

# Communication and Mobilization: the It Was No Accident movement and the campaign around a public problem in Brazil\*

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## Abstract

Based on Quéré's event approach, on Gusfield's concept of public problem and framing in Goffman, the article analyzes the emergence and actions of the *It Was No Accident* movement. It specifically concerns the development of a campaign, enhanced by social media, to present Brazil's national congress with a proposed law based on a popular initiative, which would modify the country's transit code and toughen sentences for those who drink and drive. It analyzes the content of journalistic articles published in electronic and digital media, as well as comments posed on the blog of the group and on its Facebook page. The analysis shows how the definition of a problem-situation conditions the proposed treatment.

**Keywords:** Communication and mobilization. The *Não Foi Acidente* [*It Was No Accident*] movement. Drinking and Driving. Public Problem. Event.

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## Introduction

The association of drinking alcohol and driving a vehicle has become a central theme on the public and media agenda in recent years, mobilizing discourses and actions of different actors in various forums: the media; the executive, legislative and judicial branches; civil society organizations and others. In the analysis of the constitution of this problem in Brazil, it has been intriguing to observe how it has provoked the emergence – or given visibility to the existence of – various civil organizations that are active in the prevention of traffic accidents, particularly those related to the problem of “drinking and driving”<sup>1</sup>. This article focuses on one of these movements, known as *Não Foi Acidente* (NFA) [It Was No Accident], which emerged in October 2011, when the campaign began, stimulated by actions on social media, to collect signatures and present the federal congress a proposed law based on a popular initiative that sought to modify elements of Brazilian traffic law.

This analysis is inspired by pragmatism (DEWEY, 1980; QUÉRÉ, 1997; 2005), by symbolic interactionism (GOFFMAN, 1991) and the sociology of public problems (GUSFIELD, 2009). We highlight the inter-relations between events, the process of publicizing them, the configuration of public problems and the action of those affected by them, in addition to possible disputes in the definition or framing of the events and problems, and in the treatments proposed. Based on this perspective, we describe and analyze how the *It Was No Accident* movement arose; how it appropriated various medias in the campaign that it conducted; how its supporters define or frame the situation-problem of drink-

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<sup>1</sup> The constitution of the public problem is understood here as a social, cultural and historically marked process, based on which a certain situation considered problematic or disturbing is progressively, based on a series of events, configured as a collective problem, summoning and provoking actions and discourses from various actors on the public scene, concerning its definition and forms of treatment. The *Não Foi Acidente*, movement, the event which motivated it, the actors involved and the campaign that was launched – and analyzed here – are part of this broader and complex process of constitution of the public problem.

ing and driving; what treatment proposals are presented and what social values they reveal.

### The event in the organization of experience and action

An event has “hermeneutic power,” according to the approach proposed by sociologist Louis Quéré (1997; 2005). The event is something that provokes a rupture in the experience of individuals and/or collectives. It summons actors to act to recompose the flow of normality and has potential to clarify the past and open new opportunities for the future, while revealing problems in collective life. It is in this configuration of public problems that Quéré sees a close tie between events and action, including collective action. Converted into public problems, according to the author, events open perspectives for collective action – that which is conducted jointly by subjects constituted, on different levels, in and by the action (SILVA, 2011).

In the re-organization of experience and of action, an essential moment is the definition or description of a situation or event; as they are categorized and inscribed in certain “frames of experience” (GOFFMAN, 1991), or that is, framed, defined and named. Goffman (1991:19) defines “frameworks” as “principles of organization or base elements that structure events” and that serve actors to understand and define what is happening, thus allowing them to guide their action and participation in a given situation. “Framing” can thus be understood as the mobilization of these frameworks of meaning. It is a concept that helps us to identify how an event is spoken of by different actors. The form of framing an event, in turn, conditions discourses and actions of the actors (SILVA, 2011).

Also according to Quéré (2003), the process of problematization and promotion of events establishes – in the search for the definition and resolution of the problems revealed – a way of acting together, which is that of the “public” in the pragmatic sense of the term (DEWEY, 1980; 2001). In the pragmatist perspective, the public is not a pre-existing concrete collective but “a form”

of engagement and of action – constituted in the collective experimentation of a phenomenon, in a specific context (QUÉRÉ, 2003). It is a public interested in or affected by problems revealed by certain events, which suffers and is affected by this experience, but which also acts, reacts and makes choices (FRANÇA; ALMEIDA, 2008).

The media in general, and journalism in particular, have an important role in the process of publicizing and debating events, and of the problems that they expose. They are supports for the identification and exploration of events, of the discussion and public controversies seeking the development of solutions (QUÉRÉ, 2005). This process gains new contours and possibilities in the contemporary situation: the appropriation of the Internet and of online social media by citizens can stimulate or give potential to new forms of mobilization, activism and political participation in the discussion and search for the solution for collective problems.

### **Public problem and its appropriations: disputes for definition and treatment**

If the perspective of Quéré and Dewey points us to the relationship between event, constitution of problems and of publics, and the action of affected or interested individuals and collectives, the sociology of public problems, particularly the approach proposed by Joseph Gusfield ([1981] 2009), provides us elements to consider the anchorage of a public problem – that of drinking and driving – in a certain political culture. Gusfield's perspective allows us to cast light on disputes and positions of power (political, economic and symbolic), on the definition and handling of problems; on the choices made, solutions legitimated and alternatives disconsidered; on the actors engaged and those whose absence is not questioned; and on the attribution of responsibilities etc.

A “public problem” can be understood, according to Gusfield's proposal (2009), as those social problems whose definition, which are always disputed, point to the general interest or to the public order, call for the promotion of the public good and demand

modes of regulation through mechanisms for public action. In Gusfield's conception, for a situation to become a "public problem" implies:

- a) that it is accepted as a problem by society due to its collective importance – which varies historically according to the moral sensibility and the conception of public interest that are found in a given time and context;
- b) that it stirs debate in public forums, that is, in places where there is promotion, discussion and action that seek a solution: media, public authorities, courts, citizen movements, academic spaces etc;
- c) that it is linked to a public action that seeks its resolution, which can involve not only government but also private institutions, civic associations etc.

Gusfield orients us to consider that there are various opportunities to categorize phenomena as problems and to conceive solutions, as well as different institutions that can be responsible for doing something. Three concepts are central in this author's approach: that of causal and political responsibility, and of ownership of the problem. "Ownership" refers to the capacity to create or to guide the public definition of a problem, indicating who has the power to describe it and or prescribe it, which is usually a cause for disputes and controversies. This concept allows seeing not only who sought to "appropriate" the problem, but also who seeks to "deny it" or to not be involved with it – as appears to be the case, for example, of automobile manufacturers and beer producers, concerning traffic safety in Brazil. Meanwhile, "causal responsibility" relates to the explanation of the causes of an event or situation. The concept of "political responsibility," in turn, designates who is responsible for controlling or resolving the situation-problem, relating it to the realm of public policy. The three aspects can coincide in the same person or entity, but not necessarily (GUSFIELD, 2009, p.12-17).

## Driving and drinking as a public problem in Brazil: the “Dry Law” as a mark of the public controversy

According to Gusfield’s perspective (2009) we can affirm that it is only in recent years that the combination of alcohol and driving became a public problem in Brazil. The issue began to gain visibility in the early 1990s when the relationship between alcoholic beverages and driving motor vehicles came to be, in some way, addressed both by law and by media reports. In that period, the press presented information about the behavior of Brazilian drivers in traffic and included the consumption of alcoholic beverages as one of the reasons indicated by statistics from the National Department of Transit (Denatran), in 1989, for the rise of automobile accidents involving fatal victims in Brazil, which was the “the world’s most violent country on wheels,” according to an article in the magazine *Super*, in November 1992<sup>2</sup>. The press also reported on a series of traffic accidents related to the ingestion of alcoholic beverages, with greater or lesser representation, depending on the prominence of actors involved in driving the vehicles or the number of fatal victims<sup>3</sup>.

Two laws began to address the issue in the 1990s: Law 9.294, sanctioned on July 15, 1996 by then President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and especially law n° 9.503, which established the Brazilian Traffic Code (CTB) on Sept. 23, 1997. A decade later law (n° 11.275, de 07/02/2006) was enacted, during the administration of President Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, changing three articles of the Brazilian Transit Code, above all concerning drinking and driving<sup>4</sup>. However, the most important legal measure related to this issue came with Law 11.705, of June 19, 2008, which changed

<sup>2</sup> See: “De louco, todo mundo tem um pouco”. Revista *Super*, No. 062, November 1992, available at: <http://super.abril.com.br/cotidiano/violencia-transito-louco-todo-mundo-tem-pouco-440495.shtml>. Accessed: March 2012.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example: “O efeito animal”, *Veja*, magazine edition 1.619, of 13/10/1999. Available at: [http://veja.abril.com.br/131099/p\\_110.html](http://veja.abril.com.br/131099/p_110.html). Accessed: March 2012.

<sup>4</sup> The laws referred to in this article are available at: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03). Accessed: March 2012.

the law from the 1990s and came to be known as the “Dry Law.” According to statements presented in the press at the time, the Dry Law “toughened” the penalties for those who combined drinking and driving.

The Dry Law triggered a series of reactions – immediately, and in the years after its enactment, when it underwent changes. It received support, criticism, indications of its limits and or about the need to increase educational campaigns and enforcement of compliance with the law. In addition, it sparked a group of initiatives by various institutions, such as the realization of police “blitzes” in various states, fines and arrests of drivers in the following period; as well as suits alleging the unconstitutionality of the law, which were filed in court by entities that represent bars and restaurants and by drivers caught in a blitz or involved in accidents. All of this was regularly the subject of news in the communication media; along with the reactions of the courts, legislative and executive branches. The press presented nearly daily reports about compliance or violations of the new law, including those about drivers who refused to take a Breathalyzer test, arguing that the Brazilian constitution determines that no one is required to produce proof against oneself. This fact came to be one of the main points in the controversy, because it placed in direct confrontation individual and collective rights.

It is since the approval of the Dry Law, therefore, that the combination between drinking and driving, and the fight against it to prevent traffic accidents, definitively entered the center of the controversy, and public action and attention in Brazil to an issue that affects the collectivity by the consequences that it raises in various fields. Once considered a subject of the private realm (drinking and driving) this behavior came to be a central issue of collective importance and to be broadly discussed and problematized, whether in the daily conversations of citizens, or in media debates. It is in the context of these discussions and of an event with broad public-media repercussions in the country, which took place in September 2011, that the *It Was No Accident* movement

arose, and the mobilization that began at the time –which we will analyze here.

### Methodological procedures

Our analysis, as emphasized, is supported by the understanding of an event as a fundamental element in the organization of experience and action, in its potential to reveal problems around which a public can emerge and act in the definition and search for solutions. We seek, more precisely, to identify the context and conduct an x-ray of how the *It Was No Accident* movement emerged, and how it occupies different socio-communicational environments to problematize a situation, propose a certain definition of it and stimulate collective action around a proposal to treat the problem.

The *corpus* of the analysis is constituted by 16 journalistic articles published in electronic and digital media between Sept. 18 and November 3, 2011, and accessible via Internet. They refer to the context in which the movement arose and to the beginning of the campaign to collect signatures in support of a popular initiative process to implement a new law. In addition, the *corpus* includes a total of 526 commentaries collected from posts made on the blog *Não Foi Acidente* [It was no Accident], and its Facebook profile. The collection was conducted from July 4 – July 14, 2012. In the case of the Facebook, we collected and analyzed 183 comments: 162 of them made on October 19, 2011, to include the first days of the campaign of signatures, and 21 made on April 30, 2012, in response to the “Carta ao Povo Brasileiro” [Letter to the Brazilian People], posted by the NFA and which criticizes supposed limits of the modification proposed in April by the federal congress to the Dry Law.

In the case of the blog, there were 333 comments. Of these, 29 were made to the “Carta ao Povo Brasileiro” from April 30 to June 10, 2012. The other 304 come from a somewhat random selection process: the last ten pages of comments posted by those who signed the public petition on the NGA blog. These last 304



comments to the petition were made until July 14, 2012 – the day we conducted this specific collection.

### From private drama to collective action: the emergence of the NFA movement

The *It's No Accident* movement rose from an event on Sept. 17, 2011 that affected the experience of a resident of the city of São Paulo, Rafael Baltresca, who has a degree in engineering, was 31 at the time, and who worked as a magician and motivational speaker. Orphaned by his father, on that day he also lost his mother and sister – the housewife Miriam Baltresca, 58, and attorney Bruna Baltresca, 28, respectively. They died when they were hit by a car as they walked out of the Villa Lobos shopping center in the western zone of the city of São Paulo. According to media reports at the time, the driver - Marcos Alexandre Martins, a librarian, 33, was driving at more than 100Km/h, and showed signs of drunkenness, but did not take a breathalyzer test. He was arrested at the site, indicted for murder (when it is understood that someone had an intention, or is responsible for assuming the risk that led to a death). He was released two days later, and allowed to respond to the charges in liberty. The event had broad repercussions in the Brazilian media and continues to reverberate in distinct social and media spaces<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The event that led to the death of Miriam and Bruna Baltresca, the repercussion in the media and the beginning of the campaign to change the law can be seen, for example, in the following sources, which are part of our *corpus*: Programa do Datena, Band TV, 18/09/2011; the O Globo newspaper, 19/09/2011; the newspaper Folha de S. Paulo, 19/09/2011, 03/10/2011, 15/10/2011 and 20/10/2011; Rede Record TV, 20/09/2011; Programa “Mais Você”, TV Globo, 20/09/2011; Rádio Estadão ESPN, 21/09/2011; Jornal do SBT Noite TV, 22/09/2011; the G1 website, 14/10/2011; Jornal da TV Cultura, 15/10/2011; JG TV, 15/10/2011; Jornal Nacional, TV Globo, 18/10/2011; the magazine Veja São Paulo, 02/11/2011; and SPTV, 03/11/2011. They are available on the sites of the respective vehicles, on YouTube and or at the blog of the NFA, and were accessed in April 2012.

Days later, on Sept. 20, in an interview on the program “Mais Você”, on Brazil’s leading television network TV Globo, Rafael Baltresca announced that he would begin an “awareness campaign”, asked that the host Ana Maria Braga support the cause, and spoke of the need to change the traffic laws to “change people’s behavior” and said that he wanted the event involving his family to not be forgotten “as so, so many” have, but for it to be “an example of change”.

On the same day as this interview, Rafael Baltresca created on Facebook the community ‘*Campanha Não Foi Acidente*’, posting on Sept. 22, the video of his interview with Ana Maria Braga. In other interviews on radio and television, on Sept. 21, he said that he would “fight and try to help to do justice in Brazil,” beginning “a Facebook campaign”. He also expressed a need to change both the law as well as people’s behavior – “one is directly related to the other” - citing the case of the use of seat belts in Brazil, when a law requiring their use led to a change in behavior.

On *Facebook*, he made another post on Sept. 25 – photos with his mother and sister – and on Sept. 27, posted a message requesting participation in a “a mission (...) that can change your life and the lives of many people”. After the first posts, which always earned more than 100 “likes” and dozens of comments, the Facebook profile was updated on October 14, 2011, when he announced the creation of a blog and the beginning of a campaign to collect signatures for the presentation of a proposed law based on a popular initiative to be sent to the national congress. The objective explained was to change the Brazilian transit law – “which is too lenient with those who drink, drive and kill,” according to Rafael Baltresca. The description he made on Facebook explained:

My sister, mother and many others who died at the hands of the IMPRUDENT will have a voice. The race has begun...we need one million and three hundred thousand signatures. Help us to promote. Click on [www.NaoFoiAcidente.com.br](http://www.NaoFoiAcidente.com.br) and sign our Public Petition (...) [Rafael Baltresca, post from 14/10/2011, profile of the NFA on Facebook. Highlight in the original].

Affected by the event that led to the death of his mother and sister, he took a position, problematized and politicized the situation. He made a choice: shifted the event from the private realm, from personal pain for the loss of family members, and inscribed it in the realm of a problem that affects other people and whose resolution requires the mobilization and joint action of other citizens.

### A Campaign in Cyberspace and in other spaces

The *appropriation of different media* is an important dimension in the analysis of the rise and activity of the NFA movement. The actions undertaken by the campaign take place in various socio-communicational spaces, but, above all, through the Internet and social media, especially on Facebook. Two public demonstrations, known as the “Walk for Life”, were conducted in the city of São Paulo, on October 15 - which marked the beginning of the collection of signatures – and another October 20, 2011. Nearly 100 people participated in each one. They included relatives and friends of victims of fatal traffic accidents, according to news reports. The movement also participated in debates promoted by other entities, such as the Parliamentary Front against Violence in Traffic, the Order of Attorneys of Brazil (OAB/São Paulo) and the Associação Paulista de Medicina [São Paulo Medical Association], according to information on its Facebook page.

In the traditional and new media, the NFA presented information about, positions and actions of the movement. The blog, which is updated variably, presents the petition to be signed and reverberates news about traffic deaths or about the campaign itself. It also provides information about demonstrations against this form of violence and in support of traffic safety conducted by other civil movements in various cities; it announces the adhesion of groups or public figures from the Brazilian social scene to the cause of the NFA; and lists the name of people, companies and partner institutions. It indicates and gives visibility to the existence of a broader network of people or groups that shares the proposal for

change, and discusses and takes action in relation to the problem of drinking and driving.

In a section denominated “For whom”, the blog makes an “homage” to people killed in various Brazilian cities, since the 1980s, in occurrences that involved drinking and driving<sup>6</sup>. The information and photos are sent to the blog by family members or friends. “They are not numbers, they are faces. They are people who are happy, loved and who had a full life ahead of them. The struggle is for *justice*, for the end of *impunity*, for the *respect* we have for those who have passed, and for the *love* for those who are still with us [...]”<sup>7</sup>.

In addition, the blog presents links to the campaign: a Youtube channel, a Twitter account and a Facebook page. These present their own content, news clippings or information from and about other organizations that work for the prevention of traffic accidents in Brazil and abroad<sup>8</sup>.

Daily promotion of the campaign occurs mainly on Facebook, winning new adherents to the project and signatures. On Oct. 24, 2011 – ten days after the campaign began – there were 88,000 signatures and the number grew to 130,000 on Jan. 7, 2012 and exceeded 500,000 by June 30, 2012. The following year it reached 853,110 supporters and on Feb. 15, 2012 and 937,345 on July 29, 2013 – nearly two years after the beginning of the mobilization<sup>9</sup>. On Facebook, the NFA and its supporters posted and shared news published in the media about the movement or about traffic accidents; promotional materials from the campaign or similar

<sup>6</sup> In 29/07/2013, there were 256 people.

<sup>7</sup> Blog do NFA. Emphasis in the original. Available at: <http://naofoiacidente.org/blog/por-quem/>. Accessed: June 2012.

<sup>8</sup> From 30/06/ 2012 until 29/07/2013, the NFA's Youtube I channel grew from 384 to 844 registrations; Twitter followers from 2,000 to 5,262; and “likes” on the Facebook page grew from 120 thousand to more than 411,800 people. The NFA blog is: <http://www.naofoiacidente.com.br/blog/>. The links of the campaign are: [http://twitter.com/NFA\\_Oficial](http://twitter.com/NFA_Oficial); [http://www.youtube.com/NaoFoiAcidente](http://www.youtube.com/NaoFoiAcidente?gl=BR&hl=pt;e)

<sup>9</sup> Sources: Programa “Mais Você”/TV Globo, 24/10/2011 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cr0buE1uNYw&feature=BFa&list=PL3C366C7A5E6EB332>). Accessed: 30/06/2012; Perfil do NFA no Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/NaoFoiAcidente>). Accessed: 30/06/2012, 15/02/2013 and 29/07/2013.

initiatives by other organizations, in addition to photos and cartoons about the issue, videos and images of public personalities expressing their adhesion; and they make constant appeals for people to sign and promote the petition.

In addition to the blog and the social media, the movement has a regular presence in the traditional media. Since the initiative to launch the campaign, to *appropriate* or make a claim to “ownership” of this public problem, the NFA became an actor and a journalistic source with a regular presence in reporting. These media spaces, in turn, make constant references to the campaign and thus help nourish it. In various comments posted by people who signed the petition in the NFA blog it is possible to see that they became aware of the mobilization and decided to endorse it after having seen articles in television programs.

By observing how the movement appropriates the medias, we see how the media is central to the mobilization strategy adopted by the NFA. From the gestation and development of the campaign in search of the support necessary for the proposed law, various media were triggered in a complementary manner: a) the more traditional, such as television programs and news shows, which announced and gave national visibility to the movement and its cause; and b) the new media and digital social media, such as Blog, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube, which encompass their contents, including the petition to be signed, and became spaces to promote the campaign, and for the expression and articulation of its publics.

### Definition, arguments and social values mobilized

In the commentaries posted on the blog, and mainly on Facebook, included in the *corpus*, many people simply said that they had already signed the petition, that they did their part or that they are passing it on and requesting support from their contact network. Others, particularly on the blog, make criticisms of breaches in the Dry Law; suggest other changes in laws that are directly or indirectly related to the theme; express opinions

and criticisms in relation to the public powers to which they attribute the *political responsibility* for doing something (changing the law, monitoring its enforcement, punishing those who disobey the law); praise and highlight the importance of the initiative to change the law and seek justice, appeal for others to participate; and give statements about deaths of friends or family members in similar traffic accidents.

In the analysis of these discourses promoted by the NFA and its followers, it is possible to identify the way that the participants *define or frame* the situation-problem of driving and drinking, as well as certain *values questioned and or reinforced* in their *argumentations* about the issue and the *proposals for solution* presented. Below we highlight the result of the observation of these dimensions analyzed.

The predominant *definition or framing* of the situation is expressed in the name of the movement – “It Was No Accident”- and is reaffirmed in commentaries posted on the blog and on Facebook. The act of drinking alcohol and driving and what it can provoke (victimize other people, for example) are not the result of a fatality. “It’s not an accident”, according to the discourses: its a “crime” and “murder”, practiced by “irresponsible”, “inconsequential” and “imprudent”; people who do not think of the consequences of their acts and victimize the “just” the “innocent”, and thus “destroy families” and “cause pain and suffering”. They should not be treated differently from those who kill “with a firearm”, and should be “truly punished” and “be in jail”<sup>10</sup>.

The definition or framing of a situation is a basic principle in the organization of experience, according to Goffman (1991). These “frameworks of experience”- which we constantly activate by interpreting and giving meaning to the occurrences of the world – guide us, help us to understand and position us in the situation. They guide and also condition our actions and discourses in relation to a situation. Thus, in the case of the NFA campaign, the definition

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<sup>10</sup> Categorizations and positions taken from the analysis of the comments of: N.G., *Jornal da Cultura*, 15/10/2011; J.C.M., *JG*, 15/10/2011; N. A. , NFA Facebook profile, 19/10/2011; N. R. , NFA Facebook profile, 19/10/2011; M., NFA blog, 10/05/2012 ; G.M., signatory of the public petition, NFA blog, n/d (no date). The names of the people were abbreviated to preserve their identities.

of the problem-situation (a “crime”, committed by someone who “took the risk” of driving after drinking) also limits the *proposal for resolution* which is focused, above all, on the project to change the law to establish “zero tolerance” and toughen the criminal penalties for drivers - to whom are attributed the *causal responsibility* for a considerable portion of traffic accidents with victims<sup>11</sup>.

In the *argumentation* presented, the analysis reveals the belief that a new law and more rigorous forms of punishment will contribute to making citizens aware of the consequences of their actions; to inhibit bad conduct, which is stimulated by impunity; to changing behavior and common values and stimulate others. According to these arguments, the current law is “permissive”- “a person drinks, drives at high speed and kills [...], and absolutely nothing happens”<sup>12</sup>. Others who benefit are “the irresponsible people who drink and go out killing innocent people [...] because they are certain of impunity”<sup>13</sup> or “they feel at will to drink and drive without thinking of other people”.<sup>14</sup> The change in the law would give a chance for “attitudes to change with it”; for people to become aware of how their “choices affect all of society”<sup>15</sup>; or, even to avoid that “we continue to suffer the consequences of the abuses of irresponsible people without love for those close to them and themselves”.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The proposed law based on a popular initiative to change the Traffic Code would determine: that drunken driving be only a criminal act and no longer an administrative violation; the end of acceptable alcohol levels (zero tolerance); that everyone who drives after drinking would face criminal charges; in case of homicide the sentence would increase to five to eight years of prison if the driver has any concentration of alcohol in the blood; every driver involved in an accident or who is the target of police action, under suspect of consuming alcohol or similar substances, will be submit to a clinical exam or legal medical investigation; drunkenness can also be determined by a traffic officer by obtaining proofs permitted by law. The complete proposed law is found on the NFA Blog: <http://naofoiacidente.org/blog/assine-a-peticao> . Accessed: 30/04/2012

<sup>12</sup> Rafael Baltresca, interview on SPTV, 03/11/2011.

<sup>13</sup> I. M. A., signature on the petition, Blog do NFA, n/d (no date).

<sup>14</sup> G.W.D., Idem.

<sup>15</sup> J.S.C., Blog do NFA, n/d.

<sup>16</sup> J.S.S., Idem.

Whether in the appeals made by those who express support for the campaign and to the project so that others also support it and get involved, whether in the criticism aimed at those who drink and drive without considering the consequences for others, the analysis also shows the recurrence of certain *social values* that convoke and sustain the adhesion to the campaign to change current norms. The discourses indicated a call for: *solidarity* “with those who have suffered and suffer from the irresponsibility of others”; the *collective right to safety* in traffic; the “*awareness*” and *responsibility* of individuals for their choices and how they affect others; “*respect*” “*consideration*” and “*love*” for others; and “*respect for life*”, one’s own and of others; and “*justice*” for those who lost their life in accidents involving drunk driving.

Although the proposal for *treating the problem* is focused on the recrudescence of the penalization of drivers – based on the condition that someone who drives after drinking alcohol is charged with a “crime” – some comments included suggestions for complementary measures. These include greater control on the sale and advertising of alcoholic drinks and the creation of alternative transportation alternatives. The arguments are based on the understanding that the “cause” of the campaign for the “proposal to change the law and for the penalization of drivers”, deserves support, but, alone, it would be insufficient to resolve the problem: “taxi fares must come down”, “people must have a viable travel option”<sup>17</sup> There would be a need to penalize other actors “in a severe way as well” (“gas stations and restaurants along highways that sell alcoholic beverages<sup>18</sup>) and for changing the “rules about the sale and advertising of drinks in advertising campaigns, TV, radio, hours, etc”<sup>19</sup>.

The arguments indicate, therefore, that the framing of the situation-problem simply from the perspective of criminalization and penalization of drivers excludes other actors (public and private entities) from responsibility, and other possible and complementary proposals for the resolution of the problem.

<sup>17</sup> A.R.F.R., signature on the public petition, Blog do NFA, n/d.

<sup>18</sup> L.S.S.T., Idem.

<sup>19</sup> L.O.A.C., Idem.



## Final considerations

Upon analyzing how *It Was No Accident* arose and the campaign that it conducts we can observe the force of an event that, initially touching the experience of one individual, is integrated and related to similar events that reveal a public problem that now affects the collectivity in Brazil. The decision to act and the way that the actions become visible trigger a process that shows the power an event has to affect and the scope of the problem related to it, summoning or revealing the action of other subjects and collectives affected by a similar experience, those who have personal interest or those who act in solidarity, to take positions and engage in joint action seeking to discuss, intervene and change the current situation.<sup>20</sup>

The proposal to treat the problem and change the situation takes place through a proposed popular initiative to change the current law. It thus emphasizes a public policy for safety in transit - the law - counting on its rigor, application and enforcement as a way of changing behavior and raising the awareness of citizens. The predominant definition of the situation-problem as a “crime” caused by “irresponsible” people, “murderers” who drive after drinking and do not consider others, conditions the discourses and actions for handling proposals - focused on the recrudescence of control and of penalties for drivers who drink and drive. On the other hand, this form of framing the situation also reveals a set of values - about justice, life and the other - apparently shared and called for as being equally necessary to change the Brazilian

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<sup>20</sup> Although the *Não Foi Acidente* has become the action most well-known and promoted in the media related to the issue of violence in transit in Brazil, it is important to emphasize that there are others, even some that are older than NFA, and based on similar events. See, for example, the cases of “Viva Vitão” (created in July 2011), “Instituto Trânsito Seguro” and “Movimento Nacional de Educação e Humanização do Trânsito e em Defesa da Vida” (Movet), which were created in 2008. An interesting theme for future studies would be to study similarities and differences between organizations acting in this “problematic field” (Quéré, 2005) of violence in transit: their agendas, content and actions, and their different levels of visibility in the media.

traffic situation, and that appear to support the engagement of these people in the mobilization.

The collective action triggered around the project and the public problem is given potential by the appropriation of different tools and socio-communicational spaces. The Internet and online social media *You Tube*, *Twitter* and especially *Facebook* – are used to register and promote the content and actions, reaffirming the potential of these tools to stimulate the participation and activism of citizens, who seek, in some way, to intervene and influence the debate of collective problems and the definition of public policies. By articulating the appropriation of traditional and new medias, the mobilization is amplified, gaining new supporters and social capillarity.

This amplification, however, does not signify rapid adhesion and conquest of the signatures needed for the law based on popular initiative to be presented to the Brazilian congress – the signatures are still being sought two years after the beginning of the campaign. The hypothesis can be raised – and explored in other studies – that the difficulty in more rapidly achieving the support is due less to media support itself (the Internet and its potential for mobilization actions) and more to the content of the campaign. The existence of spaces in social media (*Twitter*, *Facebook*) and even apps that warn about locations of a Dry Law police blitz, which have also mobilized and generated significant adhesion from other publics in recent years in Brazil, also deserve study.

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