A communicative weave

Relations between violence and communication in the peripheral areas of Colombia
Violence and the production of a weave made of memory and silence

Understanding the impact of the use of communications by civil society organizations in response to the armed conflict and violence in their territories, especially in the southern part of the country (in the departments of Putumayo and Huila).

- Mocoa and Putumayo, from 1991 to 2010
Context I

- Colombia: A Fragil State? and like some academics now say: “Our Nameless War”.

- PNUD: violence is not singular, but plural

- FARC: A guerrilla group acting since 1964, ELN, illegal armed groups

- Death squads, paramilitary organizations, self-defenses militias

- Drug traffic, emerald traffic, gold traffic, gasoline mafias, etc.

- Government actions

- Mixed relation between the media system and the political elite. The current president Santos carries on the name of a family that was the owner of a main media system (and his cousin, with the same family name, is his most likely contender for the next elections)
The New Orders of The Violence

Source: *To Defeat Fear*, by Torres et al.
Context II


- Rodriguez, María Clemencia - *Citizen’s Media Against Armed Conflict: Disrupting Violence in Colombia*

- Joseph Bock - *The Technology of Nonviolence: Social Media and Violence Prevention*
Context II

• Results of the Research Project “Impacts of the political and military violence in the south of Colombia between 1990 y 2010” by Torres, W.F. et al. leads to the question of what people do to deal with the violence in their populations.

• People reacted through communicative approaches, even with their own silence.
A weave of communication in the south of the country

• A weave of oral communications (indigenous tribes)

• A weave of written communications (magazines reproduced and passed from hand to hand)

• A weave of citizen's media communications

• A weave of cultural forms of communication (carnivals, even silence)
Context II

- Examples can be found in the work of María Clemencia Rodríguez, “Citizen’s Media Against Armed Conflict: Disrupting Violence in Colombia”, which shows that isolated communities react with some agency to the violence through the use of citizen’s media.

- Community radio station “Radio Andaquí” and the “radiocycle” (mobile radio unit in a bycicle) responds to a guerrilla attack on December 31, 2001.

- Communications Collective of Montes de María. To defeat the fear and build a community process, for example the Purple Rose of Cairo Street-Film Project as an nonviolent approach against the death squads in October, 2000.

- Citizen’s radio in Magadalena Medio, a Community radio Station’s Network.
Context II

• Noteworthy finding across the country: young movements against violence in the radios or through cultural actions, especially theater.

• An Spanish initiative is translated into the Colombian context: “Memory Ephemeral Theatre”, and thanks to direct action and social media coordinates actions across the country.
Context II

• Reactions in the south of the country:
• Citizen’s media: radios, magazines, newspapers, street-film
• Cultural actions like theather, carnivals
• Direct actions, such as confrontation or negociation with different actors, or an active silence in other cases
• But, one approach is missing...
The Missing Approach

• Social Media an a web-related approach. Example: Ushuahidi

• How civil society and community-based organizations use social media to prevent and confront violence.

• Search for a comparative perspective in other countries.
Survey 2012

• National Survey, 2012.
• Lead by Wisconsin University, Dr. H. Rojas.
mobile phone access

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The graph shows the percentage of people with and without mobile phone access.
Peace process

• One of the things that the guerrilla want to negotiate: media regulations

• What do we lack? Actionable information and a legal framework (for example, bloggers are not considered journalists), impact research
Thank you

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