ARTICLES

VIDEO ACTIVISM:

digital practices to narrate social movements during the FIFA World Cup (2014)

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ABSTRACT - This article aims to analyse media activist practices – developed in the context of the FIFA World Cup protests, in 2014 – and their possible consequences for journalistic practice. At present, in Rio de Janeiro, various groups have emerged, using cameras and cyberspace as political tools. As a result, their network became an extension of the public square. Through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, digital methods and a video database created between June and July of 2014, the characteristics of this type of activism are presented, examining the activists' relationship with cyberspace, their production routine and how these practices influenced contemporary journalism. Video activists created productive routines influenced by journalism but rejected some of the professional practices used in the field. However, video activism, as a media phenomenon, was capable of instigating changes in the journalistic practice and formats.
Key words: Brazil, journalism, riots, social networking sites, video activism.

VÍDEO-ATIVISMO: práticas digitais para narrar os movimentos sociais durante a Copa do Mundo da FIFA (2014)

RESUMO - Este artigo pretende analisar como estas práticas mediáticas ativistas – desenvolvidas no contexto das manifestações durante o Mundial de Futebol da FIFA, em 2014 - e suas possíveis consequências para as práticas jornalísticas. Naquele momento surgiram diversos grupos que utilizavam a câmera e o ciberespaço como ferramenta de luta política. A rede se transformou em uma extensão da praça pública. Através da observação participante, entrevistas semi-estruturadas, métodos digitais e uma base de datos de videos produzidos entre junho e julho de 2014, apresentamos as principais características deste tipo de ativismo, abordando suas relações com o ciberespaço, sua metodologia de trabalho e como estas práticas influenciaram o jornalismo contemporâneo. Os video ativistas criaram rotinas produtivas influenciadas pelo jornalismo, mas se afastaram de muitas das práticas profissionais utilizadas no campo. Entretanto, o vídeo ativismo, como fenômeno midiático, também foi capaz de inserir modificações nas práticas e formatos jornalísticos.
Palavras-chave: Brasil, jornalismo, protesto, redes sociais na Internet, video ativismo.

VIDEO ACTIVISMO: prácticas digitales para narrar los movimientos sociales durante la Copa del Mundo de la FIFA (2014)

RESUMEN - Este artículo pretende analizar las prácticas mediáticas activistas – desarroladas en el contexto de las protestas durante el Mundial de Futebol de la FIFA, en el 2014 – y sus posibles consequencias para las prácticas periodísticas. En aquel momento emergieron, principalmente en Río de Janeiro, diversos grupos que utilizaban la cámara y el ciberespacio como herramienta de lucha política. La red se transformó en una extensión de la plaza pública. A través de la investigación participativa, entrevistas semi-estructuradas, métodos digitales y una base de datos de vídeos producidos entre junio y julio del 2014, presentamos las características de este tipo de activismo, abordando sus relaciones con el ciberespacio, sus rutinas productivas y cómo estas prácticas influyeron en el periodismo contemporáneo. Los videoactivistas crearon rotinas productivas influenciadas por el periodismo, pero también se alejaron de muchas de las prácticas profesionles utilizadas en el campo. Entretanto, el vídeo activismo, como un fenómeno mediático, fue capaz de inserir modificações tanto en las prácticas como en los formatos periodísticos.
Palabras clave: Brasil, periodismo, protestas, redes sociales en Internet, videoactivismo.

1 Introduction

In recent years, we have witnessed swift and extensive transformations with respect to technological equipment and its connection with everyday life. We have moved from a society where personal relationships prevailed to a hyper-connected society, where everything is photographed, recorded and narrated on the social networking sites. Since 2011, streets, and public squares around the world have been taken over by protests, riots and demonstrations with a view of demanding true participatory democracy. At the same time, the virtual world has been submerged with images of these protests, created by ordinary people with mobile phones or hand-held cameras. These people wanted to share what the mainstream media were not transmitting; to narrate their version of events; or simply have a camera available when the situation happened.

Filming social movements and uploading and sharing the contents on social networking sites is not a new phenomenon (CHANAN, 2011; ATTON, 2002; DOWNING, 2001). At least since 1999 with the birth of Indymedia during the anti-globalization protests in Seattle (USA) (ATTON, 2013; PICKARD, 2006), this practice has been developing, following a new wave of social movements (ASKANIUS, 2012; BRUCKMANN; SANTOS, 2005; JONG; SHAW; STAMMERS, 2005).

This kind of communicative and activist practice has become more common during recent events. For example, social movements such as the Arab Spring (CASTELLS, 2012; SKINNER, 2011); Occupy Wall Street in the United States, (CASTELLS, op. cit; JURIS, 2012; MCDONALD, 2015); 15M, in Spain, (TORET, 2013); Yosoy132, in Mexico (CÁCERES; ACOSTA, 2013); Gezi Park, in Turkey (DAGI, 2013); June protests, in Brazil (ESTANQUE, 2014; RECUERO; BASTOS; ZAGO, 2014) and the Umbrella Revolution, in Hong Kong (HARP et al., 2012) live broadcasts were made and directed by citizens' cameras and, above all, by groups formed by activists using video as a tool for their struggle.

In June 2013, large social protests took place in Brazilian streets. These communications strategies were multiplied to expressive levels in the country. Cyberspace (LÉVY, 1999; 2014) became the main arena for communications created by social movements, especially on the social networking site Facebook. Activists launched more than three hundred fan pages aiming to provide counter-information about the uprising. The videos recorded in the riots went viral very quickly and in this way, a network was being created. Formed of groups and individuals who became known as "video-activists". As a result, the relationship between professional journalists working for mainstream media, and the social movements became conflict-ridden. Thus, the protest coverage produced by commercial companies in Brazil began to change. These changes went in two directions: 1) covering the events from outside the protest; and, 2) using the same type of format used by video activism.

This article aims to reflect upon the role of video-activist media practices in the uprisings of Rio de Janeiro city, as well as to understand the characteristics of filmmaking methodology carried out in this context. In addition, understand to what extent journalistic practice was, and could be in future events, modified by video activism.

2. Methodology

The results presented in this article come to a mixed methodology, using digital methods (RIEDER, 2013); qualitative methodologies, including semi-structured and participant observation (BRANDÃO,1984); and the analysis of the videos (SOUSA; MAIA, 2016; and SOUSA, forthcoming) produced by the activist groups that we follow in this research.

This research started by mapping the ten most active video activist groups both online and offline, in the context of the protests against the FIFA World Cup in 2014, in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). The procedure involved the use of a chart to show the number of 'likes' on Facebook fan pages. Also, the number of the videos published, the number of followers on respective channels on YouTube and the presence on the streets during the protests. These were recorded during the period between June 2013 and the days before the field work - June 2014.

The bulk of qualitative results were based on field observations, interviews with the video activists, and the analysis of a video database based on material produced by ten activist groups. The participant observation was conducted between June 9 and July 15, 2014 during the time of the protests. I took part in the activists' everyday life during the protests, thus participating in meetings, training workshops and the process of filming the protests. The observations were registered both in video and field diaries. Three groups out of the ten with different approaches were selected for the participant observations.

1.) *Rio40caos* was a group which focused on the production of advocacy video[1].

2.) *Coletivo Carranca was* a group that centered on live broadcasts and on direct via streaming.

3.) *Jornal A Nova Democracia* worked with news reports.

Concurrently, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 activists, which were filmed too. All names were coded for confidentiality purposes, and the interviews used in this article can be found in Page 19 under 'Interviews Cited'. The interviews followed the research's key points (some of which are production methodology, identity, narratives, aesthetics) whilst trying to establish a free dialogue between researcher and activists. Then, the interviews in Portuguese were transcribed and processed using the Nvivo to categorize them.

The quantitative results are based on the digital methods with the use of Netvizz, Gephi, Nvivo software applications and YouTube data tools to capture, analyse and visualize data from Facebook, TwitCasting and YouTube. A total of 166 videos were gathered, which were produced by the ten groups earlier mentioned. We gathered the number of followers and videos of each channel. Then, a database was built with all the videos of the initial corpus, resulting in.

3. Video activism: always on the side of social movements

When communication practices around video and social movements are approached from an empirical point of view, it is possible to find diverse experiences and the utilization of different theoretical frameworks to name them. For example, while some define the practice as participative video (LUNCH; LUNCH, 2006; SHIRLEY, 2003; JOHANSSON, 1999), others refer to it as video for development, radical video, alternative video, community video, guerrilla video, advocacy video, (ASKANIUS, 2014; PASQUINELLI, 2002), audio-visual combat, to name but a few.

In this work, we will focus conceptually on video activism, despite the fact that specialized academic literature has not yet defined a consistent terminology for it, as asserted by Mateos and Rajas (2014). Harding (2001), Widgington (2005) and Mateos and Rajas (2014) offer a broader approach to the question. Harding (2001 1) argues that the video activist is someone "who uses video as a tactical tool to bring about social justice" making use of the camera as a powerful political instrument. According to Widgington (*op. cit*.), the video activist is involved in daily activism, using the camera to advocate for social justice and social change, and to develop a close relationship and support the activist community. Mateos and Rajas (2014) focus on video activism as a process, and identify it as a political intervention resource by subaltern actors for purposes of transformation. Nevertheless, other research focuses on more specific aspects to approach the concept. For Zarzuelo (2012) the position of the video activist is at the centre of the definition. For this researcher, the video activist is a protagonist and takes part in the collective action as a common activist. Wilson and Tanya (2010) call video activist people who use the video as a tool to deter police violence, document abuse, the misconduct by police authorities, and as an effort to influence and set the political agenda. Pasquinelli (2002) on the other hand, simply argues that video activism is born from the impossibility of taking part in mainstream media. Through their cameras, the activists can avoid omissions and manipulations caused by mainstream media, using technologies for this purpose.

From Mateos and Rajas (2014) to Pasquinelli (2002) it becomes clear that the political positioning of the activist is a key factor in defining the video activism process. Mateos and Rajas (2014) draw attention to the fact that the most important aspect to explain video

activism is the type of practice or process, and not the product. Thus, several practices in different genres and formats may be included and projected in different platforms, such as the film forum, audio-visual workshops, street TV, video art, cinema and video productions, news reports, streaming of protests, etc. The next section will describe some of these characteristics as a communicative practice.

3.1 Video activism online: from the streets to social networking sites

In the past, images made by video activism were often screened privately, mostly within the social movement itself. Sometimes it was possible to do public screenings, mainly made by street TV and, in some cases, images could be screened by cable or community channels in mainstream television.

The first big wave of video activism took place in Seattle, in 1999. This well documented event was marked by the connection between video and Internet. According to Pasquinelli (2002), this first media activism cyclone and the birth of Independent Media Center (Indymedia) would not have been possible without this alliance between video and the internet. Since then, "the turn to social networks, the pervasive Internet, and the always accessible mobile phone" (WELMMAN; RAINIE, 2013, p. 1) have expressively changed the social and communication practices, and in particular video activism. Nowadays, the fact that more and more people are having access to mobile devices, they are able to film and connect to the Internet, with better image quality. As a consequence, introducing important changes to the process and practice of journalism. With a mobile phone, basic filmmaking, editing, uploading and streaming have been made possible. Any citizen or activist can use video as a tool to promote social justice.

At present, urban protests, all over the world are being filmed. Every minute can now be captured by what Pasquinelli (2002) refers to as a "video activist army"; and transmit live via streaming or sharing on social networking sites, such as Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo. These platforms have generated a change in the structures for production and circulation of the images created by video activism. The Internet was appropriated by several organizations and social movements that had no access to mainstream media, allowing the

distribution of free content to a global audience. Thus, contemporary activism is increasingly moving into virtual spaces.

In the subsequent section, video activism from an empirical point of view will be addressed, based on the fieldwork conducted. The ideas which follow refer to the practice developed in this city. However, many can be applied to the larger field of video activism.

3.2 A look at video activism in Rio de Janeiro

Although the protests were being observed in all regions of the country, video activism was more organized in particular cities, notably Rio de Janeiro. There, the groups were quickly formed and several independent activists joined this movement. Therefore, those activists interviewed were from the most active[2] groups in the city.

As noted here in the following quote, video activist in some groups, such as *A Nova Democracia* Newspaper and the *Mariachi* group, explained how the genesis of the movement was a naturally occurring process:

> At first, I was filming by myself. I did not know anyone. Once I met an old friend in the demonstration. He was filming too. And soon after I got to know all the people and this dynamic where everyone knows everyone started. So, every time an action was about to happen, people sent messages by mobile phone or Facebook. Like that, this big group, which was as big as thirty people, was becoming as an institution. (I-8, personal interviewee, August 20, 2015)

With reference to the above quote, this "big group", however, has personal singularities when it comes to the definition of an activist or video activist. Among those that still use the definition of militant to describe a video activist was heard from interviewee I-4, from A *Nova Democracia* Newspaper (personal interview, July of 2014) "I am a militant with a camera". Another interviewee saw herself as a person uncomfortable with all social injustice "I see myself as an activist, as a concerned citizen. There are days that I don't even bring my camera" (I-10 personal interview, June 2014). As Pasquinelli (2002), I- 1, from *Carranca* group, supports the concept of media activist "I like the media activist concept because to me everyone is an activist. We are all political actors. The concept is really good, but today it is a bit vague since activist can be anything" (personal interview, June 2014).

In spite of possible differences, we have observed joint action among these groups during the protests, in the course of our fieldwork. They have formed a large block of activists (Image 1) sharing social practices and using the camera as a tool for political action.

Image 1 – Video activists in a protest in Rio de Janeiro

Note: Facebook reproduction. Photograph by unknown author, 1 May 2014.

These common practices allow us to enumerate some general features of video activist production during the protests against the FIFA World Cup, in Rio de Janeiro, among which we can point:

1. Regarding the type of videos produced, most of the groups were doing news reports in video and taking pictures; except for *Carranca* and Media Ninja who were specialized in transmitting live streaming.

2. The configuration of the groups during demonstrations is usually joint action during calm moments (Image 1); but when direct conflict erupts, they try to stay in pairs or maintain visibility to their peers, seeking to guarantee the safety of the group.

3. As a general rule, they use press credentials, identifying the name of the video activist group they belong to.

4. They use personal protective equipment, such as helmets, body armour, gas masks, etc.

5. During the protests, in general, their mode of action divides them into two groups: those who behave like militants with cameras and those who are seeking to behave like reporters. The first group, in many cases, is in the middle, when they are not the centre of direct conflict with the police: shouting slogans, singing, provoking and being provoked by the police. The second group is more moderate and tries to avoid conflict, seeking first to ensure compliance with their work as reporters.

6. Professionally, video activists are mostly journalists and filmmakers. However, it is not uncommon to find video activists that operate in other professional areas, outside the action of the protests.

7. With the exception of *A Nova Democracia* Newspaper, a left newspaper established for over ten years in Rio de Janeiro, the other video activist groups used exclusively militant structures.

8. They use the Internet and especially social networking sites as a platform for organization, production and dissemination of their political activism.

The involvement between the practices of video activists and the social networking sites is one of the most important aspects for the understanding of how this type of activism developed during the protests of 2014. Some aspects of these practices will be analysed in the following topic.

3.3 The appropriation of Facebook and YouTube by video activism in Rio de Janeiro

In 2013, 49.4% of the Brazilian population was connected to the Internet (IBGE: 2013). Of these, 54.7% were accessing the network through mobile devices such as phones and tablets (IBGE: 2013). But if we analyze the connection rate among young people, the data indicates that 75.9% of them were regularly connected to the Internet; and among those students that had studied for fifteen years, the percentage reached 89.8%. Most of the demonstrators in 2013 were young, between fourteen and twenty nine years old; 49% had between ten and fifteen years of schooling, and 43%

between fifteen and twenty years of studies completed. Protesters assembled, organized and protested using the social networking sites. They also created new media and new ways of doing politics (SAMPEDRO, 2014). Rheingold (2004) calls these people using technology "smart crowds", mixing the virtual and the physical world. The video activist groups of Rio de Janeiro stood out in a particular way by their use of the cyberspace and its presence there, especially on social networking sites.

In Brazil, Facebook is the most used social networking site. In 2013, it had 76 million users, and its importance was unique in the context of the protests analysed. One of the activists from *Mariachi* interpreted the use of social networking sites in video activism as important, "we started putting videos on YouTube and created a Facebook page. At first, this was very important because it created a network and made our images openly available, through the act of sharing "(I-6, personal interview, June 2014). For the interviewee six (personal interview, July 2014), the networks enhanced the work that was already being done, "the popularization of the Internet greatly enhanced our work. It's fundamental. It is through this that we managed to create an echo in the monopoly of the media". In a different interview, the role of the Internet in the protests was also stated:

> Before, there was a protest of fifty thousand people. The mainstream media did not show it and in the end, no one was aware it was happening. Now if fifty, a hundred thousand or a million people are on the street, as in June, the mainstream media may try to hide it, but through social networking sites, the pages of the groups and YouTube, we will show another point of view (I-3, personal interview, June 2014).

YouTube channels and Facebook pages created by the video activism groups proliferated as fast as the social demonstrations themselves. Although the videos could be shared directly from Facebook, most of the audio-visual material was first edited, uploaded to YouTube and then shared on Facebook. Thus, these two social networking sites were deeply connected with the work of video activists. In Table 1, the relationship between the "likes" on Facebook, YouTube followers, number of videos posted, their viralization and the overall views per channel of the 10 most active video activist groups are shown.

Table 1- Most active video activism groups

	Group	Likes on *Facebook*	Followers on *YouTube*	Videos uploaded on *YouTube*	Most viral video on *YouTube*	Views on *YouTube* total
1	***Jornal A Nova Democracia***	127 100	16 827	257	399 200	3 663 762
2	***Mídia Ninja***	256 000	Ocult	89	88 614	1 726 251
3	***Coletivo Mariachi***	7 272	6 788	75	256 1980	3 516 588
4	***Coletivo Carranca***	5 577	411	19	14 931	26 440
5	***Mídia Independente Coletiva***	15 888	3 302	17	92 134	224 045
6	***Voz das Ruas***	1 553	708	51	10 098	84 000
7	***Linhas de Fuga***	3 287	566	182	350 971	530 626
8	***Coletivo Vinhetando***	5 264	24	19	2 392	2 698
9	***Coletivo Tatu***	2 973	493	19	12 788	64 626
10	***Rio 40Caos***	1794	240	58	18 501	57 260

Note: Views on YouTube and "likes" on Facebook, collected during May 2014, referring to the ten groups with more presence in the social protests in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The data was collected by Netvizz, YouTube Datatools and manually.

As can be seen in Table 1, all of these groups have both Facebook pages and YouTube channels with a large number of followers. Except for *Mariachi*, the number of "likes" on Facebook is more expressive than the number of followers on YouTube. However, it is not possible to establish direct connections between the two social networking sites in regard to the number of followers because they operate on a different logic. On Facebook, for example, the amount of "likes" on a page does not determine the popularity of the group in the network. There are other variables, such as interaction and attention given by the user to the page (engagement), which is perhaps, more important when ensuring that a publication reaches more people (CANAVARRO, 2014). However, on YouTube, just one video viralization ends sometimes determining the popularity of a channel, increasing both the number of followers and the total

number of the page views. This is the case of *Mariachi*, as despite having little more than 7 thousand "likes" on their Facebook page, they had more than 3 million visits on YouTube, due to the viralization of one of their videos.

The speed and connection between the number of protests - almost daily - the video production and the viralization on the network, led to a frenetic production routine. In the table below (Table 2), we can observe the production capacity of three groups from Rio de Janeiro. The videos refer to the period during the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

Table 2 - Audio-visual Production of the video activism groups in Rio de Janeiro between June-July 2014

Video activist group	Number of videos produced
Carranca (streaming transmissions)	39
Coletivo Mariachi	22
Coletivo Tatu	9
Jornal A Nova Democracia	29
Linha de Fuga	11
Midia Independente Coletiva (MIC)	4
Midia Ninja (streaming transmissions)	43
Rio 40Caos	2
Voz das ruas	2
Vinhetando	5
Total	**166**

Note: Number of videos produced by the video activism groups between 13/06/2014 and 15/07/2014. Prepared with information collected on the YouTube and TwitCasting channels of the groups.

In less than a month in Rio de Janeiro, over 166 videos were produced during social protests and then uploaded to YouTube and other platforms capable of live broadcast, such as TwitCasting. A genuine process of mass self-communication to use Castell's terminology (2009, p.88), communication that "is made of many to many", which was more often that not generated, in real time. The streaming and the edited videos available on the Internet allowed the protest to be re-lived and retraced on the network, besides being live on the street.

In addition, although that is not the subject of this work, it is important to mention the dangers of techno-optimism. Treré and Barranquero (2013) assert that since 2011, speeches around the emancipatory possibilities of the network became popular. Watching this trend among some video activists in Rio de Janeiro in 2014, these speeches were beginning to be criticized by some.

> We must appropriate the technology to get our message to the public. If people are on Facebook, we need to use it. But we must also know that our discourse within these networks is very limited. There's surveillance and we are talking about a private company, therefore, there will be restrictions. (I-3, personal interview, June 2014).

First and foremost, the Internet is not a completely free tool. Just as social movements manage to use it as a tool of struggle — as we have seen — governments have quickly adapted to the new technology and started to use it to monitor the activists (TILLY; WOOD, 2010). In Rio de Janeiro, the police unit responsible for investigating activists during the protests was the "Police Department for Computer Crimes", which was monitoring several of their Facebook accounts. Secondly, it was essential not to fall into technological determinism trap, as argued by Tilly and Wood (op.cit) and Treré and Barranquero (op.cit) and analyse social movements from a historical and relational perspective. The protests that took place in Brazil from 2012, which was at its peak in June 2013 - correspond to a political and social context in which many factors were involved (SOUSA, 2015), not just video activism or the virtual social networks.

Thus, we need to reflect on the development of online video activism in Rio de Janeiro in correlation to these specific factors. To better understand the video activist dynamics and work methodology, the following ethnographic analysis of the production methodologies developed by these activists is presented.

3.4 Record, edit and upload to YouTube and Facebook

In order to understand, it was important to as, what was the production routine of these video activists? As one of the video activists, interviewee eight, a member of the *A Nova Democracia* Newspaper adequately summarized it:

> I've always adopted a work method of transmitting the news as soon as possible. In almost all cases, I prepare myself in advance to go to the protest; I have my camera (with batteries, cards, etc.), and my protective gear in the backpack. After the protest I go to my house and sometimes I may spend the whole night editing video. In other cases, we make a slightly more elaborate edition, and the next day, the video is already on the network. I do not waste time, no rest. There have been days we started editing videos at night and continued until the afternoon of the next day. We are editing and publishing. Another thing we also do is to take some more specific cases of police violence, assemble them quickly and publish them. Then we make a full report of the protest, but we want that information flow quickly to let the public know what happened. (I-8, personal interview, July 2014)

> Then I go, I participate, I come home super tired and I still try to create the narrative. The more I feel that the protest needs to be told, the more I endeavor to edit and upload it quickly to the Internet. If it's news, the faster it circulates, the better. (I-2, personal interview, June 2014)

Almost all video activists in Rio de Janeiro follow this production routine. Most of them try to edit the material, upload it to YouTube and share it on Facebook as soon as possible, because only then can they dispute public opinion. Consider the specific case of the production of video production "Cineasta canadense sendo roubado e espancado por PMs no Rio" (Canadian filmmaker being robbed and beaten by Military Police in Rio), published by the *A Nova Democracia* Newspaper (Image 2), in July 13, 2014, through an excerpt from the diary of field research conducted as part of this investigation.

> July 13. The evening before the protest was complex. During the early hours of yesterday, twenty activists were detained by the police accused of charges of formation of gangs. However, the imprisonment of the activists led more people to appear at the event, which took place on the same day of the final match of the FIFA World Cup. The concentration began at ten o'clock at Saens Peña Square, in the region of Maracanã Stadium. I followed the start of the streaming and at twelve I arrived at the Square. As usual, the video activists gathered in a group. They talked about the need to protect themselves at this event because there were three police officers for each demonstrator, which made it clear that anyone could be subjected to human rights violations by the police. At 2 PM, protesters began to form ranks for walking, but the police surrounded the square and no one could leave. The demonstration moved within a radius of five hundred meters, always surrounded by police barriers. Soon after, the police started to make violent conduct searches and shoot tear gas and pepper spray toward the demonstrators. Some people were arrested. The entry and exit of the square was completely closed until 7 PM. I was in a group with I-7, from Rio40Caos and I-8 from Mariachi and A Nova Democracia Newspaper. At one point, she got through the police line, but then was attacked by the police. Minutes later we found Jason O'Hara, a Canadian filmmaker, who also collaborated with the A Nova Democracia Newspaper, being attended by the activist doctors, who provided assistance during the demonstrations. The police had assaulted and

> robbed him, so he was taken to the hospital. Around 7 PM, the activist lawyers negotiated with the police the departure of the group of protesters. The video activists left in a group and met in a bar two blocks away from the square. They wanted to know if everyone was okay and out of the square. At that time, they collected all the media that might have images of aggression to Jason and handed them over to I-4. We took a taxi and went to Copacabana to see how the mood was there, if there were more protests or not, but there was nothing. Then we went home.
> July 14. When I awoke, the video of the aggression to Jason had already gone viral on Facebook. (Sousa, A.L.N., Field Diary, 13 and 14 July 2014).

The video quickly spread through the social networking sites before published in the *A Nova Democracia* Newspaper page on Facebook (Image 2) and ended being published by the national and international press.

Image 2 – Publication in the official fan page of *A Nova Democracia* Newspaper[3]

Translation of the text on the image: FLAGRANT: Police beat and steal the camera of Canadian filmmaker (Images by Vladimir Seixas) The following images are a taste of the violence that the military police of Rio de Janeiro used against demonstrators protesting peacefully in Saenz Pena Square, north of the city, this afternoon. The event brought together about 1,000 people and unified numerous banners, such as "FIFA go home" and "The party in stadiums is not worth the tears in the slums." Moments after the dispersion, the Canadian filmmaker Jason Ohara was beaten by military police, who then stole the GoPro camera that was attached to his helmet. The crime, of course, has not escaped AND's lenses and is already being widely reported in the international media.

In addition, the video came to be among the ten most popular on YouTube Brazil. On July 14, it reached more than 370,000 visits. From the Facebook page of *A Nova Democracia* Newspaper, the video was shared 3.614 times, had 127 comments, 1433 likes and its range reached 434.304 people. Another important aspect, perhaps the most important to video activists is the outcome that the video generated outside of the social networking sites. The video activists were able to identify the four police officers directly involved in the aggression, who were subsequently suspended from the police force. By late afternoon, a new concentration in the centre of the city commemorated the results of the action.

Field observation and interviews revealed some specific aspects of the production routine of video activists: 1) preparation in advance; 2) working together with other video activists; 3) the quest to maintain/safeguard individual security, as well as collective security; 4) exhaustive working days; 5) low division of labour, in many cases the same person is responsible for all stages of production.

4 Video activism: in the frontier between the activism and the journalism

Journalistic practice is guided by principles of objectivity, neutrality, and veracity (MOTTA et al, 2004). According to Becker and Machado (2014), defending a cause distorts journalistic principles. However, others argue that these values "are sometimes inevitably inconsistent or contradictory" (DEUZE, 2005, p. 447). Deuze points

out that these principles are more complex in the contemporary context. For Tuchman (1972), the journalistic strategies to narrate news and stories may provide an attempt to obtain objectivity, however this could not affirm that the video activist groups achieved this. Conversely, video activists operate from another standpoint that is not professional, but political. The starting point of communication generated in the social movements is the clear positioning on the side of the oppressed, which is confirmed by interviewee nine "we do not exactly look for neutrality. When you are there, together, you need to take a stand. We take the democratic position, showing the violence that is happening there". Interviewee one reaffirmed this position to add that "I realised that as a journalist I would be more helpful as an activist because I could help the people who are on the street whereas I could not show their point of view in the mainstream media".

Thus, the credibility of the video activist narrative does not come from journalistic impartiality, neutrality or objectivity, but from immersion in events and proximity with the actors involved. This can be verified by the narrative, in the storytelling, and visually through the frames and shots. Videos produced by activists thereby obtain, an "authenticity" status (PLATON; DEUZE, 2003) due to their proximity to the subjects of the historical event, who shared – side by side – the space and time of the protest with these cameras. Almeida (2015) and Brasil and Frazão (2013) highlighted the "experiential" aspect and proximity of video activist coverage. For Brasil and Frazão (2013), video activist coverage flows through the veins of the crowd.

Video activist practice moves away from the objectivity and neutrality defended by the journalistic ethos, but approaches other journalistic standards. Acutality (live journalism), can be conferred by the absence of a scheduling grid or paid employees; the technical possibilities of mobile communication and activist energy made live streaming transmission possible, sometimes with very long duration. In addition to this, videos and pictures were uploaded on social networking sites almost minute by minute.

In this research, it was verified that there was a movement towards and a rejection of journalistic practices and ethos. Once the video activist production routine was identified and analysed, a comparison was conducted as depicted in the table below (Table 3).

Table 3 – Differences observed between journalistic routines and video activist routines in Rio de Janeiro (June-July 2014)

Journalism	Activism
Centralized and hierarchic information production	Decentralized and non-hierarchical information production
Reporting through the main channel (website, radio, TV) and sharing the contents on social networking sites	Reporting mainly through social networking sites (Facebook and Twitcasting)
Reporting outside the protest	Reporting inside the protest
Working individually	Working in groups
Using only their own network to circulate the content	Using the group's connections to circulate content
Division of labour more structured (camera person, journalist, producer, editor, presenter, etc.)	Low division of labour (the same person records, edits and promotes the video)

4.1 Reconfigurations to the journalistic practice

The relationship between social movements and mainstream media was historically conflict-ridden. Mostly, these actors accuse the press of depicting them negatively (BOYLE; SCHMIERBACH, 2009; GITLIN, 1980; MAN CHAN; LEE, 1984). The Brazilian protests during the FIFA World Cup were no different. The protesters, in several cases, did not allow journalists to cover events, forcing them out of the protests. One of the videos produced by *A Nova Democracia* Newspaper and published on April 24, 2014 "Jornalista da Globo tem acesso de raiva e é rechaçada em Copacabana" - showing a journalist being heckled by a couple - was one of the most visualised works produced by video activist groups with more than four million views.

According to Brasil and Frazão (2013), in response to this dynamic, TV channels opted to stay away from the protests, reporting from the top of buildings, or using helicopters or drones. However, the most significant reconfiguration observed in the context of this research was played out by *TV Folha* – which was published on YouTube and transmitted by *TV Cultura* twice a week – and the

cable channel *Globo News*. These two companies started using the video activist strategy of recording the protests on mobile phones, from inside the protest. This can be considered a reconfiguration of the image quality pattern and seen from two perspectives: 1) using the mobiles phones to connect and disguising themselves was the only way for mainstream media to try not to be driven away by protestors and to cover the manifestation; 2) the popularization of YouTube and Streaming coverage changed audience consumption: they were no longer looking for image quality, but for "information and visual mosaic" (BITTENCOURT; PUHL, 2013, p. 78). For the mainstream media, the mobile phone only represents a way to capture images, while for video activists it is the main technology for their activity.

Another difference is how video activists and mass communication organizations interacted with the audience. Malini (2013) highlights how commercial channels had authority, but not centrality. In other words, their narratives were popular on social networking sites in the sense that they are read, which means authority. But in order to measure public opinion influence it is necessary to pay attention to centrality. As centrality points out the capacity of a node (profile on the social networking sites) to attract and distribute connections, to establish a conversation, to share information. In Malini's research, he concludes that activists have more centrality than the mass communication profiles. Here it can be clearly seen that these channels tried to change their image recording, but not their communication model. Media activism therefore, not only addresses video practices but also all the media practices performed by activists. Media practices that were based on a network logic, which means to produce and distribute news from a sharing, participative and interactive logic, promoting social exchange around the content, which circulates through different spaces and actors (BITTENCOURT; PUHL, 2014).

Another reference to this debate, is the appropriation of video activist narratives by mainstream media. During the protests it was not uncommon for mainstream television channels to use images recorded by video activists – mostly without authorization. This was the case of the video "Cineasta canadense sendo roubado e espancado por PMs no Rio" (Canadian filmmaker being robbed and beaten by Military Police in Rio published by *A Nova Democracia*

Newspaper, on July 13, 2014. According to I-6, there are many lawsuits reclaiming authors' rights by video activists against mainstream media.

Conclusions: perspectives to the video activism and journalism research

In the context of this research, video activism was analysed as an important tool to promote social justice. This social practice is becoming more and more accessible to a large number of activists, since the basic technological devices and knowledge needed are becoming simpler. Despite security and freedom limitations, Internet availability and social networking sites as places to broadcast the images, allows the growing popularity of video activism inside and out of social movements.

The groups of video activism that worked in the counter-information of the protests developed since 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, were born from the social movements necessity of going against the mainstream media. Moreover, from the technical possibilities generated by the omnipresence of the mobile phone, the Internet and social networking sites. In order to achieve this goal, these groups established work dynamics that resemble the production routines of war correspondents, risking their safety and sometimes their life in search of the perfect image.

Evidently, online video activism has helped change the dynamics of social protests in a number of ways. Firslty, they created another point of view to the protests, previously narrated, almost exclusively, by the mainstream media; ensured the safety of the demonstrators, acting as witness cameras for police conduct, and was used as evidence of human rights violations.

This practice also started changing some journalistic features, which expose some problems and challenges to the future of journalism. For example, mass media organizations appropriated part of the video activist narrative by using mobile phones to cover the protests, however, they maintained the same centralized and hierarchic information production and circulation flow. Besides that, the mainstream media coverage continues to report without engaging in a dialogue with the social movements. The video activism eruption which took place in Brazil

challenged journalism practice to adapt to new narratives generated by the popularization of the Internet, social networking sites and the mobile phone. Thus, will journalism continue to depict the social movements negatively or will it initiate a new age of dialogue?

Evidently such a question may remain unanswered, but its important to raise such questions, including; How long will the rise of Brazilian video activism last? Will it be more prepared and experienced in the next protest wave? Can it win the battle for the public opinion next time? Will it continue to use social networking sites, which enforce a commercial logic to manage the flow of information, based on rules established by big companies? The challenge to the researchers who study video activism and journalism is to follow the phenomenon more closely, in every expression, on the streets and on social network sites. By extending ones analyses further, only then can videos help to address the phenomenon as a complex and multidimensional process, including principally, reception studies.

*This papers was translated by Vik Birkbeck and revised by Suzanne Harris.

NOTES

1 Talking about advocacy video, we are addressing a type of video that is part of an effort to make visible and give impact to a campaign that aims to change social behaviour, public policy and laws.

2 When we speak about activity, we are considering both action in the street and the social networking sites, since some groups were in the demonstrations filming, but did not upload their videos. Collectives as Rio40Caos, for example, was focused in film for advocacy video. So, their images were only used in the courts to defend protesters, or against human rights violations. Other groups, such as Tatu Colective, were dedicated to gathering images for other ends, in this case, doing a documentary.

3 Note: Image taken from the *A Nova Democracia* Newspaper Fan page, captured with Nvivo on December 16th, 2015.

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