another telephone conversation (February 2012), I also spoke with the acting head prosecutor of the case (Agneta Blidberg; case nr B 2957-04), who argued that the police and the appeals court prosecutor had chosen to produce the reconstruction video which I analysed, in order to prove that the case was one of murder and not manslaughter (see paper 1, p. 568ff). Regarding the Gothenburg Riots (case nr B 4580-01) I finally had a telephone conversation with the lawyer, Per Rudbäck (December 2011), where he stressed that the judicial use of slow motion as a presentation technique is often viewed as ‘an opportunity for the court to understand the audio-visual material at such a tempo that is assumed to ease the rational perception and the impression of details’ (see paper 1, p. 563).<sup>36</sup> The reason behind these telephone interviews was, on the one hand, to contextualise the particular cases into a broader judicial and social-historical frame, and on the other, to understand and discuss the way in which specific legal actors put into practice different aspects of legal visible evidence. For example, when I asked head prosecutor Blidberg why they had opted to produce a reconstruction film she claimed that this was because of its capacity to prove ‘murder’ rather than offer a reflection on the affective (meaning-making) dimension of the legal evidence film as such (for example, in terms of aesthetics and narrative). As my purpose with the interviews was contextual and part of a wider research process more than an object of study in itself, I took notes during the conversations where I analysed the content in terms of ‘what does it mean that A was opted in order to depict and carry out B’ and/or ‘what does it say about the ontological and epistemological assumptions behind legal paradigms; how do these particular judicial actors consider social “reality” to be composed, and how do they proceed to appropriate knowledge of this reality’. In this context, I also analysed the protocols and documents that were available (regarding the court’s decisions) in each of the four criminal cases: that is, the judicial reasoning within and around the use of visible material. This means that my research process did not just make a transcript of the events being portrayed, but evaluated the existing judicial transcripts of what was being said in (and in reference to) these events. Taken together, the analysis of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic dimension of the texts formed a pattern of different topics relating to the audio-visual presentation techniques practiced in court, which – albeit unintentionally – I argue may have contributed to the creation and intensification of affect (sense of threat, for example) and hence, the judicial judgment of the narrated event(s).

### *Politics, Pleasure, Violence*

In paper 2, I make use of an interdiscursive approach, investigating how specific knowledge production in the context of defence issues, and the strategic articulation of

‘you can make a difference’ (in the war against terrorism), intersects and accumulates via a set of political-ideological discourses on freedom, democracy, (national) identity, and the military-industrial complex’s take on technological innovation (arms manufacturing) in order to secure economic stability and the health (and happiness) of populations. The final material selection is made on the basis of finding certain visual and affective strategies and patterns of recurring political themes localised in the Swedish Armed Forces’ YouTube channel and their own website (see paper 2, p. 23). The selection of material is therefore not, as in the previous paper (1), based on the principle of media coverage but on the patterns emerging as a result of a broader examination and transcription. To make it manageable, I reduced the material amount to YouTube clips produced by the Swedish Armed Forces’ strategic resource ‘Combat Camera’ and specifically their videos, which emphasised visual rather than verbal communication. Thus, before the selection was crystallised in the form of four YouTube videos and one mobile device game app to analyse in detail, I had already screened through a total amount of 141 video clips produced between 2008-2013, as well as the only two mobile apps available at the time (*ibid.*). Thus, in some respects, my research has relied on the (CDA) suggestion that ‘the results of a study will be “complete” if new data and the analysis of new linguistic devices reveal no new findings’ (Wodak & Meyer 2009: 31). In other words, when the material starts to be repeated in relation to the research questions, which in my case is formulated as how the use of the Swedish Armed Forces’ apps and YouTube visuals may contribute to an affective understanding of Sweden’s international policy on defence and security (see paper 2, p. 55).

When it comes to the analysis of the game app produced by the Swedish Armed Forces in particular, it should be mentioned that the videogame industry has recently begun to disrupt the hegemony of the Hollywood movie industry (Nichols 2008). This means that the videogame app studied – designed to recruit soldiers through an affective role-playing game that promotes an interactive narrative of international conflict within a framework of protecting not only life or liberty (against the threat of the Other), but also of adventure and (intense) fun – potentially signals a future cultural politics in terms of military-industrial propaganda. This I suggest makes game playing apps and the like a relevant example for further study, in terms of a broader digital aesthetic-affective strategy.

Indeed, a syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis was also conducted here, but rather than moving within a semiotic dimension only, I read the visual texts against a context of production, technology and consumption as well; that is, both against specific distribution platforms (the Swedish military’s own web, YouTube channel and mobile phone apps) and the running commentaries of specific videos (that are important in understanding how the military message of defence and security may be received). In such terms of user context, I also considered the specific technological and interactive capacities of the app game. Here, in this dimension of (text) production, technology and

consumption, I have looked at the texts – the visual material of my study and its commentaries – against a wider social and political process; that is, the cultural and political-economic context which surrounds it all. By this I mean other conversations, representations, (shared) ideas, myths, rules and practices involved in the production of security discourse. Thus, it should be added that, beyond the visual texts and production-consumption structures, I also conducted two telephone interviews, with the intention of locating and discussing the specific military armament portrayed in these videos in relation to its socio-economic context; which, in turn, is connected to the affective discourse of defence. One was with the marketing manager, Håkan Karlsson of BAE Systems (November 2012), and the second with Magnus Hellgren, (November 2012), product manager for the Armed Forces Defence Materiel Administration (FMV; see paper 2, p. 30), with the objective being to place the visual text(s) in dialogue with larger mechanisms of discourse production. At the end, and through this interchange between text and context, I identified the following topics of discussion: (1) How an aesthetic-affective narrative of the Other as a threat to national (and global) security can be linked to concrete economic dynamics; (2) how affect may operate in the imaginary production of what it means to become a soldier, as well as the way in which affect is used to address the border between adventure and armed conflict; (3) and, finally, which different aesthetic-affective strategies of appealing to the online public seem to be given priority (and how these are applied and expressed).

#### *For the Lulz: Anonymous, Aesthetics, and Affect*

In paper 3, the affective narrative of democracy protection and security are contested through Anonymous' production and distribution of counter-discourse, be it through hacking activities, leaking or remediation (culture jamming practices). Anonymous confronts the hegemonic discourses of state-corporate surveillance, internet censorship, military interventions, etc. as seemingly necessary instruments of social control, and which are said to protect citizens from (the spectre of) terrorism and/or future security threats to the Western political-economic lifestyle. In terms of the selection of material then, as I note (paper 3, p. 242), my (Ferrada Stoeckel & Lindgren 2014) purpose when collecting and analysing data was less to make a representative selection regarding Anonymous as such, and more to select a range of indicative examples capable of illustrating how (visual/symbolic) counter-discursive processes may stimulate social change, or, at least, influence the public conversation. Evidently, the question here asks, how I can know what Anonymous' indicative or symptomatic examples consist of? Here, my consequent response is that 'the analysis has its focus in particular on those (communicative/hacking) actions of Anonymous that have generated a high degree of global media attention through which they have become the subject of public discussion' (ibid.). Thus, here too, the quality criterion is set to those cases with prominent media coverage – messages that have been coded-decoded by a wide group

of people and by so doing have acquired social relevance. However, this does not mean that my focus has merely been on mainstream news reporting texts, but rather, it has included a set of related texts revolving around these same mass-mediated events; especially Anonymous' own YouTube videos, with a selection criterion based on popularity ratings, documentary films (Knappenberger 2012), and also trending topics on Twitter, through which I (we), albeit more informally, was able to engage in a series of hashtags and dialogues with Anonymous associates and their posts relating to the politics of control, state-corporate censorship and military conflict (ibid.).

When it comes to the method, more specifically, the syntagmatic and paradigmatic reading of the selected texts resulted in the key topic of surveillance (as preventive defence) and the mobilisation of affect as a form of resistance. Or, rather, the main theme(s) that kept returning in my social-historical reading of the visual material was how a discourse of mass surveillance, security and control came to be contested through Anons' aesthetic production and distribution of the 'lulz' (with the leaking of classified data forming part of this forbidden pleasure); as well as how its visuals were able to actively integrate technological resources that could serve activists and citizens in the circumvention of state imposed regulations and limits on free speech. Hence, as examined in terms of this text-context dialogue, given the elements (or reactions) of a surveillance society, it is clear – to end with a conclusion – that Anonymous' specific form of political contention is able to move at an affective-discursive level where hegemonic concepts of security are not only reframed or remediated 'for the laughs' (as they say), but where the leaking of classified data in particular is able to subvert the hegemonic processes of visibility.

### *The Regime's Worst Nightmare*

The material in paper 4 is based on the daily screening of Podemos' Twitter and Facebook timelines as well as their Reddit account from June 2014 to March 2016. Here, in these social media channels, the party and their supporters/opponents comment on actual political events and link to debate articles, interviews, news and commercial infotainment programmes (TV). It is important to stress the important role that social media has played in Podemos' production and distribution of political messages, including the fact that Podemos' official Euro-election campaign (2014) was mainly channelled on digital platforms. It was also through the success of independent political talk shows (La Tuerka and Forth Apache) extended nationally via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook that the Podemos' leader, Pablo Iglesias, got recruited into mainstream television media on regular terms. Hence, it is this precise symbiosis between social and mainstream media, and the informal yet highly political dimension of entertainment-based debate television (rediffused within social media networks) which have been key in Podemos' transmission of political discourse and therefore also in my own research process. In this context, the period of my research is the time in which I began the



collection of data and started to use unstructured participant observation online (by randomly commenting and engaging in discussions with the Podemos collective through social media), unfolding, as indicated, right after the EU election on May 25, 2014 to the months following the Spanish general election (held in December 20, 2015). However, when it comes to the specific publishing dates of the videos selected, my analysis goes back to January 2014 (for the video which portrays Podemos' first political announcement prior to the EU election).

In this massive flow of texts, I also looked for continuing topics and patterns, until the material started to be repeated in terms of content, structure and form, and/or did not add anything particularly new or relevant in connection to my basic research question on how Podemos' discursive strategies are developed in terms of affect and visibility within a context of anti-austerity and social protection issues. However, let me stress that although I did follow Podemos' media activities between the election dates, I concentrated on the material dispersed around the Spanish election months (as Podemos' own media activity increased during these dates: May 2014 [European Parliament election]; May 2015 [local and regional elections], and December 2015 [general election]).

To summarise, inspired by Thompson (1984; 1990) and in line with my overall methodology in this thesis, I placed the text material – YouTube videos, television sequences, news articles, etc. – against a background of paradigmatic relations; how linguistic and extra-linguistic units may work within a system of differences in respect to given moments in time (at the synchronic level). This simply means that I extracted specific visual frames from a larger televised sequence and discussed which signifiers were present and which were absent – and in which way these signifiers were standing in opposition to something else. I did exactly the same with singular words and phrases. It follows then that I also studied how particular units were ordered, structured and related to each other within a syntagmatic dimension – that is, the way in which visual or verbal elements are active in different levels of a text's organisation (introduction, climax, resolution e.g.) within a whole string of timing (from beginning to end; the diachronic level, as dramaturgy is always connected to time development).

This paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis was in turn read against a context of distribution and consumption, providing an exploration and evaluation of where these specific texts were located and consumed (the production and distribution channels of the texts; cf. Fairclough 1995 above) as well as noting the political-social context; the economic and juridical-political historical context in which Podemos was able to mobilise resistance and social change. The total reading of the material, which I based on these three levels (text, distribution-consumption, political-social) thus provided me with the following discussion topic/question: How, rather than emerging through rational terms, does a new political desire (of change and social protection) come to be developed through an affective discourse of conflict (suitable for the rules of media

logic) and hope. That is, where a populist-polarised (and fantasmatic) discourse of ‘We, the people’ against ‘Them, the oppressive regime’ suggests that the key to happiness is the exclusion of the Other.

That said, let me now reflect on two things: First, on some insights gained from paper 4, and then on the contextualisation of my work in a broader perspective, the very process of writing a thesis as a series of articles.

### *Reflections on the working process*

There are two dilemmas which I stumbled upon in my work. One has to do with my own emotional involvement in the working process as such, and the other with the very process of writing a thesis through the format of an article – rather than monograph. I begin here with the first, by asking myself the question, is being too emotionally committed to an object of study a problem? Or, more specifically, to which extent should I as a researcher actively engage in online conversations with those – or the phenomenon – I am studying? To give a specific example; one of my main arguments in paper 4 was that if the left signifier as such did not undergo a radical transformation – if it keeps being subjected to stigmatisation (Marxism, centralised state control, anti-business, etc.) – it will be complicated to deploy in the building of a new political hegemony where different subjectivities meet. To discuss this area of complexity, I sent a message to Podemos’ Secretary of Political Affairs, Iñigo Errejón via Facebook (May 2016) right before Podemos converged with the United Left (Izquierda Unida), asking, ‘Is it possible to speak to a social majority through the (not so empty) “United Left” signifier?’ In this conversation thread I also explained that I saw politics – or the take on a political identity – less in rational terms than as the consequence of discourse production. This means that if subjectivity is that which is always mediated through the interpretation and consumption of other symbols, which are already interpreted, the political identity is not necessarily created through the reading of programmatic content but through a discursive struggle that, in our days, seems to move within popular culture – within those cultural and social practices that have the potential to create (an order of) discourse as ‘common sense’ (Gramsci 1971; Foucault 1981). And if this is so – if identity is linked to the symbolic order – although this is not a fixed order – I wondered how Podemos would go about attracting the vote of a diverse popular majority when, or if, they were forced to carry the (cultural) cross of the (far-)left signifier; which I thought would come together with such a confluence. I finished by noting that, considering all this, it would perhaps be enough to simply recognise and make visible the differences between Podemos and the United left in this new alliance. Errejón replied to my thoughts by stating that he had a similar opinion and as such he would work to achieve advances in that respect; he would work to make visible the differences between Podemos and the United Left.

Now, my dilemma, here, was that I started to question to what degree I as a researcher should try to listen and understand the social phenomenon under study, rather than actively interact – engage in discussion – about what may be ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ with the very strategies under analysis. Not only did I experience the difficulties in separating the political ‘I’ which was able to passionately engage in certain study objects and the ‘I’ of the ‘critical researcher’, but I also began to wonder if my role as researcher allowed me to expose my thoughts and even recommendations to certain key actors; which, as imbricated in the social phenomenon under study, could potentially influence its path? I came to see that it all depends on the purpose of the study and in my case my goal was neither to write a pamphlet nor to design a new visual strategy of resistance but to explore the discursive (visual-affective) strategies of Podemos (in this sense, then, my interaction aimed to grasp its potential problems). However, when I think about the research process as such, in which social media is not only a distant information site but also a potentially intense habitat for discussion, it seems to me that it is evident that in the moment when online (or offline) interaction transpires, one is also co-authoring the speech and/or the potential action of the other (cf. Bakhtin 1986: 68; Linell 1998: 101ff). My point, therefore, is that mundane digital environments are not just observable places where information can be collected but contexts the researcher is potentially (trans)forming by his or her very participation. It is not so much that one is outside ‘looking in’ – as the observant researcher who gathers relevant data in order to make a transcription – as one becomes part of the environment as soon as interaction takes place. Rather, it seems to me, as I reflect on the matter, that any form of participant observation – which I think all online interaction/discussion is to some degree, even on a small-scale – is in one way or another inherently also affecting those (or that which is) being studied. Consequently, the researcher is not only affecting the object of study, but is always, also, being affected. Given this perspective of reflexive ethnography, as Davies (1999) and others argue, the researcher ought not to reduce any distortion that might be introduced by its presence as over-involvement does not *per se* menace the capacity to analyse cultural acts; to the contrary, it might even add an extra dimension to our understanding. Nevertheless, I believe that the notion whereby the researcher is – even when it comes to short-term online interactive sessions – somehow participant in the production of speech and behaviour of those or that which is being studied, is I think still worth considering in terms of the (research) process itself.

Let me now go one step further back and reflect upon the very process of writing a set of (four) independent articles as such. This, of course, is an enormous theme to discuss, and it is not my intention to provide an extensive exploration. But, still, I would like to clarify some things that I have considered to be of importance in my writing process. Here, it should be said that I consider it important to emphasise that articles are supposed to deal with a specific question or problem which, however, implies that there will be, in the finale, several specific questions or problems addressed. Also, as soon as

an article goes through a (peer-)review process and is considered for publication, particular editors and reviewers frame both content and form. Articles, once published, are not only making posterior modification impossible but the format itself is left to the choice of the journal. All of this has significance for the research process and, of course, the way in which the overall narrative is read due to the fact that I am now finishing the final parts of this chapter subsequent to my papers, which have already been published and therefore ‘fixed’.

In an interesting personal reflection on the process of working through the article format, Sjöstedt-Landén (2012) discusses precisely this; that the form does not only influence the way in which articles are written but, in essence, the whole research process. And due to the specific conventions of the journal article – its independent character in which problem, method and theory, etc. must be (re)written for every new piece in accordance to existing editorial rules, which is different to the theme-based monograph chapter – not only may some repetition be unavoidable but also the final narrative may be somewhat fragmented. In the context of my work, the article style and structure meant that I decided to try writing in a way that allowed me to unite a major theoretical concern with a whole new set of real-world problems for each article. Hence, although I moved within the field of affect and security (visual) culture as such, my points of reference altered.

Here, in the wake of all this, let me signal a clear disadvantage. This type of process, where the empirical content continuously shifts risks making the ideal narrative – when the independent articles are finally put together – even less streamlined or linear. The advantage, however, is that by moving across different empirical levels rather than remaining within one main and single resource, from, say, a specific historical event or tendency, the complexity of the phenomenon under study might be highlighted. For example, if I had used the same source material and a narrower theoretical framework to discuss different aspects within its range (a continuation of my exploration of the legal image; paper 1, e.g.), the overall narrative would certainly have been more unifying. But that would have been a completely different project. I wanted, instead, to explore and highlight the complexness of the way in which multiple layers of affect can interact with the aesthetic experience through mechanisms of power and resistance – how affect and visual practices may be used to support/subvert institutional bodies of hegemony and control. And in order to do this – to place my discussion of affect and the representation of the (in)secure in a broader social-political context, I needed different empirical contexts. Thus, it is this precise combination of elements that I will discuss in the next part; the specific findings and my contribution to the field of visual culture studies as a whole.

## Summary, and conclusions

This part summarises the four articles and provides a final discussion of my main findings and conclusions. I will also discuss the specific contributions this research makes to the current scholarship. In a general sense, I see it as crucial to understand that social practices and the system of dominant ideas that are formed from these practices are always imbricated in a (visual) dimension of affect. That is to say, that social practices and circulating concepts or common lines of reasoning – here, the way in which society must be defended (to echo Foucault) through the apparatus of legal or military judgement, for example – are not acting in isolation or within the domain of ‘reason’ alone but are intrinsically formed within image culture, emerging amid layers of sensation in the creation of truths and imaginaries. Indeed, it is this context of reality production that operates on the plane of intensities which I explore and discuss in detail – that is, how fear, antagonism and hope are mediated, created and stimulated (made meaningful) on a bodily level too. That said, it is also within this framework that I, in the following, will summarise the main line of argument in my published papers.

First, in ‘The Legal Image’s Forgotten Aesthetics’ (paper 1), I analyse how the Swedish judicial system produce and make use of (audio-)visible evidence in a context of social control and personal security; here, the protection of life, as well as individual and collective development is addressed through the exclusion of dangerous social elements, as in ‘We’ need a court which is capable of protecting ‘Us’ from ‘Them’ in order to have a secure and well-functioning society, and so on. Within such a (productive) context of control and security I discuss the way in which visible evidence has a tendency to be used as a support to specific truth-claiming narratives, but where the affective-aesthetic impact attached to human (legal) perception and interpretation – where expression and representation exert a fundamental effect on the judicial experience and final sentence – is rather forgotten. The core of my argument can therefore be described in terms of how visible judicial evidence is never just ‘pure’ evidence but, is instead always a matter of aesthetic and affective production, as camera-produced images and technical and dramaturgical elements may elicit states of fear, threat and Otherness, thus leading to unplanned judicial consequences.

In the following section, I will elaborate my discussion from paper 1 in relation to one of the research questions posed at the beginning of this thesis relating to the way in which affective processes interact in the aesthetic experience, and as a consequence, how this interplay works to legitimise practices and discourses of security and order. My findings suggest that,

1. *The legal image's cinematic representation and scenography assign an extra narrative and affective value beyond its explicit evidentiary or identifying purpose.* Technical-dramaturgical components and material forms like screen flickering, light, aspect ratio, focal length, point-of-view shots, colour, slow motion, time shift effects in sound and other conscious or unconscious cinematic techniques inherently influence judicial perception and the imagination of truth. This suggests that the specific representation techniques used in court are not only affecting the assumed understanding of the crime's reality on a neutral, descriptive level but also that which produces new aesthetic and affective experiences of the (threatening and insecure) real.

2. From here it follows that *the understanding of a cinematic text – be it in the form of legal visible evidence or explicit fiction – is not a linear process* for affective, embodied impacts (potential emotional shocks, intense sensations, for example) produce meaning and form perception in their own right. Corporal reactions such as repulsiveness, or bursts of adrenaline or stress can also lead to cognitive activity, just as mental interpretation may provoke bodily sensations. By extension, the legal evidentiary film's production of, say, unpleasant affective involvements such as disgust, fear or (potentially pleasant) ones such as the sensation of revenge are, here, also affective components which can connect to the intensity of perception, suggesting, for example, that the criminal Other must be halted for societal good.

3. Despite existing research on audio-visual perception as that which is created in relationship between mental ability, affect and the body, in the context of the judicial cases I analyse, *there seems to be no profound knowledge or recognition about these concerns and/or their potential effects.* As mentioned, in the judicial sphere, 'representation techniques such as slow motion seem to be viewed as an opportunity for the court to understand the audio-visual material in such a tempo that is assumed to ease the rational perception and the impression of details' (paper 1, p. 562). Here, the judicial actor does not reflect on how cinematic codes and narratives may create meaning and intensely affect the (judicial) viewer, that is, in a way that is visceral and created unconsciously beyond the image's intentional or pronounced argument. From this perspective, the judicial judgment of threat and truth is thus not – indeed, is never – objective or free from emotions, even if it may try to frame itself as technical and clinical.

In this context, my contribution to the field of visual culture in relation to affect research in particular is not a statement or arrival at a conclusion whereby legal visible evidence is by its nature not objective as such, but instead relates to the way in which I detail how affective involvement may take place through aesthetic representation, and how this may influence perception and judgment. Further, my contribution connects to the broader philosophical and political discussion which problematises practices of objectivity itself, here, the notion of judicial power as that which is an integral part of the very mentality and discourse which regards and supports the sovereign (law/state

power praxis) as natural; like the actions and punishments which are decided and legitimated in the name of security would be stemming from a series of dispassionate practices rather than from a sensitivity to political or historical surroundings. This, then, is precisely what my study problematises in my take on the law's visual evidentiary practices, and whose truth-claiming narrative I deconstruct. With this in mind, I have critically discussed and explored the way in which particular institutional bodies deploy aesthetic-affective techniques to support a (hegemonic) security discourse, in this case, tied to the sovereign's exclusive right to issue security regulations, and exercise social control. That said, it should be noted that my first paper is the most text-oriented; based on the analysis of audio-visual texts and their capacity to arouse affect and create new realities in a context of security practice. In the next (paper 2) I widen the perspective and consider visual texts and the issuing of discourses of (in)security in relation to a larger corpus of social-economic practices.

Thus, in 'Politics, Pleasure, Violence: Swedish Defence Propaganda in Social Media' (paper 2), I analyse the way in which the Swedish Armed Forces, or, specifically, Sweden's international policy on defence and security, are enmeshed with private defence industry groups when emphasising – through social media tactics and the aesthetics of the mainstream media – that an effective defence (materiel) is necessary in order to anticipate the potential dangers of the future; for example, to prevent external threats and/or to secure (inter)national political-economic stability against global terrorism. Here, the communication of the nation's security is imbricated with affective states such as 'fear' (of the Other), 'bravery' (of soldiers) and/or an overall sense of belonging (to a collective Western identity, articulated, of course, in difference). This runs through a repetitive compound of socio-cultural/political discourses that not only accumulate into a larger master narrative of protection – that the civil society should allow itself to be defended, be it through institutional surveillance or more physical (war) technologies – but also promises the reality of enjoyment and fulfilment for those within the community. This produces an underlying affective narrative in which society is constituted through a lens of fear, and where the joys of life are framed as possible only after Threat is extinguished. And/or where the recruitment of soldiers is mobilised through the opportunity to 'make a difference' – by participating in armed conflict. Amongst my findings is that, in practice, this kind of affective political discourse involves an implicit economic spin-off in which technologically advanced defence equipment is aestheticized and 'mediated as essential to prevent external attacks, and to succeed in the war on terror' (see paper 2, p. 37); an argument which suits the arms industry.

In the following section I also seek to present the findings in paper 2 in connection to one of my research questions – how does the mediation of affect in the representation of reality strive to legitimise, in this particular case, state military practice in relation to

an overlapping discourse of democracy and defence? More specifically, my findings show that,

1. In the Swedish Armed Forces' online role-playing games I have analysed, the military battle is framed and situated at the border of fantasy and reality, with the user acquiring, through an affective involvement in the game, *a bodily as well as a mental perception and understanding of armed conflict, threat and security*.

2. The discursive production of national security in the state military's visual representation of armed conflict, extracted from the analysed material, acts across layers of affect, going beyond the notion of fear as it moves within contexts of desire and identity as well. Here, the soldier experience is narrated around the underlying promise to become part of something larger than oneself, and as an opportunity to matter, to become someone (important). However, it is not only a heroic narrative about the protection of human rights which structures the military event but also *a narrative which indicates that the soldier experience is an opportunity for pleasure and adventure, an opportunity to have fun (in danger)*. This suggests, also in relation to the former point, that, in contemporary military propaganda, there is a conflict between fun and (deadly) seriousness, security and (thrilling) adventure, or, indeed, between the underlying promise of pleasure and pain (offered to those who participate in combat).

3. The affective and visual branding of armed international conflict in which *the military's social media strategy raises and strengthens the discourse of Swedish military technology as a condition for security* (in an entertaining style or not) is inevitably constructed in close connection to the interests of the armament industry. For example, once the discourse of advanced weaponry as a necessary instrument for peace and order is circulating and socially accepted, it is difficult to set it apart from the difference between specific commercial demands, the affective discourse of Otherness, and the politics of counter-terrorism. There is therefore a thin line between the official discourses of security that are affectively and visually mediated through mundane popular culture formats and which can be said to participate in the legitimisation of military praxis and the sovereign's monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and particular economic interests.

To conclude, the state military's visual narrative of international conflict is part of a broader (affective) commercial, pop-cultural and political discourse of democracy and (in)security. My contribution to the literature is located at the intersection of affect and visual culture as I discuss how military forces are now picking up the trend for (visual) social media marketing and a set of interactive strategies which move between fantasy and reality in order to motivate users on the plane of sensation to participate in overseas conflicts – in the fight for democracy. Or, which is the same thing, in the war against terrorism, where the specific interests of large security corporations are intrinsically intermeshed. Through my exploration of the state military's aesthetic and affective tactics and techniques, I show and problematise not only how the cognitive and the



affective interacts in (the potential readership) of the military representation/creation of the (dangerous) real, but also how these techniques are performed in order to reinforce a cultural attitude which connects to the notion and cultural construction of Otherness; and thus also to the sovereign's (moral and formal) obligation to prescribe procedures for the enforcement of security policy.

Paper 3, 'For the Lulz: Anonymous, Aesthetics and Affect' (co-authored with Simon Lindgren 2014) discusses the way in which affect and the political aesthetics of Anonymous invite public participation in public affairs regarding questions of state-corporate structures of social control and security that reduce individual freedoms (the right to privacy and autonomy, for example). I argue that the political resistance of Anonymous is not necessarily tied to rational or physical street action tactics alone, but works in a reciprocal fashion with 'the lulz' – a particular form of joy, humour and passion. This means that the controversial satisfaction coming from the lulz can also be regarded as a form of resistance towards cultural norms and the dominant ideas of security, control and power. When read in terms of affect, the lulz can potentially be considered a form of counter-power; an ability to inspire others to enjoy beyond normative regulation and/or as the potential capacity to evoke a range of affective political responses and interests 'for the laughs'.

In this study of Anonymous' affective and aesthetic strategies, two important observations can be made. First, Anonymous' decentralised counter-power does not 'fight against the idea that power has become affective' (Massumi 2002a: 234; in paper 3, p. 259) and/or in opposition to a 'theatrical and aesthetic perspective' of politics (cf. Angerer 2013: 235); rather, they meet, as Massumi would have it, 'affective modulation with affective modulation' (ibid.). This means that the 'trolling' or 'protest affect' of the lulz is mobilised towards hope and empowerment – the 'structure of feeling' (in this context; a set of culturally shared values, experiences and emotions) that tells a particular generation that there is not only the possibility of challenging the powerful through hacktivist or whistleblowing action, but also that resistance is satisfying on its own terms. This in turn raises further questions on aestheticism and the mobilisation of affect as a mode of struggle. On this note I argue that rather than moving within the domain of moralism or protest alone, social movements seems to be in need of a strategy for attracting different popular identities; that is, not only around the (affective) creation of social divisions (a 'We-Them' relation in which antagonistic frontiers are clearly defined; cf. Laclau 2005; Mouffe 2005) *but also through the mobilisation and promise of pleasure.*

In order to put my findings in relation to the (research) question of how aesthetic and affective strategies are used to challenge the hegemonic discourses and control practices, here, in terms of a movement of counter-culture against the surveillance state, I would like to indicate that,

1. The constant intertextual references to popular culture used by Anonymous, which are carried out during hacktivist actions (as well as within the production of videos and graphics), seem to create the necessary conditions for enabling identification among the public. In this context it could be said that *Anonymous employs a mainstream format to communicate alternative content*. (See paper 3, p. 259.) In a similar vein, the hacktivist (and trolling) aesthetics of Anonymous supply the mainstream media with spectacular images when reporting on the group. On the one hand, this makes the political debate on social control potentially more attractive, although on the other, the aesthetics of Anonymous can also cast its counter-hegemonic lulz as merely trivial – a series of youthful pranks rather than acts which may inspire critical thought.

2. Anonymous' idea of social change and counter-hegemonic strategies, where specific power structures are trolled by Anonymous' technical capacity to break into servers and leak information, is connected to the sense of pleasure that is inscribed in the act of resistance itself. This is to suggest that the lulz can be regarded both in terms of the forbidden pleasure of fighting for something meaningful, that which may give an increased sense of identity, belonging, joy and meaning to one's life, as well as a form of pleasure where the act of standing up against power is rewarding in its own right. In both cases, however, *the lulz can be described as an affective force that has the power to inspire and affect others*.

3. Anonymous shows that cyber security is fragile and can always be challenged. This is symbolically important as when it comes to physical confrontation there is no civilian group which can ever match the institutional power-infrastructure. However, 'in cyber- or information wars those terms change – and this is where the potential of hacker-culture as a political movement comes into play' (251).

The main contribution of article 3 is thus the exploration of the relation between (visual) culture jamming practices in a wider context of affect and hacktivism in general, and the way in which political resistance and citizen participation in collective matters can be made engaging through the mobilisation of pleasure in particular. In this context, my analysis shows that Anonymous is to a certain extent unique as one of the first social movements to strategically combine hacktivism, symbolic resistance and web-action with street action. Here, the group thus uses a mix of actions to influence and connect on- and offline communities in order to contest hegemonic discourses of (mass) surveillance and the expansion of state control as absolute conditions for securing democracy.

Paper 4 broadens the concept of security as it deals with how the Spanish political movement Podemos disputes political hegemony and the lack of social protection coverage (the politics of austerity) through a new affective political grammar and the media logics of television, based on an aesthetics of conflict and recognition. My principle findings show that although large social divisions and/or the 'working class' can indeed be said to exist in terms of economic inequality, the (class) conflict (read

‘class war’) is no longer present as such (this of course is not a new theoretical finding but an observation which connects to the formation of new populist resistance movements from left to right). In Podemos’ understanding, an absence of societal class-consciousness means that political confrontation must be organised in terms of an affective discourse mediated via popular culture, that goes beyond the traditional left-right terminology and instead is reframed in new compositions of ‘Us-Them’ relations, through which the notion of ‘the people’ – the interests of regular folks; not the ‘working class’ but the ‘normal’ and diverse ‘social majority’ – is articulated towards the self-enriching political Other – the political establishment – who works for its own benefit and serves the ‘the 1%’. Therefore, the point I stress is not only that Podemos uses visual (social and) mainstream media in order to distribute messages, but that by doing so are also placing a specific political discourse of resistance in a colourful and cinematic context where the mediation of affect – the image of conflict, the Other and the production of desire – is embraced by the informal but imperative rules of media functioning. To specify my findings in relation to how the hegemonic discourses of security-insecurity are contested – in this context, the vote of security and stability against the uncertainty of social change – I underline the following,

1. Podemos’ strategic participation in mainstream media talk shows and polarised news media suggests that *there is a need in the politics of resistance to appropriate and be familiar with the existing (affective) media logic of conflict/recognition and the brief television format in order to mobilise political identification*. Here, to provide some context, Podemos’ production of the ‘caste’ metaphor was, for example, suitable for the media because of the way it fuelled a social tension between the impoverished middle classes and ‘caste’; the self-enriching political class of the two-party system. Hence, it triggered a dramaturgy of Otherness to which an integral part of the television audience could identify and recognise.

2. By making use of the media logic of conflict and a well-defined Us-Them narrative, Podemos was provided with an opportunity to signal ‘the caste’ as the source of a problem and themselves, or, rather, ‘the (common) people’ – defined here in opposition to the caste – as the solution, an alternative to the status quo. Thus, the group mobilises *a political-affective message whereby it is only in throwing the oppressive Other (of the two-party system) out of institutions that social injustice and current social protection gaps can be brought to an end* and/or, by extension, the only way to ensure democracy and ‘the people’s’ wellbeing. Here, Podemos’ symbolic production of ordinary culture promotes the idea that it is not the traditional (left) elite which is representing the collective subject but (finally) the ‘common people’ who are claiming visibility and power.

3. This suggests that due to a crisis of political representation, the politics of resistance which aims to alter hegemonic discourses (that strive to preserve and secure forms of political order) seems to be in need of considering a new kind of *post-political*

*aesthetic which addresses the collective subject less in terms of traditional ideologies than current discursive conflicts.* For example, the populist polarisation between an ‘Us’, ‘the ordinary people’ against a ‘Them’, the Other who does not work to protect the regular folk. In relation to this, my findings illuminate Podemos as a resistance group holding an anti-essentialist view of the subject. The subject being that which is not constituted in relation to its material conditions, at least not only, but rather through its formation within processes of discourse. And if there is a relation between discourse and identity formation – and symbolic forms are pliable – then it is on the level of culture (shared meanings) and the creation of new confronting signifiers where the struggle for political subjectivity is mainly taking place.

Hence, my study shows how Podemos’ discursive strategies are imbricated within a set of visual and social practices that intimately overlap affective dimensions in the articulation of ‘the people’ (in opposition to an adversarial ‘Other’). My contribution is located in the way in which I discuss the mediation of affect as a potential to social change, acting through the conventional codes of mainstream television media, and the mobilisation of desire beyond traditional ideological conflict. I have here also stressed the way in which the referent object of security-insecurity alludes to a discourse which places the status quo as that which is the avatar of the secure (that which represents the stability of order), and where the alternative is presented as ‘chaos’ and/or the ‘anti-systemic’, the insecure. Podemos, as we have seen, struggles to revert this relationship through image practices and its production of new (post-ideological) symbolic forms, claiming that it is precisely the continuing of the social order – in which the politics of austerity seems to be the norm – that is threatening the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

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To make a final summary of all the findings in their entirety, my studies show how the mediation of affect in relation to visual practices and new technologies can be used both in order to encourage resistance and civil participation in terms of on- and offline actions (in the context of power abuse and social control, for example) as well as to motivate civil participation and create social legitimation; that is, in terms of contemporary security policies when these technologies are administrated by certain authorities (to promote military power and the war on terror, for example). I have also pointed out the way in which new significations can arise when the visual and the affective are combined with the contemporary praxis of popular culture, for example, gaming culture in light of political propaganda where the game-playing activity is capable of creating a particular kind of experience and understanding in its own right. In a similar way, when I discuss the role of the visual in terms of judicial power, I

emphasise how legal visual representation and evidentiary footage of the real – and the narrative of who and who is not a potential threat to society – is ultimately an aesthetic construction in which the potential affective impact is that which is producing a new experience of the real itself. That is, where the legal film and footage do not simply represent a historical (linear) reality but also actively create a (potentially intense) sensation of this reality. And this interaction, between the visual and the affective, is thus that which is used to free or punish subjects in the name of security. It should then be noted on a discourse-theoretical level, that although the notion of affect in discourse production has been somewhat problematised and discussed (see, e.g. Mouffe 2002; 2005; 2014; also see, e.g. Glynos & Howarth 2007; Glynos & Stavrakakis 2004; Stavrakakis 2007 on the fantasmatic dimension of political discourse), it seems to me that a more in-depth connection to the visual is missing in the field of discourse theory. Thus, here I hope to have shown that a deeper understanding of the visual and the affective – when put in the context of contemporary political praxis and the discursive (and the affective) struggle for hegemony (and truth) – is needed.

That said, and to take this opportunity to reflect more freely on my work, I would like to conclude by noting that both papers 1 and 2 consider how aesthetic and affective experiences actively shape, discern and in a significant way enhance our potentially intense perception and sensation of threat; while, at the same time suggesting and normalising different types of coercive solutions. Nonetheless, it seems to me that it is not just the affective mobilisation of fear which is crucial to the determination of the Other, as the (affective) notion of security itself can be said to be channelled through ‘libidinal investments’, in this context, the thrilling psychophysical pleasure of punishment (‘let Them pay’) or, say, revenge. In the cultural production of the Other, however – may it be in terms of the fundamentalist, foreign or criminal Other – I think the contagious power of fear should not be underestimated as it is, one could argue, the dominating affect which repeatedly seems to drive ‘Us’ toward one discourse of conflict or exclusion rather than another. For example, in Western humanitarian interventions (read ‘the war on terror’), we are apparently not only prepared to disarm our enemies but also accept institutional violence as a universal practice. And although we have a ‘normal’ society on the outside, by giving in to the construction of the Other and the illusion of its violent exclusion as a final remedy, the fear of the antagonist Other risks turning into the latent (intolerant) practices which normalise a politics of oppression. This is because, obviously, any use of state violence as a means to achieve solutions – any approval of civilian casualties as a passage to peace (security and joy) – is quite close to that thing one thought was in the past: that some lives seem to be less grievable than others (to paraphrase Butler 2009).

To spell it out, we all know that criminality or terrorism will not be reduced by harsh punishment but by changing the politics that give rise to social gaps and massive inequality, hence cementing further polarisation and radicalisation. This is something

even Lacan has noted: that our desire for meaningfulness is always there, but the lack (of meaningfulness) is not equal to all, and as long as there is fear, alienation and exclusion there will always be forces which promise to fill the gap in one way or the other. Let me hold on to this thought for a while. As I see it, the mobilisation of fear (mediated through mass media) towards the Other, may then, not only have 'Us' give up our civil liberties for 'security' (to protect 'Us' from 'Them'; via state-corporate surveillance practices which are claimed to be in our interest, for example) and not only will the individual freedoms we cede, such as 'privacy', for example, not come back, but more importantly I would say that the fundamental problem (of security) does not (just) reside in the Other (at the start) but in the social gaps and massive global inequalities – and that these are not really being dealt with (as it appears to me that the security apparatus treats the symptom and not the root cause). Moreover, is it not exactly in the mobilisation of fear – the cultural acceptance of an 'Us-Them' fraction – that institutional violence is made legitimate, although the spectre of the Other is always a result of specific articulatory practices, where some (political, economic, cultural) antagonisms are selected over others, and some are even covered over? And if the horrific sins of the Other are continuously isolated from the adverse side effects of the system – from social and hidden antagonisms – is (s)he not the ultimate symbol on which to apportion blame and whose presence, to borrow a phrase from Žižek (2002), is that what 'guarantees the consistency of our symbolic edifice'? That is, in increasingly consolidating and sustaining the ideological order which justifies and normalises mundane structural injustices? If that is the case, one might argue that the main task of the politics of resistance is this: to work against the politico-cultural (affective) mobilisation of fear.

I do not argue that Anonymous and Podemos are the solutions to the aesthetics of power which show an idealised unity with their visible enemies, but rather that they are social phenomena which, somehow, try to reverse and/or redirect this political libido through the body-political; not via conceptual thought only but also through an aesthetic, bodily strategy of social change, pleasure and desire, within which, the mobilisation of hope (and *lulz*) struggles to transgress the boundaries of fear.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> I think of the social network as the web of social relations between individuals and groups in which ideas and knowledge are formed, transformed and shared (cf. Bosua & Scheepers 2007).

<sup>2</sup> By cognition, I mean the mental processes involved in perceiving, thinking, and interpreting environmental stimuli (cf. Zanoli & Naspetti 2002: 644).

<sup>3</sup> As the reader can see, the title (society must be defended) is borrowed from Foucault (2003 [1976]).

<sup>4</sup> For a more specific discussion on the relationship between Swedish arms exports and the Swedish government, see the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SPAS). Available at: <http://www.svenskafreds.se/faq/vapenexport> (in Swedish); <http://www.svenskafreds.se/the-swedish-peace-and-arbitration-society-spas> (English; accessed September 3, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Albeit not focusing on visual practices, cf. Mouffe 2002; 2014.

<sup>6</sup> However, as I present this thesis in a Swedish context, the reader might be interested in exploring the works of Dahlberg (2009) on the representation and exclusion of emotional expressions in Swedish court proceedings as well as how (audio-visual) media technology may influence legal social interaction (e.g. 2012; 2013). Also see, e.g. du Rées' (2010) artistic research on visual forensic evidence. Also see, Pollack (2008; 2012) on crime journalism as well as Jarlbro (2010) on the intersection between the media and the judicial system; the way in which the mainstream media depict and narrate the judicial system as well as how specific judicial actors may use the media to communicate.

<sup>7</sup> Now, although this capacity of social media to cut across different social layers is fundamental in building intersectional alliances when different agents unite in the image production of a common antagonist (in producing and distributing visible evidence of regime abuse against both Islamist as well as non-Islamist groups, for example), not only is the use and reading of technology (and the image) bound to other people's (social) background (cf. paper 3 in this thesis), but if one takes the example of online video streaming in particular, I would also say that this technology is utterly dependent on the context in which it is placed in order to be comprehensible to begin with. Hence, to stay with the (Arabic) 2011 protests as a case in point, the visuals that involved streaming and citizens posting images of the uprisings were often integrated in a specific (mass) media logic. That is, although new visual technologies have, undoubtedly, a powerful potential for creating and mobilising affective connections between different segments, it seems to me, that in order to transform discourse more generally, these technologies are conditioned by a narrative, and administrated by the politics of traditional mass media actors as well (cf. Micó & Casero-Ripollés 2014 on online activism and media relations during the 15-M protests in Spain).

<sup>8</sup> However, of course, images of state abuse – in the context of Spain this combines with massive rates of (youth) unemployment, inequality, years of economic crisis, austerity politics and political corruption – has contributed to increase a sense of a 'We-Them' conflict in the squares as well (cf. paper 4). Now, as Micó and Casero-Ripollés (2014) stress: the abundance of information creates problems when it triggers (communicative) dispersion (868-869), which in turn indicates that visual online activism should, perhaps, not only be accompanied by technical-dramaturgical

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skills in order to stand out (ibid. 869), but also that the status/popularity of the user who posts the image online seems to play a major role in terms of the possibilities of (re)diffusion (Kharroub & Bas 2015: 16). This is not to say that resistance or the capacity of images to go viral is reduced to the large networks of specific agents, but rather that there is no inherent value in the image as its impact is always contextual. However, in terms of image viral tactics, it seems to me that it is the sum of tactics which are crucial as one might also argue that the ability of images of resistance to expand and connect with others increase when they are mobilised through a network of many small organisations and personal contacts; as these smaller units may connect to the subject less in terms of a (homogeneous) mass than a number of diverse singularities including personal but shared experiences (cf. Anduiza, Cristanchoa & Sabucedo 2014; Castells 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Here, resistance, is perhaps, not so much a matter of reclaiming old ideologies as of using the conventional codes of online popular culture to communicate and rebrand present frames of social conflicts in an intertextual (popular) form that is open to many. However, I might add that I have only spoken of the image and resistance in relation to the event, while the most important aspect of visual culture and political content is possibly not contextualised around direct movement but rather close to what Gramsci calls a 'war of position' (1971). That is, the way in which social change is not defined through its ability to act on a given moment but through the mobilisation of, as Mitchell puts it, 'subtle shifts in language, imagery, and the limits of the thinkable' (2013: ix). Thus, it is this (rather slow) discursive strategy which I discuss more fully in paper 4 – that is, how Podemos' articulates a clashing 'We-Them' idea where a re-imagination of the social order is processed through systematically occupying visibility in both alternative and mainstream media over longer periods of time, and by so doing provide the conditions for 'the ordinary people' to identify and define themselves against an antagonist Other.

<sup>10</sup> I have decided not to use any illustrations to support my theoretical arguments, as the theoretical context in this introductory chapter is already rather compact and extensive.

<sup>11</sup> This thread is also picked up in paper 3.

<sup>12</sup> All language is figurative and therefore also potentially visual. It is not the case that the written or verbal word is just 'literal' and therefore incapable of changing into states of affect or broader visual, material or mental interpretations, or that art-objects, signs and symbols are only 'aesthetic' and therefore not able to be potentially developed into thoughts and reflections.

<sup>13</sup> Hence, I write about aesthetics in relation to the sum of social practices which unites, creates and (trans)forms particular signifiers into an 'order of discourse' – the set of normative ideas within particular domains that constitutes social order and comes into being through the systematic mediation (selection-exclusion) of symbolic forms and knowledge production practices (also see, e.g. Foucault 1981; Laclau & Mouffe 1985).

<sup>14</sup> For example, Tomkins classifies a group of nine (native) affects which he sorts into categories such as positive, neutral and negative. The positive include 'interest-excitement' and 'enjoyment-joy', while the neutral includes 'surprise-startle' and the negative 'distress-anguish', 'shame-humiliation', 'fear-terror', 'anger-rage' as well as affective responses related to 'dissembl' and 'disgust'. All these affects are mainly localised in the expression of the child's face due to its status 'as the prime organ of affect' (1962: 224) and/or made visible by body language transformations; the hanging of the head as a sign of shame and so on (2008: pp. 405, 410, 430, 451-434). In this context, Cartwright (2008) and Sedgwick (2003) use Tomkins' empirical (measurable) schema of bodily affects in order to understand the notion of empathy and identification, and shame and paranoia, respectively – by giving 'the body' a kind of singularity or disconnection from the social. Both authors share a critique of the poststructuralist tendency to 'over-emphasise' the subject being constituted or caught in the symbolic texture: the rules of language and culture that constitutes identity. More specific, Sedgwick writes of affect (shame)

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(in dialogue to Tomkins) as a sort of ‘free radical that ... attaches to and permanently intensifies or alters the meaning of – almost anything: a zone of the body, a sensory system, a prohibited or indeed permitted behaviour, another affect such as anger or arousal, a named identity, a script for interpreting other people's behaviour toward oneself’ (2003: 62). Thus she sees ‘anyone's character or personality’ as a ‘record of the highly individual histories by which ... [affect] has instated ... durable, structural changes’ in the self and the relationship with others (ibid. also see Hemmings’ critique of Sedgwick, 2005: 559).

<sup>15</sup> In the cultural studies’ take on emotion, the debate has to do with the way in which cultural norms and power relations have the capacity to create collective affects and produce the gaze. In such a context, the term emotion is situated and integrated within cultural, social practices (a discussion of ‘the politics’, the ‘practices’ and the ‘distribution’ of affect and emotion). That is, how a wide range of power relations, for example, promote and inscribe emotions in relation to gender-structural discriminations (the emotional feminine in opposition to ‘the man of reason’ for example) and/or labour divisions such as the bodily framed working-class justification set in opposition to ‘higher’, intellectual work, and so on (cf. e.g. Jaggar 1989; Hall 1997; Ahmed 2004). Thus, as Ahmed (2004) summarises it, ‘Cultural studies are not specifically interested in what emotions are or where they are located (in mind or body), but what they do – its effects and consequences’ (my rephrase, in Harding & Prigam 2010: 4). Here, this means how a series of emotional discourses take place and circulate: how the cultural politics of emotions (Ahmed 2004) are organised, take shape and are made meaningful (cf. Hall 1997; Butler 2006 [2004]; 2009; Barker 2012 [2000]). As such, the cultural notion of emotion is not bound to the inner states of the person, or the individual experience – or inherent to a specific object or a particular situation – but are influenced by social norms and the repetitive political narratives which make us ‘feel’, ‘respond’, ‘express’, ‘act’ or ‘see’ in relation to these social/cultural norms. However, as Mitchell (2002) would have it, not only is affect and emotion regulated by social structures, but social arrangements are also regulated by complex, affective and emotional, human bodies.

<sup>16</sup> For a further discussion on the capacity of emotion to generate cognitive data, see, e.g. Damasio (1994; 1999; 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Or rather, cognitive film theory is characterised by an orientation towards the cognitive sciences (Currie 2004: 156): ‘an interdisciplinary confederation of researchers from anthropology, computer science, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, and neurology ... united by a common interest in the mental structure that underlies complex behaviour and experience (problem solving, language processing, visual perception, etc.)’ (Carroll 1988: 61). For a further discussion on cognitive film theory, see, e.g., Thompson & Bordwell 1994; Bordwell & Carroll 1996; Smith, M 1995; Allen & Smith, M 1999; Plantinga, & Smith, G 1999; Grodal 1997; 2009; Buckland 2004; Smith, M & Wartenberg 2006; Plantinga 2009.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g. the artist Yiyang Lu in *Mashable*, interviewed by Seth Fiegerman, August 10, 2013, [http://mashable.com/2013/08/10/yiyang-lu-overwhelmed-octopus-twitter-fail-whale/?utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Mashable%2FSocialMedia+%28Mashable+»+Social+Media%29&utm\\_cid=Mash-Prod-RSS-Feedburner-SocialMedia-Partial&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_source=feedburner](http://mashable.com/2013/08/10/yiyang-lu-overwhelmed-octopus-twitter-fail-whale/?utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Mashable%2FSocialMedia+%28Mashable+»+Social+Media%29&utm_cid=Mash-Prod-RSS-Feedburner-SocialMedia-Partial&utm_medium=feed&utm_source=feedburner) (accessed April 4, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> In the context of identification in terms of psychoanalytic film theory, however, there is an idea of subjectivity building formed around the Lacanian imaginary; here, the subject does not only (mentally) project itself in opposition to the Other but also through the side of fantasy which involves (mis)recognition. That is, the aesthetic experience, the psychoanalyst claims, is a process of identification which is idealised, as the subject ‘sees’ itself on screen which in its illusory status contributes to the production of an idealisation of the self (the ‘ideal-ego’). Further, this delusive image or reflection (identification) invites the subject to feel (temporarily) ‘complete’. In this

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sense, film experience may reactivate the infant's experience with the mirror (when the child, from about the age of six months, misrecognises her or himself in the mirror as that which is not hindered by motor capacities) and, thus, this 'pleasure of identification explains, partly, why we enjoy watching films' (Thomson-Jones 2008: 115). Indeed, in this approach, the gaze is constitutive to the formation of subjectivity, not in its capacity to see but because it 'misidentifies'. For example, in papers 2 and 4, I discuss how the spectator (and the nation) is addressed in terms of that which may be an opportunity to not just engage with distant characters on a screen or differently to the antagonist Other, but fundamentally through a narrative and aesthetic strategy that encourages the spectator to look at him or herself in terms of pride (an imaginary view of the self and the nation, where unity and belonging is created).

<sup>20</sup> Here, I simply paraphrase Thomson-Jones, who notes that, 'the possibility of identification can make the difference between a good and a bad film' (2008: 123).

<sup>21</sup> For a further discussion on the notion of mood in particular, see, e.g. Platinga and Smith 1999; Smith 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Also, in paper 1 (p. 558), I note how sound has the potential to produce visual-affective interpretations just as photography may be perceived as noisy or silent depending on light, colour, movement and more.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Thomson-Jones (2008) who notes that, 'We not only respond to content but also to form or style, and sometimes we respond to form regardless of content as a film's form and sound effects can be used to trigger emotional responses that, in turn, reinforce the significance of narrative events' (123).

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g. Rancière's thoughts on aesthetics as, inherently, political (2004).

<sup>25</sup> See Negri interviewed in, <http://roarmag.org/2015/01/negri-interview-multitude-metropolis/> (accessed October 27 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Another way to understand the matter is to say that when representative democracy is disconnected from social conflict – the civil struggle – democracy becomes less (a social) movement and participatory focused, and therefore also less 'political'. In Rancière's terminology, institutional (representative) democracy transforms into the police; a set of technicians working to uphold social order and the constitution, instead of including politics and the social masses in the project of democracy.

<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the real is also a state of affect where meaning (discourse, the world as we know it) starts to fall apart (Žižek 1994: 30). Hence, when translated into discourse theory, the real is both this lost world of harmony – the mother/child dyad; i.e. the ultimate target of desire which in political discourse is framed as that which can be reached through the elimination of the Threat – and, at the same time, that which disturbs meaning and subjectivity itself (cf. Pisters 2003: 47). That is to say that the real (as a state of affect; a state of intense sensation) may be destructive and traumatic if signification as we know it fails, or can be transformed into emancipation (insofar as new meanings, or desires are produced).

<sup>28</sup> As the poststructuralists like to claim, 'Language is "empty" because it is just an endless process of difference and absence: instead of being able to possess anything in its fullness, the ... [subject] simply move from one signifier to another, along a linguistic chain which is potentially infinite. One signifiers implies another, and that another, and so on ad infinitum' (Eagleton 2008: 145, my italics; cf. Derrida 1970: 249).

<sup>29</sup> Also, drawing from a broader poststructuralist perspective, it could be said that my thesis, in general, supports the critique of the notion whereby reality could exist independently of cultural signs (Gaines 1999) – a critique of the instrumentalist view which 'takes language as a tool designed to express human thought' rather than that which is inherently constructivist in character (Fink 2004: 81). This is discussed, for example, in paper 1, specifically in my analysis of how

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practices of visible evidence in the judicial field seem to be linked to ontological assumptions whereby an objective reality is capable of manifesting itself and/or existing apart from the cinematic techniques that produce and distribute it; that is, the series of events produced and distributed by legal recordings. Of course, this does not mean that reality beyond interpretation is impossible, but rather that I critique the way in which legal (visible) evidence is framed less as a social construction than an ‘anti-aesthetic’, ‘anti-affective’ or ‘anti-fabricated’ narrative; that is, as a piece of visual information qualified to record reality like an ‘open window’ that opens towards the natural world (see paper 1, p. 566).

<sup>30</sup> However, it is important to stress that this lack is related to the symbolic order, especially because the subject, who unconsciously experiences the world and itself via symbolic forms, is ensnared in abstraction – if language is absent (if signification is never certain) then it is also ‘lacking’. Thus, in my view, it is this displacement of language and symbolic form (and by extension, how the subject experiences the world and itself) that fundamentally advances this lack of complete satisfaction (cf. Fink 2004: 23). As Stavrakakis has put it, ‘What we buy is what we fantasise about, and what we fantasise about is what we are lacking: the part of ourselves that is sacrificed/castrated when we enter the symbolic system of language. ... This loss, however, the prohibition of *jouissance*, is exactly what permits the emergence of desire; a desire which is structured around the unending quest for the lost/impossible *jouissance*’ (2007: 239).

<sup>31</sup> Here, the discursive theoretical (Lacanian) frame of my research is anchored in my argument of how the subject’s desire of being honoured and feeling meaningful is at bottom also an injected desire of the producers of discourse that sells the message that the subject will reach a state of ‘plenitude’ by ‘consuming the product of desire’ (cf. Glynos & Stavrakakis 2004; also see, e.g. Žižek 2008: 200ff). Thus, the subject will, for example, overcome its constitutive lack by joining the armed forces, or expel the (terrorist or political) Other (papers 2 and 4).

<sup>32</sup> What fantasy does then is not only lure us into (political, economic) consumption by framing the possibility of ever-lasting enjoyment or harmony, but the (cultural, political, economic) mobilisation of fantasy is also that which, at the deepest level of human subjectivity, structures our identity in order ‘to ensure that the radical contingency ... remains in the background’ (Howarth 2013: 245; cf. Glynos & Howarth 2007: 145-52). Thus, ‘We engage in fantasy not to escape from, but to escape to a social reality that protects us’ (from its own contingency; cf. Taylor 2010: 78). Differently put, fantasy conceals possible interpretations that risk putting our socialised conception of the world and ourselves at stake. In this definition, fantasy has nothing to do with deliberate escapism or what stands in opposition to ‘reality’ in a fantasy-reality dualism, rather, on the contrary, fantasy is that which supports ‘reality’ or at least our (learned, symbolic) concept of it. This is why fantasies are not strictly private but travel within the public domain through the production of discourse, desire and ‘common sense’ (cf. paper 2, p. 32 in this thesis; also see, Homer 2005: 85).

<sup>33</sup> In the context of my work, ‘*jouissance*’ allows itself to signify both the intense satisfaction (enjoyment) of the mother/child unity phase in the real (but which is ‘lost’ as the subject is inscribed in the symbolic), and/or a form of forbidden pleasure beyond normative rules – those social norms that command what is enjoyable and what is not. In paper 2, this idea of (forbidden) enjoyment is implicit but nonetheless also manifest in the way in which the military sets out a legitimate framework within which subjects may enjoy the (affective) adrenaline kick that comes from participating in military conflict overseas. The discourse of humanitarian interventions and preventive defence may dominate in a ‘just war’ narrative but there is also this frame which the media hardly mentions, one that unofficially legitimises or creates the possibility of an enjoyment of killing and the risk of putting oneself in danger and potentially being killed. I suggest it is the enjoyable uncertainty (of violence and cruelty, life and death), that comes with not knowing what



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will and will not happen in a war situation (or in life) that makes the participation in military conflict, such an attractive adventure; it goes far beyond the traditional discourse on humanitarian interventions and the protection of life and global security issues. In paper 3 then, the concept of jouissance is very much located in 'the lulz'; in the trolling passion of Anonymous and their 'excess' of enjoyment in breaking into cyber security systems 'for the lulz' (for the laughs). That is, the hacktivist culture of Anonymous – where they mock specific power structures at the same time as inciting a larger public debate on state power surveillance, for example, – shows that political resistance does not have to be performed against a purely moral or intellectual backdrop but may very well be issued in parallel with a kind of enjoyment which transgress the limits of pleasure (moving beyond the cultural norms that regulate the subject's assimilation and exercise of pleasure; see, e.g. Žižek 2012b: 47; also see, e.g. Fink 1997: 8-9, 225-227 for a discussion on jouissance as the pleasure of 'getting off' on situations related to danger and/or pain). However, if enjoyment is not given but based on the command of the masters of discourse (cf. Lacan 1998: 7 [1975]) then the subsequent questions ask how and where this enjoyment is taking place, and who or what is (not) allowing it to be a legitimate or genuine form of pleasure (or, to take it somewhat further; a form of meaningfulness). Hence, it seems to me that this is what Anonymous fundamentally challenges in their use and visibility of the 'lulz'. Finally, in paper 4, the jouissance mobilised by Podemos can be applied to the thrill of conflict and democratic revolution; an opportunity to 'throw them all out', alongside the mobilisation of enjoyment which is based on expelling the whole set of political-economic authorities (the true 'parasites') from the system, for they have proved themselves unable to resolve the popular claims. Hence, Podemos is not just another political party aspiring to conquer the governmental throne, but rather, in my reading, the attractiveness of Podemos is also positioned in this kind of satisfaction which enables enjoyment from changing and taking over a system – in letting 'normal' people walk the halls of power at the expense of the 'privileged' antagonist Other. This is a psycho-political narrative that in itself, one could argue, is just as important/attractive as Podemos' political-economic programme, or even more so.

<sup>34</sup> Also, perhaps I should clarify here that I do not mean relations of domination in terms of sovereign power only (between the state, forms of punishment and the individual for example), but rather the way in which specific control mechanisms, apparatuses of knowledge, and the power of 'true discourses' act and are constituted in and through our (social) bodies; i.e. in a system of power based on 'normalisation', and, consequently, in which its multiple actions are perceived as 'natural' (cf. Foucault 2003: 23-42 [1976]).

<sup>35</sup>

Hej,  
En utmärkt redogörelse av vad jag försökte säga .  
Jag har inga svårigheter att ställa mig bakom detta.  
Hälsningar  
Peter Althin

-----Ursprungligt meddelande-----

Från: Rodrigo Ferrada Stoeckel [mailto:rodrigo.ferrada@kultmed.umu.se]

Skickat: den 29 februari 2012 12:59

Till: Peter Althin

Ämne: Re: SV: mål nr B 2957-04

Telefonsamtal med Peter Althin 2012-02-28

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Hej Peter,

Tusen tack för samtalet igår, det var intressant att höra dina tankar ”inifrån” så att säga. Som jag förklarade hastigt analyserar jag de olika audiovisuella bevismaterialen utifrån ett främst filmiskt (estetiskt och affektivt) perspektiv där jag resonerar kring vilka eventuella underliggande (juridiska) betydelser som kan tänkas framträda vid en sådan läsning. Jag har försökt sammanfatta vårt samtal och skickar härmed till dig - alltid lite svårt att ”minnas” men här kommer i varje fall ett försök till en sådan efterhandskonstruktion:

1. Beträffande bildens betydelse i juridiska processer kan sägas följande: en bild eller en filmsekvens som presenteras i en rättssal vet man aldrig riktigt hur den skall tolkas/tas emot av åskådarna då en bild/film kan ha mångbottnade metaforiska betydelser bortom den huvudsakliga argumenteringen de juridiska aktörerna lyfter fram. Skriftlig eller verbal information är i denna mening inte heller en form av rak kommunikation men det finns en tanke om att ”bilden” inte är lika ”bokstavlig” (tolkningsriktad) som det verbala/skriftliga.

2. Som en följd av detta resonemang kan sägas följande: en bild kan åstadkomma en djupare effekt på de juridiska åskådarna jämfört med om samma information skulle presenteras via en verbal eller en skriftlig strategi. Detta beror, kan tänkas, på grund av bildens inkorporerande och visuella ”abstraktion” och tankeledande karaktäristiska (visuella associationer) på ett sätt som text och verbal information inte förmedlar. Ett exempel på sådana effektfulla associationer är bilder som porträtterar för- och efterskador (blod, kroppar, före- och efter, etc.) till skillnad från en skriftlig/verbal beskrivning av dessa skador eller kroppar.

3. Beträffande dilemmat om den tilltalades (MM) slutliga påföljd, livstidsfängelse eller sluten psykiatrisk vård (målnummer B 2957-04 i hovrätten; B 3454-04 i HD) kan följande diskuteras: HD:s bedömning att den tilltalade (MM) dömdes till livstidsfängelse och inte vård kan anses vara ett politiskt beslut. Detta på grund av, bland annat, HD:s icke-beaktande av Socialstyrelsens medicinska bedömning av den tilltalade. HD agerade på det stora hela självständigt, utöver de läkarutlåtanden som styrkte den tilltalades behov av vård (tre läkare och en psykolog var för vård medan två läkare var emot, se: [http://svt.se/2.23796/1.295067/manga\\_turer\\_kring\\_mijailovics\\_halsa](http://svt.se/2.23796/1.295067/manga_turer_kring_mijailovics_halsa)). I tingsrätten hade även domstolen sagt nej till att få den tilltalades hälsa prövad av Socialstyrelsen vilket var något som senare överklagades i hovrätten - varav då Socialstyrelsen konstaterade/bedömde den tilltalade som allvarligt psykiskt sjuk, både före, under och efter brottet. I hovrätten blev därför den tilltalade dömd till vård. Detta beslut överklagades i sin tur av RÅ och HD gjorde som nämnts en egen bedömning av fallet (utöver Socialstyrelsens rekommendationer) och dömde den tilltalade till livstid. I slutändan var alltså frågan om den tilltalades (o)hälsa trots allt mer juridisk än medicinsk vilket får en att spekulera/reflektera (ställa frågan) om påföljden hade varit annorlunda om inte den drabbade varit den hon var.

PS.

Säg gärna till om du tror något behövs förtydligas.

Tusen tack för din tid.

Mvh,

Rodrigo

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24 feb 2012 kl. 11.43 skrev Peter Althin:

Hej igen,

Jag är ledsen att mitt återkommande dröjt .

Det enklaste är nog att vi tar det över telefon ,varför jag får be

Dig översända Ditt telefon nummer till mig ,så hör jag av mig.

Hälsningar

Peter Althin

-----Ursprungligt meddelande-----

Från: Rodrigo Ferrada Stoeihrel [mailto:rodrigo.ferrada@kultmed.umu.se]

Skickat: den 6 februari 2012 22:13

Till: Peter Althin

Ämne: mål nr B 2957-04

Hej Peter, jag skrev nyss ett mail till adressen: advokatfirman@advokatalthin.se<mailto:advokatfirman@advokatalthin.se> men såg precis därefter din egen, direkta adress. Här kommer då mail igen:

Hej Peter!

Jag heter Rodrigo Ferrada Stoeihrel och vi har hastigt talats vid via SMS. Tänkte endast att det kunde vara en bra idé att skriva till dig via mail – lite övergripande om de frågor (och forskningsprojektets bakgrund). Som jag nämnde är jag alltså doktorand i medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap vid Umeå universitet. Jag forskar just nu om huruvida ”bildbevis” kan förstås och nyttjas inom specifika rättsliga processer via ett visuellt och medieteoretiskt perspektiv och har bland annat tittat på polisens rekonstruktion som användes i samband med hovrättens mål nr B 2957-04 (Anna Lind, MM).

Utifrån ett medie- och kommunikationsvetenskapligt perspektiv är filmen intressant men när jag såg rekonstruktionen funderade jag fram och tillbaka på några saker som inte stod med i själva domslutet. Jag har också försökt få tillgång till de pläderingar som användes i samband med denna rekonstruktion men har inte fått något svar från de åklagare som varit inblandade. Dessa pläderingar har jag inte heller lyckats spåra via dagboksbladet. Hursomhelst, jag hoppas det går bra att jag ställer några frågor så kan du (förhoppningsvis) svara i den mån du kan och minns:

1. Vad var syftet med rekonstruktionen och/eller vad ville filmen bevisa? (Jag har läst om syftet via press men istället för att förlita mig på journalisternas tolkningar vill jag höra mig för.)

2. Var filmen trovärdig och om så, på vilket sätt? Om inte, varför?

3. Kom du ihåg någonting om formspråket? Dvs. hur rekonstruktionen var filmad? Hur mottogs detta ”formspråk” i rättsalen? Var det någon som anmärkte på estetiken?

Dessa frågor går stundtals, som du märker, in i varandra. På övergripande nivå blev jag vidare nyfiken på rekonstruktioner som sådana och tänkte därför på några följdfrågor:

5. När används rekonstruktioner i rättsliga processer?

6. Vad är dess fördelar/nackdelar?

7. Kan det finnas en risk för att en rekonstruktion uppfattas som effektfull? Om inte, hur gör man för att undvika detta?

Tusen tack för din tid Peter, hoppas du har möjlighet.

Mvh,

Rodrigo Ferrada Stoeihrel

<sup>36</sup> I did not have the possibility to localise and speak directly to the prosecutors and lawyers involved in the other cases.