New communicative resistances: the rebellion of the ACAPD

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Abstract

Introduction. This article aims to make a contribution to the debate on the role of the media in the cultivation of assumptions about reality, especially after the emergence of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). **Objectives.** The study focuses on the analysis of two specific new forms of communicative conflict that have been used in social movements: the protest lip dubs and videos of police misconduct filmed by civilians. Both of these communicative forms are types of what we have termed Audiovisual Cultural Artefacts of Protest and Demand (ACAPD). **Method.** The study is based on a theoretical analysis of the relationship between power, communication and resistance, and offers an interpretation of the different dimensions in which resistance and conflict are articulated. For the empirical analysis, six audiovisual artefacts that have been used in the Basque context have been examined based on the methodological reflections on visual sociology. **Results and conclusions.** The results provide a general characterisation of these audiovisual artefacts, while the analysis of the Basque case allows us to contextualise these tactical and communicative innovations, and to discuss the importance of context, the construction of the discourse, the possible tendencies towards spectacularisation and the possibilities of counter-stereotyping.

Keywords
Counter-information; Social representations; Basque Country; Audiovisual Cultural Artefacts of Protest and Demand; Social movements.

Contents
1. Introduction. 2. The communication revolution and the revolution communication. 3. The resistance. 4. Adiera zaitez! (Express yourself!). 5. What is new and what is old? 6. Euskal Herria: (re)tuning. 7. Method. 8. Results. 8.1. From war masks to happy combative masks: the lip dub. 8.2. The war masks of the 'others': images that were not shown before. 9. (In)conclusive notes for discussion. 10. Notes. 11. List of references.

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1. Introduction

"The revolution will not be televised" **[1]** was the corrosive denunciation made by the African-American poet and soul singer Gil Scott-Heron back in 1970. His words reflected the predominant criticism made by the liberation movements regarding the media: they act as sources of ideological domination. This criticism is related to the critical approaches of the Frankfurt School and Guy Debord.

The very fact that in this criticism is included in a song, a format typical of mass communication, exemplifies the response strategy articulated by the movements in relation to the allegations of ideological domination: counter-information, communicative conflict and reappropriation of technologies. Today, the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) seem to facilitate innovative actions in this regard as they enable the bypassing of the filters established by large media corporations.

This article firstly addresses the debate on the role of the media, the different resistances that have been articulated, and the possibilities opened by the ICTs. Then, it focuses on Euskal Herria (the Basque Country).

The Basque case is illustrative because the current changes in its socio-political context seem to be provoking changes in the representation and stereotyping practices of the media, which have been challenged by some social and political movements.

This article addresses these issues mainly through the analysis of two examples: the emergence of the protest lip dub and the videos of police misconduct filmed by civilians. We consider both cases to be examples of Audiovisual Cultural Artefacts of Protest and Demand (ACAPD).

2. The communication revolution and the revolution communication

The appearance of the mass media (and the 'masses') gave rise to a long academic, political and social debate on their role. The discussion has often swung between two opposing positions: from the agonising position of domination to technological optimism and determinism. The critical perspectives seem to articulate a shift in the critiques of the forms of social control: the attention

seems to be focused not only in the economic aspect but also increasingly on the ideological and cultural realms, in which the role of the mass media becomes central.

The *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the well-known work first published in 1944, established a central idea: the cultural industry is both the medium -the mechanised techniques of transmission and reproduction- and the message (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1994). This idea synthesised the idea of domination: alienation is consolidated not only through the control of the production context, but also of mass consumption, which is already classified and manipulated by the cultural industry.

In contrast, in 1967 the work of McLuhan and Fiore, *The medium is the message*, presented a very different tone: the instantaneous and global nature of the new electronic technologies –whose paradigmatic case was television- restructures the patterns of social interdependence, which would mean that all people were involved with each other. This communicative process would entail an increase of the workforce for social change, as it is a window to the world (McLuhan and Fiore, 2008).

During the same time, Guy Debord proposed in a less optimistic tone the primacy of representation: "The entire life of the societies in which the modern conditions of production prevail manifests itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. All that used to be directly lived has now become representation" (Debord, 2003: 37). Consumer capitalism turns all human experiences into commodities, and resells them through advertising and the media: "The show is the 'capital' to such a degree of accumulation that it has become the image" (Debord, 2003: 50).

The work of the researchers from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Hall, Cohen, Clarke, Willis and Hebdige) offered new perspectives to understand mass culture and the forms of popular resistance, based on the Gramscian conception of hegemony (Gramsci, 2009). They focused their attention on the popular working-class culture and the urban youth subcultures, which they understood as political battle fields between classes, as answers to the structural contradictions, and as symbolic resistance against the bourgeois culture.

As pointed out by Christine Elizabeth Griffin (2010), this line of thought has been criticised by some authors who do not agree with the primacy given to class, as it shadows other types of social relations. From a more Bourdieu an perspective, Martín Criado (1998) argues that sometimes researchers impose their own reconstructed logic over the logic-in-use of the actors because they want the working class to always be revolutionary subject, even though they may not know it.

This has been a key debate particularly when interpreting urban youth cultures, pivoting around the sub-culturalist positions (Blackmann, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2005; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006; Hall and Jefferson, 1998; Griffin, 2010), which are responsible for the work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, and the proposals for overcoming the concept of subculture, grouped as post-sub-culturalist (Bennett, 1999, 2000, 2011; Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004; Muggleton, 1997, 2000, 2011). Griffin himself defended, however, several of the benefits associated with the legacy of the Birmingham's project, especially its willingness to develop symptomatic readings and contextual analyses in relation to the social, economic and political conditions.

Thus, in the third chapter of *Culture, Society and the Media* (Gurevitch, Bennett, Curran and Woollacott, 1982), Stuart Hall says that the mass media reproduce and strengthen society's system of values through consensus. According to Hall, the mass media are not only the expression of an already-achieved consensus, but are also producers of this consensus, as they reproduce definitions of situations that favour and legitimise the existing structure of things. The groups that are left outside of this consensus are defined as "deviant".

This is what has led to the establishment of the cultural and social power that defines the deviant practices and establishes the rules of the game, which draws a social order based on integration and conformity. This is how the ideological power is structured (Bourdieu, 2002), the power to give certain meanings to certain events. This power of signification is not neutral, and people try to get access to it from different positions to (dis)articulate meanings. The role of the mass media in this field, based on their superiority of economic resources and capacity to reach the population -through the radio and television devices in each home-, becomes central.

In a similar vein, in the Latin American world also emerged some attempts to reposition the debate on the media in relation to the historical processes and to provide new theoretical and methodological perspectives, especially at the hands of Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993) and Néstor García Canclini (2001 and 2002). Martín-Barbero took from Walter Benjamin the shift of focus towards people's forms of perception and this allowed him to focus on the analysis of the technologies in multiple dimensions: the mass media can also mean the abolition of elitist separations and privileges, and the pleasure of being in a crowd. Undoubtedly there is domination, as the Frankfurt school alleged, but not everything is domination:

> "Not all the forms of acceptance of the hegemonic by the subaltern are signs of submission just as the mere rejection is not a sign of resistance, and not all that comes 'from above' are the values of the ruling class, because there are things that come from above but respond to other logics other than those of domination" (Martín-Barbero, 1993: 87)

The plot has become more dense and contradictory regarding mass culture. And this is how Martín Barbero describes de operation of hegemony in the cultural industry: the implementation of a recognition device and the operation of expropriation of the popular experience: "And this experience -which is memory and practice- is also related to the mechanism with which the popular working classes face unconsciously and effectively the mass media: the oblique gaze with which they read" (Martín-Barbero, 1993: 88).

The examination of the cultural industry from the hegemony perspective enables a double break: "with the technological positivism, which reduces communication to a media problem, and the cultural ethnocentrism that equates mass culture with the degradation of culture" (Martín-Barbero, 1993: 95). *Mass-mediation* devices were thus linked structurally to the reconstruction of the hegemony that revolves around culture, and from the 1920s these devices played an important role [2].

3. The resistance

This perspective on the *mass-mediation* devices allows us to locate and read in a much more rich and complex manner the relations of power and resistance; the explicit or more oblique symbolic and communicative conflicts; and the paradoxes, like the one noted by Greil Marcus (2005) in relation to punk: the critique of mass culture also aims to be mass culture. Thus, these resistances can act at several levels.

Firstly, resistance can occur in the most purely symbolic and ideological level, when the hegemonic totalising categorisations are resisted, avoided and challenged. These resistances will act as fissures to the hegemonic narratives, by questioning them, and standing on the edge of the social sphere. This resistance involves the constant escaping from the hegemonic narratives that attempt to dominate and stigmatise them; such resistances, in their escaping from the hegemonic signification, must maintain a constant resistance to the homogenising impulses, to their reduction to a singular narrative that limits their signification.

This would be the case of the subcultures studied by the Birmingham school; contradictions and objections are raised and exhibited and, as Dick Hebdige (2004) would argue, "magically" resolved, at the level of appearances, i.e. at the level of the signs. In the theoretical level, the works of Zizek (1989) and Laclau and Mouffe (2001) develop those tensions in the construction and limiting of the hegemonic narratives, in some cases reducing the importance that the Birmingham school granted to social class.

Secondly, as suggested by Jakue Pascual (2010), communication is also community life and it is here where the capital also aims to constitute its determinations. Thus, there emerges a conflict in which the capital deploys a series of mechanisms to produce subjectivity that includes the production of secret -concealment, memory reduced to present events- as a symbol of the destruction of the community processes of social communication. Thus, the contradiction is located between the community politics which are part of the social construction of common knowledge, and the abstract politics, which are part of the disintegrative informa(tisa)tion (Pascual, 2010).

This same dichotomy is also addressed by Jesús Ibáñez in the foreword to the Spanish edition of Michel Maffesoli's *The Time of Tribes* (1990), where he highlights some ideas raised by the author himself. In accordance with the work on popular cultures produced by García Canclini (2001, 2002) and Martín-Barbero (1993), resistances are articulate in the symbolic and material construction, of these processes of community social communication, which play down and modulate the influence of the mass media. Manuel Delgado Ruiz has widely and deeply worked this issue around the 'street' protest as a communicative and community space.

Thirdly, with regards to the more explicitly political movements, the extended critique of the media as agents of ideological domination has gradually oriented its actions towards the growing importance of the communicative conflict. Some of its critics, such as Heath and Potter (2005: 15), describe this orientation in an original way:

> "Matrix is not intended to be a representation of an epistemological dilemma. It is a metaphor for a political idea that has its origins in the 1960s. It is based on an idea that had its greatest expression in the work of Guy Debord, the unofficial founder of the Situationist International,

and his disciple Jean Baudrillard. (…). And it was precisely here where the idea of cultural blockade emerged. The traditional political activism is futile. It amounts to trying to reform political institutions included in the Matrix plot. What would be the purpose? What we really have to do is to awaken people, to "unplug them", to set them free from the tyranny of the show. To achieve this we must produce a cognitive dissonance. Through symbolic acts of resistance, we must suggest that in the world there are things that do not work."

In short, these actions of resistance are directed to the symbolic and communicative level, from the symbolic distortion of the détournement of the Situationists to the importance of the spectacular/communicative movements such as Greenpeace, or the guerrilla communication actions **[3].** These actions are also directed to the construction of communicative and symbolic spaces, the street protest, and the reappropriation of communication technologies, such as pamphlets, fanzines, or free and community radio stations.

Some of these interpretations and actions, aimed at the communicative and cultural spheres, have also been criticised. For example, Heath and Potter (2005) criticised the rejection of the reformist and partial solutions. In a different and deeper line, Slavoj Zizek (2009: 59) has warned (and almost responded to the previous criticisms) about the de-politicisation of the economic sphere ("It is the political economy, you idiot") that could lead to the excessive focus on the cultural by some movements:

> "The price of the de-politicisation of the economy is that the sphere of politics, in a way, becomes de-politicised: the true political struggle is transformed into a cultural battle for the recognition of the marginal identities and the tolerance of differences"

In another formulation, Boltanski and Chiapello (2002) also seemed to point in the same direction, when they warned and described the problems and neutralisations that result from separating the historical critiques of capitalism, society and art.

4. Adiera zaitez! (Express yourself!)

These resistances involve tactical innovations and strategic actions, but also something else. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, in *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (1998), propose the idea that the construction of social representations does not only take place in the mass media, but also, as pointed out, in the processes of community social communication and, in particular, in the heart of the social movements. And this construction has an outward dimension of counter-information, and an inward dimension of experience, identity-construction and self-expression.

According to them, through the combination of culture and politics social movements serve to reconstitute both, and provide an internal political and historical context for cultural expression, and offer, at the same time, the resources of culture to the repertoires of political action. For these authors, cultural traditions are mobilised and reformulated in the social movements and the mobilisation and reconstruction of tradition is essential for what social movements are really for and what they mean for social and cultural change.

Eyerman and Jamison developed the concept of "exemplary action". Just as it is represented or articulated on the cognitive praxis of the social movements, the exemplary action can be considered as a specification of the symbolic action discussed by Melucci and others. The exemplary action is symbolic in many ways, but it also is more than merely symbolic:

> "As a cultural expression, exemplary action is self-revealing and thus a symbolic representation of the individual and the collective which are the movement. It is symbolic in that it symbolizes all the movement stands for, what is seen as virtuous and what is seen as evil. In the age of symbols, an age of electronic media and the transmission of virtual images, the exemplary action of a movement can serve an educative function for many more than the participants and their immediate public. This exemplary action can also be recorded, in film, words and music, and thus given more than the fleeting presence which for Hannah Arendt characterized the exemplary action of the Greek polis, one of the sources of our conceptualization. (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998: 23)

Within social movements actors reinterpret their relationship with the world and with others. Actors experience with individual and collective identities through their conscious reformulation, and even articulate the different forms of resistance and their relationship with the hegemonic system:

> There are definitely strategic aspects to this process of mediating culture and politics. But that is not the only or even the most essential point, especially not if one assumes the point of view of the actor involved. Social movement actors believe in what they do and their activities are connected to how they identify and distinguish themselves. Social movement activity in this sense is intimately connected with meaning and identity: it is exemplary action. Part of the emergent culture produced within social movements represents an alternative vision and way of life to that of the dominant society. As emergent cultures, in other words, social movements present and represent alternatives. Social movements transform marginal subcultures into real alternatives by offering visions and models of alternative forms of meaning and identity which can be consciously chosen. (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998: 170)

5. What is new and what is old?

Currently, with the development of ICTs, the dissemination of personal computers and the global expansion of the Internet since the late 20th century, authors such as Jenkins (2008) point to the emergence of the media convergence culture. This perspective argues that there is a crossover between old and new media, and between popular and corporate media. One of the keys to this new media model, according to Jenkins, is the participatory culture, going from the previous model in which producer and consumer are separate roles and the media audience is passive, to another model in which media producers and consumers are participants and interact through a new set of rules. [4]

Applied to social mobilisation, Castells (2012) argues that the transformation that occurred during the last two decades in socialised communication has resulted in the passage from mass communication, which is exemplified by television and its one-way message, to mass self-communication, which is exemplified by the Internet and the mobile networks, in which individuals can create their own communication networks, i.e. they can self-communicate. This is how this

author claims that "the transformation of communication has expanded the possibilities for autonomous action of the social movements, the subjects of social transformation" (Castells, 2012: 12). In the same vein, other studies have also suggested that online user-generated content (UGC), which is characterised on such features as expressiveness, performativity and collaboration, promotes political participation (Ostman, 2012).

In this new technological context, in the Internet universe, the YouTube video platform emerged in 2005. This website allows users to upload and watch videos produced by users themselves. According to authors like Shifman (2012), YouTube can be considered as an emblem of the participatory culture, as it connects the economic, social and cultural logics of participation. Some specific forms of protest, like the lip dub in the Basque case, have used this new communicative tool to make demands (Del Amo, Diaux, Letamendia, 2012).

However, in this optimistic approach to the transformation potential of the new technologies there are a number of aspects that are also worth examining (Kim, 2012). The most obvious is the role that large corporations are still playing in the cultural and communicative industry, by personifying large telephone and information filtering companies in the business they carry out. In the case of YouTube, there is a growing inclusion of advertising content next to the catalogue of videos; and, on the other hand, there is the issue, in specific cases, of the removal of videos that show, for example, police misconduct due court orders.

Castells (2009) also warns about such aspects as the increasing concentration of global networks of multimedia companies **[5]** and the digital access and educational gaps, which "tend to reproduce and amplify the class, ethnic, race, age and gender structures of social domination between countries and within countries" (Castells, 2009: 57). Another aspect, also pointed out by Martín-Barbero, is the cultural dimension that mediates the multilevel transformation communication:

> the cultural dimension of the process of multi-layered transformation of communication can be grasped at the intersection of two pairs of contradictory (but not incompatible) trends: the parallel development of a global culture and multiple identity cultures; and the simultaneous rise of individualism and communalism as two opposing, yet equally powerful, cultural patterns that characterize our world (…). The ability or inability to generate protocols of communication between these contradictory cultural frames defines the possibility of communication or miscommunication between the subjects of diverse communication processes (Castells, 2009, p. 56)

In this sense, Castells points out that national, regional, local identities and non-State national identities remain to be a principle of identification as identities of resistance, in cases in which they face the challenges of globalisation or the dominant nation-states. Castells also suggest an aspect in which the marketing of the new media connects with the public opinion and with some popular aspirations, since they have largely escaped, and continue escaping, the iron cage of the political bureaucracy, including the mass media.

The critique of the media's ideological domination made by the emancipatory movements, and their relation with mass communication, highlights their communication and re-appropriation strategies. Today, the Internet is also an area of conflict, which offers new possibilities for social agenda and

change, which in some cases even "tries, although not always successfully, to be ahead of the commodification and control" (Castells, 2009: 188). Beyond the communicative dimension, even Castells agrees with Igor Sádaba (2008) in that the new capitalist phase is based on the appropriation, enclosure, of knowledge which makes the Internet also a privileged place of conflict.

After having contextualised the milestones of an extensive debate on the role of the media, we will describe the experiences that are proliferating in Euskal Herria in this field.

6. Euskal Herria: (re)tuning

Many and varied resistances and conflicts around the definitions of reality have emerged in Euskal Herria in the past 35 years. The struggle for hegemony between the Basque and Spanish national narratives has determined the social scene based largely on the political sphere, which is charged by emotions.

However, the 1980s also witnessed the emergence of what Jakue Pascual (2010) has called the Youth Resistance Movement, a powerful youth movement, structured around punk and what came to be called Basque Radical Rock, which undertakes a differentiated redefinition of the physical space ('the street', certain taverns, festive spaces, a wave of squatting to create *gaztetxes* [occupied youth centres]) and a whole group of small record labels and expressive communication channels (fanzines, magazines, free radio stations, music itself, concerts, style, etc.). This movement represented the development of a Radical Basque Culture (RBC) in the words of Luis Sáenz de Viguera (2007: 4):

"…a social, political and cultural phenomenon that disrupts the categories of political subjectivity established by the framework of the political-institutional narratives that make up the social space. From its own margins, but always pointing to an impossible outside, the radical culture will be a changing phenomenon, difficult to classify as soon as it emerges, precisely, as an escape from the place of identification and structuration of the social"

And this phenomenon will express "the distance between the democratic discourses (of the media) and the brutal realities of crisis, unemployment and, above all, continuous repression now justified by the system, by the alliance between the new democratic parties and the old forces of order" (Sáenz de Viguera, 2007: 167).

This radical culture kept a special interaction with the Basque culture which, due to its subordinate character with respect to the dominant Spanish culture, was also articulated as popular culture (Amezaga, 1995). This relationship was reflected in the role of language (Amezaga, 1995; Urla, 2001) and in the, conflictive, attempts to get inserted in the (counter)hegemonic narratives that mobilised the radical nationalist left (Lahusen, 1992; Pascual, 2010; Sáenz de Viguera, 2007).

However, due to the State media and the hegemonic narrative, which associated the 'Basque' with the 'radical' based solely on the political situation and the traumatic reality of violence, has been the subject of strong processes of representation and stereotyping. These processes homogenised all the resistances and enabled their insertion in criminalising narratives, from the youth movements, the radical culture and the music to the political movements and violent acts. Thus, at the time, the

Basque resistance worked as the otherness that ensured the ideological operation of the hegemonic narratives in Spain. These criminalising processes were more than merely ideological processes, of metaphorisation and stereotyping, which was materialised in the 'everything is ETA' doctrine developed by Garzón and applied by the Spanish judicial system, which has entailed such measures as the closure of newspapers and radio stations, and the boycott and ban on concerts (Sáenz de Viguera, 2007).

Currently, we are witnessing major changes in the Basque social and political context. Firstly, the political change, marked by the decision of the Basque radical nationalist left to bet exclusively on political routes, and the route derived of ETA's total abandonment of the armed struggle. Thus, sectors of the nationalist left, which had been located in strategies of resistance and opposition, have embarked more openly on opposition strategies against the political hegemony. On the other hand, there is the economic crisis and its consequences which are also prompting the re-composition of hegemony and, especially in the Spanish State, the strong questioning of the hegemonic narratives since the reform of the Regime.

In this context, there is a proliferation of audiovisual cultural artefacts, ACAPD, with which some groups seem to try to dissolve stereotypes, and even to turn them around, challenging the hegemonic narratives.

7. Method

The study is based on the interpretive paradigm (Lindlof, 1995): through the analysis of a selected sample of videos posted on YouTube, we interpret visual texts with a constant reference to the social context and power relations. Within this interpretive paradigm, there are relativistic and postmodern schools of thought that contend that all reality is a social construct and that metanarratives have disappeared, so that one can only describe and interpret small narratives; which also vanishes the political and ideological criticisms since they are also metanarratives.

As mentioned, this study relies on an interpretive school of thought that does take into account the deep political criticism, focuses on the culturally located/contextualised communication and is interested in political signification (of resistance or pro social order) that exists in all cultural texts and practices: the British cultural studies (Hebdige, 2004; Hall, 1982; Williams, 2002) and the Latin American cultural studies (Martín-Barbero, 1993; and García Canclini, 2001 and 2002). In this perspective it is essential to talk about hegemony and political struggle for domination. In this study the sample of YouTube videos –the visual texts- are regarded as cultural artefacts, and this theoretical and empirical proposal is the basis for their analysis.

The visual texts to be analysed are Basque protest lip dubs and videos of police misconduct filmed by civilians. In both cases we refer to videos that have been posted on YouTube, which have massive broadcasting potential, and have created within the last three years. These videos are studied by following the model of qualitative analysis proposed by Lindlof (1995). According to this author, there are four stages in the analysis of texts –which in this case are visual texts- embedded in an inductive process. The four stages are: encoding, reduction, explanation and construction of theory. The last stage will be addressed in the conclusions section.

Thus, after watching the videos several times, the first stage of analysis we performed was encoding, which involves establishing codes and categories to organise data. At this level, two levels of codes had to be distinguished. The first-level codes are simple, specific and topical descriptive codes of people, conducts, events, contexts and activities. These are the basic descriptive characteristics that we can directly observe in the videos. The following step required a higher degree of depth and analysis: the establishment of the second-level codes.

These codes have to be based on the first-level descriptive codes; and they become the basis to build cultural and theoretical categories. The second-level codes can be conceptual, relational, contextual, cultural and beliefs-related. Lindlof advises to look at such elements as the issues enacted by participants, the conflictive situations, the recurring elements, the conditions that evoke actions, the expressions about how participants see themselves, and the communication acts (rituals) that incorporate beliefs and cultural processes. This way one can develop different categories that go beyond the purely descriptive realm and involve interpretation based on the cultural and political context in which the text is inscribed.

After the first and second level categories were developed, we tested them on the sample of videos and the new features or aspects of the videos that had not been noticed before were classified into each category. Progressively, as the visual data were classified, the defining properties of each category were established. Thus, the category becomes a conceptual and theoretical construct. Lindlof, in *Qualitative Communication Research Methods* (1995), warns that at some point in which there is a "theoretical saturation" of the categories in which data of the (visual) texts no longer provide anything new. Then there is the process of reduction, which consists in summarising the most relevant terminology, and focusing on the most useful categories for research purposes, i.e. those that better address the relation between the cultural artefact and the (cultural, hegemonic, political and conflictive) context.

This was followed by the explanation stage, which constitutes the theoretical effort to understand the coherence and meaning of the action of the case under study; and finally, by way of conclusions of the entire study, we offer the construction of the theory, which is based on the analysis of the social situations in relation to the communicative processes under study.

8. Results

8.1. From war masks to happy combative masks: the lip dub

Three recent examples of lip dub were examined for this study. A singular case is the "LIP DUB 3", which is made in Britain as a gesture of solidarity with Basque political prisoners.

LIP DUB 1 - *Lip Dub Uskararen Eguna 2012 Bidankoze* (viewing date: 19-11-2012)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXopIagXSCk

LIP DUB 2 - *Lip-dub 1512-2012 Nafarroa Bizirik* (viewing date: 19-11-2012)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veVIWdUquoQ

LIP DUB 3 - *lipdub de solidarité avec les prisonniers politiques basques.mov* (viewing date: 19-11-2012) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1xULq5fO-o
 First-level codes

General characteristics

- Visuality, images and colour: there is a continuous exhibition of explicit and direct colourful images through which participants are shown.

- Instantaneity: ICTs allow the instant dissemination of the videos after they are posted on the Internet, which allows people from different parts of the world to see them.

- Direct expressiveness: a lip dub is a type of event in which the emotional expressive function takes precedence, in which the shocking and explicit visuality of the message tries to directly and immediately reach the viewer.

- Positivity and fun: the joy and the optimistic tone are a constant in the lip dub.

- Dynamism of the images: the choreographic movement, the changing shots and the tracking shot are characteristic of the lip dub.

- Well-crafted quality pictures: screenplay, rehearsal, direction, editing and broadcasting.

Txema Ramírez de la Piscina (2013) has also developed an analysis of the lip dub, in which he describes features that correspond to first-level codes: free, click friendly, rewarding to the receiver, instantaneity, authenticity, active participation, fun, specific message, powerful and imaginative, proactive and motivated group, appropriate music (ad hoc song), appropriate direction, necessary technical resources, calculated duration, mass dissemination.

Specific features - Basque protest lip dub

- Profusion of symbols: this is manifest in the Basque case. All lip dubs contain a lot of symbols which, regardless of the cause, represent different struggles and social and political demands.

- Own musical repertoire: the use of songs in Basque language, the convergence between the musical and linguistic elements is repeated in all the Basque protest lip dubs that were analysed.

- Basque ethnic elements: the presence of costumes, musical instruments and traditional characters, folklore and popular Basque mythology is also remarkable.

- Theatrics, costumes and dance: this feature is strongly related to the dynamic and playful spirit. The profusion of costumes, dramatic performances, and the central importance of choreographies and dances are reflect the more optimistic and open character in the Basque contemporary forms of social vindication.

- Individual-collective approach. Images constantly combine close-ups with wide shots while staging a sort of 'witness passing' among participants. The singular is combined with the community.

Second-level codes

- Emotional appeal: the emotions and feelings of participants are highlighted through the aesthetic combination of music, symbols, colourful images, and even the display of the faces of the people involved in the lip dub interacting emotionally. This implies an interpellation, a search for emotional connection with the viewer, beyond the rational element of the message.

- Representation and representativeness: there is an attempt to include and represent all the "catalogue" of social movements, like for example the national liberation movement, the feminist movement, the *okupa* (squatting) movement, the *euskaltzale* (pro-Basque language) movement, the youth movement, the ecologist movement, the internationalist movement, etc. Furthermore, representativeness and the inclusion of people belonging to different generations (children, elders, etc.) are encouraged. There is, therefore, an attempt to open the participatory options and to show the support to the causes of different movements and generations, showing a more plural, inclusive and integrative nature.

- Tradition vs modernity. Although lip dubs themselves are an exercise of adaptation to new technologies, all of them include references and allusions to traditional and ethnic Basque elements. The memory of the tradition is merged, updated and communicated in the lip dub.

- Unifying spirit: representation of the cohesive diversity and the harmonic union of groups, simultaneously highlighting the individual and the community.

- Alternative worldview: in the lip dub each movement has a voice, a time to present its message and demands. They represent a worldview, an alternative view of the world with universal pretentions.

- Cultural connection: there is a marked attempt to represent "the Basque" culture, from the folk to the musical elements.

8.2. The war masks of the 'others': images that were not shown before

In addition to the lip dub, another types of ACAPD that were examined in the study are the videos of police misconduct filmed by civilians and posted on platforms like YouTube with the intention of denouncing or, at least, showing such events. We selected three of these ACAPD that have had a special impact in Euskal Herria. However, here it is important to mention that while the lip dub is proliferating in the Basque Country, the posting of videos of police misconduct filmed by civilians are not as widespread in the Basque Country as in other regions or countries, like Spain, where the mobilising dynamics initiated with the 15M seem to have been suppressed and gradually radicalised in such events as the 25S and the recent general strike of the 14N.

VIDEO 1 - *Carga policial contra la ikurriña en sanfermines* ("Police attack against Flag of the Basque Country in the Festivities in celebration of San Fermín") (viewing date: 19-11-2012) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_cZrrhwdXg

VIDEO 2 - *Kukutza Ertzaintza Persiana* ("Police breaks a hotel's blinds") (viewing date: 19-11-2012) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pp2dZSaw7o

VIDEO 3 - *Vitoria-Gasteiz GREBA OROKORRA!!!! HUELGA GENERAL!!!* ("Vitoria-Gasteiz GREBA OROKORRA! GENERAL STRIKE!!!") (viewing date: 19-11-2012) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xku6LptVn4k&feature=related

First-level codes

- Direct and raw recording: these videos are filmed by civilians and show conflicting and direct images of the place where the action is taking place. The situations, people, decorations and visual elements that appear in them have not been previously prepared or selected; the events happen as they are filmed, although obviously the direction and focus of the camera is the choice of the person recording the events.

- Spontaneity: these types of videos are completely spontaneous in the cases in which people are not aware that they are being filmed. When the people who appear in the videos realise that they are being recorded, the spontaneity is not as high. In any case, in these videos the screaming, beating, words, noise and insults reflect the inherent spontaneity of these types of videos.

- Low quality images: since these videos are not prepared and in many cases are recorded with camera phones, the quality of their images tends to be low. In addition, the situations of tension and conflict are often recorded with bad sound, shaking hands, and poor focus.

- Instantaneous and global dissemination potential: as in the case of the lip dubs or any another video posted on the Internet, after these videos are uploaded to websites everyone in the world connected to the Internet can view them.

- Dynamism and forced travelling shots: while lip dubs were characterised by colourful images and a travelling shots from start to finish, which transmitted a sense of dynamism, in this case the recording is also continuous, but the travelling shot is forced by the tense situation provoked by the police, which is recorded in real time and in compromising and tense situations.

- Explicit institutional symbolism: as mentioned, the protest lip dub is characterised by the profusion of explicit symbolism, including the use of flags and costumes representing different aspects of the popular struggles. In this case very explicitly forms of symbolism are also included, but of opposite side: the security forces and their properly standardised uniforms, which represent the forces responsible for maintaining the institutional law and order.

Second-level codes

- Claims of plausibility and credibility: the description of these videos claims that the images are real and raw, that the time, place and people in the videos have not been previously selected, and the spontaneity of the people and situations that appear in these videos tend to establish a claim of plausibility and credibility about the event that is being presented.

- News blackout against potential mass dissemination in social networks: until the advent of the Internet, the media companies controlled by large corporations, especially television, decided which information was disseminated. These filters blocked the news and images that were uncomfortable for the media company in question. Currently, however, the dissemination of any information, news story or video in Internet-based platforms is potentially massive and global, so the images that were previously banned can now be disseminated. However, the disappearance of these filters can also lead to trivialisation due to the flood of images and the absence of mechanisms to verify the veracity and quality of what is posted on the Internet.

- Emotional appeal and shock: in the lip dub there is positive emotional appeal towards the viewer; the humour and positivity of the images try to deliver a dramatic message of protest that positively excites the viewer. In these other cases, more than an emotional appeal there is an attempt to shock the viewer. Here the raw and real images tend to arouse more reactive emotions, such as outrage over the situation recorded -a police officer assaulting a protester, for example-.

- Symbols of power and repression: as mentioned these videos show a profusion of explicit institutional symbolism, represented by the uniforms and weapons of the different security forces. Thus, while the lip dubs present the different struggles and demands of pro social change movements, in the case of the videos of police misconduct filmed by civilians their uniforms can be interpreted as symbols of order, power and in some cases of repression.

9. (In)conclusive notes for discussion

Through the analysis of the Basque protest lip dub and the videos of police misconduct filmed by civilians we have tried to highlight the emerging role of Audiovisual Cultural Artefacts of Protest and Demand (ACAPD) in the communicative struggle for hegemony, and their relation with the socio-political context in which they emerge. Now, it is time to highlight the main preliminary conclusions and their contextual and theoretical articulation.

(Re)Opening channels

The ACAPD are configured as a novel new form of protest, a tactical innovation (Del Amo, Diaux, Letamendia, 2012; McAdam, 1983; Morris, 2003). As pointed out by Castells (2009, 2012), mass self-communication is a tool that can be useful and effective for social movements. In the case of the ACAPD studied here, the instantaneity of the videos posted on the Internet, the global potential to reach viewers, and the disappearance in the Internet of certain filters, which the mainstream media

previously imposed on some types of images and information, allow the opening of new channels of communication to express alternative views on the social reality.

However, we are not suggesting that we are currently witnessing a radically new phenomenon of communicative conflict. In fact, in the Basque case we described previous types of alternative communication, which have been and continue to be especially rich. Fanzines, posters, banners, murals and, especially, the free radio stations, the Basque Rock and the radical culture built around it, have been living examples of alter-communication, of the subversion of the corporate media strategies to creatively develop contents that escape the pure logic of profit, and of the structuring of communicative and symbolic spaces.

It could be argued that in the Basque context mass self-communication already existed or at least aimed to exist. ICTs allow this type of communication to be more autonomous, individualised and massive, and more global; the ICTs have given continuity and novelty to the forms of mass self-communication. In this sense, the use of the lip dub, videos of police misconduct, and of many other alternative Internet tools seems to reflect a new -and potentially decisive- chapter of the old tradition of re-appropriating technology and subverting the signs and messages of power.

These forms of communication will allow the dissemination of images that were previously hidden by the mainstream media. Precisely, part of the conflict seems to gradually focus on the attempts of the police to control filming with mobile phones, which have been challenged through the development of documents with legal recommendations after the emergence of movements such as the 15M **[6]** and even apps that allow the real-time uploading of images to the Internet, which complicates their confiscation.

The existence of these public spaces of communication and conflict -and their mobilisation networks- allows us to understand the fast and prolific mobilisation of new ICT resources in the context of political change. As mentioned, the case of the videos of police misconduct filmed by civilians coincides with what is happening in other places and movements, but the great proliferation of the lip dubs, which require a higher level of organisation, is especially peculiar and significant.

The protest lip dub, which for the Basque people was 'invented' with the creation of the *Lipdub per la independència* of Vic, seems to become a prolific communicative form; which to be understood it is necessary to take into account the whole tradition of communicative protest, the mobilisation networks and the new political context. The lip dub created in Britain was described as a significant case because it shows that the networks of mobilisation and solidarity towards Euskal Herria are now focused on the creation of lip dubs, which suggests that this ACAPD is currently becoming a distinctive feature of the Basque protest movements.

(Re)Presenting (itself). The return of the stereotype

The lip dub and its representation, through videos that can be watched around the world, of a symbolic universe that is alternative to the hegemonic power and is composed of different conflicts that come together in a single movement, emerged in this context. Lip dubs are positive and theatrical forms that have unifying intentions, are focused on the communicative protest, but also work along the lines pointed out by Eyerman and Jamison (1998), and have a strong self-expressive components where the emotional element (Goodwin, Jasper, 2001) plays a central role.

With regards to the construction of the discourse, of the narrative articulated by the ACAPD, we pointed out that Castells highlighted the ability of the new forms of communication to articulate two opposing cultural frameworks: the global and the identitarian aspect, the individual and the community. And the analysis has shown that this articulation seems to be successfully achieved particularly in the case of the Basque protest lip dub.

We have highlighted the careful articulation between the protagonist roles of specific individuals within a community framework, overcoming the "anonymous mass-isolated individualism" dichotomy (which presented the two faces of the same conceptualisation). The identitarian aspect is clearly present in the protests, in the music and in the proliferation of traditional and modern Basque references. The global aspect is present in a double dimension: in the use of global communication networks and their global dissemination potential; but also in this enactment and iconography of an alternative worldview, which refers to Euskal Herria, but goes beyond. This worldview also has pretentions of universality and of becoming a (counter) hegemonic narrative, and also refers to a new worldview that is connected with alternative movements that take place around the world.

Likewise, the proliferation of videos of police misconduct filmed by civilians with their camera phones, shows one side of the Basque, and Spanish, social reality which the mass media tend to hide. Thus, the versions and experiences on the real Basque reality are diversified and enriched.

It seems that together the two types of ACAPD studied in this article, the lip dub and the videos of police misconduct, articulate a global discourse. Both ACAPD present a communication articulated 'from the inside', from the popular protest. And they present two contrasting views. On the one hand, the image of 'us' promoted by the lip dub, which seems to recover in the new context an old slogan: 'Happy and combatant'.

And, on the other hand, the image of the "others", those who do not dramatize their situation, those who repress. The order and synchronisation of the lip dub contrast with the chaos provoked by the forces of the law and order. The emotive appeal exists in both artefacts: emotion and commotion. We are not affirming that there is a communication strategy planned in this respect, but instead that in the new socio-political context, the simultaneous presence of both elements subtly articulates those discourses. They counteract the criminalising stereotype that the now-challenged hegemonic narratives had built around 'the Basque' people.

A normalisation process?

Pamplona's punk group *Lendakaris Muertos* offers an acidic satire of the uses and abuses of ICTs in the social mobilisations in relation to the subject of *La hoz y el Martini* **[7]**:

> "I have seen things that you would never believe: thousands of shining iPods in *Puerta del Sol*, a comrade falling under the batons of the system, ten video cameras filming it live. The police beats us, the bankers rob us... I've been years in college and just found out that we are called rebels... you can call us like that if you want, but we use Vodafone mobiles phones in the happy hours".

The corrosive trivialisation of the song format points to a fundamental criticism that we want to address. Martín-Barbero (1993) pointed out how the expansion of mass culture included a dimension

of the democratisation of culture that at the same time involved certain degree of trivialisation. Here we can detect a similitude with the degree of democratisation that the ACAPD can provoke in the media.

We pointed out that the shift towards the communicative realm, and especially the audiovisual field, involves an intrinsic contradiction: the critique of the 'spectacularisation' of life is made through spectacle. The risk of emptiness and spectacularisation, of trivialisation, is present; the risk of the confinement to media battles. In the videos that have been analysed this does not seem to happen: the filming by citizens take place in the context of real street demonstrations, in a context of crisis and increasing challenging of the hegemonic narratives, and the lip dubs also demand and seek the participatory and wide popular mobilisation, in the street, and in many cases call people to protest.

We have also noted another contradiction: the merely identitary protests and the exclusively cultural battles can depoliticise political issues; they are integrated by *post-politics* (Zizek, 2009). The ACAPD analysed in this article also seem to escape to this objection. The antagonism is present, explicit in the videos of police misconduct, in many cases in the context of growing demonstrations of socio-economic nature. And it is also present in the lip dub, where the specific protests of each of the movements are symbolically framed in a general worldview, which proposes an alternative scene that is antagonistic of existing scene and has pretensions of universality, and of counter-hegemonic narrative.

The ACAPD, in short, do not appear to substitute, but to give more visibility to the social movements. Here and now, in this historical moment in which, as mentioned, paths and mobilisation networks with a long history get intertwined with the new context. This will continue if the socio-cultural and political conditions, i.e. the communicative, symbolic and mobilisation spaces that have fed them, are maintained beyond the audiovisual sphere.

PS: Looking a little further. Inverse stereotypes?

The distribution between different types of ACAPD seems to materialise a certain inversion of the stereotype: the Basque people makes lip dubs and there is an increasing posting, by "Spanish people", of videos showing police misconduct. We do not want to produce another stereotype, but to briefly describe some processes. The change of political strategy in the sectors of the sovereigntist left reinforces the focus, which has been successful in terms of election results, on the political-institutional aspects, on the creation of a political alternative that channels in some way the social demands, and on the regulated and predictable mobilisations (Zubiaga, 2012), and a well-crafted and obsessive plan to deconstruct the violent stereotype of Basque people as 'radical'.

Currently, the processes of social protest in the national framework seem to reflect a process of progressive radicalisation and questioning of the dominant hegemonic framework and narratives since the reform of the Regime, and there are also tactical innovations in the forms of mobilisation, which are partly depicted in the videos. The stereotype created by the media during many years seems to be extending or moving to Spain **[8],** from the famous *perroflauta* (a derogatory term originally used to refer to street musicians or crust punks and subsequently used by the right-wing media to refer to protesters) to the legislative attempts to control of the calls to protests through the social networks or the criminalisation of the 25S movement. These criminalising narratives, in any

case, seem to find difficulties to be implemented in society, and are challenged by the ACAPD, which are used as instruments of resistance and rebellion.

In this regard, we would like to outline a final thought. On other occasions in which we have presented reflections on this matter we have wondered whether the lip dubs have come to stay in Euskal Herria. The truth is that they arrived with force, and continue to impact beyond of what some expected. Within the framework of Durango's Basque Book and Music Fair, which is a representative event of the Basque culture, the most massive and spectacular lip dub was recorded in December 2012 to call people to the annual mobilisation to bring ETA prisoners closer to their place of origin. This lip dub **[9]** ratifies and condenses once again the characteristics listed in this article. The participant, although informal, observation, which we can only partially and briefly address, seems to indicate a certain saturation in the specific case of the lip dubs, but not necessarily of the ACAPD as collective for of action. Within the same framework and calling again to a mobilisation that on this occasion would be conflictive, in December 2013 a new type of ACAPD would be tested, a kind of collective wave **[10]**, which also exhibits the features previously described. We have, therefore, to remain vigilant.

10. Notes

[1] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xFLBcLOuEU (consulted on 19-11-2012)

[2] Castells' view (2009) on communication and power is quite similar, but it is conceptualised from a different theoretical perspective.

[3] http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrilla_de_la_comunicaci%C3%B3n (Consulted on 17-11-2012)

[4] Although Jenkins (2008) points to that not all participants are created equal and have the same resources.

[5] Castells says that "are organizations and institutions influenced largely by the business strategies of profitability and expansion of markets that process and model (although do not determine) the revolution of the new cultures of autonomous communication and communication technologies" (Castells, 2009: 108).

[6] http://madrid.tomalaplaza.net/2012/05/10/aclaracion-sobre-la-posibilidad-de-tomar-fotos-a-policias/ (consulted 18/11/2012)

[7] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaqTOuc69I4 (consulted on 18-11-2012)

[8] On some 15M environment blog has come to even talk about "The geared of Spain": http://pensando15m.blogspot.com.es/2012/04/la-vasquizacion-de-espana.html (consulted 18-11-2012)

[9] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mREEbtkzh2o (consulted 5-02-2014)

[10] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjLQH-kszl4 (consulted 5-02-2014)

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