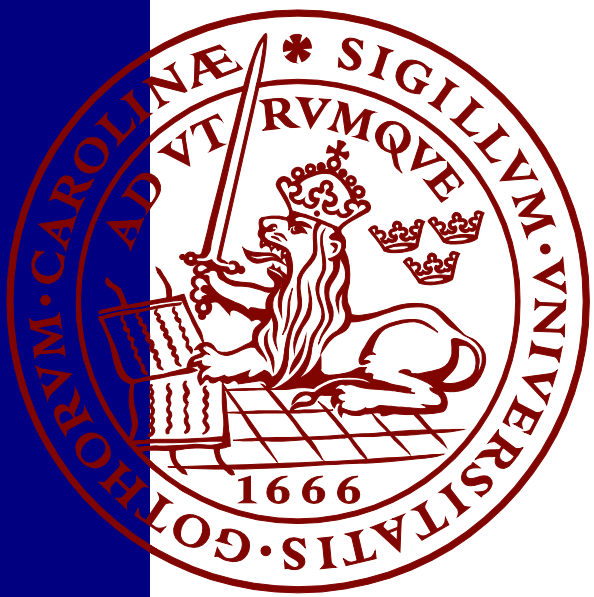
Verdicts and images

Exploring how the Aurora movement relates its visual communication about strategic climate litigation to sympathetic publics

András Dominik Rákos

Master Thesis Series in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science,
No 2024:037

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Lund University International Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science (30hp/credits)



LUCSUS
Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies

Verdicts and images

Exploring how the Aurora movement relates its visual communication about strategic climate litigation to sympathetic publics

András Dominik Rákos

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Lund University International Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science

Submitted May 12

Supervisor: David O'Byrne, LUCSUS, Lund University

Empty page

Abstract

Strategic Climate Litigation (SCL) has recently gained traction as a repertoire of social movement organisations to instigate change towards sustainability. This thesis aims to understand the imagery of the Aurora movement and how it is used to engage with sympathetic publics around SCL. Applying Panofsky's (1955) iconographic method, it examines images collected from Aurora's Instagram channel and members of the movement. The thesis finds that Aurora connects its visuality to SCL through the construction of the ecological crisis, climate justice and crowdfunding narratives, aligned with the visual self-expression of contemporary youth-led climate movements. It also demonstrates that while Aurora's visual communication encompasses clear problem definitions and verifications, it does not thoroughly explore alternative narratives and potential negative effects. Despite its limitations in focus and engagement with production, the thesis offers novel empirical insights into social movement scholarship as it effectively connects the concepts of visuality, audiences and SCL.

Keywords: Youth climate movements, Sweden, Audiences, Iconography, Visual self-expression

Word count (thesis – except Acknowledgement, Content list, Reference list): 11 756

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, David O'Byrne and Sahana Subramanian for providing me with guidance throughout the research and writing process. I wish to extend my appreciation to my thesis peer-review group for following my project from the beginning till the end and repeatedly offering honest and thoughtful feedback. Lastly, I am thankful to my friends and family for their unwavering love and emotional support during my ups and downs.

Table of contents

1 Introduction 1

1.1 Background 1

1.2 Knowledge gaps 2

1.3 Research purpose and case selection 4

2 Contemporary climate movements and visuality 6

2.1 The rise of contemporary youth-led, digitalised climate activism 6

2.2 Forgotten visuals 7

3 Visual methodologies in social movement scholarship 9

3.1 A critical approach to visuals in social movement scholarship 9

3.2 Studying the visual self-expression of social movements through iconography 10

3.3 Complementing iconography with narrative analysis 12

3.4 Normativity and positionality 13

4 Research design and methods 14

4.1 Data collection and sampling 14

4.2 Four-step visual analysis 15

4.2.1 Pre-iconographic description 16

4.2.2 Iconographic interpretation 17

4.2.3 Identification of narratives 17

4.2.4 Assessment of persuasion 17

5 Understanding Aurora's visual content.....18

5.1 Description of Aurora's visual content..... 18

5.1.1 Formats and themes of Aurora's visual content..... 18

5.1.2 Recurring visual elements in Aurora's visual content..... 20

5.2 Symbolism of Aurora's visual content..... 21

5.2.1 Symbolism of Aurora's logo..... 22

5.2.2 Symbolism of pictograms..... 24

5.2.3 Activism-related symbols..... 25

5.2.4 Symbolism of human subject depictions..... 26

5.2.5 Symbolism of backgrounds..... 27

6 Narratives about strategic climate litigations and their relationship with audiences.....29

6.1 Narratives and sympathetic audiences around strategic climate litigation..... 29

6.1.1 The ecological crisis narrative..... 30

6.1.2 The climate justice narrative..... 31

6.1.3 The crowdfunding narrative..... 32

6.2 Assessment of persuasion..... 32

7 Concluding discussion.....35

7.1 Key contributions..... 35

7.2 Limitations and future research directions..... 37

8 Annexes.....40

9 References.....47

List of abbreviations

CMO	Climate Movement Organisation
FFF	Fridays For Future
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and other identities
RQ	Research Question
SCL	Strategic Climate Litigation
SMO	Social Movement Organisation
XR	Extinction Rebellion

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Climate change is often referred to in academic discussions as a 'wicked' problem owing to its complex, multi-scalar, non-linear, unpredictable and cumulative character (Levin et al., 2009). This makes it extremely difficult to tackle without adversely affecting the conditions of other socio-ecological systems. Addressing climate change is further hindered by the power dynamics surrounding it and the fact that the longer it takes to implement the solutions, the more costly they will become (Lazarus, 2009). Additionally, the lack of global lawmaking frameworks renders it complicated to devise, execute and enforce measures that are proportionate to the scale of the problem.

Domestic courts are playing an ever-increasing role as agents of change with regard to climate change as they offer a controlled setting where knowledge claims and values become openly contestable (Averill, 2008, p. 902). Earlier research typically viewed the impacts of domestic courts from a narrow legal perspective (Mead & Maxwell, 2022; Rocha, 2023). More recent studies, however, have drawn on the inquiries of social movement scholarship and also regarded their political and social effects. In his seminal paper, Lobel (2004) argues that courts not only function as arbiters of disputes or instruments for organisational change but also as "*arenas where political and social movements agitate for, and communicate their legal and political agenda*" (p. 479). The protest model he proposes dissolves the boundary between law and politics, viewing litigation no longer as the ultimate goal but rather as a repertoire, part of an overarching strategy to accomplish social change. Given the urgent need for action in response to climate change juxtaposed with diminishing trust in political and corporate actors, Lobel's (2004) model well explains the recent proliferation of Strategic Climate Litigation (SCL) cases worldwide (Batros & Khan, 2020).

While there is no universally accepted definition, SCL is most commonly understood as the umbrella term for legal cases that aim "*to achieve broader change beyond the direct interests of or remedies sought by the plaintiffs*" (Batros & Khan, 2020, p. 3). In addition to its immediate impacts on formal regulatory frameworks and corporate behaviour, an increasing number of scholars highlight the positive effects of SCL on awareness-raising, climate change communication and scientific literacy. SCL cases shift the focus from whether climate change is happening to questions of injuries/remedies, victims/perpetrators and winners/losers (Calzadilla, 2019; Hunter, 2009).

Consequently, they give voice to marginalised communities and tell stories that are tangible and intimate, not only for the judges but also for the general public. Recent successful cases, such as *Neubauer, et al. v. Germany* (2020) and *Sharma and others v. Minister for the Environment* (2020), demonstrate how compelling narratives are often taken up by professional newsmakers (Peel & Markey-Towler, 2021), thereby enriching public discourses, educating people about climate change and exerting moral pressure on decision-makers (Averill, 2008; Osofsky, 2010). Moreover, these cases play a major role in popularising and legitimising climate science, as they frequently reference authoritative sources like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Calzadilla, 2019; Hunter, 2009). For the above reasons, this thesis sees SCL as a significant driver of domestic courts' rising importance as arenas for protest in today's liberal democracies (Lobel, 2004).

Setzer & Higham's (2022) report on recent trends in climate litigation attests that, although still making up a small proportion of all cases filed, SCL is undeniably gaining traction and visibility. While most lawsuits were initiated in the United States of America, European courts are frequently targeted as well, involving cases that either seek to enforce certain standards, point out the inadequacy of governments' climate ambitions or challenge private corporations. The recent upsurge in SCL cases filed in Europe was largely driven by youth plaintiffs, who by relying on the principle of intergenerational justice, narratively connect the ongoing ecological crisis with violations against the human rights of young generations (Donger, 2022; United Nations Environment Programme, 2023). Many of these cases and the activists behind them have grown out of youth-led Climate Movement Organisations (CMOs) such as Fridays For Future (*Neubauer, et al. v. Germany*, 2020; *Children of Austria v. Austria*, 2023). This thesis engages with the current wave of youth-led SCL cases in Europe.

1.2 Knowledge gaps

Viewing SCL as a repertoire for social change aligns my work with social movement scholarship. Social movement researchers have long engaged with the question area of climate communication. While framing theory elucidates how social movements form narratives around events, ideas and social phenomena to mobilise supporters, build collective identities and compete in various arenas (Entman, 1993; Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Lindekilde, 2014; Meyer et al., 2023; Snow et al., 1986), theories on reception direct attention towards audiences, whether sympathetic or antagonistic towards the particular organisation (Blee & McDowell, 2012; Eyerman, 2005). In light of the digital revolution and the subsequent digitalisation of activism, framing practices and their effects on external audiences have gained renewed scholarly interest, thereby also reaching the subfield of climate movement research (McLean & Fuller, 2016; Neumayer & Rossi, 2016; Özkula et al., 2023).

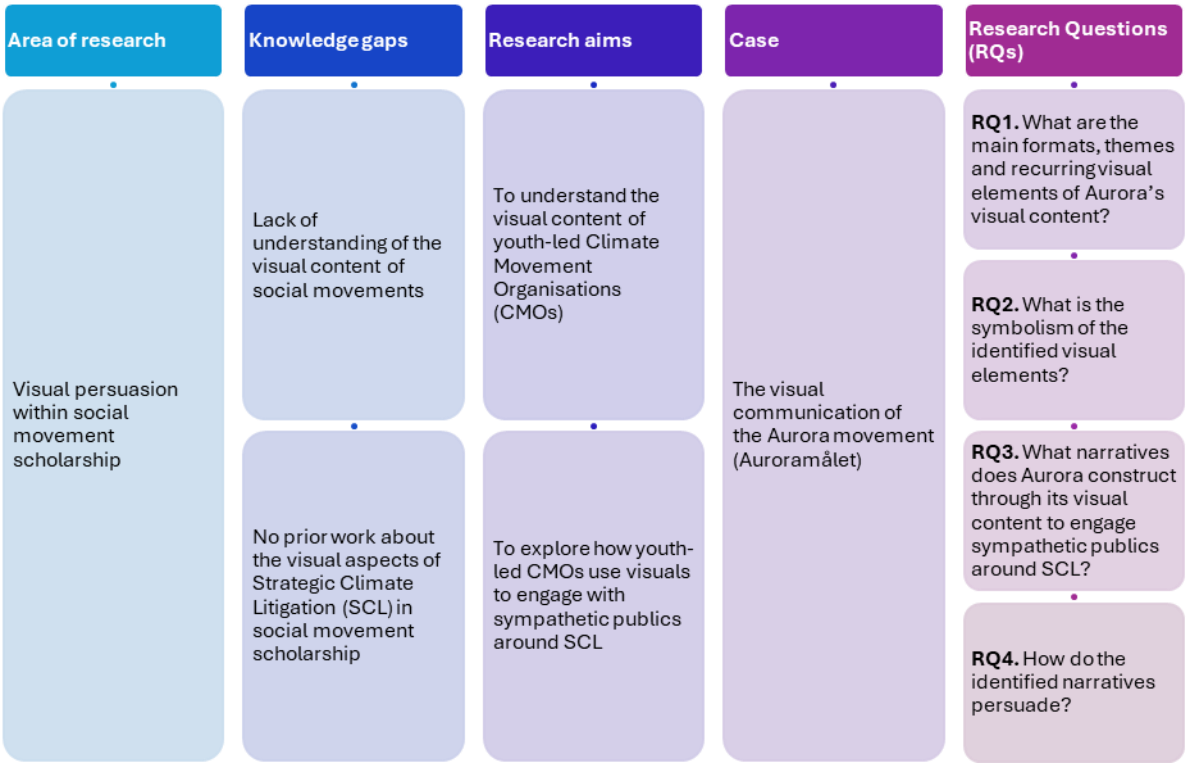


Figure 1. A visualisation of the research purpose of this thesis, including the area of research, knowledge gaps, research aims, case selection and Research Questions (RQs). (Own figure.)

The number of scholarly articles published on the digital strategies and repertoires of youth-led CMOs also experienced a rapid increase since the climate strikes of 2018-2019 (Baran & Stoltenberg, 2023). Despite these studies examining various aspects of contemporary climate communication trends, available social movement literature currently overlooks the role of visuals. The lack of theoretical development regarding visual persuasion is noteworthy given empirical evidence from related fields (Mitchell, 2011) regarding visuals' quick dissemination and high retainment by audiences (Geise et al., 2021; Grabe & Bucy, 2009). This thesis seeks to contribute to this research area by employing the concepts and methodologies of visual persuasion in the context of youth-led SCL, as shown in Figure 1.

By better accounting for the audiences of youth-led CMOs, this paper enriches research about the visual framing practices of Social Movement Organisations (SMOs). It chooses to prioritise sympathetic over antagonising publics, driven by the acknowledgement of audience engagement as a pivotal goal of CMOs to sustain their activism and the recognition of the limited power and resources of SMOs in reaching the 'general public' in today's digitalised societies (Rodgers, 2018). The thesis further contributes to social movement scholarship by integrating scholarly work on digital tactics in climate activism with the burgeoning field of visual persuasion. Thus, it emphasises the importance of visuals, a dimension often overlooked in the field. Lastly, by foregrounding SCL in its inquiry, the

study contributes insights into how visual representations of SCL cases align with the broader goals of CMOs and how concepts like intergenerational equity can be translated into tangible and communicable messages through visuals.

1.3 Research purpose and case selection

This thesis has the dual aim of enhancing knowledge about the visual content of youth-led CMOs and understanding how these visuals are used to engage with sympathetic publics regarding SCL. More precisely, the first object of study is to explore the formats, themes, symbols and compositional elements of the visual communication of contemporary youth-led CMOs. The second object of study is to relate the identified visual cues and meanings to SCL and sympathetic publics. To reach these aims, the paper unpacks the visual aspects of the *Aurora case* in Sweden (*Anton Foley and others v. Sweden*, 2022). On 25 November 2022, 600 young people, affiliated with the Aurora movement (Auroramålet, hereinafter referred to as Aurora), filed a lawsuit to force the Swedish state to drastically reduce its carbon-dioxide emissions. This goal is pursued to ensure that Sweden fulfils its fair share, accounts for all emissions and actively conserves and restores the natural environment in accordance with the provisions of the Paris Agreement (Edling & Malm Rath, 2023). According to the lawsuit, the inadequacy of the Swedish state to mitigate climate change violates the rights of young generations to life, property, private and family life and non-discrimination as per the European Convention of Human Rights (*Anton Foley and others v. Sweden*, 2022). At the time of writing, The Supreme Court of Sweden (Högsta domstolen) had just accepted the Aurora case for future judgment (SVT Nyheter, 2024).

The Aurora case suits the present analysis for several reasons. First, it is one of the most recent SCL cases with no verdict yet reached. This allows for the exploration of an ongoing campaign that has the potential to significantly impact both the legal framework and the public discourse surrounding climate change in Sweden. Second, the aims of Aurora extend beyond solely winning the lawsuit they also encompassing movement building, awareness-raising, campaigning and demonstrating (Edling & Malm Rath, 2023). Therefore, the case against the state is part of an overarching campaign, in which climate communication is assumed to play a crucial role. And third, upon examining Aurora's website and social media platforms, it becomes evident that it places a huge emphasis on producing engaging visuals, thus educating and mobilising potential supporters around their action.

With its stated objective to better understand the visual content of Aurora and the ways it is used to engage sympathetic publics around SCL, I seek to answer the following research questions.

RQ1 What are the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's visual content?

RQ2 What is the symbolism of the identified visual elements?

RQ3 What narratives does Aurora construct through its visual content to engage sympathetic publics around SCL?

RQ4 How do the identified narratives persuade?

The paper is structured as follows. Chapter 2 introduces the rise of contemporary youth-led CMOs and reviews existing scholarly work about visuality in social movement scholarship. Chapter 3 delineates the theoretical foundations of this study, including its roots in critical visual studies and its normative position. Chapter 4 displays the research design to analyse Aurora's images, inspired by Panofsky's (1955) iconographic method. Chapter 5 presents the findings for RQ1 and RQ2, associated with the first aim of this thesis to expand knowledge of the visual content produced by youth-led CMOs. Chapter 6 outlines Aurora's visual narratives regarding SCL and connects them to sympathetic audiences, thereby addressing RQ3 and RQ4 and accomplishing the second aim of the paper. Chapter 7 offers a concluding discussion of the thesis's contributions and limitations.

2 Contemporary climate movements and visuality

The proliferation of digital technologies and social media has fundamentally changed how SMOs disseminate information and organise themselves (McGarry et al., 2019; Neumayer & Rossi, 2018). The new wave of climate protests, hallmarked by the emergence of CMOs like Fridays For Future (FFF) and Extinction Rebellion (XR), appeared to be fundamentally affected by these developments. Aurora is closely linked to this new generation of climate activism as its tactics, messages and reliance on digitalised networks mirror other CMOs that arose during the 2018-2019 climate protests (de Moor et al., 2021; Doherty et al., 2018). Its collaboration on multiple occasions with actors such as Greta Thunberg or FFF Sweden further aligns Aurora with contemporary youth-led CMOs (Dagens Nyheter, 2022).

This chapter serves to set the stage for the analysis of Aurora's visual content by highlighting the most relevant traits of contemporary youth-led climate activism and introducing scholarly perspectives on the digitalisation of climate activism (Chapter 2.1). It then reviews existing literature about visuality in this field and outlines the advantages of integrating imagery in social movement scholarship (Chapter 2.2).

2.1 The rise of contemporary youth-led, digitalised climate activism

The emergence of CMOs such as FFF and XR was widely celebrated as the commencement of a new era in climate activism (Rákos, 2022). The extent to which these recent mobilisations introduced innovation to climate activism in Europe is subject to scholarly debates (de Moor et al., 2021; Doherty et al., 2018; Stuart, 2020; Zantvoort, 2021). While the resolution of these disputes exceeds the scope of this paper, the securitisation of climate change, framing it as a 'crisis' or an 'emergency', and the governmentalisation of security, considering state decision-makers as main agents of climate inaction, are traits that make contemporary youth-led CMOs stand out (Albert, 2023; Lucke, 2020). Additionally, new climate activist groups construct inclusive and uniting demands, often grounded in scientific consensus, to mobilise publics through social media and employ emotionally charged messages (de Moor et al., 2021; Doherty et al., 2018; Molder et al., 2022). While the former two traits involve their problem formulation and location of blame, the latter two align contemporary youth-led CMOs with the literature on digitalised and personalised activism (McLean & Fuller, 2016; Neumayer & Rossi, 2016).

Social movement scholarship has recently engaged with how digital repertoires changed the movement-building, campaigning and collective identities of new climate movements (Baran & Stoltenberg, 2023; Mattoni & Teune, 2014; Özkula et al., 2023). Aside from mapping their diverse engagement with their audiences on social media platforms, it also examined the personalisation of their framing practices, indicating a shift that successful SMOs no longer rely on rigid traditional notions of 'us' in today's post-material societies (cf. Bennett & Segerberg, 2011, 2013). Another characteristic of new-generation CMOs involves the central role of organic and spontaneous networks, uniting like-minded individuals around common causes and facilitating the rapid accumulation of large and diverse audiences (McLean & Fuller, 2016). The fluidity of messages and the networked character of public engagement thus call upon the extension of our understanding of framing practices in relation to contemporary youth-led CMOs (Baran & Stoltenberg, 2023; Neumayer & Rossi, 2016; Özkula et al., 2023).

2.2 Forgotten visuals

Digital technologies and social media have not only transformed the ways in which information is shared and protests are organised but also provided a non-material space where resistance and social change can be visualised (McGarry et al., 2019). Social sciences have a history of exploring visuality (Mitchell, 2011; Rose, 2016) but social movement scholarship has so far only produced scattered accounts, addressing visual forms such as protest signs (Philipps, 2012), photographs (Delicath & Deluca, 2003; Veneti, 2017), logos and graphics (Daphi et al., 2013; Kurtz, 2005), 'rebel colours' (Chesters & Welsh, 2004; Sawer, 2007), performative aesthetics (Buhre, 2023; Coombs, 2020) and the role of art (Adams, 2002; Milbrandt, 2010). The literature about the visuality of contemporary youth-led CMOs is nascent; existing studies focus on recurring visual elements (Shim, 2023) and the visual representation of activists (Hayes & O'Neill, 2021; Molder et al., 2022; Olesen, 2022).

Instances of theory building regarding visuals are equally rare in social movement scholarship. The most influential attempt to devise a comprehensive framework for analysing the visuality of SMOs is attributed to Doerr & Teune (2012), Doerr et al. (2013), Doerr & Milman (2014), Mattoni & Teune (2014) and McGarry et al. (2019). In their seminal chapter, Doerr & Milman (2014) define their visual approach as a set of concepts and methods to analyse the visual self-expression, representations and the public (in)visibility of SMOs. They consider these domains as hallmarks of three distinct scholarly interests, where visual self-expression involves the strategic use of symbols, visual representations

reflect the perspectives of external actors and (in)visibility entails the scrutiny of power dynamics that structure spaces of shared visual meanings (Doerr & Milman, 2014).

The negligence of visuals in social movement scholarship is conspicuous, particularly considering the extensive engagement with visuality in fields such as cultural studies, anthropology, media and communication studies, political science and visual sociology (Mitchell, 2011; Rose, 2016). Several authors argue that, in the age of digitalised and personalised communication, visuals have become more efficient than words in tailoring emotions and messages to wide audiences (Casas & Williams, 2019; Geise et al., 2021; Grabe & Bucy, 2009). Whether they facilitate constructive debates (Milner, 2013; Rovisco & Veneti, 2017) or increase political polarisation (Harteveld, 2021; Yarchi et al., 2020), their power to shape public discourses is widely accepted in the literature. Besides their efficacy in tailoring messages to diverse publics, visuals have long functioned as integral components of CMOs' self-expression (Buhre, 2023; Coombs, 2020; della Porta, 2013). Given the potential of imagery to mobilise wide and heterogeneous audiences, visuality appears inseparable from networked, digitalised climate activism. Thus, to fully comprehend how contemporary youth-led CMOs engage sympathetic publics around their goals, we need novel conceptual frameworks and methodologies to grasp the visuality of their climate communication.

3 Visual methodologies in social movement scholarship

The previous chapter underlined the under-theorisation of the visual imagery of contemporary youth-led CMOs as a prominent research gap to address. In doing so, I align my theoretical approach with critical visual studies and adopt an emancipatory stance to assist Aurora in reaching its sympathetic audiences while pursuing its broader aims. This chapter is divided into three parts. Chapter 3.1 lays out the theoretical entry point of this study, building on Rose's (2016) understanding of critical visual methodologies and Doerr & Milman's (2014) aforementioned approach to studying the visual aspects of SMOs. Chapter 3.2 and Chapter 3.3 then outline a conceptual framework, which combines iconography with narrative analysis. Lastly, Chapter 3.3 briefly explains the study's normative position.

3.1 A critical approach to visuals in social movement scholarship

Since the so-called 'pictorial turn', there has been a steady increase in social scientific research about the role of visuals in shaping the social world. While earlier theories tend to focus on representation, a growing body of literature highlights the interconnectedness of images with power and how visuality constitutes reality (Bohnsack, 2009; Philipps, 2012). Rose's (2016) discussion of visual methodologies provides a useful starting point to theoretically approach visuals in the critical tradition. Following Foster (1988, p. ix), she deviates from modern notions considering seeing and knowing as independent and defines visuality as the collection of ways in which human vision is socially constructed (Rose, 2016, pp. 2–3). Images in this critical tradition are conceptualised as sites both existing and shaping their social and material context. Therefore, the question shifts from what images 'depict' to what they 'do', or in other words, from the 'whys' towards the 'hows' (Bohnsack, 2009).

Several aspects of the visual approach of Doerr & Milman (2014), introduced in Chapter 2.2, align with critical visual studies. First, regarding the visual self-expression of SMOs, its perception of images as symbolic resources endows movements with the agency of using visuals strategically to tap into shared experiences and offer avenues of resistance (Doerr et al., 2013; Doerr & Teune, 2012; Luhtakallio, 2013). Second, by discussing the visual representations and public (in)visibility of SMOs, Doerr & Milman (2014) foreground questions of power and hegemony, for example, by asking how particular visuals of protest events become visible in the public sphere, while others remain invisible (Rovisco & Veneti, 2017, p. 271). Additionally, the framework acknowledges the social context in

which images are created, diffused and received and calls for mixed-method research designs, involving the producers of the visuals and sympathetic/antagonistic publics (Doerr & Milman, 2014).

Owing to these contributions, the visual approach of Doerr & Milman (2014) emerges as a useful departure to adopt the tenets of critical visual studies in social movement scholarship. It also complements conventional theories of framing practices (e.g. Entman, 1993; Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Lindekilde, 2014; Meyer et al., 2023; Van Gorp, 2007). On top of that, with its consideration for audiences, it has the potential to overcome the limitations of existing empirical research in contemporary youth-led climate activism (Baran & Stoltenberg, 2023; Neumayer & Rossi, 2016; Özkula et al., 2023). These studies tend to neglect the sites of production and audiencing, apart from a few exceptions (Mattoni & Teune, 2014; Molder et al., 2022; Neumayer & Rossi, 2018; Olesen, 2022; Shim, 2023).

As said, this thesis rests upon the adaptation of critical visual studies to SMOs. In particular, it focuses on the visual self-expression of Aurora with its aims to better understand its visual content and investigate how it uses images in relating SCL to sympathetic publics. Therefore, it addresses the sites of the image itself and audiencing in the compositional modality (Rose, 2016). Given that meanings attached to visuals are reflections of existing social relations and identities, the site of production and the social modality are also involved to some extent in the analysis. However, the ways in which Aurora's images produce social difference and shape the viewers' gaze lie outside the scope of the paper, albeit touched upon. To answer the RQs, the thesis draws upon the conceptual toolbox of iconography, as presented shortly.

3.2 Studying the visual self-expression of social movements through iconography

The term iconography, coined by Panofsky (1955), was originally used in cultural studies to uncover the historical and sociological situatedness of visual symbols in Western art. The main goal of iconography is to reveal the significance of visuals in a particular spatiotemporal context (Müller & Özcan, 2007, p. 287). Since its first use, various social scientific disciplines adopted and interpreted iconography, including social movement scholarship (Gaufman, 2021; Howell, 2017; Kurtz, 2005; Philipps, 2012). As it places a particular emphasis on the context in which visuals exist, it is capable of both approximating the intended meaning of images and reflecting questions of reception (Daphi et al., 2013; Doerr et al., 2013). These considerations have made iconography not only useful for critical visual scholars like Rose (2016) and Doerr & Milman (2014) but also for the present study.

Table 1. Summary of the concepts of semiotics used in this study, accompanied by their definitions and examples. The definitions are based primarily on Dyer (1982a), Rose (2016) and Daphi et al. (2013). (Own table.)

Concept	***Definition***	***Example***
Sign	The most basic analytical unit of semiotics, composed of a 'signifier' and a 'signified'.	A piece of cardboard – protest sign
Signifier	A material object to which a signified gets attached.	A piece of cardboard
Signified	A concept, which gets attached to a signifier.	"Protest sign"
Iconic sign	A sign in which the signifier and the signified are connected through resemblance.	Photograph of people at a demonstration with protest signs – protesters
Indexical sign	A sign in which the signified denotes a broader concept in logical association with the signifier.	Schematic pictogram of high-rise buildings – a city; a piece of garment – social position
Symbolic sign	A sign in which the signified denotes a concept with an arbitrary connection to the signifier.	Schematic drawing of Planet Earth – environmental activism; darker background colour – negative emotions
Denotation	The practice of decoding signs by identifying their immediate/conventional meaning.	Assigning environmental activism to a schematic drawing of Planet Earth, using the accompanying text, which contains the name of an environmental movement
Connotation	The practice of decoding signs by identifying their higher-level meanings.	Assigning the concept of environmental justice to a rainbow flag

Iconography is situated within a social constructivist epistemology, positioned at the juncture of semiotics and discourse analysis (Müller & Özcan, 2007). Rooted in Saussure's (1959) structural linguistics, semiotics acknowledges the multi-layered character of meaning-making (Rose, 2016). It stresses the polyvalency and relationality of signs, suggesting that their meanings can be derived from their structure and how they interact with other signs in complex "*systems of signification*" (Dyer, 1982a, p. 91).

Table 1 summarises the most fundamental concepts of semiotics ('signs', 'signifiers', 'signifieds' as well as 'iconic signs', 'indexical signs' and 'symbolic signs'). Out of these, 'denotation' and 'connotation' bear specific relevance in this discussion as they refer to distinct ways of decoding signs (Barthes, 1985). While denotation involves the identification of immediate or conventional meanings, such as the interpretation of an indexical sign, connotation tackles a higher level of meaning-making. Connotation involves the process of associating a variety of possible meanings with a sign, based on its relation with the surrounding text, other signs and its broader sociocultural context (Daphi et al., 2013; Rose, 2016). Iconography draws heavily on these two concepts and applies them specifically to visual images (Daphi et al., 2013; Doerr & Milman, 2014).

Alongside semiotics, iconography is also related to the Foucauldian understanding of discourses. First, with its emphasis on the role of cultural practices, institutions, belief systems and societal structures, iconography aligns with Foucault's (1972) definition of discourses, seeing them as systems of practices and signs that systematically construct their subjects and the surrounding world (p. 49). Second, by highlighting intertextuality and polyvalency, its description of signs is less rigid as in

mainstream semiotics and thus lies closer to the poststructuralist epistemology of 'becoming' (Rose, 2016). And third, since iconography precludes the possibility of reaching any form of objective 'truth', it naturally directs its attention towards how signs are transformed into larger narratives and what these stories can 'do' (Doerr et al., 2013; Heyes, 2010). Therefore, iconography inevitably taps into questions about how meanings carried by visuals persuade, or in other words, produce 'effects of truth' (Philipps, 2012; Rose, 2016).

Iconography provides a robust theoretical basis for investigating the visual images of Aurora and their connection to sympathetic publics in relation to SCL. The original method devised by Panofsky (1955) delineates three stages of interpretation: pre-iconographic, iconographic and iconological. Pre-iconographic description involves dissecting the 'primary or natural subject matter', where the analyst decodes forms, objects, events and expressional qualities as they materialise in the visual (Panofsky, 1955). This largely entails unpacking the formal composition of the image (Imdahl, 1994), including its main objects (in the background and margins), colours, spatial organisation and depiction of human bodies (Doerr & Milman, 2014; Rose, 2016). Iconographic interpretation of the 'secondary or conventional subject matter' entails the denotation of signs, attributing themes, concepts and stories to motifs and compositions found in the image (Panofsky, 1955). A crucial part of this stage involves identifying symbolic signs and exploring aspects of encoding and decoding (Hall, 1973), for instance, how images refer to familiar symbols and how audiences may interpret them. Iconology involves revealing the 'intrinsic meaning or content' or uncovering the underlying symbolism of an image through connotation, often beyond the creator's conscious intentions (Daphi et al., 2013; Luhtakallio, 2013; Panofsky, 1955). This final stage of the analysis contextualises the images and their visual symbols, situating them in a broader system of mythologies (Rose, 2016).

3.3 Complementing iconography with narrative analysis

The research design of the current thesis is inspired by Panofsky's (1955) above-mentioned three-step iconographic analysis. In line with semiotics, it aims to untangle the 'appearance of things' as it studies Aurora's visual self-expression, meanwhile acknowledging that underlying systems of mythologies are simultaneously at work (Rose, 2016). To approach the third stage of the method (the iconological analysis), the paper complements the original framework with narrative analysis, inspired by Bacchi's (2009) '*What's the Problem Represented to be?*' (WPR) approach. Instead of attempting to reveal 'intrinsic' meanings, it defines narratives as coherent stories about the world with a clear problem formulation, attributed cause(s) and proposed solution(s) (Hajdu & Fischer,

2017). Hence, it maintains distance from the studied visual material and analytically interprets their problem formulations, underlying assumptions, silences, effects and dissemination (Bacchi, 2009).

The WPR approach complements the iconographic method as it provides a flexible analytical framework to identify SCL-related narratives in Aurora's visual communication. Furthermore, it also helps establish how meanings associated with images persuade (Philipps, 2012; Rose, 2016), as it asks questions about the conveyed narratives' coherence, complexity, interpretative repertoires and strategies to deal with contradictions and uncertainties. To address these queries, the paper draws on the framework of Hajdu & Fischer (2017). Although initially designed for the analysis of degradation narratives, its clearly defined analytical categories, such as 'reinforcing factors' and 'questioning factors', make it easily applicable to diverse sources and for various purposes, including the visual persuasion of CMOs. Thus, combining the insights of narrative analysis and iconography enables me to not only understand the meanings attached to Aurora's visuals but also assess how narratives constructed around SCL are utilised to engage with the CMO's sympathetic audiences.

3.4 Normativity and positionality

Transparency about the analyst's positionality is of special importance in critical visual studies (Mitchell, 2011; Rose, 2016). Therefore, I find it essential to clarify the normative standpoint of this paper. As stated at the beginning of Chapter 3, the thesis is explicit in taking a normative stance, aiming to assist CMOs (Aurora, in particular) in creating visuals that attract their sympathetic audiences to SCL and support their overarching objectives. This stance is consistent with the ontology of critical social sciences as it formulates an emancipatory agenda. Additionally, it is rooted in the recognition that solving complex socio-ecological challenges necessitates urgent and socially just action, as established in Chapter 1.1. The normative position of this paper is also informed by the view of CMOs as agents of change towards sustainable outcomes.

Finally, my positionality as a white, educated man with a history in climate activism also has to be acknowledged. This is necessary because the knowledge claims I make in this study are influenced not only by choices of epistemology, methodology and normativity but also by my embeddedness in existing power relations (Doerr & Milman, 2014). Having addressed normativity and positionality, Chapter 4 will operationalise the four RQs of this thesis and detail the methods employed to analyse Aurora's visual content.

4 Research design and methods

Grounded in critical visual studies, I propose a four-step visual analysis combining Panofsky's (1955) concept of iconography and narrative analysis. This section explains the research design comprising a pre-iconographic description, iconographic interpretation, identification of narratives and assessment of persuasion. It starts by explaining the data collection and sampling methods (Chapter 4.1), followed by the presentation of the four-step framework to answer the RQs (Chapter 4.2).

4.1 Data collection and sampling

Figure 2 summarises the data sourcing and sampling procedure of this study. To collect and sample visual materials, I adopted Müller-Doohm's (1997) rigorous process, which is based on a first impression analysis and the selection of prototypes. Having defined visuals as visual images found online and offline, I sampled online images from Aurora's Instagram as it was the only platform where the CMO published original visual content. I scraped the CMO's online visual material (published between February 1, 2021 and February 9, 2024) using the Instagram Scraper of Apify (Version 2024-04-23; 2019). I excluded stories and tagged posts as well as videos and visual images not owned by Aurora. I collected offline images by contacting members of the CMO via email.

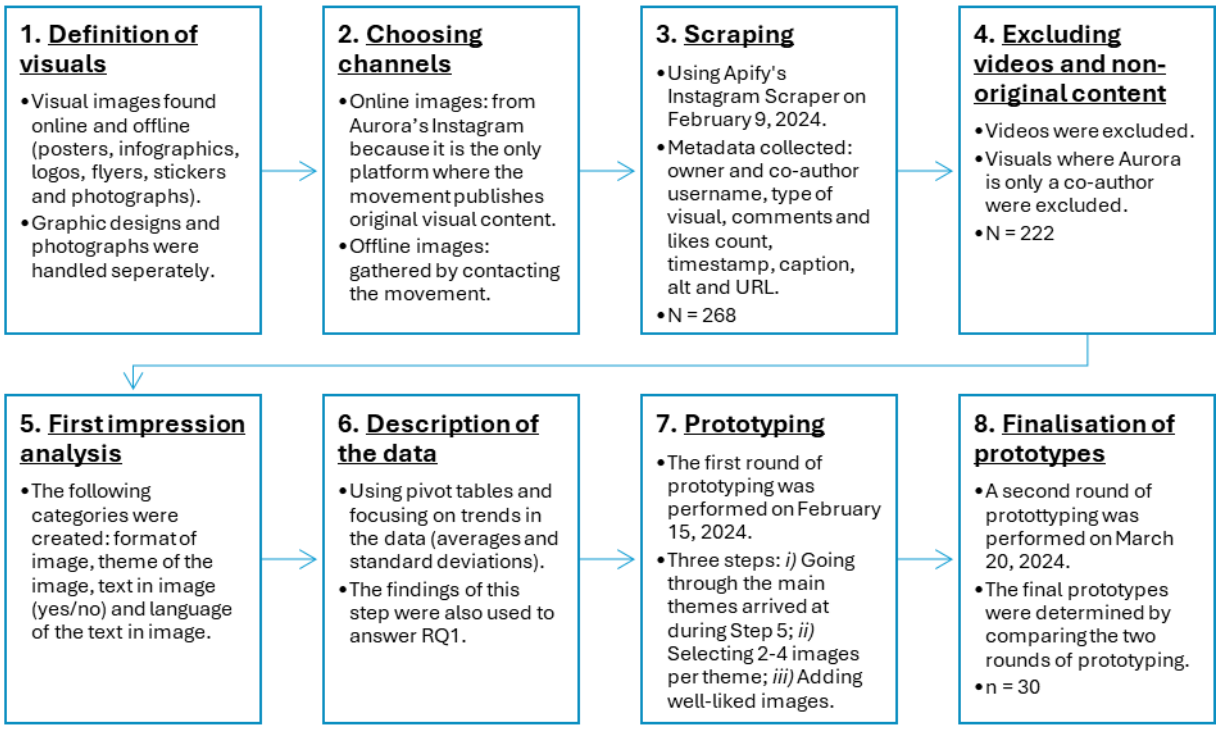


Figure 2. Flowchart of the data collection and sampling process for the present research. (Own figure.)

The *first impression analysis* helped to systematise the corpus and get familiarised with the visuals of Aurora. I categorised the collected material as per the format, theme (primary message), presence of embedded text and the language of the text. Having coded all images in the corpus according to these categories, I described the dataset to reveal general trends and exceptional cases. These findings were used to both answer RQ1 ("*What are the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's visual content?*") and *identify prototypes*. I defined prototypes in this thesis as visual images believed to represent the entire corpus (Müller-Doohm, 1997). I sampled images based on their recency, popularity in terms of like counts, representation of various image formats, themes or important campaigns and consideration of different target audiences (see in more detail in Figure 2). Graphic designs (infographics, posters and memes) and photographs were sampled separately.

To enhance scientific rigour, I performed two rounds of prototyping with a one-month gap in between. The first round was undertaken on February 15, 2024, prior to the review of the literature on visual methods. The second round followed on March 20, 2024. I determined the final prototypes by comparing the lists of images generated in the two distinct prototyping rounds. As a result, I selected 25 online images, three offline posters (shared with me by a member of the CMO via email) and two protest signs (which hold great significance within Aurora). Annex 1 lists the final 30 prototypes chosen as a result of the sampling process, coupled with individual justifications for selecting each image. Annex 2 displays the five sampled offline images.

4.2 Four-step visual analysis

The research design of the four-step visual analysis includes the pre-iconographic description and iconographic interpretation to fulfil the first research aim (to understand the visual content of Aurora) and the identification of narratives and assessment of persuasion, related to the second research aim (to explore how the CMO uses visuals to engage with sympathetic publics around SCL). The following sub-chapters guide the reader through the four steps, each involving a distinct set of methods (Figure 3) and guiding questions to direct the coding procedure (Annex 3–6). The guiding questions were based on the academic literature as well as a preliminary understanding of Aurora's visual material as per the first impression analysis. I revised the categories after having processed around half of the selected visual material (Mayring, 2004).

Research aims	Research Questions (RQs)	Step in the research process	Level of meaning-making	Associated methods (and sample sizes)
To understand the visual content of youth-led Climate Movement Organisations (CMOs)	**RQ1.** What are the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's visual content?	**Pre-iconographic description**	Description of main themes, forms, objects, events and expressional qualities	First impression analysis (N = 222) and compositional analysis (n = 30)
	RQ2. What is the symbolism of the identified visual elements?	**Iconographic interpretation**	Denotation	Content analysis (n = 30)
To explore how youth-led CMOs use visuals to engage with sympathetic publics around Strategic Climate Litigation (SCL)	**RQ3.** What narratives does Aurora construct through its visual content to engage sympathetic publics around SCL?	**Identification of narratives**	Connotation	Narrative analysis (n = 30)
	RQ4. How do the identified narratives persuade?	**Assessment of persuasion**	Connotation	Narrative analysis (n = 30)

Figure 3. The completed operationalisation table of the current thesis project, which includes the research aims and Research Questions (RQs) as well as the associated steps in the research process, levels of meaning-making and methods (along with the sample sizes). (Own figure.)

4.2.1 Pre-iconographic description

The pre-iconographic description involved the first impression and the compositional analyses to identify the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's visual content (Rose, 2016). It operated in the compositional modality of the sites of the image itself (Rose, 2016). The first impression analysis assessed all visual images sourced from Aurora's Instagram (N = 222) and excluded offline visual content. It served to provide a general overview of the formats and themes of Aurora's visual communication. The categories during the first impression analysis were inductively determined, exhaustive and, apart from themes, mutually exclusive.

The compositional analysis, alongside every other method discussed in this chapter, was limited to the selected online and offline prototypes (n = 30). During the compositional analysis, I broke down the studied visual images into their constituent parts and analysed them in isolation (Imdahl, 1994), generating a broad understanding of the objects and spatial patterns attached to the images (Doerr & Milman, 2014). Besides, the analysis also recognised settings and colours as significant parts of a CMO's visual self-expression. This is due to the acknowledgement that while objects often convey explicit meanings, elements in the background provide context and space for symbolic associations (Rose, 2016). They may offer new or alternative interpretations of the images' focal points through,

for example, the atmosphere and emotions they carry. Additionally, settings and backgrounds may also reflect the collective identity of an SMO.

4.2.2 Iconographic interpretation

The second step of the research design was the iconographic interpretation. With the interpretation of the findings of the pre-iconographic description through content analysis (Mayring, 2004), this stage of the research decoded how cultural/political meanings were assigned to recurring visual features, colours or spatial arrangement. During the iconographic interpretation, I also assessed how these signs were related to each other and the accompanying text and how they potentially influenced the viewer (Bohnsack, 2009; Rose, 2016). Here, I no longer viewed the selected prototypes in isolation, enabling a denotative understanding of Aurora's visual content. The iconographic interpretation primarily concerned the sites of the visual itself in the compositional and social modalities. However, by asking questions about the images' expressive content and the positioning of human figures and the viewer, it also touched upon audiencing (Dyer, 1982b).

4.2.3 Identification of narratives

The pre-iconographical description and interpretation were useful in revealing messages and mental constructs conveyed through visual imagery (Imdahl, 1994), reflecting the first research aim of understanding Aurora's visual content. To uncover how the CMO used visuals to connect with sympathetic publics around SCL, I also performed a narrative analysis. In doing so, I first coded the prototypes for visual or textual cues about target audiences and SCL. Then, I sought problem formulations, cause attributions and solution propositions in the images and their accompanying captions. Full problem-cause-solution chains were inferred from around half of the prototypes, while the other images only revealed partial sequences. Posters and infographics tended to be rich in textual information and visual cues with specific meanings (such as pictograms), while I implied the problem-cause-solution chains of photographs from their settings and captions. Narratives were assumed when certain problems, causes and solutions were often mentioned together.

4.2.4 Assessment of persuasion

The final step involved the assessment of the persuasive content of the selected prototypes, informed by the framework of Hajdu & Fischer (2017). It included the following categories: clarity of the problem definition, verification of causes and solutions, consideration for alternatives, reinforcing factors and questioning factors. Through this step, it became possible to understand the internal structure of Aurora's visual communication and whether the CMO made any truth claims.

5 Understanding Aurora's visual content

This section elucidates the findings of the four-step visual analysis pertaining to the first research aim of this thesis (to understand the visual content of youth-led CMOs), including the pre-iconographic description (Chapter 5.1) and the iconographic interpretation (Chapter 5.2).

5.1 Description of Aurora's visual content

The pre-iconographic description was undertaken to provide insights into RQ1 ("*What are the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's visual content?*"). This chapter presents the key findings of the first impression analysis (Chapter 5.1.1) and the compositional analysis (Chapter 5.1.2).

5.1.1 Formats and themes of Aurora's visual content

Figure 4 breaks down the Instagram images of Aurora based on their format (N = 222). The first impression analysis revealed that *posters* and *infographics* were the most prevalent formats published by Aurora at the time of the data collection, accounting for 84% of the Instagram posts. These visuals mostly included event posters, humorous graphics, images of personal storytelling, news reports, flyers and educative materials. Posters and infographics heavily relied on digital graphic design and featured textual information, mostly accessible to Swedish speakers. *Photographs* took up only 10% of the corpus, despite often garnering greater reach and like counts than posters and infographics. Besides the aforementioned formats, *memes* also appeared among the analysed images, with various viral meme formats adapted to suit the CMO's needs. Memes emerged as the most popular visual content in terms of like counts. Only two images in the dataset were labelled as *logos*.

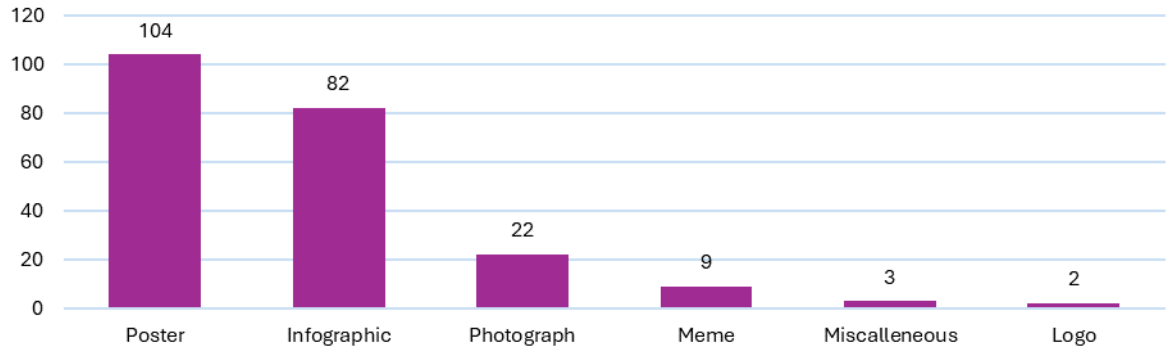


Figure 4. The breakdown of Aurora's images on Instagram according to image formats, related to RQ1 ("*What are the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's visual content?*"). The categories were inductively determined, exhaustive and mutually exclusive as a result of the first impression analysis (N = 222). The bars in the graph represent the number of posts per category. (Own figure.)

Figure 5 depicts the main themes found in Aurora's Instagram posts in the first impression analysis. The study exposed that the most common topic in the corpus was *recruitment and engagement*, constituting 23% of the images. This category also included visuals urging supporters to financially support the CMO to undertake SCL. The second most common theme among Aurora's Instagram posts, at 17%, concerned *environmental science*. These posts utilised scientific terminology, covering topics such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems. Around 15% of Aurora's visual content was related to *environmental law and SCL*. These images primarily dealt with the progress of the Aurora case and, to a lesser extent, similar lawsuits in other countries. Additionally, the analysis found that visual content providing general information *about Aurora*, showcasing *demonstrations and movement life*, discussing questions of *politics and climate change* and citing *climate justice* were also common in the corpus. The most popular visuals in terms of likes count involved the progress of the Aurora case, politics and demonstrations and climate justice (especially posts that showed solidarity towards Sámi people). However, these themes were not mutually exclusive. Instead, images often connected different topics and messages. For example, more than half of the images related in some way to SCL, even if it was not the theme assigned to them.

Overall, the first impression analysis established a general understanding of Aurora's main visual formats and prevalent themes. It showed that the CMO's visual communication was dominated by text-centred graphic designs, such as posters and infographics. It also found that although fewer in quantity, photographs and memes resonated more with Aurora's audience. The first impression analysis revealed recruitment and engagement, environmental science and environmental law and SCL as the most recurring themes in the published images. Out of these, visuals related to environmental law and SCL were particularly well-received by Aurora's sympathetic publics.

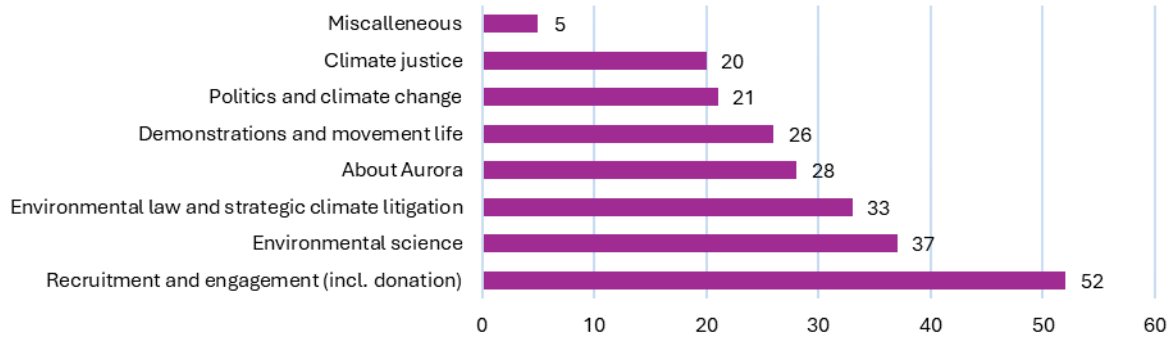


Figure 5. The breakdown of Aurora's images on Instagram according to image themes, related to RQ1 ("*What are the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's visual content?*"). The categories were inductively determined and exhaustive as a result of the first impression analysis (N = 222). The bars in the graph represent the number of posts per category. (Own figure.)

5.1.2 Recurring visual elements in Aurora's visual content

The compositional analysis identified the most recurring objects, colour choices, settings and human body depictions in the selected prototypes (n = 30). Table 2 lists these visual elements, along with their sign types (iconic, indexical or symbolic) and typical positions within formal arrangements. The most commonly depicted object in the analysed images was *Aurora's logo*. The official logo at the time of writing this analysis had remained fundamentally unchanged since September 16, 2021 (Figure 7A). It was represented in various ways in different compositions, but most typically in the margins, or blended in the background. Its two main components, the *Aurora butterfly* and *Planet Earth* appeared as independent objects as well, typically with a central position in formal arrangements.

Table 2. List of the most recurring visual elements in the formal compositions of the selected prototypes, related to RQ1 ("*What are the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's visual content?*"). The list includes objects, colour choices, settings and human subject depictions. They are also categorised as iconic, indexical or symbolic signs. The number of occurrences (in how many images they occur among the selected prototypes) and the typical positions in spatial arrangements are assigned to each identified visual element. (Own table.)

Recurring visual element	***Type of visual element***	***Type of sign***	***Number of occurrences***	***Typical position in spatial arrangements***
Aurora's logo (or the name of Aurora)	Object (logo)	Symbolic sign	22	In the margins (sometimes embedded in the background)
Protesters and activists	Human body depiction	Iconic sign	9	In the centre
Pictograms related to climate justice	Object	Indexical sign	8	In the margins
Pictograms related to environmental science and politics and climate change	Object	Indexical sign	7	In the margins
Aurora Butterfly	Object	Symbolic sign	6	In the centre
Green and blue hues	Colour	Symbolic sign	6	Background
Protest signs	Object	Symbolic sign	5	In the centre
Urban environments	Setting	Symbolic sign	5	Background
Violet hues	Colour	Symbolic sign	5	Background
Planet Earth	Object	Symbolic sign	3	In the centre
Megaphone	Object	Symbolic sign	3	In the centre
QR code	Object	Indexical sign	3	In the margins
Performers	Human subject depiction	Iconic sign	3	In the centre
Natural environments	Setting	Symbolic sign	3	Background
Stage settings	Setting	Symbolic sign	3	Background

Other commonly depicted objects included pictograms, protest signs, megaphones and QR codes. *Pictograms* were frequently coded from infographics and sometimes posters, positioned marginally as indexical signs. *Protest signs* and *megaphones* appeared centrally in images that showcased public demonstrations and the progress of the Aurora case. Whereas protest signs were typical visual features of photographs, graphical depictions of megaphones also occurred in posters. QR codes were only featured in offline materials, exclusively in a marginal position.

14 images among the selected prototypes depicted human bodies. Photographs represented human subjects as iconic signs, while only one prototype featured them graphically (Figure 8C). *Protesters and activists* and *performers* were the most commonly displayed human subjects, often positioned centrally and further highlighted with saturation. The subjects were predominantly young or young adults and female-presenting. Turning to skin colour and ability, the overwhelming majority of depicted bodies appeared white and able-bodied. The clothing styles in the images were diverse, ranging from casual to semi-formal and formal, signifying a middle-class or upper-middle-class demographic. Around half of the photographs depicted bodies in an active posture, entailing activities like marching, chanting and fist-raising. Another substantial portion of images portrayed their subjects in stationary and composed positions, raising protest signs, giving speeches and performing on a stage, among others.

I also coded the prototypes for settings and colour choices. Because the analysed photographs often depicted protest events, I found *urban environments* comprising streets and buildings as the most typical settings. A smaller proportion of the images were set in *natural environments*, marked by features like trees, bushes and the sky. Finally, I also identified *stage settings* in the visuals. While photographs showcased a diversity of settings, almost all posters and infographics featured plain unicoloured backgrounds. The most frequently used hues in graphic designs were *greens and blues*, followed by *violets*.

The compositional analysis mapped the frequently depicted visual objects of Aurora's selected online and offline images, namely Aurora's logo (including the Aurora butterfly and Planet Earth), pictograms, protest signs, megaphones and QR codes. The typical depicted human bodies were protesters, activists and performers, visualised as young, female-presenting, white, able-bodied and most likely belonging to the middle class. The showcased settings comprised urban, natural and stage scenery, while the colour choices included, above all, greens, blues and violets. However, the pre-iconographic description equates importance with high occurrence (Rose, 2016) and thus it cannot grasp the significance of visual symbols on its own.

5.2 Symbolism of Aurora's visual content

Figure 6 summarises the discussed visual symbols and matches them with the themes found in the first impression analysis, related to RQ2 ("*What is the symbolism of the identified visual elements?*"). To aid the reader in navigating this chapter, I grouped the visual cues as follows: Aurora's logo and its constituent parts (Chapter 5.2.1), pictograms (Chapter 5.2.2), activism-related symbols (Chapter 5.2.3), human bodies (Chapter 5.2.4) and background elements (Chapter 5.2.5).

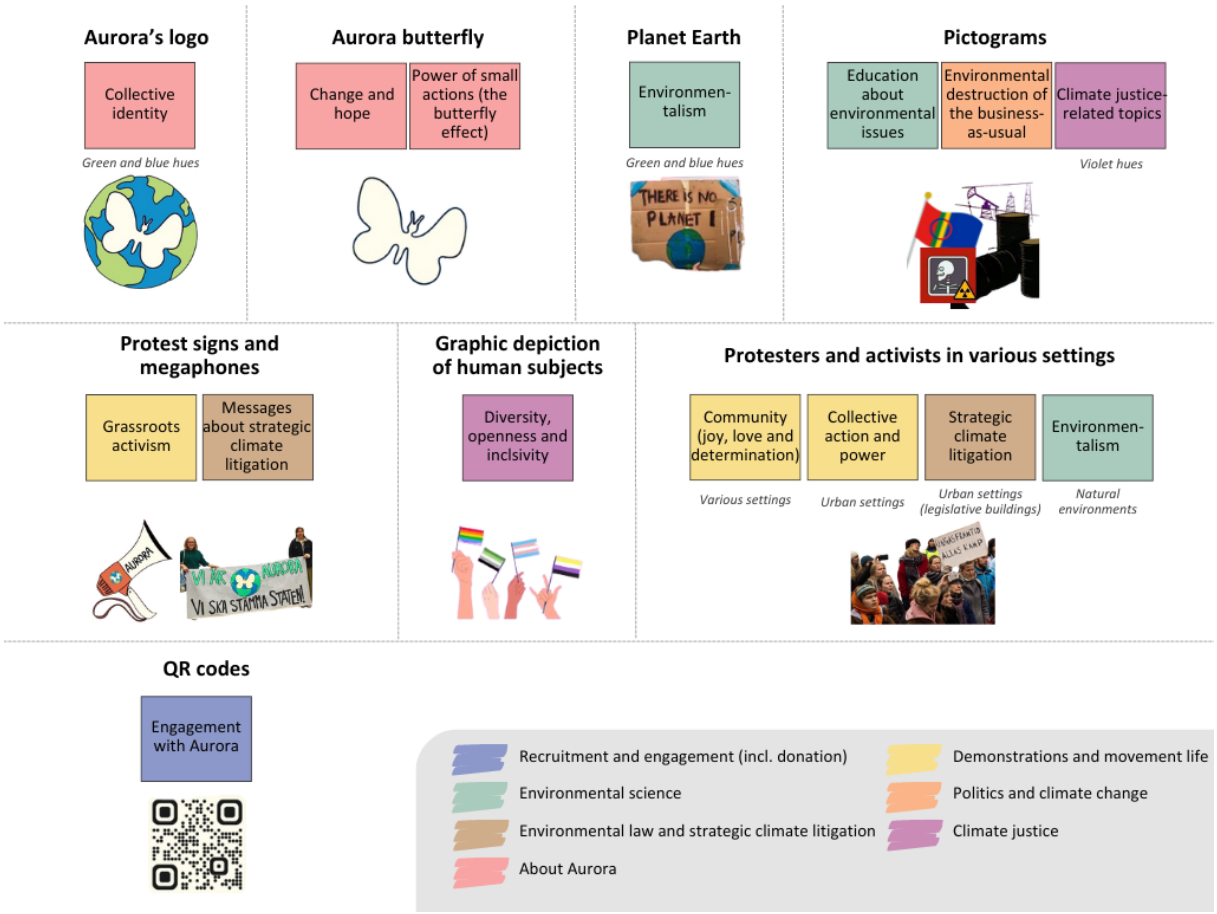


Figure 6. Summary of the findings to RQ2 ("*What symbols and compositional elements can be identified in Aurora's visual content?*"): the most important symbols (signifiers) of Aurora's visual communication and their meanings (signifieds). The meanings are paired with the themes identified in the first impression analysis. (Own figure.)

5.2.1 Symbolism of Aurora's logo

Owing to its frequency in virtually all image formats and themes, *Aurora's logo* can be seen as the CMO's most pervasive visual symbol. Its colour scheme consisted of bright shades of greens and blues, which I also revealed as the most recurring hues in graphic designs (Figure 7A). Its design was found simple and felt hand-drawn, exuding a sense of playfulness and optimism through vibrant colours and minimalism.

The logo of Aurora comprised two key visual elements: the Aurora butterfly and Planet Earth (Figure 7A). According to the caption of the Instagram post about the original logo (LOGO-01 in Annex 1), the *Aurora butterfly* was symbolic of change and hope through its wings beating. It was also intended to signify the butterfly effect, suggesting that even small actions can lead to radical changes. The prominent depiction of the Aurora butterfly in the logo, as per the accompanying text, symbolised that the movement was gaining strength, comparable to Aurora, the Greek goddess of dawn in ancient Roman mythology. While the meaning of its plain white colour remained

unexplained, it likely served to enhance its visibility against the background. The other focal point of the logo was the schematic representation of *Planet Earth*. Although its intended symbolism was not clarified, given the widespread association of Planet Earth with environmental concerns and activism, it presumably reflected Aurora's commitment to addressing global ecological challenges.

Figure 7 attests to the various ways the logo of Aurora was represented in different compositions. In Figure 7A, it occupied the image's focal point, while it was marginally positioned in Figure 7B. When embedded in the background (Figure 7C) or showcased in protest signs (Figure 7D), its pervasiveness was further emphasised. It was predominantly displayed without the name of the CMO, highlighting its role as a standalone signifier of Aurora's agenda and carrier of collective identity (cf. Kurtz, 2005). Similarly, in certain cases, the Aurora butterfly (Figure 7C) and Planet Earth (Figure 7E) were also represented on their own, indicating their potential to act as distinct symbols of Aurora.

Figure 7. Different interpretations of Aurora's logo. **A** depicts the official logo of the movement at the time of writing this paper, with a central position in the spatial arrangement. In **B**, an uncoloured version of the logo was placed in the bottom left corner. **C** serves as an example of both a poster where the logo was embedded in the background and an image where the Aurora butterflies were represented on their own. In **D**, the logo was showcased on an iconic protest sign, along with the text "*We are Aurora We Will Sue the State!*". **E** showcases Planet Earth as a standalone visual cue, detached from the logo. (By ©Auroramålet, the original images are accessible in Annex 1–2.)

5.2.2 Symbolism of pictograms

Since Aurora mainly used them to illustrate textual information or highlight the key messages of an image, the signifieds attached to pictograms were straightforward to decipher. The meanings conveyed by pictograms typically aligned with the core themes explored in first impression analysis, particularly the topics of environmental science, politics and climate change and climate justice.

The CMO mostly employed *pictograms related to environmental science and politics and climate change* with an educative aim to visually represent the environment and its destruction. This was achieved in various ways. For example, in an image series, Aurora used sixteen different pictograms to represent areas in which the climate and environmental action of the Swedish state lags, with crosses overlaid on them to emphasise the movement's objection to these harmful industries (Figure 8A). The other approach used pictograms to illustrate dystopian futures caused by business-as-usual activities, serving as a cautionary reminder of the importance of avoiding such outcomes (Figure 8B).

Figure 8. Images produced by Aurora to illustrate how pictograms were used in the visual communication of the movement. **A** depicts a cover image typical in the series where the missed environmental and climate targets of the Swedish state were represented by different pictograms. **B** displays an offline poster where environmental destruction was signified by oil wells, barrels and a barren deforested meadow. **C** depicts a cover image of an infographic about the ecological crisis and intersectionality, depicting dissociated hands of various skin colours raised in the sky holding flags of gender and sexual minorities. In **D**, Aurora's logo was surrounded by rainbows, symbolising the movement's solidarity with sexal and gender minorities. **E** stands as an example of infographics and posters, showcasing the Sámi flag as a symbol of solidarity with this specific marginalised group. (By ©Auroramålet, the original images are accessible in Annex 1–2.)

Aurora also used *pictograms related to climate justice*, including, depictions of various skin colours, flags (Figure 8C) and rainbows (Figure 8D). Based on the surrounding text, their primary function was to illustrate messages that raised awareness about the struggles and histories of oppressed groups. The Sámi people appeared as a group to which Aurora dedicated particular attention. This was signified most commonly by the depiction of the Sámi flag in graphic designs (Figure 8E). Apart from signifying solidarity, these pictograms also symbolised an inclusive environment where everyone was welcome, regardless of their cultural background and skin colour.

5.2.3 Activism-related symbols

The pre-iconographic description showed that protest scenes were pervasive in Aurora's visual content. Other signifiers of activism in the selected images included protest signs and megaphones. *Protest signs* are known as prominent symbols of activism, resistance and dissent (Luhtakallio, 2013; Molder et al., 2022; Philipps, 2012). The main function of protest signs was to communicate powerful emotions through their textual content (slogans). In the scrutinised spatial arrangements, they assumed an even more central role than the human figures, either by being positioned at the viewer's level to enhance the readability of their slogans (Figure 9A) or by physically supporting the messages with human subjects placed behind them (Figure 9B). Their slogans provided an important basis for the narrative analysis, which uncovered a variety of messages related to SCL and will be presented in Chapter 6.1.

Similar to protest signs, *megaphones* are widely recognised symbols of activism, grassroots mobilisation and advocacy. Although they appeared less commonly in the analysed images, Aurora consistently represented them as clear focal points with their vivid colours and central position. They not only appeared in photographs capturing demonstrations (Figure 9C) but also in posters detailing the progress of the Aurora case (Figure 9D), therefore, visually linking the megaphone with SCL. Additionally, in an already discussed poster (Figure 7C), the megaphone was dissociated from human subjects, with Aurora butterflies emerging from it. This image was unique in that it linked two of Aurora's oft-recurring visual elements, thereby associating activism and grassroots mobilisation (represented by the megaphone) with hope and transformation (represented by the Aurora butterfly).

Figure 9. Images taken from Aurora's Instagram to illustrate how activism-related symbols were used in the visual communication of the movement. **A** depicts a photograph taken during a protest event where protest signs were raised in the air by the protesters. **B** displays Aurora's iconic protest sign with the message "*We are Aurora We Will Sue the State!*", held by activists. **C** shows a photograph of an activist speaking through a megaphone. In **D**, the megaphone is related to the progress of the Aurora case. (By ©Auroramålet, the original images are accessible in Annex 1–2.)

5.2.4 Symbolism of human subject depictions

The pre-iconographic description found that human bodies in protest photographs were typically depicted as young, female, white, able-bodied and middle-class (Figure 10A). This portrayal mirrored the prevalent iconic representation of subjects in Aurora's visual communication and shed light on the CMO's audience (Hayes & O'Neill, 2021). In particular, it revealed an inconsistency between *graphic depictions of human bodies*, signifying solidarity and inclusivity (see Chapter 5.2.2), and the typical appearance of *protesters and activists in photographs*. Another interesting finding concerned the construction of middle-aged, upper-class individuals as the main antagonists of Aurora, as seen for instance in Figure 10D.

Depending on the context and the non-verbal communication of the human subjects depicted in the images, activists and protesters may elicit different emotions from the viewer. Photographs taken during demonstrations often conveyed a sense of authenticity and expressivity, paired with feelings of joy, love and determination (Figure 10A). Such visuals thus symbolised collective action and power. Images portraying their subjects in stationary and composed positions tended to relate to the

progress of the Aurora case or SCL in general (Figure 10B). Additionally, a few images highlighted the communal aspect of activism, by accompanying human figures with personal stories or showcasing activists in indoor settings (Figure 10C). Nonetheless, whether active or static, the subjects typically adopted a posture of confidence in the analysed images.

5.2.5 Symbolism of backgrounds

I coded urban, natural and stage environments as the most oft-recurring settings in the pre-iconographic description, whereas I found greens, blues and violets as the most typical colour choices in Aurora's imagery. Beyond such observations, the iconographic interpretation uncovered the potential symbolic meanings of these backgrounds. First, the accompanying text of the images attested that protest events featuring *urban environments* were situated in Stockholm (Figure 11A). Some photographs were specifically placed next to the Parliament House of Sweden (Riksdagshuset), a symbol of legislative power, visualising the Aurora case as a lawsuit aimed at the state (Figure 11B). Second, images set in *natural environments* implied that human-nature connectedness was integral to Aurora's visual identity (Figure 11C). Third, *stage settings* like in Figure 11D were utilised to establish a more intimate relationship with the viewer, achieved by positioning them close to the activists and at a similar eye level.

Figure 10. Images taken from Aurora's Instagram to flash various examples of how the movement depicted human bodies. **A** was chosen as an example of photographs taken in protest settings to showcase the typical audience of Aurora's demonstrations. **B** depicts two activists of the movement in a static posture. **C** displays activists in an indoor environment during a workshop. **D** represents the antagonists of Aurora in a meme format. (By ©Auroramålet, the original images are accessible in Annex 1–2.)

Considering the symbolic significance of colours, I observed *green and blue hues* to be linked with the colours of Aurora's logo, further amplifying its pervasiveness (Figure 11E). They could also potentially serve to establish a connection with other CMOs as green has become a widely associated colour of environmentalism since the late twentieth century (Sawer, 2007). *Violet hues*, on the other hand, tended to command more attention and convey stronger emotions (Figure 11F) as well as signalling a contestation of heteronormativity when paired with messages about climate justice (Sawer, 2007). As for marginal visual elements, Aurora frequently featured *QR codes* in offline posters. Categorised as indexical signs, their purpose was to guide the viewer towards engagement with the movement (Figure 11E).

Figure 11. Images produced by Aurora to illustrate the diversity of settings and backgrounds used to provide contexts and create atmospheres. **A** depicts a protest scene set in an urban environment, marked by residential buildings and streets. In the background of **B**, the Parliament House of Sweden (Riksdagshuset) can be deciphered, signalling that the Aurora case was targeted at the Swedish state. **C** depicts the board of Aurora in a natural setting, marked by green hues, trees and a pictogram of a bird. **D** shows a photograph from a community-building event, set on a stage. **E** features an offline poster, showcasing blue and green hues. **F** represents the cover image of an infographic about the insufficiency of Sweden's climate politics, dominated by a dark violet hue in the background. (By ©Auroramålet, the original images are accessible in Annex 1–2.)

6 Narratives about strategic climate litigations and their relationship with audiences

The pre-iconographic description painted an overarching picture of the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's imagery, giving a clear answer to RQ1. The subsequent iconographic interpretation pinpointed the potential meanings of these symbols, addressing RQ2. The analysis thus far demonstrated that SCL was a pervasive theme of Aurora's visual communication. Its significance was not only indicated by its high occurrence as a theme but also by the associations drawn between the representation of activism-related symbols and the iconic depiction of protesters and activists in photographs. The most explicit references to SCL included the consistent use of posters and photographs to showcase the progress of the Aurora case and report on legal cases initiated by youth plaintiffs in other parts of the world and the CMO's well-known slogans, such as "*We are Aurora. We will sue the state!*", "*Now we sue the state*" and "*Sweden's climate policy is illegal*". However, as the following discussion flashes out, SCL was tied to Aurora's visual narratives in various other ways.

This chapter presents the findings of the four-step visual analysis related to the second research aim of this study (to explore how Aurora uses visuals to engage with sympathetic publics around SCL). Chapter 6.1 displays the identified SCL-related narratives of Aurora's visuals, while Chapter 6.2 assesses their persuasive content.

6.1 Narratives and sympathetic audiences around strategic climate litigation

Pertaining to RQ3 ("*What narratives does Aurora construct through its visual content to engage sympathetic publics around SCL?*"), Figure 12 summarises the main problems, causes and solutions I identified and visualises how they form problem-cause-solution chains (narratives) in the analysed sample. It also assigns to them the visual cues discussed in Chapter 5. As seen in Figure 12, the paper found three narratives in relation to SCL in Aurora's visual communication: the ecological crisis (Chapter 6.1.1), the climate justice (Chapter 6.1.2) and the crowdfunding (Chapter 6.1.3) narratives.

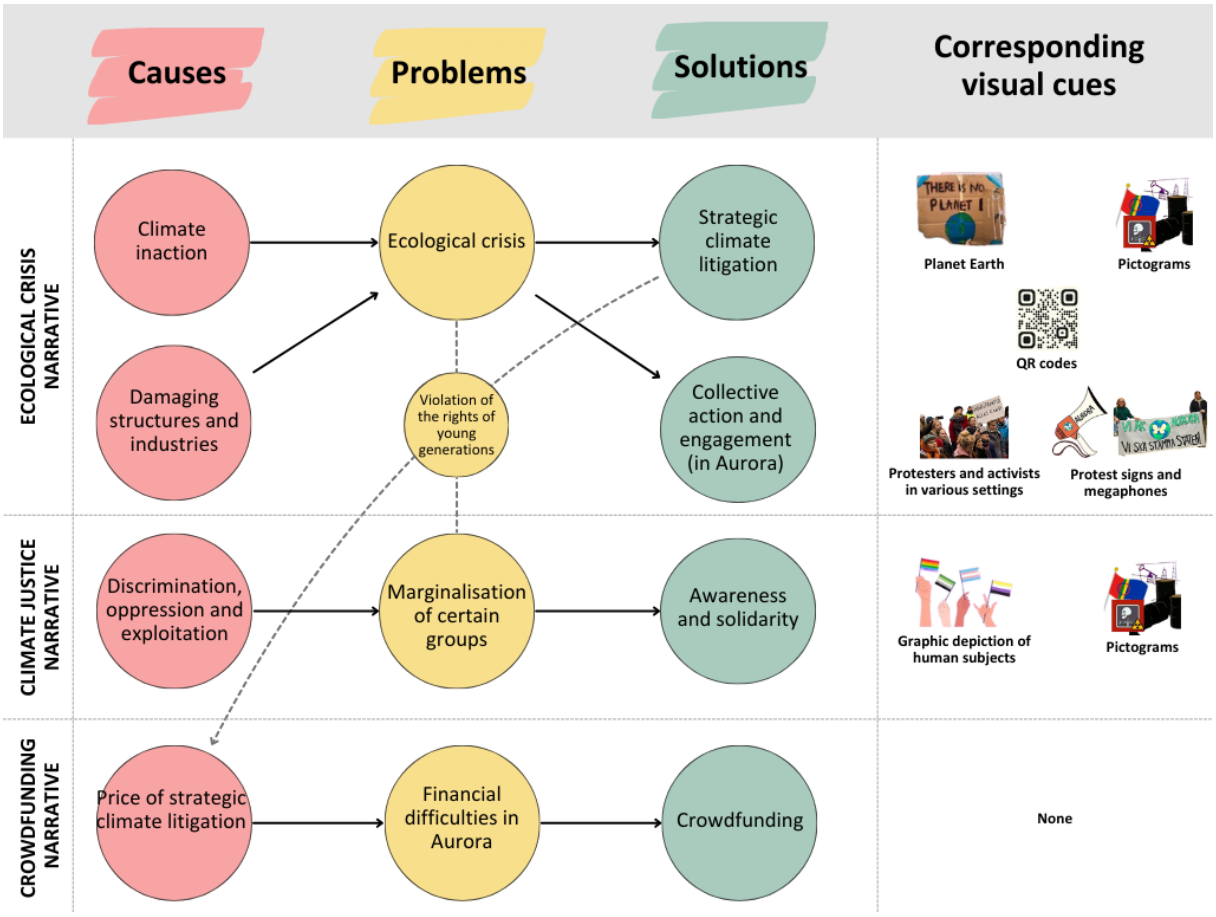


Figure 12. Summary of the findings to RQ3 ("*What narratives does Aurora construct through its visual content to engage sympathetic publics around SCL?*"): the most common problems, causes and solutions in Aurora's visual communication, as coded from the selected prototypes. The dashed lines symbolise connections between the narratives. Visual cues are matched to each problem-cause-solution chain. (Own figure.)

6.1.1 The ecological crisis narrative

The *ecological crisis* was the most frequently cited problem by Aurora, including climate change, global warming, forest and biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, among others. The CMO typically described it in scientific terms, emphasising it through the depiction of Planet Earth and certain pictograms. Additionally, the visual representations often linked the ecological crisis with its negative impacts on *the future of younger generations*.

Climate inaction was identified as the main cause of the ecological crisis, apparent in all image formats and accompanying captions. It encompassed insufficient climate policies and states' reluctance to act, with a special emphasis on Sweden and Swedish politicians. Images claiming climate inaction as a cause used a legal language of rights and responsibilities, apparent in slogans and topic sentences such as "*Do you want to hold the state accountable?*", "*Sweden's climate policy is illegal*" and "*Climate action is a legal duty!*". On top of that, the analysed images also recognised

damaging structures and industries as significant contributors to the ecological crisis. This issue was primarily represented in captions and protest signs.

The studied material discussed SCL and collective action and engagement as key solutions to the ecological crisis. *SCL* appeared most frequently, evident in all image formats, captions and protest signs. *Collective action and engagement (in Aurora)* were mostly implied through photographs of protest events and depictions of QR codes. The CMO sporadically referenced them in graphic designs and captions, mostly tailored to younger audiences to mobilise them through invitations to future public events, community-building activities and awareness-raising campaigns, among others.

The ecological crisis narrative appeared to target young people and the general public. The studied graphic designs and accompanying captions were consistent in clarifying that Aurora had primarily reached out to younger generations to participate in both the Aurora case and public forms of collective action in the name of intergenerational equity. Meanwhile, the CMO called upon its older audiences to become financial supporters. The engagement of the youth was not only sought in written text but also reinforced by visual formats and design elements, such as content in the form of memes, minimalist graphics, the depiction of predominantly young people in photographs and the portrayal of protest-related symbols and slogans. Turning to the general public, Aurora's visual content aimed to reach this group using two distinct strategies simultaneously. On the one hand, the CMO often published divisive content, such as memes, reaching greater publics through their polarising effect but, on the other hand, it established a neutral and educative tone using scientific terminology. The two approaches can be seen as complementary in that they both intended to direct the general public towards collective action and engagement in Aurora.

6.1.2 The climate justice narrative

Aurora's visual communication anchored the climate justice narrative in the formulation of the *marginalisation of certain groups* as its problem. The analysed visual material dedicated particular attention to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other identities (LGBTQIA+ communities) as well as the Sámi people where the latter was commonly associated with the degradation of living space and cultural heritage. This already implies a connection between the climate justice and the ecological crisis narratives, however, the most important link appeared to be the *violation of the rights of young generations*, which was a key message of protest signs and the CMO in general.

Aurora visually represented the climate justice narrative in pictograms and graphics of human bodies. It constructed the narrative to stem from *discrimination, oppression and exploitation*, including racism, fascism, neocolonialist appropriation, lack of acceptance against LGBTQIA+ people and the expropriation of Sámi land.

The analysed material's answer to climate justice issues was *awareness and solidarity*, encompassing education, for example, about the struggles of the Sámi or LGBTQIA+ communities, and solidarity by amplifying the voices of the marginalised through coalition-building. Thus, the content related to climate justice was tailored to the youth and the general public (similar to the ecological crisis narrative) as well as allied activist groups and marginalised communities. Allied activist groups involved CMOs such as Fridays For Future Sweden and Ta Tillbaka Framtiden, which Aurora mostly addressed via tags and co-authoring. On the other hand, the CMO typically reached out to marginalised communities through content about their predicament and its connections to the ecological crisis.

6.1.3 The crowdfunding narrative

Financial difficulties in Aurora constituted the problem formulation of the third identified problem-cause-solution chain, the crowdfunding narrative. The analysed prototypes typically attributed financial difficulties to the high *price of SCL*. To tackle them, they urged the sympathisers of the CMO to participate in *crowdfunding* activities. The image captions spelt out the forms of donation in more detail. The problem-cause-solution chain of the crowdfunding narrative almost exclusively relied on text and lacked visual reinforcement. With its focus on seeking financial support to undertake SCL, the crowdfunding narrative was clearly tailored to the potential donors of the CMO.

6.2 Assessment of persuasion

As established in the narrative analysis, SCL was deeply embedded in Aurora's visual communication. The ecological crisis narrative presented it as a key solution, leveraging both scientific and legal terminology to justify the necessity of the Aurora case. The crowdfunding narrative constructed SCL as the cause of financial difficulties in the CMO and a reason to urge followers to engage in crowdfunding activities. Although the climate justice narrative did not explicitly mention SCL in its problem-cause-solution chain, its connectedness to the ecological crisis narrative through the violation of the rights of young generations further increased the prominence of SCL as a focal point of Aurora's visual communication. The three discussed narratives, therefore, not only justified the centrality of SCL but also underscored the significance of mobilising the support of sympathetic

publics for the success of the Aurora case. To comprehend the persuasive content of these narratives, relevant to RQ4 ("*How do the identified narratives persuade?*"), I assessed their problem definition, verification mechanisms, exploration of alternatives, reinforcing factors and questioning factors (Hajdu & Fischer, 2017).

The *ecological crisis narrative* provided a clear problem definition, justified primarily through the use of scientific and legal terminology. Infographics with abundant written text served to break down the ecological crisis into well-defined concepts like climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. These sources also provided validation for climate inactivity as a cause by referencing scientific studies that established a connection between insufficient policies and the observed ecological harms. Further, the narrative effectively verified SCL as a solution by adopting legal reasoning in written text and presenting examples of both successful and failed lawsuits worldwide. Nonetheless, the problem-cause-solution chain of the ecological crisis narrative lagged in two aspects. First, it did not adequately substantiate the efficacy of collective action, which was often assumed rather than explicitly accounted for in the analysed material. Second, the narrative lacked a thorough examination of the structural character of the ecological crisis as this cause was inferred mostly from protest signs in photographs.

As the *climate justice narrative* was found to be interconnected with the ecological crisis narrative, I expected it to extend and nuance the presented problems, causes and solutions. In justifying its problem formulation and identified causes, the climate justice narrative indeed complemented scientific reasoning with moral and political arguments. The combination of both natural and social scientific research also suggested an awareness of the complexity of socio-ecological systems. However, while Aurora clearly laid out and validated the problems and causes, the proposed solutions of the narrative (awareness-raising and solidarity) lacked sufficient verification.

As discussed earlier, the *crowdfunding narrative* stood out in Aurora's visual communication. It outlined a clear problem definition resorting to instrumental reasoning, focusing on the financial implications of SCL. The verification of the problem, its causes and the proposed solutions was explicit in written text, underpinned by hints of transparency. However, the narrative showed deficiencies regarding the independent verification of the problems and solutions and the consideration of alternative ways of financing lawsuits.

In summary, Aurora's visual communication demonstrated a hierarchy of problem formulations, prioritising the ecological crisis narrative through emphasis and repetition. It depicted the scientific research about the causes of the ecological crisis as uncomplicated truth, supported by images,

which aimed to debunk so-called ‘climate myths’. I interpreted this move as a truth claim. While the CMO openly expressed its ethical/political convictions and acknowledged the existence of alternative narratives, it did not extensively address them or explore the potential negative effects of its proposed solutions.

7 Concluding discussion

The present thesis was the first empirical study in the literature that explored the visual communication of contemporary youth-led CMOs undertaking SCL vis-à-vis sympathetic audiences. It had the dual aim of comprehending the formats, themes and symbolism of recurring elements of Aurora's visual communication and unpacking what narratives the CMO constructed to engage with sympathetic publics around SCL. Anchored in critical visual studies, it drew on Panofsky's (1955) iconographic method, complemented with narrative analysis, and collected graphic designs and photographs through online and offline means. The thesis provided a comprehensive analysis of Aurora's visual communication, fulfilling RQ1 and RQ2. It also linked the identified imagery with SCL by demonstrating its centrality in three pervasive narratives of the CMO, addressing RQ3. Lastly, it assessed the strengths and deficiencies of the persuasive content of the SCL-related narratives, answering RQ4.

This chapter provides reflexive notes in two parts. Chapter 7.1 summarises the analysis's key findings and discusses their relevance with respect to the academic literature. Chapter 7.2 evaluates the performed analysis from a methodological viewpoint and outlines future research directions.

7.1 Key contributions

Thanks to the novelty of its scope, the thesis produced knowledge relevant to the scholarly literature about the role of visuality, SCL and audiences within social movement scholarship. First, it enriched our understanding of the place of SCL within the visual self-expression of SMOs. This was achieved by showcasing an example of the successful integration of SCL with the visual symbolism of contemporary youth-led climate activism. Although the study demonstrated the significance of SCL in Aurora's visual communication through the identification of narratives, it found a lack of direct visual representations of legal topics in the analysed material. Instead, I showed that the three SCL-related narratives were intertwined with symbols of transformation and hope (Aurora butterfly), environmentalism (Planet Earth), grassroots mobilisation (activism-related symbols), the politics of climate change and climate justice (pictograms), aligning with the visuality of contemporary youth-led CMOs (Molder et al., 2022; Olesen, 2022; Shim, 2023).

Second, the paper furthered our knowledge about the most common frames employed by contemporary youth-led CMOs. Although situated in critical visual studies, its findings are translatable to the language of framing theories. For example, the climate crisis narrative can be

dissected into two diagnostic frames (climate inaction and damaging structures and industries), two prognostic frames (SCL and collective action and engagement) and a motivational frame (pointing at the power of small actions represented by the Aurora butterfly) (Lindekilde, 2014; Snow et al., 1986). It is also noteworthy that the current analysis paralleled previous accounts of the framing practices of contemporary youth-led CMOs in finding the frames of hope, transformation and opportunity to be significant in Aurora's visual communication (Molder et al., 2022).

Third, the thesis contributed to scholarly discussions regarding the audience of contemporary youth-led CMOs, tied into broader debates about the emancipatory potential of these actors. In line with the literature, the analysis revealed a consistent portrayal of groups of young, female, white and middle-class activists in various settings, showcasing people acting together as a 'collective body' (Doerr & Teune, 2012; Luhtakallio, 2013; Neumayer & Rossi, 2018; Shim, 2023). Others have argued that the depiction of young female bodies in protest settings serves an emancipatory potential (Hayes & O'Neill, 2021; Molder et al., 2022). At the same time, Shim (2023) calls upon the dangers of the prominent representation of white middle-class subjects and urban environments as it may bracket the North-South and urban-rural dynamics of climate justice, excluding people of colour and rural populations from the movement. While this insight resonates with decolonial critiques of contemporary CMOs (cf. Zantvoort, 2021), the present thesis revealed cues in Aurora's visual communication, which demonstrated Aurora's conscious effort to be inclusive of individuals from diverse sociocultural backgrounds.

Fourth, consistent with the normative standpoint of this thesis, the study produced valuable insights that can help Aurora reach sympathetic publics with SCL-related visual content. The assessment of persuasion demonstrated that the strength of Aurora's narratives lies in their clear problem definitions, verification mechanisms and acknowledgements of moral/political convictions. It also pointed out deficiencies in the identified visual narratives, indicating domains of improvement. Firstly, it is essential to more thoroughly validate the necessity of the solutions of *collective action and engagement (in Aurora)* and *awareness and solidarity*. This can be achieved by systematically exploring other potential solutions and showing how educative content, for instance, produces better outcomes for marginalised communities than its alternatives. Furthermore, insofar as the ecological crisis and the climate justice narratives are shown to be interconnected, providing a more profound understanding of underlying structural configurations and power relations could help Aurora better define its political position relative to other SMOs. It would also assist the movement in amplifying the voices of disenfranchised groups, disproportionately affected by unjust structures.

In sum, the thesis furthered the field of social movement scholarship by providing novel insights into the role of SCL and audiences regarding the visuality and framing practices of SMOs. By revealing that Aurora's key messages about SCL were embedded in broader visual narratives of the ecological crisis and climate justice, the paper underscored the importance of SCL's additional benefits beyond immediate legal gains, such as awareness-raising, climate change communication, scientific literacy and moral pressure (Averill, 2008; Calzadilla, 2019; Hunter, 2009; Osofsky, 2010). The findings thus contributed to our understanding of the ever-increasing and expanding role of courts as agents of change towards sustainable outcomes. On top of that, the thesis provided a list of domains in which Aurora can improve its visual communication with respect to SCL and sympathetic publics, fulfilling its normative goal of assisting CMOs in creating visual content that supports their overarching aims. In this way, the paper demonstrated its relevance to sustainability science.

7.2 Limitations and future research directions

The four-step visual analysis presented in this thesis constituted the first attempt in the literature to complement Panofsky's (1955) iconographic method with a narrative analysis. The data analysis drew on a diversity of methods to increase replicability, representativity and rigour and develop a comprehensive coding framework (Annex 3–6), encompassing various sites and forms of visual self-expression (Doerr & Milman, 2014; Doerr & Teune, 2012; Rose, 2016). Furthermore, the incorporation of the first impression analysis to select prototypes significantly enhanced the replicability of the sampling procedure (Müller-Doohm, 1997). The main limitations of the research design involved decisions about the sites and modalities of visuality, the definition of visuals, the choice of methodology and biases arising from my positionality.

The first shortcoming of the thesis lies in its almost exclusionary focus on the compositional modality. While I devised the coding framework to incorporate the social modality of the sites of production, the image itself and audiencing, the study's findings regarding the creators and the audiences of Aurora's visual content were limited due to the absence of direct interaction with these groups. To better understand the visual context, ie. how image producers utilise shared meanings, social identities and knowledges, Doerr & Milman (2014) and others (Baran & Stoltenberg, 2023; Neumayer & Rossi, 2016) recommend triangulating visual analysis with methods such as interviews, surveys and ethnography. Practitioners of audience studies urge the incorporation of similar methods in comprehending the processes through which different audiences renegotiate or reject the meanings of visuals (Rose, 2016, p. 38). While the initial intention of this research was to conduct semi-structured interviews with the creators of Aurora's images, the arrangement of the interviews did

not go as planned. Thus, despite attempts, the thesis failed to truly transcend disciplinary boundaries (see Lang et al., 2012).

The second deficiency of the research design entails the inclusion/exclusion criteria of the data collection procedure, stemming from the established definition of visuals. The paper defined visuals narrowly, focusing on graphic designs and photographs. It thus excluded formats like videos, material objects and performative aesthetics (Doerr & Teune, 2012; Mitchell, 2011). However, the coding framework allowed for the careful analysis of objects, colours, spatial patterns and human subject depictions as distinct features of the analysed images.

This leads to the third limitation relevant to this discussion, namely the question of breadth versus depth in qualitative research. Underpinned by semiotics' in-depth interpretative character, iconography presents a method typically associated with small sample sizes. To counterbalance the representativity deficit of iconographic approaches, I selected a larger number of prototypes (n = 30) compared to related empirical inquiries (Gaufman, 2021; Howell, 2017; Kurtz, 2005; Philipps, 2012). This choice has allowed for greater representativity, albeit with the associated weakness of offering a more superficial analysis of the individual images (Panofsky, 1955).

Finally, following the literature on critical visual studies (Doerr & Milman, 2014; Mitchell, 2011; Rose, 2016), I aimed to maintain self-reflexivity concerning my positionality throughout the research process. Despite efforts to lay bare the rationale behind all major decisions, biases rooted in my normative position inevitably influenced every aspect of the study, from scoping the research problem and choosing methods to interpreting and synthesising the data. Notable ethical concerns did not arise during the thesis project, given that it used analysed and disseminated publicly available images (Mitchell, 2011; Rose, 2016). The interviews that I initially planned to conduct were designed to fulfil the principles of anonymity, confidentiality, the right to privacy and informed consent (Knott et al., 2022).

Future research directions involve the exploration of the production and circulation of Aurora's visual images by triangulating the findings of this thesis with interviews and social media analysis (cf. Neumayer & Rossi, 2018). The inclusion of methods like interviews could sharpen the transdisciplinary edge of the research, highlighting the 'active' role of the analyst as a partner of the 'studied' SMOs in developing "*a contextually bound and mutually-created story*" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 696). In addition, conducting comparative studies involving other youth-led CMOs that undertake SCL is also crucial for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the visual imagery of contemporary climate activism, so as to study how Aurora and similar movements are portrayed

by external actors, including antagonistic publics. Lastly, beyond questions of visual self-expression and representations, investigating the (in)visibility SMOs involved with SCL could offer valuable insights into the discursive dimension of the success of these campaigns. The potential target audiences of this and future work include social movement scholars, practitioners of related social scientific disciplines engaged in visual research as well as social movement actors seeking to better understand their own imagery and how visuals can 'assist' them in reaching their overarching goals.

8 Annexes

Annex 1. The final prototypes selected in the sampling process of this study. Two rounds of prototyping were conducted with a one-month interval between them, resulting in the selection of 25 online and five offline images. The table presents the final 30 prototypes of this thesis, along with their format, theme and language of embedded text (coded during the first impression analysis). A column called "*Justification for selecting*" was added to provide transparency on why each image was chosen as a final prototype. (Own table.)

Image code (with hyperlink)	Format	Theme of image	Language of the text in the image	Likes count	Publish date	Justification for selecting
LOGO-01	Logo	About Aurora	*N/A*	138	September 16, 2021	Logo
LOGO-02	Logo	Climate justice	*N/A*	219	August 5, 2023	Logo
PHOTO-01	Photograph	Demonstrations and movement life	*N/A*	188	January 25, 2023	Photograph from banners
PHOTO-02	Photograph collection	Demonstrations and movement life	*N/A*	775	June 10, 2023	Well-liked, photographs from movement life (Aurorafest)
PHOTO-03	Photograph	About Aurora	*N/A*	128	September 22, 2021	Represents well images of the faces behind Aurora
PHOTO-04	Photograph	Environmental law and Strategic Climate Litigation (SCL)	*N/A*	1 891	March 21, 2023	Most-liked image of this category; text-free
PHOTO-05	Photograph	Demonstrations and movement life	*N/A*	501	September 26, 2021	Well-liked, foundational photo
PHOTO-06	Photograph	Demonstrations and movement life	*N/A*	941	December 28, 2022	Well-liked, photographs from the protest
PHOTO-07	Photograph collection	Demonstrations and movement life	*N/A*	2 071	November 26, 2022	Well-liked, photographs from the protest
PHOTO-08	Photograph collection	Demonstrations and movement life	*N/A*	647	September 23, 2023	Recent; text-free photo collection of various aspects of movement life; well-liked; about the Week of Action
TEXT-01	Meme	Politics and climate change	English	1 212	April 7, 2023	Represents memes about climate politics, most-liked in its category, relatively recent
TEXT-02	Poster	Demonstrations and movement life	Swedish	293	May 17, 2023	The image about movement life (Aurorafest), a well-liked, relatively recent
TEXT-03	Meme	Recruitment and engagement	English	559	October 25, 2023	Most-liked in this category, it seems memes work when asking for donations
TEXT-04	Infographic	Environmental science	Swedish	226	July 2, 2023	Represents infographics about the ecosystem, well-liked in the category, co-produced
TEXT-05	Poster	Politics and climate change	Swedish	1 023	December 3, 2022	Creative; well-liked; about the scientific state of the climate

TEXT-06	Infographic	About Aurora	Swedish	405	August 27, 2022	Well-liked; represents well a type of post, which aims at introducing the people behind Aurora
TEXT-07	Infographic	Politics and climate change	Swedish	303	January 14, 2023	Represents a series about Sweden's missed environmental goals, relatively recent
TEXT-08	Poster	Progress of the Aurora case	Swedish	1 704	December 7, 2022	Most-liked in this category, appeal to science
TEXT-09	Poster	Recruitment and engagement	Swedish, English	368	July 8, 2023	Well-liked, very colourful poster design, relatively recent
TEXT-10	Infographic	Climate justice	Swedish	360	June 17, 2023	Represents the image series about intersectionality and climate change, an image that received the greatest number of comments in comparison to its likes count
TEXT-11	Infographic	Climate justice	Swedish, Sámi	1 823	February 6, 2023	A well-liked, good example of coalition building, relatively recent
TEXT-12	Infographic	Recruitment and engagement	Swedish	608	January 5, 2023	Most-liked image from this category; represents an Instagram "campaign" whereby Aurora attempted to engage their audience online with content about books and movies (this type of content seems to attract attention)
TEXT-13	Poster	Demonstrations and movement life	Swedish	23 516	November 15, 2022	The most-liked visual of Aurora; a good example of a protest poster; co-authored by Greta Thunberg
TEXT-14	Poster	Environmental law and SCL	English	731	October 4, 2023	Well-liked, good example of a poster design, represents a series (examples of other SCL cases), very recent
TEXT-15	Poster	Environmental law and SCL	English	1 221	June 26, 2023	Post about the most recent progress of the Aurora case; well-liked
OFFLINE-01*	Offline	*N/A*	Swedish	*N/A*	*N/A*	An image uploaded to Instagram with the explicit aim of spreading it as a poster in schools
OFFLINE-02*	Offline	*N/A*	Swedish	*N/A*	*N/A*	The iconic "Nu stämmer vi staten" banner
OFFLINE-03*	Offline	*N/A*	Swedish	*N/A*	*N/A*	The iconic "Vi ska stämma staten" banner
OFFLINE-04*	Offline	*N/A*	Swedish	*N/A*	*N/A*	Image shared by a member of Aurora
OFFLINE-05*	Offline	*N/A*	Swedish	*N/A*	*N/A*	Image shared by a member of Aurora

** The offline images analysed in this study are found in Annex 2.*

Annex 2. The offline prototypes analysed in this study. Images coded as OFFLINE-01, OFFLINE-02 and OFFLINE-03 were acquired by contacting members of Aurora via email. Images coded as OFFLINE-04 and OFFLINE-05 are recognised as the two most iconic protest signs of Aurora and were cropped from online photographs. (By ©Auroramålet, acquired through personal communication.)

Image code: OFFLINE-01

Image code: OFFLINE-04

Image code: OFFLINE-05

Image code: OFFLINE-02

Image code: OFFLINE-03

Annex 3. The code book for performing the pre-iconographic description, addressing Research Question (RQ) 1 ("*What are the main formats, themes and recurring visual elements of Aurora's visual content?*"). The guiding questions are classified according to their corresponding image property. The sources of theoretical inspiration are also matched with the questions. (Own table.)

Guiding question for coding	***Property of the image***	***Theoretical underpinning***	***Comments***
What is the format of the image?*	First impression	Müller-Doohm's (1997) structural-hermeneutic interpretation	None
What is the theme of the image?*			
Is there written text embedded in the image? If yes, what is its language?*			
What/who is displayed in the image?	Objects	Doerr & Milman's (2014) iconographic description	
Is the image part of a series? Which one?			
What hues does the image operate with?	Colour	Compositional analysis as introduced by Rose (2016)	
What is the saturation of the image?			
What is the value of the colours in the image?			
How is the text in the image formatted (font, colour, style, size, effects)?	Typography		Only applicable for text-centred images
What/who is in the centre of the image?	Spatial organisation	Doerr & Milman's (2014) iconographic description and compositional analysis as introduced by Rose (2016)	None
What/who is in the margins of the image?			
What is the background/setting of the image?			
How do elements in the foreground and background relate to one another in the image?			
Which elements are visual and which are textual in the design?			Only applicable for text-centred images
How do the textual and visual elements compare to each other?			
What does the age of the subjects appear to be in the image?	Positioning of human figures	Dyer's (1982b) iconographic analysis for interpreting non-verbal communication	Only applicable to photographs
What does the sex/gender representation of subjects appear to be in the image?			
What does the skin colour of the subjects appear to be in the image?			
How are the bodies depicted in the image?			
What is the clothing style of the subjects in the image?			
What emotions do the subjects in the image express?			
How can the pose of the subjects in the image be described?			
What are the subjects in the image doing?			
How far is the viewer positioned from the image?			

Annex 4. The code book for performing the iconographic interpretation, addressing Research Question (RQ) 2 ("*What is the symbolism of the identified visual elements?*"). The guiding questions are classified according to their corresponding image property. The sources of theoretical inspiration are also matched with the questions. (Own table.)

Guiding question for coding	***Property of the image***	***Theoretical underpinning***	***Comments***
What are the key messages of the image?	Content	Müller-Doohm's (1997) structural-hermeneutic interpretation	None
How does the image "feel"? What is its atmosphere like?	Expressive content	Compositional analysis as introduced by Rose (2016)	None
Does the image build on certain emotions to take its effect?			
What elements create the atmosphere of the image? How?			
Based on its expressive content, what could be the genre of the image?			This serves to nuance the question of formats
What is the content of the image's caption?	Caption		Not applicable for offline images
How does the caption's content relate to the image's key messages?	Image-caption relationship	Intertextuality is important both in semiotics and discourse analysis (Rose, 2016)	
How does the caption's tone relate to the image's "feel"?			
Are colours used to stress certain elements of the image? Which ones and how?	Colour	Compositional analysis as introduced by Rose (2016)	None
Is typography used to stress certain messages?	Typography		Only applicable for text-centred images
Is spatial organisation used to stress certain elements of the image? Which ones and how?	Spatial organisation		None
From what angle does the viewer see the image?	Position of the viewer		Only applicable to photographs
How far is the viewer positioned from the image?			
What relationship does the image build with the viewer?			
What visual symbols can be seen in the image?	Visual symbols	The call of Doerr et al. (2013) to focus more on the use of visual symbols. Relationships between images are stressed in discourse analysis (Rose, 2016).	None
What could these symbols potentially signify?			
Are there any visual symbols in common with this image and other images? Which ones?			
Is composition used to establish a connection between the image and other images? How?			
Are there any differences between this image and the others? What are they?			

Annex 5. The code book for performing identification of narratives, addressing Research Question (RQ) 3 ("*What narratives does Aurora construct through its visual content to engage sympathetic publics around Strategic Climate Litigation?*"). The guiding questions are categorised according to the information they aim to harness. The sources of theoretical inspiration are also matched with the questions. (Own table.)

Guiding question for coding	***Category***	***Theoretical underpinning***	***Comments***
Does the image address a problem? How does it define the problem?	Narratives about SCL	Hajdu & Fischer's (2017) framework, based on Bacchi's (2009) '*what's the problem represented to be?*' (WPR) approach.	None
What cause(s) does the image attribute to the identified problem? Who/what does it blame?			
What solution(s) does the image offer to address the identified problem?			
Who does the image speak to? Does the image aim to engage with a certain group? How?	SCL and audiences	Connection to research aims	None
Does the image's content address Strategic Climate Litigation (SCL)? How?			
Does the caption address a problem? How does it define the problem?	Narratives	Hajdu & Fischer's (2017) framework, based on Bacchi's (2009) WPR approach.	Not applicable for offline images
What cause(s) does the caption attribute to the identified problem? Who/what does it blame?			
What solution(s) does the caption offer to address the identified problem?			
Who does the caption speak to? Does the caption aim to engage with a certain group? How?	Narratives about SCL	Connection to research aims	Not applicable for offline images
Does the caption of the image address SCL? How?			

Annex 6. The code book for performing the assessment of persuasion, addressing Research Question (RQ) 4 ("*How do the identified narratives persuade?*"). The guiding questions were taken from Hajdu & Fischer's (2017) framework, which is based on Bacchi's (2009) '*what's the problem represented to be?*' approach. The guiding questions are classified according to what aspect of persuasion they relate to. (Own table.)

Guiding question for coding	***Aspect of persuasion***	***Comments***
In what ways and how clearly does the narrative define its problem?	Problem definition	None
In what ways does the narrative verify the causes of its problem?	Verification mechanisms	None
In what ways does the narrative verify its proposed solutions?		
Has the proposed solution been shown to work previously? If yes, is it analysed how the current context differs from that one? Are there previous failures in other places not included in the narrative?		
Have the identified problems and solutions been independently verified?		
Does the narrative define a diverse range of problems? How open is it to discuss different problem definitions?	Openness to alternatives	None
Does the narrative present its problem formulation as uncomplicated truth? Does it make truth claims?	Reinforcing factors	None
How often are more dominant problem formulations repeated in Aurora's visual communication?		
Are the solutions of Aurora linked to other positive outcomes?		
Does Aurora appeal to supporting discourses? Which ones?		
Does Aurora discuss its underlying motives?	Questioning factors	None
Does Aurora recognise that other narratives also exist?		
Are potential negative consequences of the solutions also discussed?		
Does Aurora cite counter-narratives or discourses?		

9 References

Adams, J. (2002). Art in Social Movements: Shantytown Women's Protest in Pinochet's Chile. *Sociological Forum*, *17*(1), 21–56. http://www.jstor.org/stable/685086

Albert, M. (2023). Climate emergency and securitization politics: towards a climate politics of the extraordinary. *Globalizations*, *20*(4), 533–547. https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2022.2117501

Apify. (2019). *Instagram Scraper [Computer software]*. https://apify.com/apify/instagram-scraper

Averill, M. (2008). Climate litigation: Ethical implications and societal impacts. *Denver University Law Review*, *85*(4), 899–918. https://digitalcommons.du.edu/dlr/vol85/iss4/8/

Bacchi, C. (2009). Introducing a 'what's the problem represented to be?' approach to policy analysis. In C. Bacchi (Ed.), *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?* (pp. 1–25). Pearson Australia. 9780733985751

Baran, Z., & Stoltenberg, D. (2023). Tracing the Emergent Field of Digital Environmental and Climate Activism Research: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Literature Review. *Environmental Communication*, *17*(5), 453–468. https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2023.2212137

Barthes, R. (1985). *L'Aventure sémiologique*. Éditions du Seuil. 2757854305

Batros, B., & Khan, T. (2020). Thinking Strategically About Climate Litigation. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3564313

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2011). Digital media and the personalization of collective action: Social technology and the organization of protests against the global economic crisis. *Information Communication and Society*, *14*(6), 770–799. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2011.579141

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2013). *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press. 9781107025745

Blee, K., & McDowell, A. (2012). Social Movement Audiences. *Sociological Forum*, *27*(1), 1–20. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41330911

Bohnsack, R. (2009). The Interpretation of Pictures and the Documentary Method. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, *34*(2 (128)), 296–321. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20762367

Buhre, F. (2023). Child Figurations in Youth Climate Justice Activism: The Visual Rhetoric of the Fridays for Future on Instagram. In B. Sandin, J. Josefsson, K. Hanson, & S. Balagopalan (Eds.), *The Politics of Children's Rights and Representation* (pp. 251–274). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04480-9

Calzadilla, P. V. (2019). Climate Change Litigation: A Powerful Strategy for Enhancing Climate Change Communication. In W. L. Filho, B. Lackner, & H. McGhie (Eds.), *Addressing the Challenges in Communicating Climate Change Across Various Audiences* (pp. 231–246). Springer. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98294-6

Casas, A., & Williams, N. W. (2019). Images that Matter: Online Protests and the Mobilizing Role of Pictures. *Political Research Quarterly*, *72*(2), 360–375. https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912918786805

Chesters, G., & Welsh, I. (2004). Rebel colours: 'Framing' in global social movements. *Sociological Review*, *52*(3), 314–335. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954x.2004.00482.x

Neubauer, et al. v. Germany, (2020). Climate Change Litigation Databases. Retrieved May 12, 2024, from https://climatecasechart.com/non-us-case/neubauer-et-al-v-germany/

Sharma and others v. Minister for the Environment, (2020). Climate Change Litigation Databases. Retrieved May 12, 2024, from https://climatecasechart.com/non-us-case/raj-seppings-v-ley/

Anton Foley and others v. Sweden, (2022). Climate Change Litigation Databases. Retrieved May 12, 2024, from https://climatecasechart.com/non-us-case/anton-foley-and-others-v-sweden-aurora-case/

Children of Austria v. Austria, (2023). Climate Change Litigation Databases. Retrieved May 12, 2024, from https://climatecasechart.com/non-us-case/children-of-austria-v-austria/

Coombs, G. (2020). It's (Red) Hot Outside! The Aesthetics of Climate Change Activists Extinction Rebellion. *The Journal of Public Space*, *5*(Vol. 5 n. 4), 123–136. https://doi.org/10.32891/jps.v5i4.1407

Dagens Nyheter. (2022, November 28). *Nu stämmer de svenska staten för bristande miljöpolitik ["Now they are suing the Swedish state for a lack of environmental policy"]*. Dagens Nyheter. Retrieved May 12, 2024, from https://www.dn.se/sverige/nu-stammer-de-svenska-staten-for-bristande-miljopolitik/

Daphi, P., Lê, A., & Ullrich, P. (2013). Images of surveillance: The contested and embedded visual language of anti-surveillance protests. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, *35*,

55–80. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X(2013)0000035007

de Moor, J., De Vydt, M., Wahlström, M., & Uba, K. (2021). New kids on the block: taking stock of the recent cycle of climate activism. *Social Movement Studies*, *20*(5), 619–625. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1836617

Delicath, J. W., & Deluca, K. M. (2003). Image events, the public sphere, and argumentative practice: The case of radical environmental groups. *Argumentation*, *17*(3), 315–333. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025179019397

della Porta, D. (2013). What we can do with Visual Analysis in Social Movement Studies: Some (Self) Reflections. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, *35*, 137–144. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X(2013)0000035010

Doerr, N., Mattoni, A., & Teune, S. (2013). Toward a Visual Analysis of Social Movements, Conflict, and Political Mobilization. In N. Doerr, A. Mattoni, & S. Teune (Eds.), *Advances in the Visual Analysis of Social Movements: Volume 35* (pp. xi–xxvi). Emerald Group Publishing LimitEd. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X(2013)0000035004

Doerr, N., & Milman, N. (2014). Working with images. In D. della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* (pp. 418–445). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198719571.001.0001

Doerr, N., & Teune, S. (2012). The Imagery of Power Facing the Power of Imagery: Toward a Visual Analysis of Social Movements. In K. Fahlenbrach, M. Klimke, J. Scharloth, & L. Wong (Eds.), *The Establishment Responds* (pp. 43–55). Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230119833_4

Doherty, B., de Moor, J., & Hayes, G. (2018, November 27). *The 'new' climate politics of Extinction Rebellion?* Open Democracy. Retrieved May 12, 2024, from https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/new-climate-politics-of-extinction-rebellion/

Donger, E. (2022). Children and Youth in Strategic Climate Litigation: Advancing Rights through Legal Argument and Legal Mobilization. *Transnational Environmental Law*, *11*(2), 263–289. https://doi.org/10.1017/s2047102522000218

Dyer, G. (1982a). Semiotics and Ideology. In G. Dyer (Ed.), *Advertising As Communication* (pp. 91–110). Routledge. 0203158342

Dyer, G. (1982b). What Do Advertisements Mean? In G. Dyer (Ed.), *Advertising As Communication* (pp. 69–90). Routledge. 0203158342

Edling, I., & Malm Rath, D. (2023). *Sue the state? – An introduction to climate justice, Aurora and the role of law in climate transformations [Lecture]*. Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, *43*(4), 51–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Eyerman, R. (2005). How social movements move. In H. Flam & D. King (Eds.), *Emotions and Social Movements* (pp. 41–56). Routledge. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203013526

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2005). The Interview. From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd Ed., pp. 695–728). SAGE Publications Inc.

Foster, H. (1988). Preface. In H. Foster (Ed.), *Vision and Visuality* (2nd Ed., pp. ix–xiv). Bay Press. 0941920100

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language*. Pantheon Books. 0394711068

Gamson, W. A., & Meyer, D. S. (1996). Culture, ideology, and strategic framing. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & N. Z. Mayer (Eds.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (pp. 261–274). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987

Gaufman, E. (2021). The gendered iconography of the Belarus protest. *New Perspectives*, *29*(1), 80–89. https://doi.org/10.1177/2336825X20984334

Geise, S., Panke, D., & Heck, A. (2021). Still Images—Moving People? How Media Images of Protest Issues and Movements Influence Participatory Intentions. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, *26*(1), 92–118. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161220968534

Grabe, M. E., & Bucy, E. P. (2009). *Image Bite Politics: News and the Visual Framing of Elections*. Oxford University Presss. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195372076.001.0001

Hajdu, F., & Fischer, K. (2017). Problems, causes and solutions in the forest carbon discourse: a framework for analysing degradation narratives. *Climate and Development*, *9*(6), 537–547. https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2016.1174663

Hall, S. (1973). *Encoding and Decoding in the television discourse* [Discussion paper] (CCCS selected working papers. Vol. 2). University of Birmingham. x http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/2962/

Harteveld, E. (2021). Ticking all the boxes? A comparative study of social sorting and affective

polarization. *Electoral Studies*, *72,* 102337. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102337

Hayes, S., & O'Neill, S. (2021). The Greta effect: Visualising climate protest in UK media and the Getty images collections. *Global Environmental Change*, *71*, 102392, 959–3780. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102392

Heyes, C. J. (2010). Subjectivity and power. In D. Taylor (Ed.), *Michel Foucault. Key Concepts* (pp. 159–172). Acumen Publishing. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/UPO9781844654734

Howell, J. (2017). *Representations of Resistance: Ironic Iconography in a Southern Mexican Social Movement*. In S. H. Awad & B. Wagoner (Eds.), *Street Art of Resistance* (pp. 277–300). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63330-5_12

Hunter, D. B. (2009). The Implications of Climate Change Litigation: Litigation for International Environmental Law-Making. In W. C. G. Burns & H. M. Osofsky (Eds.), *Adjudicating Climate Change* (No. 2008-14; pp. 357–374). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511596766.018

Imdahl, M. (1994). Ikonik. Bilder und ihre Anschauung. In G. Boehm (Ed.), *Was ist ein Bild?* (pp. 300–324). Brill | Fink. 9783770529209

Knott, E., Rao, A. H., Summers, K., & Teeger, C. (2022). Interviews in the social sciences. *Nature Reviews Methods Primers*, *2*, 73. https://doi.org/10.1038/s43586-022-00150-6

Kurtz, H. E. (2005). Reflections on the iconography of environmental justice activism. *Area*, *37*(1), 79–88. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2005.00610.x

Lang, D. J., Wiek, A., Bergmann, M., Stauffacher, M., Martens, P., Moll, P., Swilling, M., & Thomas, C. J. (2012). Transdisciplinary research in sustainability science: practice, principles, and challenges. *Sustainability Science*, *7*(1), 25–43. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-011-0149-x

Lazarus, R. J. (2009). Super wicked problems and climate change: Restraining the present to liberate the future. *Cornell Law Review*, *94*(5), 1153–1233. https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/clr/vol94/iss5/8/

Levin, K., Cashore, B., Bernstein, S., & Auld, G. (2009). Playing it forward: Path dependency, progressive incrementalism, and the 'Super Wicked' problem of global climate change. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, *6*(50), 502002. https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1307/6/0/502002

Lindekilde, L. (2014). Discourse and Frame Analysis. In-Depth Analysis of Qualitative Data in Social Movement Research. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological Practices in Social Movement*

Research (pp. 195–227). Oxford University Press. 9780198719571

Lobel, J. (2004). Courts as forums for protest. *UCLA Law Review*, *52*(2), 477–561. https://scholarship.law.pitt.edu/fac_articles/538

Lucke, F. von. (2020). *The Securitisation of Climate Change and the Governmentalisation of Security*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-50906-4

Luhtakallio, E. (2013). Bodies keying politics: A visual frame analysis of gendered local activism in France and Finland. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, *35*, 27–54. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X(2013)0000035006

Mattoni, A., & Teune, S. (2014). Visions of Protest. A Media-Historic Perspective on Images in Social Movements. *Sociology Compass*, *8*(6), 876–887. https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12173

Mayring, P. (2004). Qualitative Content Analysis. In U. Flick, E. von Kardorff, & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (pp. 266–269). SAGE Publications Ltd. 0761973745

McGarry, A., Erhart, I., Eslen-Ziya, H., Jenzen, O., & Korkut, U. (2019). The Aesthetics of Global Protest. In A. McGarry, I. Erhart, H. Eslen-Ziya, O. Jenzen, & U. Korkut (Eds.), *The Aesthetics of Global Protest. Visual Culture and Communication*. Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvswx8bm

McLean, J. E., & Fuller, S. (2016). Action with(out) activism: understanding digital climate change action. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *36*(9–10), 578–595. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-12-2015-0136

Mead, S., & Maxwell, L. (2022). Climate Change Litigation: National Courts as Agents of International Law Development. In E. Sobenes, S. Mead, & B. Samson (Eds.), *The Environment Through the Lens of International Courts and Tribunals* (pp. 617–648). T.M.C. Asser Press. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6265-507-2_20

Meyer, H., Pröschel, L., & Brüggemann, M. (2023). *From Disruptive Protests to Disrupted Networks. Analyzing Levels of Polarization in the German Twitter Discourses around "Fridays for Future" and "The Last Generation"* (OSF Preprints). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/nd68z

Milbrandt, M. (2010). Understanding the role of art in social movements and transformation. *Journal of Art for Life*, *1*(1), 7–18. https://journals.flvc.org/jafl/article/view/84087

Milner, R. M. (2013). Pop Polyvocality: Internet Memes, Public Participation, and the Occupy Wall Street Movement. *International Journal of Communication*, *7*(0), 34.

https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/1949

Mitchell, C. (2011). *Doing Visual Research*. SAGE Publications Ltd. 9781107025745

Molder, A. L., Lakind, A., Clemmons, Z. E., & Chen, K. (2022). Framing the Global Youth Climate Movement: A Qualitative Content Analysis of Greta Thunberg's Moral, Hopeful, and Motivational Framing on Instagram. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, *27*(3), 668–695. https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612211055691

Müller-Doohm, S. (1997). Bildinterpretation als struktural-hermeneutische Symbolanalyse. In R. Hitzler & A. Honer (Eds.), *Sozialwissenschaftliche Hermeneutik: Eine Einführung* (pp. 81–108). VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-663-11431-4

Müller, M. G., & Özcan, E. (2007). The Political Iconography of Muhammad Cartoons: Understanding Cultural Conflict and Political Action. *Political Science & Politics*, *40*(2), 287–291. https://doi.org/10.1017/S104909650707045X

Neumayer, C., & Rossi, L. (2016). 15 Years of Protest and Media Technologies Scholarship: A Sociotechnical Timeline. *Social Media and Society*, *2*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116662180

Neumayer, C., & Rossi, L. (2018). Images of protest in social media: Struggle over visibility and visual narratives. *New Media & Society*, *20*(11), 4293–4310. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818770602

Olesen, T. (2022). Greta Thunberg's iconicity: Performance and co-performance in the social media ecology. *New Media and Society*, *24*(6), 1325–1342. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820975416

Osofsky, H. M. (2010). The continuing importance of climate change litigation. *Climate Law*, *1*(1), 3–29. https://doi.org/10.3233/CL-2010-002

Özkula, S. M., Reilly, P. J., & Hayes, J. (2023). Easy data, same old platforms? A systematic review of digital activism methodologies. *Information Communication and Society*, *26*(7), 1470–1489. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.2013918

Panofsky, E. (1955). Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art. In E. Panofsky (Ed.), *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History* (pp. 26–54). Doubleday Anchor. 0385092482

Peel, J., & Markey-Towler, R. (2021). Recipe for Success?: Lessons for Strategic Climate Litigation from the Sharma, Neubauer, and Shell Cases. *German Law Journal*, *22*(8), 1484–1498.

https://doi.org/10.1017/glj.2021.83

Philipps, A. (2012). Visual protest material as empirical data. *Visual Communication*, *11*(1), 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357211424675

Rákos, A. D. (2022). Zöld stratégiák a COVID-19 járvány alatt. Kortárs klímamozgalmak elérésének és belső struktúrájának elemzése 2020 és 2022 között ["Green strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Analysis of the reach and internal structure of contemporary climate movement. *Civil Review*, *19*(3), 29–46. https://www.civilszemle.hu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/72-Civil-Szemle-20223-3.pdf

Rocha, A. (2023). Suing States: The Role of Courts in Promoting States' Responsibility for Climate Change. In M. da G. Garcia & A. Cortês (Eds.), *Blue Planet Law: The Ecology of our Economic and Technological World* (pp. 99–108). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-24888-7_8

Rodgers, K. (2018). Mass Media and Digital Media. In K. Rodgers (Ed.), *Protest, Activism, & Social Movements* (pp. 165–186). Oxford University Press. 9780199021611

Rose, G. (2016). *Visual Methodologies - An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (4th Ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd. 9781473948891

Rovisco, M., & Veneti, A. (2017). Picturing protest: visuality, visibility and the public sphere. *Visual Communication*, *16*(3), 271–277. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357217704633

Saussure, F. de. (1959). *Course in general linguistics*. Philosophical Library. 0070165246

Sawer, M. (2007). Wearing your Politics on your Sleeve: The Role of Political Colours in Social Movements. *Social Movement Studies*, *6*(1), 39–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742830701251294

Setzer, J., & Higham, C. (2022). *Global trends in climate litigation: 2022 snapshot* [Policy report]. Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment and Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science. https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/117652/1/Global_trends_in_climate_change_litigation_2022_snapshot.pdf

Shim, D. (2023). *Visualizing Climate Activism on Social Media – How does Fridays for Future Germany Picture Climate Action?* (KHK/GCR21; Global Cooperation Research Papers 33). Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK / GCR21). https://doi.org/10.14282/2198-0411-GCRP-33

Snow, D. A., Rochford, E. B., Worden, S. K., & Benford, R. D. (1986). Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation. *American Sociological Review*, *51*(4), 464. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095581

Stuart, D. (2020). Radical Hope: Truth, Virtue, and Hope for What Is Left in Extinction Rebellion. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, *33*, 476–504. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-020-09835-y

SVT Nyheter. (2024, April 25). *Högsta domstolen tar upp frågan om klimatstämning av staten ["Supreme Court takes up issue of climate lawsuit by state"]*. SVT Nyheter. Retrieved May 12, 2024, from https://www.svt.se/nyheter/granskning/ug/hogsta-domstolen-tar-upp-fragan-om-klimatstamning-av-staten

United Nations Environment Programme. (2023). *Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023 Status Review*. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/43008

Van Gorp, B. (2007). The constructionist approach to framing: Bringing culture back in. *Journal of Communication*, *57*(1), 60–78. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9916.2007.00329.x

Veneti, A. (2017). Aesthetics of protest: an examination of the photojournalistic approach to protest imagery. *Visual Communication*, *16*(3), 279–298. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357217701591

Yarchi, M., Baden, C., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2020). Political Polarization on the Digital Sphere: A Cross-platform, Over-time Analysis of Interactional, Positional, and Affective Polarization on Social Media. *Political Communication*, *38*(1–2), 1–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1785067

Zantvoort, F. (2021). Movement pedagogies in pandemic times: Extinction Rebellion Netherlands and (un)learning from the margins. *Globalizations*, *20*(2), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2021.2009319