‘Pasolini en medellin’ a participatory video experience to counter violence in Medellin-Colombia

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COLOMBIA

Is also the Latin American country with the longest-running internal armed conflict.

Since 1948 and counting
Guerrilla presence on 2011
Paramilitary groups
Presence on 2011
BACRIM - BANDAS CRIMINALES

Tras la captura del pez gordo del narcotráfico conocido como ‘Don Mario’, las autoridades ponen la mira en 10 organizaciones y sus pequeños ejércitos que controlan el negocio de la droga en el país. ¿Cuáles son y dónde operan?

La historia ha demostrado que el narcotráfico en Colombia es un negocio de nunca acabar. Por desgracia, año tras año ha sobrevivido a las acciones de la fuerza pública y a la estrategia que cada gobierno trae bajo la manga; aunque cortan las cabezas y las colas de estas organizaciones, por algún lado

Alta Guajira
Urabá
Sur de Bolívar
Magdalena Medio
Los Paisas
Águilas Negras
Nueva Generación
Erpac
Los Rastrojos
Los Machos
Todas las BACRIM
Ver cabecillas

Criminal Bands presence on 2011
17,459
Homicide cases on 2010

77.95% (13,610 cases)
Happened in urban areas

HOMICIDE RATE IN COLOMBIA 2010

(Colombian medical-forensic system report 2010)
“According to Colombian human rights organization CODHES, more than 280,000 people were forcibly displaced in 2010. Amnesty International estimates that over the last 25 years, between 3 and 5 million people have been internally displaced in Colombia. The Office of the Attorney General is investigating more than 27,000 cases of enforced disappearance committed during the course of the hostilities, although the true number of enforced disappearances is thought to be significantly higher”.

“In the last 25 years, between 3 and 5 million people have been internally displaced in Colombia”
Colombian people in rural and urban areas are surrounded by armed actors and violence practices in everyday life.
To many years of internal armed conflict

As a result, violence is placed so deeply into our minds that has become normalized.

"Resolving everyday conflicts with violence and force is perceived as acceptable and effective" (Rodriguez, 2011)
Despite the violence, an increasing number of Colombian citizens are using media tools and strategies to counter its effects, to reconstitute webs of meaning, identities, and memories (Rodriguez, 2008, 2011; Franco, Rincon & Nieto, 2010; Roman 2010).
"The Colombian war exists!
But society has survived beyond its politicians, warriors and rulers because they exercised cultural resistance in Communication"
(Rincón, 2008, p.3).
Colombia has a long history of media activism and community media.

Radio Sutatenza was one of the first community-based media outlets in the history of communication for social change (Gumurcio-Dragon, 2011; Rodriguez, 2008). Thereafter, different strategies used radio, television, video, photography, newspapers, and even graffiti.
According to the Ministry of Culture of Colombia there are:

- 651 Community radio broadcasting licenses
- 553 community tv licences
- 26 indigenous radio stations
- 2 indigenous tv stations
an unknown number of experiences are working
On colombia, using communication to address violence,
but there are Not listed in the reports,

• because they work without license
  (away from the national policies),

• because they use different ways to broadcast
  (like youtube, vimeo, web radio, free blogs,
cell phones, or even piracy as an strategy to diffuse their
  own work)

• or because they identify themselves not
  as community media.
In 2001, Clemencia Rodriguez coined the term 'citizen's media' by taking elements of Chantal Mouffe´s 'radical democracy and citizenship' approach and Jesus Martin Barbero´s 'political power' concept, in order to rename the communication processes developed by active citizens (Rodriguez, 2001).
As proposed by Mouffe, “citizenship” is an acquired political identity rather than a given social status, so identity must be constructed through action; hence citizens are active agents in the construction of their own citizenship (Rodriguez, 2001).
The concept of “political power” as proposed by Jesus Martin Barbero, refers to the power that communities have to name the world in their own terms and to make it count. In this sense, Barbero uses the word "count" in its double meaning: to tell and to be taking into account (Rodriguez, 2001)
The link between identity and narrative, and between citizenship and action, lead Rodriguez to explore citizen's media as promoting symbolic processes that allow people to name the world in their own words (Rodriguez, 2001).
This means that citizens' media focus on how to trigger social change rather than focus on who produces the content (community media) or the subject of that content (alternative media).
This shift in focus to the cultural and social processes that arise when communities gain media skills and access to reshape their own identities (Rodriguez, 2001), also points to the need to examine processes of communication (rather than the products), as the transformative element for the communities.
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• How does violence affect media practices? And how does communication affect violent practices?
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- How does violence affect media practices? And how does communication affect violent practices?

- What role does citizen media can play in violent contexts?
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• How does violence affect media practices? And how does communication affect violent practices?

• What role does citizen media can play in violent contexts?

• What are the hows, wheres, and whys of self-representation, critical thinking, empowerment and social change that are/or not taking place?
The last report of the National Commission on Reparation and Reconciliation of Colombia (‘CNRR’ in Spanish) claimed that Colombians must talk about violence in order to understand how communities construct strategies to resist and resignify their lives in the midst of the pain and the horror that violence imposes over them.

(interview with Gonzalo Sánchez Gómez, director of the historical memory group of CNRR, published on 'el colombiano' newspaper, on nov 13, 2011).
Omar Rincon (2007) encourages talking about violence from a different perspective. He argues that it is imperative to narrate what is happening in Colombia, but not from an academic standpoint, or from the state, or from the mass media, but from the everyday experiences of people in the communities. 

**Silence is no longer possible** (Rincon, Saffon, Cadavid, et al, 2007)
However, violence is so pervasive that there is never time to re-group and analyze their/our practices of resistance; there is only time to react in the ongoing situation.
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Here, doing is everything
(Nordstrom in Rodriguez, 2011).
Nonetheless, it is necessary to complement the 'doing' with other actions.
Nonetheless, it is necessary to complement the 'doing' with other actions such as listening.
Nonetheless, it is necessary to complement the 'doing' with other actions such as listening, rethinking.
Nonetheless, it is necessary to complement the 'doing' with other actions such as listening, rethinking and learning.
Nonetheless, it is necessary to complement the 'doing' with other actions such as listening, rethinking, and learning, without stopping the doing.
Previous studies about CMVX in Colombia are difficult to locate. Some studies (Rodriguez, 2008, 2011; Rincon, Saffon, Cadavid et al, 2007; Franco, Rincon & Nieto, 2009; Roman, 2010, Peruzzo, Tufte & Vega, 2011) have demonstrated the importance of how citizen’s media reconstruct the symbolic universes of communities disrupted by violence.
What remains missing, however, is understanding the story behind the scenes. Further research must systematically describe, thematize, evaluate and share existing citizen’s media experiences, in order to point out both the failures and the successes that help communities break the violent circle (Rodriguez, 2011; Franco, Rincon & Nieto, 2010; Rodriguez, 2011; Perez & Roman 2011; Peruzzo, Tufte & Vega, 2011);
the challenge is to listen to the experiences of people who use communication in the midst of conflict to add not just to the construction of knowledge in the academia, but to help citizens' media practitioners improve their work.
To rethink citizen's media practices in violent contexts (CMVX) is to try to understand what is happening to Colombian communities and to explore their practices of resistance (Rincón, Saffon, Cadavid et al, 2007).
There is a lot to be done, as Rodriguez (2011) argues: "we need to rethink the functions of media in terms of the communities' communication and information needs in order to understand the complex and multidimensional roles citizen's media can have in contexts of armed violence." (p.233).
The Pasolini en medellin case

“Reframe, rethink, revise, represent, report, rebuild, reaffirm, reconstruct, replicate, report, reveal, rewind, remember, recollect, recover, recall, rely, regenerate, regrumble, reproach (the re-election), recuperate, reintegrate, resolve, to reiterate, resist, rewrite, reflect, renew, react: REC .”

(Roman & Perez, 2010 retrieved from http://audiovisualcomunitariolab.blogspot.com/)
Pasolini en Medellin (PEM) is a nonprofit organization that works in Medellin, Colombia with young people from peripheral neighborhoods of the city combining video with community advocacy as a tool for social change. From a citizen media perspective, PEM is trying to understand violence, and its effects on everyday life, using video and ethnography as a gateway to invite communities to narrate their own experiences in different ways, thus, gaining critical thinking and acting against violence creatively, dialogically, interactively, and reflexively.
I am a part of the unlisted experiences of communication in Colombia, A experience without an unique definition:

We don’t call us community media, but we work media with communities

We don’t call us alternative media, But we look for alternative narratives

We are not mass media But we broadcast using piracy and free software to call the masses
Our logo can tell a lot about us

A hand making a gun sign, means the presence of violence on our daily life.

A hand proposing a new meaning to the gun: a frame. means the intention to resignify the violence, without avoid it.

We are trying to use IMAGES TO DISARM MINDS
This is a practice informed by theory, not the application of a theory on the practice.
We work with participatory Methodologies, visual methods and ethnography to explore reality with people.

Our work is focus on the process rather than on the products.
We use **fiction storytelling in violence contexts** as a way to resignify our environments, our memories, our symbolic universes, and as a way **to poetize reality**, without avoid violence.
We use a **Co-creation perspective** because we are also affected by violence, and we learn with people, we don’t teach people.
We use “RE” strategies, creative tools and methods to think, present, construct, sist, signify, build. Reality in Violence contexts.

Strategies to Re-constitute the symbolic universes that have been disrupted by violence.
We use a Gang model in our organization that allow us to

- Re-signify the meaning of a Gang
- Invite participants to join the organization
- Support the creation of new organizations
- Build creative networks
- Work collaboratively
We use a **SPRING DESIGN** because we think that video is a gateway to gain consciousness about that reality can be transformed.
Telling stories is the first step in recovering trust, and self-confidence, reconstructing memories, and identities, and weaving social networks in public spheres.
Con la casa al hombro (2011)  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vd85eI-2VXE

La quinceanera (2011)  http://vimeo.com/24225167

FINDINGS through the experience

In violence contexts produce a video is a goal hard to achieve because of the pressure of armed actors.

Thus, more than focus in the product we have to focus in the production process as the most significative stage, so participants can gain a way of look, a critical way of thinking to address their own reality, even without a finished audiovisual piece.
Violence and armed actors can constrict our spaces, our social relationships. But the only thing that violence can not constrict is our creativity. Creativity is a powerful tool to resist violence.
The process of making a video understood as a performance, is an strategy to recover the public spheres, is a way to communicate a message through actions, because taking a camera in the middle of the conflict is a political action, and this action cause a big effect in the community.

the social change message can be created also in the making-process rather than in the product.

the production process an important opportunity to restore the agency of the community
In sum, citizen media practices in violence contexts can contribute to community building, because they become practices of citizenship, agency, creation, interaction, trust, reciprocity, representation, self expression and dialogue.
this case study can help other practitioners by acting as an invitation to find their own way, to analyze their practices, share the insights from the citizen's media practices, and translate it into shared knowledge. This would allow them to become a part "of the cultural capital of all those attempting to use media technologies for peace building" (Rodriguez, 2011 p.262).
“These are small things
They don’t end poverty
They don’t take us out of underdevelopment,
They don’t socialize the means of production and change,
And they can’t expropriate the cave of Ali Baba.

But perhaps
They can trigger the joy of making,
and translate it into actions.

And after all, acting over reality
And change it, even just a little bit,
It is the only way to prove
That reality can be transformed”

Eduardo Galeano
Re-Thank you
LIST OF REFERENCES:

PIER PAOLO PASOLINI, JEAN ROUCH, GLAUBER ROCHA, PAULO FREIRE, CLEMENCIA RODRIGUEZ, PILAR RIANO, OMAR RINCON, SHIRLEY WHITE, ALFREDO GUMURCIO, TOMAS TUFTE, SARAH PINK, ELISENDA ARDEVOL, MARCUS BANKS, MICHAEL DE CERTAU, RAYMOND MADDEN, CAROLINNE NORDSTROM, CESAR TAPIAS, GERMAN ARANGO, CAMILO PEREZ, JAIR VEGA, MARIA JOSE ROMAN, JULIO CORTAZAR, SANTIAGO GAMBOA, VICTOR GAVIRIA, ALFREDO MOLANO, SERGIO ALVAREZ,