

Beyond fiction: digital media, violence, politics and vindication

Más allá de la ficción: medios digitales, violencia, política y reivindicación

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ABSTRACT

In this article we address the accelerated transformation of social experiences linked to the development of digital communication technologies. We aim to understand how media narratives are related to changes in the media representation of violence, political communication and repertoires of vindication. We carried out a digital ethnography on the consumption of violence in videos distributed on social media of the last two electoral processes in Mexico, as well as of the demonstrations that occurred in Latin America during the fall of 2019. We chose these empirical phenomena, because they are representative events in the reconfigurations that experience violence, politics and social movements, based on the use of social media. We found that the exponential increase in audiovisual production generated by the massive use of smartphones produces a blurring between fiction and reality, which allowed us to identify three main findings: the mimicry of violence, the degradation of political rationality, and fiction as a repertoire of vindication. Bearing in mind these manifestations is relevant for the analysis of the transformations of violence, politics and vindication in a digital communication driven society.

Keywords

Undrawing;
Media mimicry;
political mediatizations;
cosplay protest.

RESUMEN

En el presente artículo abordamos la acelerada transformación de las experiencias sociales vinculada con el desarrollo de las tecnologías de comunicación digital. Nuestro objetivo es comprender de qué manera se relacionan las narrativas mediáticas con los cambios en la representación audiovisual de la violencia, la comunicación política y los repertorios de reivindicación. Realizamos una etnografía digital sobre el consumo de la violencia en videos distribuidos en redes, durante los últimos dos procesos electorales en México, así como de las manifestaciones ocurridas en Chile y Ecuador durante el otoño del 2019. Seleccionamos estos fenómenos empíricos, porque son acontecimientos representativos en las reconfiguraciones que experimentan la violencia, la política y los movimientos sociales, a partir del uso de redes sociodigitales. Encontramos que el incremento exponencial de la producción audiovisual, que se genera por el uso masivo de teléfonos

Palabras clave

Mimetización de la
violencia, degradación
política, ficción
reivindicativa

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inteligentes, provoca un desdibujamiento entre ficción y realidad. Esto permitió identificar tres principales hallazgos: la mimetización de la violencia, la degradación de la racionalidad política y la ficción como repertorio de reivindicación. Tener presente estas manifestaciones es relevante para el análisis de las transformaciones de la violencia, la política y la reivindicación en las sociedades hipermediatizadas.

INTRODUCTION

In the last three decades, the academic literature on the social phenomena linked to the use of the Internet has increased at different rates, going through different perspectives in which the parallelism between material or physical reality and virtual reality seems to have an endless persistence. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, communication studies rethought the problem of digital culture as a communicative phenomenon. In this way, they reintegrated different traditions of the discipline such as the media ecologies approach, which makes it possible to easily overcome this dichotomy by thinking of technological devices as interdependent organisms or entities that share the same environment or social milieu. This makes it possible to understand communication technologies, particularly the internet, not as a parallel virtual reality, but from their participation in the configuration of the cultural ecology (Islas, Arribas and Gutiérrez, 2018).

In this sense, our hypothesis is that far from there being a dichotomy between the material and virtual worlds, both dimensions are increasingly intertwined. Therefore, the frontier between social experience and media narratives is blurring, in such a way that their characteristic differences are disappearing in the configuration of contemporary social reality, transforming diverse communicative phenomena. In particular, our interest is focused on the audiovisual representation of violence, because it occupies an important place in hegemonic and non-hegemonic audiovisual productions; we are also interested in political communication and the repertoires of vindication, since they are two of the phenomena whose media transformations are highly visible both in the academic and journalistic fields. We consider that the three phenomena and their transformations keep a relationship that is relevant in public life, which makes this reflection a must.

From the emergence of the press, through the rise of radio, television, the internet and its more recent derivatives such as web 2.0, mediation has progressively defined the participation of subjects and communities in public life (Novella-Cámara, Romero-Pérez, Sánchez-Melero and Noguera-Pigem, 2021). Increasingly, social experience is defined as a media narrative. Audiovisual contents fulfill a double function, at the same time that they are social representations, they comprise symbolic materials from which identity is constructed, or what Miller, Aladro-Vico and Requeijo-Rey (2021) define as the formation of myths from symbolic representations.

Hyper mediatization reiterates the ontological value of language, through images, sounds and words, it consecrates symbolic expression as the foundation of self-formation. The massification of digital media implies that more and more people are partaking in the production of media narratives, unlike the closest precursors such as

television, cinema and radio, where only small or specialized groups participated in the production of audiovisual content.

This massive integration of new audiovisual producers consecrates media narratives as the essence of everyday experience. Digital communication technology gives them the possibility of being protagonists of their own history (Hidalgo, 2016). Paradoxically, at the same time they are prey to the de-subjectification that occurs in datafication and the consequent speculation promoted by the data capitalism exercised by large digital media companies (Milan and Treré, October 19, 2017). The fact that media production has descended into the realm of the commonplace implies a blurring between social experience and media narratives. Reality has reached a point of juxtaposition with fiction (Hidalgo, 2016).

In this context, on the one hand, different forms of fictional violence represented in series and movies are consumed on streaming platforms, on the other hand, the advancement of technology has facilitated access to snuff videos that are distributed through WhatsApp chains or on internet sites such as Blog del Narco (Eiss, 2017). These materials expose cases of real violence, as Tonelli (2019) points out, it is a process of updating in the forms of audiovisual production, in which amateur video linked to the internet has a determining role in the creation of myths.

Simultaneously, political actors are increasingly characterized in the media, in situations that question the functionality of political speeches, as well as the ability to design proposals that provide solutions to social problems. Within this discouraging panorama, there are also playful and imaginative forms that promote a commitment to social reinvention, as play becomes essential in the aesthetics of the new social movements (Benson, 2015). The blurring of the boundary between fiction and reality allows for the erosion of superheroes who take to the streets to fight against the evil in the world (Miller *et al.*, 2021).

The aim of our study is to understand how this blurring between fiction and reality derived from the massification of media productions, influences transformations around: 1) documentation, distribution and consumption of audiovisual violence linked to new non-hegemonic production formats; 2) ways in which political speeches, as well as the promotion of nominations for elected office, adapt to emerging non-conventional audiovisual formats; and 3) vindictive expressions linked to new repertoires in which the appropriation of audiovisual content is in a preponderant place.

Violence in hyper-technified contexts

A large part of the social studies that interpret phenomena of violence linked to the use of digital networks focus on the analysis of digital interactions and their particularities in the exercise of violence (Blanco, 2014). Thus, the most recurrent research raises issues of cyberbullying or gender violence, focusing on the main ways in which power is exercised in socio-affective relationships and in school contexts through the use of such media (Blanco, 2014; Blanco, de Caso, & Navas, 2012; Martín, Pazos, Montilla, & Romero, 2016).

As a result of the foregoing, it is relevant to consider the fact that violence in digital networks is not only exercised, but also has a series of a number of implications regarding its production and consumption. Unlike the naturalized consumption of fictitious violence promoted by cinema and television, in the violence consumed in these new media there is a greater participation of non-hegemonic audiovisual producers, whose creation of content does not formally constitute a montage, but are real acts documented in photography and video. This audiovisual documentation exercise is part of contemporary social dynamics and experiences. For example, some of the particular forms of cyberbullying focus on audiovisual production, by recording school fights or elaborating memes with photographs of bullied students (Morales-Reynoso and Serrano-Barquín, 2014).

Along with the above, the consumption of snuff videos documenting real violence is associated with the mediatization of narcoculture and violence, particularly from its novel forms of production and audiovisual documentation that are distributed on YouTube and Facebook (Núñez-González, 2021). In this context, network users have access to explicit materials on violence, sometimes even accessing this information long before the vast majority of news media release a story. In parallel, despite efforts to remove violent content from Facebook, censorship has certain limitations when compared to private communication spaces such as WhatsApp, where large content distribution chains can be generated through private communication networks. These contents are always more explicit than those disseminated by news media and regardless of efforts to remove them, many of them are distributed privately mostly in WhatsApp groups.

Because in these libraries it is possible to see far beyond whatever is projected in traditional media; audiovisual documentation of violence outside legitimate news spaces rethinks the boundaries between public and private (Haidar and Chavez, 2018). The empirical examples of mediatized violence are innumerable, recordings made and disseminated by organized crime groups, cyberbullying and cyberbullying on gender, public lynching, animal abuse, street fights, and so on (Ascencio, 2017; Parra, 2015).

Media policy: emerging formats

The presence of digital media has practically penetrated all social spheres and political communication is no exception. In this dimension, different approaches have also been built that highlight the communicative empowerment of citizens, along with novel forms of modeling public opinion mainly assisted by the use of Bots and algorithms (Treré and Barranquero, 2017).

Alongside, we distinguish a third category of political expressions in networks, whose characteristic is that political rationality undergoes communicative transformations, which are perceptible in the various promotional mechanisms used by candidates in electoral contexts. Technological empowerment is not intended by this type of expressions (Reguillo, 2017), neither do they focus on the discursive domain under an argumentative scheme of will to truth (Foucault, 1992) or pretension of validity (Habermas, 1999). Instead, they replace the instrumental rationality of old political

discourses and texts with the Pop narratives of media formats (Fetzer and Bull, 2012; Chilton and Schäffner, 2002).

Authors such as Islas (2021), Serrano, Ramírez and Palazuelos (2022) argue that through platforms such as TikTok public servants can establish relatively broad levels of connection with citizens, mainly young people, as long as their communications match both the language of the audiences and the characteristics implicit in the use of the platform. This and other networks make it easier for actors to insert issues into the public agenda, while at the same time broadening the political dialogue among citizens.

Simultaneously, the use of these new media formats gives rise to overexposure of the personal profiles of political actors, while posing high levels of risk to their reputation (Sánchez, 2021). In the context of electoral campaigns, the promotion of candidates is articulated through different languages that adapt to the characteristics of each platform, this process gives a playful basis by promoting the combination of different genres such as comedy, satire or drama (Obando, 2021).

The combination of cinema genres, as well as the bet on the sensorial nature of media narratives in the composition of political speeches and in the promotion of candidates is not a new phenomenon; some time ago Castells (2013) put forward the idea that voters orient their vote based on contagious campaign formulas such as songs or spots, instead of resorting to the comparative analysis of proposals that address specific social problems.

This phenomenon has intensified with the development of digital networks and the consequent appearance of characteristic platforms such as TikTok. Such intensification results in the development of content that touches previously unimaginable extremes of absurdity, comedy, drama or satire. This is due to the fact that, to a great extent, they seek to adapt to the new contents that reach higher degrees of virality and contagion, which are mostly ephemeral audiovisual productions or lacking in content, coming from diverse prosuming niches on the network.

New repertoires of vindictive expression

According to Minuchin and Martí (2019), collective action repertoires in the Latin American context are undergoing a process of updating and innovation in response to a deterioration of political representations. For these authors, the new repertoires emerge in a context structured by commodification and prefigure novel forms of appropriation of public space.

In this context, digital networks comprise the primary infrastructure from which the communication of contemporary social movements is built, as well as their forms of organization and construction of political objectives (Toret, Calleja-López, Marín, Aragón, Aguilera, and Lumbreras, 2013). In this way, the so-called connected crowds appear in cities, forming performative networks through which they seek to claim a new sensibility for the world and its problems (Rovira, 2017).

In this context, sensibility emerges as the myth from which vindicatory values are strengthened. From the approach of media ecologies, sensitivity has a fundamental value to understand the moral, political, cultural and economic consequences exerted by the media in social change, since according to McLuhan's position (1997), they are understood as the environment in which the very transformations of the human sensorium are generated. As an extension of human faculties, the media are part of the sum of perceptions through which environments are experienced, interpreted and transformed through technology (Roncallo-Dow, 2014). Therefore, in the new repertoires of collective action in hyper-mediatized contexts, we see the emergence of rhetorical figures of fictional narratives, which foster novel forms of sensibility and aesthetic appreciation as discursive emblems of protests.

From the articulation between hegemonic and autonomous audiovisual production, fictional narratives are constructed as a repertoire of vindication through remakes, whether memes, edited videos or practices such as cosplay. Much of the symbolic expressions, as well as the communication rituals that are built around contemporary activism, are deployed with great force at this meeting point (Treré, 2017).

In the hegemonic dimension, film production stands out mostly, although television series and of course the political communication agenda itself in news media also figure. While in the autonomous dimension, edited videos, memes and other growing performative activities such as cosplay stand out. The communication rituals in media activism are based on a sort of shared sensibility, which promotes common encounters based on mass culture among the population afflicted by different social discomforts (Ardèvol, Martorell, San-Cornelio, 2021; Palazuelos, 2020; Reguillo, 2017).

Such nonconformities are expressed through different media symbolisms that are part of the collective imaginary of the protesters; symbols that are strongly associated with cinema, mostly Hollywood productions that have strongly permeated Latin America during the last three decades, Japanese and Korean anime cartoons that have also had a strong presence in this region, as well as other Netflix series popular among Latino audiences (Blanco, 2020).

Shared media narratives are the raw material in the production of audiovisual and performative remakes that allow for a common encounter, the formation of collective identities and even more, the construction of creative repertoires capable of reversing actions of repression into ironic mass parties, playful games and surrealistic resistances (García and Mangieri, 2015; Reguillo, 2004 and 2017).

Material and methods

In this article we delve into three empirical dimensions: the production, distribution and consumption of audiovisual violence; the study of the political appropriation of digital networks; and the analysis of the use of media in protest. We relate these three phenomena because we start from the idea that the increase in violence is a fundamental

factor in the composition of social unrest that detonate mobilizations that through different protest repertoires expose a series of complaints, which in turn must be addressed by political actors who use the media to inform citizens about the results of their roles, or to promote their campaigns when they aspire to a new position.

The methodological approach we propose is of a qualitative nature, thus, the empirical work we carry out is limited to media narratives and their link with social experience. As a method of study, we use digital ethnography in its most updated development, which proposes a holistic approach to the field through a deep immersion in the cultural practices of certain social groups, in order to understand the way in which their participants mean and act in their reality. We ascribe to Wang's approach (May 13, 2013), who points out that from digital ethnography it is possible to build deep qualitative data or what she calls Thick Data, in this sense, we employ various instruments such as monitoring the production of audiovisual materials distributed on digital platforms, participant observation and in-depth interview (Palazuelos, 2020; Pink, Horst, Postill, Hjorth, Lewis, & Tacchi, 2019; Ardèvol & Gómez-Cruz, 2012).

For the analysis of the production, distribution and consumption of audiovisual violence, the sample we selected included the publications of Blog del Narco made during the electoral periods from December 14, 2017 to July 08, 2018 and from September 07, 2020 to June 06, 2021, which are the periods in which the last two electoral processes in Mexico took place, this with the intention of contrasting the empirical findings between the first two categories of our study.

The criteria for the selection of audiovisual materials for analysis that we used were based on the words: violence, murder, executions, candidates, elections (in reference to the electoral process). We selected the results linked to the states of Sinaloa, Sonora and Baja California, as Northwest Mexico is one of the regions with the highest rates of violence (Citizen's Council for Public Safety and Criminal Justice, April 6, 2017).

As a result of the immersion in the field and from repeated meetings with key informants, we managed to join two different WhatsApp groups (one organized by citizens from Sonora and the second one from Sinaloa respectively), during the period of the 2021 electoral process, where we followed up on videos and photographs of violent attacks related to the candidacies of those entities. Although these groups also shared, during the same period, various violent contents of a political nature that occurred in other states of the republic; although these materials were not systematized, they are useful for us to build the inferences that we propose in the results of this article.

In relation to the political appropriation of digital networks, as a first immersion we conducted a general monitoring of the candidates who competed for elected office in Mexico during the 2021 electoral process. In a second moment we extracted the most significant cases based on three criteria: 1) candidacies of Youtubers and Influencers that are related to varied spaces of interaction in digital network platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and even OnlyFans; 2) candidacies of public figures (actors and athletes), attached to media narratives coming from Mexican television or sports shows such as wrestling, boxing and soccer; 3) candidates who went viral for including dances,

songs, as well as implausible and absurd proposals or expressions in their campaigns. We chose these three categories because they led the viralization in the public agenda, becoming emblematic cases of the mediatization of politics in Mexico during the 2021 electoral process.

Once the candidacies were detected, we monitored their profiles on Facebook and Twitter during the months in which the electoral process took place, focusing on the publications that had the highest number of views, comments and shares in other spaces in order to detect the particular narratives of the viralization of media politics in networks. Within these spaces we conducted participant observation, we talked with Internet users who commented on the candidates' publications and we conducted a total of ten online interviews (Ardèvol, Bertrán, Callén and Pérez, 2003).

Finally, for the study on the use of media in the protest we conducted a similar digital ethnography exercise, although here we focused only on media tracking through the development of a field diary based on the monitoring of hashtags, we divided the contents of the publications into two segments of analysis (see Table 1): 1) audiovisual materials (photographs, videos, memes, digital banners, infographics) that were published on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook; 2) testimonies, opinions and interactions among Internet users who used the hashtags in their publications.

Table 1. Data analyzed from the protests in Ecuador and Chile

Country	Hashtag	Audiovisual material	Testimonials, opinions and interactions
Ecuador	#PaquetazoEcuador	47	93
	#MeDuelesEcuador	45	85
	#ParoEcuador2019	38	87
	#EcuadorSeLevanta	52	96
	#ElPuebloNoSeToca	50	99
	#FueraLeninFuera	53	98
	#ResisteEcuador	28	93
	#YoTambienSoyZangano	46	89
	#ParoNacionalEcuador	40	84
Chile	#LaMarchaMaGrandeChile	41	82
	#PiñeraRenuncia	42	87
	#ChileResiste	53	98
	#EvasionMasviaChile	41	99
	#ChileNoSeRinde	39	93
	#ChileSeMoviliza	46	95
	#CarabineroDeChile	56	97
	#ChileQuiereCambios	23	89
	#NuevaConstitucionParaChile	48	96
	#ChileViolatesHumanRights	33	93
Totals	19	821	

We focus on these two countries because their protests were the ones that had the most media coverage at the international level (CNN Español, November 22, 2019), since the protests were distinguished by social resistance to the excessive use of violence through the use of performative expressions.

Finally, we organized and systematized the data obtained in the three collection stages by means of content analysis, based on open coding, which facilitated the construction of inferences and interpretations of sociocultural phenomena (Strauss and Corbin, 2002). Based on this data management, we constructed the following observation categories and subcategories (see Table 2).

Table 2. Categorization of analyzed contents

Categories	Subcategories
Mimicry of violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production • Distribution • Consumption
Degradation of political rationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content viralization • Adaptation of speeches to media formats • Political proposals
Fiction as a protest repertoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performative political expressions • Representation of characters in speeches • Appropriation of media narratives

From the analytical exercise of these categories, we prepared a set of descriptive narratives as results of our research, in order to establish a relationship with the observable characteristics in the field. This allows us to deepen our understanding of the changes experienced by the audiovisual representation of violence, political communication and the repertoires of vindication, linked to the growing massification of media narratives produced from hegemonic and autonomous spaces that define new particularities in the media ecology as well as in the social experience.

Analysis and results

Mimicry of violence

We found that massive integration of people in audiovisual documentation procedures tends to diversify the consumption of the different narrative genres elaborated prior to the emergence of socio-digital networks. At the same time, new forms of audiovisual production emerge that expose explicit violence that goes beyond any montage by offering the viewer real situations of violence.

We saw that digital communication facilitates the processes of production and consumption of violent videos. The non-hegemonic audiovisual documentation and distribution of violent acts promotes immeasurable growth due to the encryption of

platforms such as WhatsApp, which makes it almost impossible to establish a traceability and control of its distribution, which also poses a methodological problem to build a quantitative sketch of the phenomenon.

Beyond the important need for this missing data, through the digital ethnography approach we carried out, we evidenced the existence of the phenomenon and identified four categories related to the consumption of audiovisual violence:

- 1) anonymous distribution of videos and photographs from hand to hand through WhatsApp chains;
- 2) consumption on non-hegemonic news pages on Facebook and Twitter;
- 3) consumption of internet blogs dedicated to the distribution of violent materials;
- 4) series and movies representative of contemporary violent contexts.

The phenomenon is not reduced to the autonomous documentation of violence that is added to the catalog of audiovisual materials available for consumption. We found that this mimicry of violence is signified by a double recurrence, in which series and films not only represent a violent world, whose productive hegemony is questioned or longed for by amateur productions. In addition to representing, the two forms of audiovisual production (hegemonic and autonomous) also feed violent contexts by providing elements that serve as a basis for the construction of identities and mechanisms of interpretation of social reality.

During our field observations, such characteristic was repeatedly shown during the electoral processes in Mexico, a representative example of this was in the 2018 elections in which 774 aggressions to various candidates and other political actors involved in the campaigns were recorded, of which 152 were killed (Aristegui Noticias, July 10, 2018). In the testimonies obtained in the fieldwork, we found a link between the assimilation of this large number of attacks and assassinations of politicians, with the rise of the *Game of Thrones* series, whose penultimate season was launched prior to the aforementioned electoral period.

According to the data obtained in the interviews, this television series had an impact on the sector of the Mexican population that followed it, by facilitating the process of mimicry of political violence with media fiction, helping to naturalize the attacks and murders that took place during the electoral campaigns. Such process was seen in the making of memes related to the series that naturalized violence in political contexts. As one of our informants pointed out during the interview, “With *Game of Thrones* we learned that in the struggle for power betrayal and murder is common, those who want bone put their skin on the line” (anonymous informant, interview June 10, 2018).

The media ecology is plagued by violence, going from drug trafficking series on streaming platforms such as Netflix and TV news channels, to the autonomous production of home videos. Violence signifies contemporary history, our politics and our ontology. Its television and film productions comprise a representational sacralization of social experience, at the same time, the massification of audiovisual production media encourages the desire to participate in that media representation. Violence is fiction when it comes from cinema or television and becomes documentation

when it comes from cell phone cameras that capture real scenes; in both cases, it is both a social representation and a symbolic element of identity construction and interpretation of reality. Anchored to the mimicry between fiction and reality, audiovisual violence fulfills the double function of representing and constructing social experience.

Degradation of political rationality

From the analysis of the data obtained in the digital ethnography, we identified that various candidates for elected office have been involved in what we call processes of degradation of political rationality, since the speeches were articulated to the media narratives of film, television and other platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or TikTok. In addition to the above, during the 2021 electoral process in Mexico we analyzed multiple discourses starring emblematic media figures who competed for various popular elected positions.

For example, the case of Rocío Pino who went from being an influencer of the OnlyFans platform to being a candidate for federal deputy, whose campaign slogan was the hashtag #ChichisParaTodas and who, through different videos in which she showed her naked body, promoted the proposal that the application of breast implants for women be included as part of the basic health care sector. In one of her spots the candidate pointed out: “I know that campaigning naked is not political, but right now what we need less is to be politicians, I prefer to show my naked body than to put my face as a politician” (Rocío Pino, May 27, 2021).

There were several cases that we detected in this same electoral process, such as the nomination of the wrestler “El Tinieblas” for a municipal mayor's office, who during his campaign and his participation in the political debates presented himself at all times with his wrestler's mask without showing his face. Another case related to the degradation of political rationality that we identified was that of the soap opera actor Alfredo Adame, who competed for a deputy and during his campaign went viral in networks after verbally assaulting a citizen, repeating this same act of verbal violence as an unorthodox strategy of media popularity.

The above shows that there are multiple cases of political speeches in which fiction is mixed with reality, since several film and television actors, as well as sportsmen, have held public office and figured in Mexican politics. We see that there is a link between the lack of rational campaign proposals and the extreme mediatization of politics. The degradation of discursive rationality is the high point of media politics, where the frontier between fiction and reality is blurred.

Hyper-mediatization in the field of politics favors the exaltation of emotions that suppress various forms of discursive rationality. Through this excess of irrationality, both the annihilation of moral individualism, of communitarianism and of the processes of citizen subjectivation are promoted. The above results allow us to point out a process of hybridization of political communication with different media genres. In the cases analyzed, speech rationality is shown to be degraded; political actors were shown as fictitious characters by sacralizing the absurd as a point of communicative encounter with citizens. This degradation of political rationality mocks social needs and problems,

praises political immaturity, exalts the incompetence of political systems and exalts the inefficiency of public administration.

Fiction as a protest repertoire: likely horizons

In the ethnographic work conducted during the protests that took place in South America in the fall of 2019, we found a recurrent use of media references in the configuration of collective action repertoires. Such expressions show an appropriation of the values promoted in the television series, in such a way that these elements were an important part in the construction of collective identity of the young protesters, as well as in the configuration of their ideals of struggle. This became visible with the remakes in the form of memes, banners and cosplay that made reference to different television characters.

In this sense, the Chilean demonstrations in the fall of 2019 were another case that shows vindictive expressions linked to media narratives, since in them we found repeated references to the cartoon *Naruto* (see figure 1), since in multiple expressions the demonstrators represented President Sebastián Piñera as a Hokage and the members of his cabinet as Shinobis, political titles that in the animated series allude to the characters that exercise power in an authoritarian manner over the village and its inhabitants.

Figure 1. Otakus demonstration in Chile



Source: Dávalos 2019, 23 de octubre.

Alongside, the young protesters identified themselves as Akatsukis, who according to the story are an organization that arose to defend the population against oppression and tyranny. Originally their strategies of action were peaceful; however, after intense moments of crisis they ended up resorting to actions beyond the legal frameworks governing the social organization of the village. This is reaffirmed in the banners analyzed in the field that pointed out #OtakuPeroNuncaFacho, as well as others that showed drawings of characters and political analogies of *Naruto*, as well as different performative expressions in which the use of cosplay of characters from this and other animated series stood out.

The remake productions ranging from the creation of memes, the editing of videos, the occupation of public space through the cosplay of anime characters or the elaboration of banners with political analogies of television series, were mechanisms of expression that fostered common encounters, in which symbols of mass culture were abstracted from which collective resistances and identities were configured (Treré, 2017). These media references provide an axiological framework based on sensitivity, justice, playful solidarity, the denunciation of social decomposition, as well as its consequent transformation. Anchored to the blurring between fiction and reality, they project new possible horizons.

Discussion and conclusions

Media narratives have expanded thanks to the development of the media, particularly the presence of the internet and mobile devices such as cell phones or tablets. Derived from this, audiovisual production has been massified due to the presence of new accessible devices for audiovisual documentation. These two trends are causing juxtapositions between fiction and reality, hybridization processes that generate three characteristics in the hyper-mediatized society.

Firstly, violence is mimicked by moving between the hegemonic productions coming from cinema or television and the documentation in non-autonomous spaces, in the first dimension fictional violence concentrates, while in the second the real violence concentrates against bodies interacting in different contexts that determine different levels and categories of violence; likewise, these categories have different interests or speculations in the audiovisual documentation of their actions. In both cases, audiovisual productions of violence are a way of representing the daily attacks occurring in the social experience, at the same time that they contain symbolic materials from which the subjects construct processes of identification and interpretation of reality, that is to say that audiovisual violence has a double recursiveness that weaves between fiction and reality.

Secondly, we saw a hybridization between Pop media narratives and political discourses. In this sense, political communications, mostly those pertaining to candidate promotions in electoral campaigns, seek to integrate themselves into media ecologies, integrating in their communicative dynamics unorthodox strategies that degrade the discursive rationality of their proposals. Simultaneously, this process involves various effects, as well as signs of insensitivity towards social problems, consecrating the operative incapacity of public administration and political actors both in the involvement and in the resolution of problems.

In the face of the first two characteristics, a third one emerges, also derived from the blurring of the border between fiction and reality, which seeks to vindicate social sensitivity, through particular repertoires of technopolitical vindication that include performativity as the main channel of expression. These expressions of protest are based on an axiological framework that denounces social decomposition and seeks to transform it, resorting to media narratives both in the interpretation of political contexts and in the creation of the collective identities that are the players of contemporary activism.

The three characteristics: mimicry of violence, degradation of political rationality and fiction as a vindictive repertoire, comprise forms of political expression in the context of the hyper-mediatized society. Therefore, the repertoires of technopolitical expression are not reduced to vindictive responses, but are structured among diverse forces that may well give rise to the formation of collective intelligences that pursue political objectives seeking to transform the structures of power, while at the same time they may propitiate the emergence of digital masses that through different archaisms and uses of violence may disintegrate transformative collective action, fostering the de-subjectivization of certain groups or aspiring to preserve the structures of power. In both cases, these repertoires are subject to the resources and capabilities of those who use them in certain political contexts, in which both the characteristics of digital communication technologies and media narratives play a key role.

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