

YouTube mediation and the case ‘Complexo do Alemão occupation’: characteristics and use dynamics

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Abstract

This paper analyzes videos on YouTube related to Complexo do Alemão occupation in Rio de Janeiro city in 2010. The purpose is to identify the principal applications of YouTube by its users through this case: a high public visibility event. Information collected from the videos and user profiles were used for quantitative and qualitative analysis. The results conclude that there are a predominance of TV news content replicated by online members, coinciding with TV channel audiences. Visualization and interactivity are related variables. The research has detected a significant concentration of postings by a small group of users in relation to total videos analysis.

Keywords: YouTube. Cyberculture. Online videos. Internet. Digital Culture.

Introduction

The growing importance of the Internet in recent decades marks the need for an analysis of the modes of collective utilization and social appropriation of digital devices

as a mean of gaining an understanding of contemporary social Communication processes. Any investigation in that direction must take into account three main aspects of the current context. First, there is an impressive number of online users that grows by the year¹ and that fact has repercussions on the dynamics of various sectors of social, cultural, political and economic life. Second, the popularization of the digital environment in convergence with the advent of the so-called Web 2.0 has generated huge amounts of data and information socially shared or replicated through the collective use of databases. This last fact is simultaneously accompanied by a complex system of digital protocols and registrations. Third, the routine use in daily life of mobile miniaturized devices such as cell phones, digital cameras, tablets and netbooks that are capable of capturing, processing and inserting digital contents in the network at any time of day and almost anywhere, has been breaking down the barriers of spatial separation and making feasible a new form of Media ubiquity, still in vigorous expansion, and one whose effects need to be studied.

There is a variety of variables involved in this interplay. Internet user profiles have been the target of investigation by researchers or by companies like Google, Apple, Microsoft and Amazon in a bid to identify patterns, descry behavioral traits, understand social Communication processes, detect and measure tendencies or even test hypotheses by using statistical methods allied to qualitative analysis.

If we base our analysis on events with great public repercussions, what characterizes the input of information online when the users themselves are the producers, propagators and consumers of the data, all at the same time? How do individuals appropriate digital tools and applications and how does such appropriation relate to the traditional Media system?

In the light of this broader research agenda, the specific objective of this article is to identify the main characteristics of user appropriation of YouTube, taking as the object of a case

¹ According to International Telecommunications Union data, available at <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/material/pdf/2011%20Statistical%20highlights_June_2012.pdf> Consulted Sept. 8, 2012.

study an event with strong Media repercussions and visibility: the occupation of the huge *Complexo do Alemão* slums in the city of Rio de Janeiro in November 2010. The event occurred in the wake of a series of attacks on police stations and banks and setting fire to vehicles in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, carried out by drug dealers and which culminated with the state government reaction. With backing from the armed forces, the state government determined the occupation of the *Complexo do Alemão*, a huge sprawling set of slums in the northern part of the city. It was announced that the operation would be unleashed on November 28 in a bid to break up the structure of organized crime that dominated the region and was held responsible for the violent outbreaks that preceded the occupation. The center of analysis here is to descry the *locus* of traditional journalistic contents in the broadcasting and reproduction of the online videos.

Given the ease of publication of the audiovisual material recorded, produced or edited by the user and a reasonable freedom to post material that is offered by tools like YouTube, it is only to be expected that there will be a significant volume of amateur videos, homemade productions, parodies, narratives, video-graphic testimony, criticisms, expressions of support and so on, associated to events of that kind. The importance of the present analysis lies in obtaining an understanding of the dynamics of the dissemination of such material and of the types of content that online users produce or replicate in the light of major high profile events with great Media visibility and a strong impact on public opinion. We are interested in discovering whether the actions of these online profiles constitute a new source of contents regarding such events or they merely replicate the narratives propagated by the regular Media. The data analysis consists of cross-referencing the information displayed in these online versions with the user profiles and, allied to that, conducting a qualitative analysis; something that will enable us to map out an understanding of the phenomenon and contribute methodologically and theoretically to similar research in the future.

To explain the trajectory of the research and the questions that guided it, this paper is divided into three parts. The following section offers a brief overview of the main theoretical discussions involving the social appropriation of digital tools with a special focus on the debates about YouTube. The aim is to characterize the digital tool and situate it in the current Communication system, identifying its tensions and cohesions with the mass Media. The following section clarifies the cross section of analysis and the methodology used for the case study. The last section will be dedicated to presenting the empirical data gathered from 346 videos, subjecting them to statistical analysis and accompanying them with the respective qualitative analysis.

The trajectory of YouTube and the Media

There are websites on the internet offering a great variety of video-graphic contents². The choice of YouTube for this research was based on the hegemonic position this site holds at the moment in the global and national spheres alike; it is the most popular site for posting and exhibiting videos and is among the 10 most accessed sites in Brazil and the world at large³.

YouTube was created in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim in California. From the outset the website aimed at providing an opportunity for the expression of independent, individual and collective content, avoiding the barriers and filters so typical of the former audio-visual Media like television and cinema. That idea was neatly expressed in the site's former motto: "*broadcasting yourself*"⁴. Youtube co-founder Chad Hurley declared that the site would be "a democratic platform" available to the general user and for the "independent production of content" whereby "creative people that produce content will have more

² Such as Joost; AOL Video; Yahoo! Video; MSN Video etc. There are others that produce transmissions in streaming, such as Ustream.

³ See < <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/BR> > consulted on January 15, 2012.

⁴ This catch phrase no longer appears on the YouTube homepage

opportunities in the future without being tied to a [broadcasting] network” (MAY 2010, p.503).

Their project gained fame rapidly with a growing volume of users posting and watching videos, creating their own channels and sharing their experiences socially. In 2006, Google bought up the site for US\$ 1.65 billion and from then on it has been incorporated to Google’s projects and directives.

In less than a decade the website has become an important channel for video-graphic expression and interaction with a broad spectrum of users. Because of its wide outreach and the dynamics of social networks the videos have come to reflect individual and collective reactions⁵ to questions with strong repercussions on the general public, especially those that lend themselves to representation in video form.

Although it constitutes an innovation in the way video-graphic material is consumed, as compared to television for example, YouTube needs to be addressed in a manner that transcends the usual collocation of old Media *versus* new Media. Currently YouTube is becoming an important replicator of mass Media productions as well (GEHL, 2009; KIM, 2012; MAY, 2010; SHIFMAN, 2011). That is the result of its gradual appropriation on the part of organizations in the corporate sector and other institutions that use this medium for marketing and advertising their products and also due to the activities of ordinary users who, on their own initiative, record, publish and share industrial productions such as TV programs, news broadcasts, cinematographic productions and others.

On the other hand, this kind of appropriation whereby the users upload mass Media videos has led to the appearance of a new kind of agent located in the space between those that watch videos on YouTube and the big Media companies:

Simply put, archival work implies two jobs: storage and display. In the case of YouTube, the former is largely done at no charge by the users of YouTube. They are, essentially, the curators of storage and classification. The latter,

⁵ They may be in the form of individual posts, or collective interaction and sharing, or comments or other means.

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however, can be done for significant profit by bloggers, entrepreneurs and large media companies. These are curators of display and exhibition. They are what Greenberg would call the mediators of YouTube (GEHL, 2009, p.46).

That would make the supposedly democratic and participative openness of YouTube and other initiatives – like the Participative Journalism in the sphere of the Web 2.0 whose underlying principle is that all who wish to can post information – function as preconfigured systems, a kind of exploitation of unpaid work done by the users. In most cases, even though they may not see it themselves, they are actually working for the big Media enterprises under the guise of online participation (GEHL, 2009; KPEROGI, 2011).

If we take a closer look at the circulation of information about facts and events – with an emphasis on journalistic activity – digital tools like YouTube are neither replacing nor threatening the big Media sector. In fact they are altering its dynamics and opening up new fronts of analysis because they have made the contemporary Communication process far more complex:

Video sites like YouTube give news organizations the opportunity to reach audiences through a secondary market of mouse clicks and forwarded e-mails, and viewers of news are now part of the distribution chain. The ability to tease out the motivations for that activity can play a part in identifying opinion leaders in the social networking spaces who will be attractive for media companies to know. The changes in video distribution are important for researchers also, as they struggle to understand the changing relationship between mass communication and interpersonal communication functions – particularly for media content that's delivered on demand and through new social networks (HANSON; HARIDAKIS, 2008, p.8).

In that respect, relatively traditional themes in the field of Communication like agenda setting and gatekeeper, for example, gain new facets for discussion. As Bruns (2005) has pointed out, the moment that the technical characteristics of digital support managed to break the barriers to information publication (because of their immense data storing and exhibiting capacity)

the function of *gatekeeper* finds itself coexisting with what that author refers to as *gatewatcher*. It means that in addition to the gatekeeper function (editors, journalists, information producers etc.) visibility is also enhanced by the repercussion of those that watch a given piece of information while at the same time sharing, endorsing or commenting on it, by means of those tools that typify the social Media like YouTube, Pinterest, Twitter and Facebook. That is why it is so important, in the case of this system of communicative mediation, to understand the characteristics of those active users that post videos and their relation with their associated social networks.

In the specific case of YouTube, the good performance of a user or their profile is measured by the adhesion of a large number of faithful followers (a network), or by having their videos “endorsed” or by receiving millions of accesses (Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, 2009). It may be that the hyperactivity of some users will concentrate in their hands a large part of the information flows, as has been the case with other online tools (CASTELLS, 1999; DAVIS, 2005).

Corpus of the analysis and methodological parameters

The case study presented in this article specifically sets out to analyze the characteristics of the way its users appropriated YouTube to focus on the theme of a major event with big public repercussions. The case in question was the occupation by security forces of the state of the sprawling set of slums known as the *Complexo Alemão* in the city of Rio de Janeiro in 2010. It turned out to be one of the largest of such operations ever undertaken and it was a major Media event with great repercussions all over Brazil, capturing the public’s attention and huge audiences in the Communication Media with live journalistic coverage.

The event was scheduled to take place on November 28, 2010 and was designed to capture members of drug gangs and to break up the criminal organization that dominated the region and was held to be responsible for the recent outbreaks of violence.

It involved around 2,600 police officers and army troops as well as making use of helicopters, police cars and armored vehicles⁶.

From the moment the troops gathered at the entrance to the *Complexo* and the police and military entered the *favelas*, the event became the main item on Communication Media agendas throughout the country with live broadcast coverage typical of a big Media event. It was pre-announced, took place in a big urban center, with strong almost spectacular visual appeal that was sure to keep it in the public eye; all those aspects made it capable of generating a huge volume of recorded images, video testimony, live action videos, parodies, etc. as well as revealing the reactions of online users, their mode of access, remarks, opinions, discussions, etc.

The study was based on a *corpus* that consisted of 346 videos exhibited in the period from November 28, 2010 to January 22, 2011. The material was gathered using YouTube's internal search engine and the following screening tags as the entry points: invasion occupation, hilltop, complexo alemão. It must be noted that the selection of tags used terms commonly employed by the users themselves, a technique sometimes referred to as "folksonomy" (TRANT, 2009; AQUINO, 2008): meaning the public's capacity to converge, sharing and cataloging a theme through the collective use of a term that becomes generally adopted, so that it serves as an entry point for the sea of online information. Thus they correspond to a representative sample of the contents broadcast on those events.

To obtain the sample for analysis the following procedure was adopted; three screenings were made of the raw results obtained by the search engine. The first consisted of screening out those with repeated addresses (URLs). The second filtered out those videos that were created on dates prior to the event as they lay outside the temporal scope of the research and the last was done during the "reading" of the videos when those that had no connection to

⁶ Journalistic reports of the operation are available at: <<http://noticias.uol.com.br/cotidiano/ultimas-noticias/2010/11/28/policiais-comecam-operacao-para-invadir-morro-do-alemao.htm>> or <http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/policia-invade-complexo-do-alemao-2919504>. Consulted on Dec. 15, 2011.

the event were eliminated. They had been pulled in by the search engine because of a coincidence in the tags⁷.

Once the corpus of the analysis had been defined, an electronic spread sheet was used to register the information extracted from each video. This was done in the period from February 1 to 7, 2011. Chart 1 below shows the kind of information that was extracted from the videos about the event and about their “authors”:

Chart 1 – Description of information used for database construction

| Video Data | Author/profile data |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Video link (URL) | Nickname |
| Date video posted | Declared age |
| Date first comment posted | Date of YouTube account opened (participant since.....) |
| Number of comments | Number of videos posted (sent in) |
| Number of views | Most recent YouTube activity (... days ago) |
| Video time length | Number of registered Followers for the channel |
| Number of LIKE (Thumbs up) | |
| Number of NOT LIKE (Thumbs down) | |
| Format (narrative category) | |

Source: Silva, 2011.

The variable “narrative category” was divided into 9 sub-categories based on the nature of the video contents. This was based on a prior empirical prospection designed to identify the most recurrent categories applicable to this case. They are as follows:

- a) *Didactic* – a narrative organized with images and arguments that attempt to demonstrate a certain aspect of a question in an instructive, educational manner;
- b) *Play-acting* – when people appear in the video acting out the role of certain characters;
- c) *Journalistic* – when the video presents excerpts of news reports from

⁷ For example, “German (*Alemão*) tourist climbs the hill”; “German creates sports complex”, “German army occupation” etc.

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TV news programs for example. To be classified in this category the video must have at least some part of it reproducing the original sound and images of the replication;

- d) **Message** – when the video carries written phrases superimposed on the images;
- e) **Musical-clip** – in this type of narrative the moving images are associated to a musical sound track;
- f) **Musical-slides** – here a series of static images is associated to a musical sound track;⁸
- g) **Eye-witness** – the video was recorded at the moment the scenes it shows (or other material closely related to them) were unfolding so that it reproduces what the person filming them actually saw;
- h) **Parody** – when the video uses already existing images and produces a parody by dubbing sound over them or a musical soundtrack;
- i) **Testimony** – when someone facing the camera gives their account or opinion about something as if they were talking to the video spectator.

It must be stated that the videos were not necessarily classified in a single category as some of them could be classified in more than one. Thus the idea of the categories is not to classify the rate of occurrence of closed categories but rather to identify the most frequently occurring narrative forms in the sample.

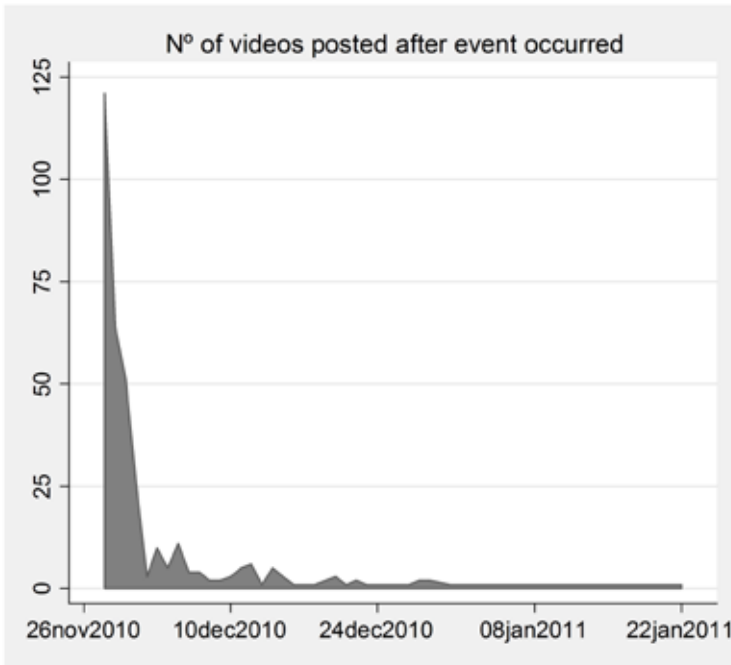
YouTube and the occupation of the *Complexo do Alemão*: analysis

For the purpose of this article we have focused on analyzing variables such as dates of posting, number of views, number of comments, video category, number of videos posted, number of followers registered for the channel/profile and other profile characteristics that shed light on key questions like posting dynamics, visibility, user pro-activity, and predominant narrative forms.

⁸ It must be made clear that if the video presents photographs or moving images taken from a TV news program or newspaper it is only classified as “journalistic” if it reproduces the excerpts with the original sound and image. A moving image without the original sound track, is not sufficient to classify the video as “journalistic”. In other words in this latter case it is merely a collage of images in a new narrative – a musical clip if the images are in movement and as musical-slides if the images are static.

First of all the results give us an overall idea of the dynamics of video posting insofar as they reveal the time lapse between the event in question and the online posting. Graph 1 shows that the great majority of postings was concentrated in the first three days following the event, accounting for 68.41% of the total:

Figure 1 – Videos posted by days of the week



Source: Silva and Mundim – YouTube (2011)

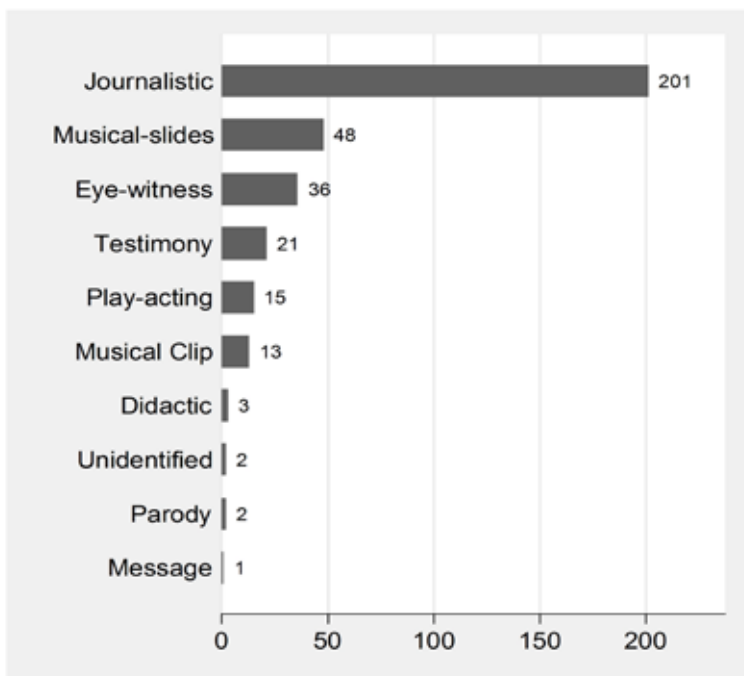
It can be seen that the intensity of posting is clearly linked to the heat of the event unfolding. It is no coincidence that about one third of the videos (35%) were posted on the day the invasion took place.

As regards to the types of narrative, generally speaking the results show a clear predominance of videos that replicate journalistic matter taken from traditional Media sources, thereby corroborating the intermediating role of “curator” of mass Media content identified by Gehl (2009). As can be seen from Graph

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2, of the 343 classifiable videos, 201 (around 59%) were classified as journalistic narratives (that is to say they contained at least some TV news footage with integral reproduction⁹ of parts of news programs¹⁰). Those percentages would be even higher if we were to take into account the *musical-clip* and *musical-slides* narratives that make use of Media contents in their production even though they are fragmentary selections edited by the YouTube user.

Figure 2 – Narrative categories identified



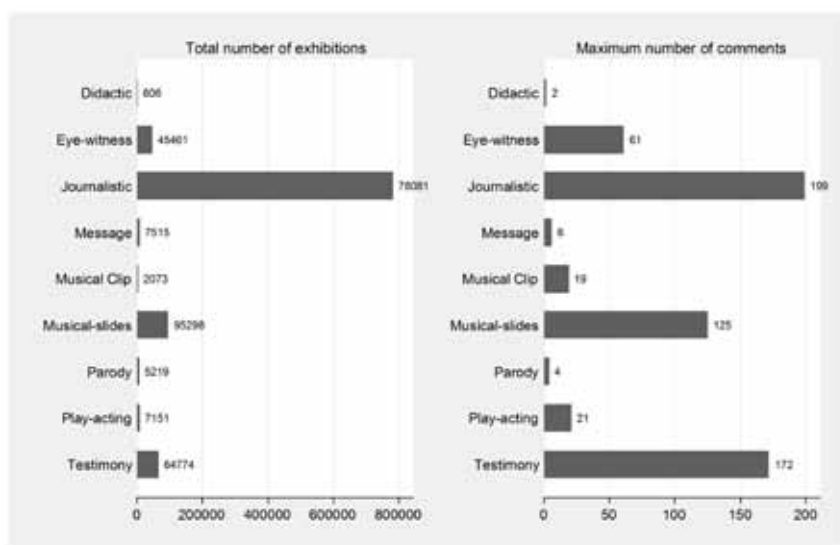
Source: Silva and Mundim – YouTube (2011)

⁹ Integral in this case means the original sound and images without any editing even though they may be just short fragments of a report, for example.

¹⁰ Videos classifiable in more than one category were less than 7% of the total sample.

The predominance of narratives with journalistic content can be viewed from two additional angles: comparing the types of narratives on the one hand and the number of views and comments on the videos on the other. Graph 3 shows that the videos with a journalistic format were exhibited 780,815 times during the period under analysis; a far higher number than that achieved by any other category. In the aspect of comments, it was, once more, the journalistic category that registered the highest numbers; in second place in this aspect came the testimony category. The videos that received the smallest numbers of comments were the message, parody and didactic categories (see Graph 3):

Figure 3 – Total views and maximum numbers of comments



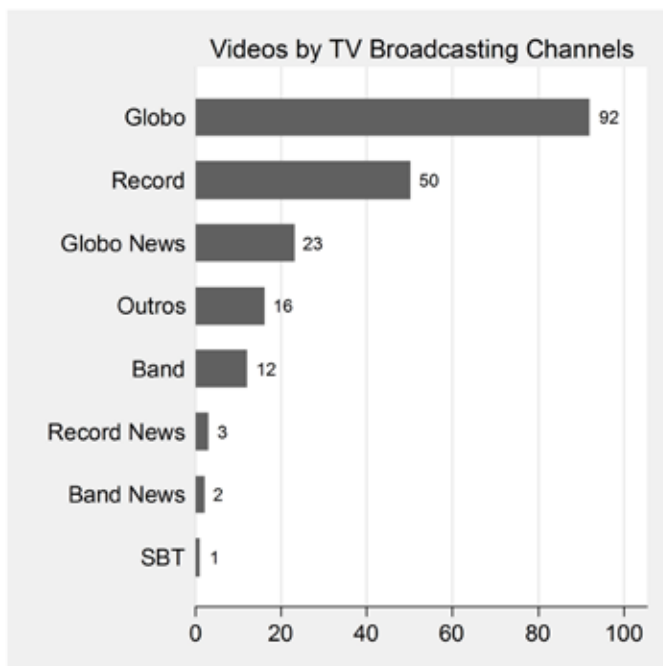
Source: Silva and Mundim – YouTube (2011)

Graph 4 shows that 115 of the 199 journalistic narrative-type videos¹¹ 50.7% were reproduced using images broadcast by the

¹¹ It can be seen from Graph 2 that there were actually 201 videos with journalistic content altogether but 2 of them could not be associated to any of the broadcasting channels. That is why N, in Graph 4, is 199 and not 201.

Globo TV network (92 or 47% in the open TV channels and 23 or 11.7% in its cable TV channel Globo News). That gives a clear idea of people's personal preferences in regard to watching TV¹².

Figure 4 – Journalistic narratives by TV broadcasting channels



Brazilian TV Broadcasting Channels (N=199)
Source: Silva and Mundim – YouTube (2011)

An examination of the profiles of those posting videos revealed a strong connection between the quantities of videos posted by the individual's profile (historical profile total and the frequency of posting of journalistic-type videos). On average those individuals who have most posted videos since they established their YouTube profiles are precisely the ones who most tend to post videos in the journalistic narrative category. Research

¹² TV audience data (2010) in Mídia Dados: <<http://midiadados.digitalpages.com.br/home.aspx?edicao=2>> consulted on July 14, 2012.

undertaken by Hanson and Haridakis (2008) suggests that YouTube users who share traditional Media news items tend to do so as a means of inter-personal expression and that naturally tends to mirror their preferences as TV viewers.

A second cross-referencing process sought to identify any possible relation between video visibility (represented by the variable 'number of views') and the interaction among the YouTube users (represented by the variable 'feedback-number of comments'). Pearson correlation tests¹³ ($r = 0.89$, $n = 345$, $p < 0.01$) showed a strong, statistically significant correlation between those two variables. The growth in the number of views was accompanied by a growth in the number of comments. It was no mere coincidence that in spite of the journalistic videos being the ones that aroused the greatest numbers of comments in absolute terms or that have at least one comment registered, they are not the most commented videos in proportional terms. In general, around 50% of the journalistic, play, and musical-clip videos received some kind of commentary, but the eye-witness videos showed a different pattern and they were the videos with the highest proportion being commented; 80% of the total posted.

Apart from the number of comments, the relation of interactivity with the user profile that posted a video can be measured by the numbers of the buttons expressing approval or disapproval of the video that are clicked on. Not everyone that watches a video necessarily comments on it or reacts and so the activation of those buttons means that the viewer was in some way affected by the content displayed. In spite of their being the quantitative majority in the research sample, the journalistic videos are not the ones that most arouse a response in their

¹³Pearson's correlation test seeks to determine the degree of association or correlation between two numerical variables, X and Y. The values attributed to r range from -1 to 1. The nearer the value obtained is to 1 the greater the degree of association in which case, when one variable increases the other accompanies it and increases too. The nearer the value obtained in the test is to -1 the more the two variables vary in opposite directions, that is, if one increases, the other decreases. The closer the value is to 0 the less likelihood there is of any correlation existing between the variables in question. It must be remembered that no kind of causality is implicit in such relations when they are detected.

viewers. The eye-witness videos are the ones that receive the most clicks of approval (clicking on the thumbs up icon) because they are personalized visions of the event and not just replication of material already broadcast by other Media.

In a similar pattern to that shown by the comments there was an evident and statistically significant relation found between the number of views and the volume of approvals and disapprovals using the thumbs up thumbs down buttons ($r = 0.82$, $n = 344$, $p < 0.00$). That confirmed the relation between visibility and interaction/feedback in this case. It also confirmed that there is no significant relation between the size of the social network profile (number of followers per profile) and the interactivity represented by the like and dislike expressions ($r = -0.10$, $n = 313$, $p < 0.21$). On the other hand, when we evaluated whether visibility (number of views) is linked to the size of the video displayer's social network (number of registered followers) the same tests revealed a very weak negative connection ($r = -0.10$, $n = 335$, $p < 0.05$). The number of people associated to a profile also appears to have little influence on the volume of interaction, that is, the number of feedbacks received; the test showed that there is no direct relation between the number of registered followers of the profile and the number of comments ($r = -0.01$, $n = 335$). Thus the case study in question shows that any supposition that the social network attached to the profile (represented by the occurrence of comments) makes a difference to the interaction because of the closer links it represents can be discarded. What is actually more relevant to the interactions is the number of views. Interactivity is more strongly related to the video's visibility in this case, rather than to the size of the person or profile's group of followers. It cannot be stated that this rule is universally applicable because the relation can vary according to the theme being posted. In the opposite direction, in other cases in which the theme has a much more personal appeal, the size of the network may be an important variable affecting interactivity and elevating the number of comments.

In regard to the characteristics of the profiles that posted videos and the kinds of narratives, it is possible to make some

interesting analysis. The aspect of age group, as informed in the YouTube profile, revealed two main age groups, one embracing those aged 34 or less and the other, those aged 35 or over. The results are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Narrative categories and age informed by users (profiles)

| | 15 to 34 | 35 plus | % Total |
|----------------|----------|---------|---------|
| Play-acting | 9% | 1% | 6% |
| Testimony | 3% | 24% | 12% |
| Eye-witness | 8% | 33% | 19% |
| Journalistic | 47% | 16% | 33% |
| Musical-slides | 24% | 22% | 23% |
| Musical-clip | 9% | 4% | 7% |
| N | 98 | 76 | 174 |

Source: Silva and Mundim – YouTube (2011)

NB: The categories ‘Didactic’, ‘Messaging’, ‘Unidentified’, and ‘Parody’ were eliminated from the analysis as the number of observations was too low (< 10).

It can be seen that the age informed in the user profile does not seem to influence the production or posting of videos in the Musical-clip category but it clearly interferes in the eye-witness and testimony categories of narratives, in favor of the older age groups. The contrary seems to be the case with the journalistic narratives where the younger age groups prevail. That raises two questions we have no answers for: why do the older people prefer to post videos in the Testimony and Eye-witness formats? Again, why is it that presumably younger YouTube users prefer to post videos replicating journalistic contents of the mass Media? Only specific qualitative research will be capable of producing an answer to them.

Further analysis of the profiles/channels data with a focus on the posting dynamics shows that generally there is a low level of uploading for the greater number of profiles and a small group of profiles where uploading is extremely intense. Thus in regard

to the variable “number of videos posted by the profile” the data were as follows (Table 2):

Table 2 – Numbers of videos posted by user profiles

| Nº of videos posted | Nº of Users | % | Nº of Videos | % |
|---------------------|-------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| 1 video | 132 | 81.0% | 132 | 38.2% |
| 2 videos | 13 | 8.0% | 26 | 7.5% |
| 3 videos | 3 | 1.8% | 9 | 2.6% |
| 4 videos | 5 | 3.1% | 20 | 5.8% |
| 5 videos | 2 | 1.2% | 10 | 2.9% |
| 6 videos | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 7 videos | 4 | 2.5% | 28 | 8.1% |
| 8 videos | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 9 videos | 1 | 0.6% | 9 | 2.6% |
| 10 videos or more | 3 | 1.8% | 112 | 32.4% |
| N | 163 | | 346 | |

Source: Silva and Mundim – YouTube (2011)

The sample analyzed in this research contained 163 profiles of YouTube users that posted videos on the selected theme. 132 of them (81%) only posted one video, 13 (8%) posted 3 videos and only 3 (1.8%) posted 10 videos or more. These 3 groups of profiles were responsible for 112 videos, that is, 32% of all the videos that made up the sample. That suggests that most users are not very active in posting material while at the same time there is a much smaller group that is highly active in doing so. This last group answered for almost one third of all the videos published on the theme in the period analyzed. That indicates, at least in this particular case, that there is some kind of concentration of video posting activity and it identifies the co-existence of two distinct kinds of users: one hyperactive and the other hypoactive. Thus the asymmetry among what Castells (1999) calls those performing “inter-agency” as opposed to those “interacting” and Davis (2005) denominated as “posters” versus “luckers” is confirmed.

Finally, in regard to the dynamics of the relations between the profile activity and its social network, Table 3 presents the results of the Pearson *r* correlation testing for the data cross-referencing

between the number of followers registered for the profile/channel and the number of videos sent in by the same (which reflects on the prior posting activity of the user and his or her channel).

Table 3 – Correlations between the views, comments, registered followers, videos and time of existence of YouTube profile

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
|-------------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|------|
| (1) N ^o of Views | 1.00 | | | | |
| (2) N ^o of Comments | .88** | 1.00 | | | |
| (3) N ^o of Followers | -.12* | -.08 | 1.00 | | |
| (4) Profile Existence (days) | .02 | -.01 | .23** | 1.00 | |
| (5) N ^o of videos posted | .07 | .08 | .56** | -.07 | 1.00 |

** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

Source: Silva and Mundim – YouTube (2011)

It can be seen from the analysis focused specifically on variable (3) ‘number of registered followers for the profile’ that there is a moderate degree of association with the ‘number of videos posted’ (5). In other words, those YouTube users that are most active in posting videos also have a larger number of followers, although the numbers in themselves do not allow us to establish any kind of specific causal relationship.

Conclusions

This article has endeavored to produce an analysis of the mediations that take place in one of the most popular sites dedicated to online exhibition of video-graphic material, the YouTube, by typifying the videos posted associated to an event that had huge repercussions among the general public. The results show the clear predominance of journalistic material and content replicated from the Media. That coincides with audience ratings outside the sphere of the Internet where it so happens that the TV networks with the biggest audience ratings are also the ones

with the greatest numbers of online videos posted replicating their material. The study has also confirmed that there is a strong relation between the number of times a video is viewed and the volume of comments and, furthermore, that the size of the network of followers associated to the given profile (channel) bears no relation to the volume of comments in this case.

In spite of the fact that the journalistic videos are by far the most replicated they were by no means the most commented in proportional terms among the categories that were subjected to analysis. They also failed to appear among those that received the greatest numbers of “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” in proportional terms. It is likely that the kind of person that watches this category of video production is more interested in watching the contents and less in interacting with the profile that is posting it.

Generally speaking the profile of the YouTube users is one of infrequent activity considering that a considerable part of those in the sample only have one video related to the event posted in their profiles. On the other hand, there is a hyper-active minority that is responsible for the greater part of the total number of event-related videos that were posted.

The results obtained and presented here are by no mean universally applicable. It is highly probable that the type of event affects the dynamics of appropriation of the YouTube users in the general sphere and affects the relation between “reproducing material of the traditional Media” *versus* “broadcasting yourself” in the specific sphere. That is a sporadic contribution, indeed, but useful, nevertheless, in the light of the complexity of Online Communication. Future studies dedicated to comparing events with distinct characteristics offer a promising horizon for analysis. Finally, it is important to underscore that statistical methods on their own are incapable of providing answers to all the questions that arise; the contributions of Social Science disciplines must be used as a qualifying element in that sense.

It must also be stated that all the phenomena cited above are still incipient and accordingly call for caution in the analytical processes and for further empirical efforts in the bid to gradually

obtain a solid knowledge base. The YouTube's origins, trajectory and current characteristics call on us to think about how digital tools, that bring with them a huge potential for decentralization and complementarity in the information circulation processes, are currently formatting themselves internally and externally; how they are adapting and composing a much broader Communication system. At the same time it is an important time to reflect on the Internet ambiances in the aspect of their relations to other means of Communication, including the traditional Media and to do so outside of the usual perspective of mere contraposition.

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