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***‘So they can see all we’ve suffered!’ Understanding the Roles of the Citizen Witness in
the Visual Economy of Crisis Images***

APPROVED BY SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor: Mary A. Bock

Co-Supervisor: Robert Jensen

***‘So they can see all we’ve suffered!’ Understanding the Roles of the Citizen Witness in
the Visual Economy of Crisis Images***

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Dominique A. Montiel Valle

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the political prisoners, the journalists and everyone continuing the fight against injustice in Nicaragua—whether it be by mobilizing, documenting, or simply keeping those suffering in their thoughts. This is also dedicated to those that died trying. Always in my mind, *mi Nicaragua Nicaraguita*.

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ABSTRACT

‘So they can see all we’ve suffered!’ Understanding the Roles of the Citizen Witness in the Visual Economy of Crisis Images

Dominique A. Montiel Valle, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2019

Supervisor: Mary A. Bock

This project examines the various roles of mobile-clad citizen witnesses of crisis as well as how their produced content is used in the news, based on a critical discourse analysis of 140 tweets shared during the first week of Nicaragua’s current socio-political crisis. This corpus was developed through data cleaning to include only those shared by news organizations that showcased citizen visuals. The analysis showed that citizen witnesses enacted four distinguishable roles: that of verifier, watchdog, unifier, and dissenter, and that news organizations tended to incorporate citizen content through re-tweeting with no added context.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

On April 19th of 2018, after one day of small demonstrations, protests broke in various cities of Nicaragua over a government-sanctioned social security reform. Numerous communities and universities gathered in the streets to demand a retraction, but violence soon arose between protesters and protest police as well as members of “La Juventud Sandinista,” a government youth group. The violence that escalated on that day concluded in the deaths of Darwin Urbina, Hilton Rafael Manzanares, and Richard Pavon Bermudez, sparking a nationwide revolutionary outcry and a citizens’ revolt (BBC, 2018). Within a week, deaths multiplied into the twenties and have continued to increase into upwards of five-hundred people, the current tally (Confidencial, 2018). The number of direct murders at the hand of the state—whether through the police, paramilitary groups, Sandinista youth—as well as the exorbitant amount of injuries (around four-thousand) and politically-motivated arrests (upwards of six-hundred) illustrate an extremely precarious national environment (Infobae, 2018).

Yet, both *because* and *despite* this reign of terror, seas of mobile-clad citizens have and continue to expose themselves to the streets with only one weapon: their phone cameras. Particularly in the first week of protests back in April of 2018, when journalists, expatriated nationals, and members of the localized citizenry itself were scrambling to make sense of the sudden, repressive reality, mobile camera-clad citizens played a key role in providing visual narratives of national happenings. Their networked content provided a stark picture for local and global audiences: national police storming and attacking the Polytechnic University of Nicaragua, where auto-convocated students were trenched, doctors and nurses under orders to refuse medical care to the wounded of Managua; and unresponsive, dying bodies being carried by the masses in plain daylight (Confidencial 2018; Agren, 2018; Wade, 2018).

The crucial role of camera-wielding citizens in times of brutality and crisis is a relatively new, yet rapidly proliferating phenomenon (Frosh & Pinchevski, 2009; Castells, 2009; Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013; Bock, 2016). However, informed by literature on embodied witnessing and the new requisites for bearing witness ushered in by the visual media economy, we can come to see that the “very entry card to presenting oneself as witness today” is “graphic imagery that bears the mark of incontrovertible truth” (Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013, p. 755;). The citizen camera-witness, as Anden-Papadopolous terms, is the epitome of this politically dissident, camera-wielding martyr—a purveyor of vivid embodied experience for purposes of claiming witness and raising awareness in the global arena (2013). Although it is helpful to employ this framework to explore the role of mobile-clad citizens during the ongoing sociopolitical crisis in Nicaragua, I approach the citizen camera-witness’s end goal of intentional political dissidence with ambivalence and openness in order to understand the full range of roles that the citizen witness of crisis undertakes.

To examine the multiple roles of the citizen witness of crisis and how CWC visuals are used in the news, I engaged with citizen visuals shared through Twitter during the first week of the crisis (April 19-April 26). More specifically, I did a multi-modal critical discourse analysis on both original citizen posts and curated re-posts shared by journalists and media organizations. This two-pronged approach allowed me to access components of production and distribution in the visual economy of crisis images.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This project aims to understand the modalities of citizen witness work that surfaced on Twitter in the tumultuous beginnings of Nicaragua's ongoing sociopolitical crisis. In addition to this, it explores how professional journalists used and curated these citizen visuals in their own Twitter posts. Given this context, the following literature will discuss the case study of the Nicaraguan crisis with specific appraisal of how it can better help us understand citizen crisis witnessing. Subsequently, I will contextualize this project within past research on the *visual economy*, as it is a productive framework to understand citizen visual production. Furthermore, I will examine conceptualizations of media-witnessing, granting focus to the citizen witness of crisis as has been theorized thus far. I will then delve into discussion surrounding the labor of the citizen journalist as it has been explored within the wider corporate media landscape. Lastly, I will review literature that points towards journalistic pressures to include citizen crisis content and literature that underscores the *authenticity* of citizen crisis content as journalistic capital.

Case Study: #SOSNicaragua

At the time of this writing, Nicaragua has been submerged in a sanguine socio-political crisis for the duration of 11 months. On April 18th of 2018, after the Nicaraguan government, headed by president Daniel Ortega, announced a social security reform that would see current workers imposed with a much higher contribution rate and a 5% decrease in pension funds awarded to retirees (Alfaro, 2018). On that fateful Wednesday, a small group of protesters, mostly a mix of university students, senior citizens and journalists, was injured by members of *La Juventud Sandinista*, the FSLN funded youth group (the FSLN is the party in power).

The next day hundreds of retirees and national public & private university students from UNA (*Universidad Nacional Agraria*), UPOLI (*Universidad Politecnica*) and UCA

(*Universidad Centroamericana*) took to the streets of Managua, the capital city, to reject the new INSS reforms. On that Thursday, April 19th of 2018, they too were met with violent repression, this time at the hands of protest police or *antimotines* who attempted to neutralize the protests with tear gas, rubber bullets, and physical violence. Later that day, under the veil of the night, the first mortal clash between protest police and protesters took place in the outskirt of UPOLI, resulting in the first recorded death of the crisis. Many students took refuge together inside their universities. The national police, riot police unit, government groups and, later on, paramilitary groups thus began to stalk and attack university ‘trenches’ at nighttime—a repression tactic consistently used to neutralize the dissident university movement (Wade, 2018). Within that first night of mortal violence, three individuals perished and a new, viral hashtag appeared on Twitter: #SOSNicaragua (“Fechas claves,” 2018; Hurtado, 2018).

The culmination of state aggression on the 19th paved the way for two consecutive realities: on the one hand, protests were no longer about the social security reforms (these were later revoked by Ortega), they were now about dethroning the 11-year running Ortega government (Gallo, 2018). The other awakened reality was that of a cyber-boom: the crisis “shot up the amount of [social media] users in Nicaragua and fomented migration amongst platforms according to the affordances they gave to the hundreds of people out mobilizing” (Translated from Spanish) (Hurtado, 2018). Twitter, particularly, saw an incremental rise in Nicaraguan users after April 18th & 19th (Hurtado, 2018).

Within these early days and weeks of the movement, citizens of every kind made use of the platform to evidence wrongdoings, voice political dissent, coordinate manifestations, warn of perilous areas, and to request immediate medical or subsistence items (Hurtado, 2018). In this way, citizen communication through social media was critical: “thanks to citizen journalism we realized what was happening in remote or faraway regions. People

started to follow accounts and personas that, in the day to day, shared information regarding critical zones of the conflict” (Translated from Spanish) (Hurtado, 2018). The reporting, mobilizing, and manifold forces of social media communication during the crisis has thus sustained its prevalence of usage throughout these 11 months.

The crisis is ongoing, with Ortega’s government still in power. Evidenced by forensic examinations and extensive research, hundreds of the estimated 500 deaths have been perpetrated by war-grade weapons like AK-47s and, furthermore, have been found to be shot from sniper positions (Navarro, 2018). The violence was nothing short of brutal. With a government that consistently calls protesters *golpistas* or coup-conspirators, there is still no definitive resolution in sight. Besides mortal violence, there is evidence to show political prisoners have been and continue to be tortured within *El Chipote* and *Detencion de Mujeres La Esperanza*, the two main prisons holding the bulk of close to 400 political prisoners (“Rapporteur on the Rights of People,” 2018). Journalists have also suffered grave harassment, with two of the country’s most recognized tv reporters, Miguel Mora and Lucia Pineda, under arrest and tens of others under self-exile in Costa Rica and the US (“Nicaragua: Allanan instalaciones de 100%,” 2018; Roths Schuh 2018).

Currently, the government is in dialogue with representatives from the Catholic Church and the Private Sector, but many other factions of the Civil Alliance—a multi-organization coalition that represents peasants, university students, the Caribbean region, etc.—have expressed dissatisfaction and disassociation with this dialogue for peace, arguing that there is no dialogue until *all* political prisoners are released (Romero, 2019). Nevertheless, social media platforms like Twitter are still a stronghold for crisis discourse and the #SOSNicaragua hashtag is constantly employed by citizens across the nation when an instance of repression is identified, such as the more recent burning of *Radio Sandino* and the 100-year sentencing of peasant leaders Medardo Mairena and Pedro Mena. Images and

videos of protest, injustice, and evidentiary information continue to be widespread in the digital ecology of Twitter's #SOSNicaragua.

The Politics of Visuals: Icons vs. Visual Economies

The market penetration of camera operating smartphones in all corners of the world has, unsurprisingly, given rise to an era of online image and video ubiquity. Even in a small country of 6.3 million like Nicaragua, the poorest country in Central America and second poorest in the Western hemisphere, there are an estimated 2.5 million working smartphones as of 2017 (Porter, BN Americas, 2017; CIA Library). This “age of perpetual media exposure,” as Frosh and Pinchevski (2009) termed it nearly a decade ago, has had profound implications for ways of being—we are all constantly hand in pocket, ready to document, expecting the unexpected (p. 295). The proliferation of visuals and audio-visuals in our current digital ecology, in addition, has intensified questions about how to study and understand these phenomenon.

Although researchers have pondered over the resonance, iconography and power of the material image itself, others have suggested that “the power of an image as icon does not reside simply in the qualities of the image itself nor does it arise spontaneously as a mystical sort of cultural resonance” (Griffin, 2018, p.). The conundrum of visual power is that the image is the agent that shocks the senses and stirs affective responses, and yet the image does not stand alone. As Linfield puts it, “it seems to me that these images... were telling me things I urgently needed to know—and at the same time that the realities they documented could not be found only, or primarily, in the pictures themselves” (2010, p. xiv).

To shift away from icon-centric visual studies, Poole (1997) proposed the idea of a visual economy. An anthropologist, Poole's (1997) interest in the idea of a visual economy sprouted from her fieldwork with Andean indigenous peoples in Southern Highland Peru. During her time there, she became particularly interested in “the ways in which visual images

and visual technologies move across the boundaries that we often imagine as separating different cultures and classes” (Poole, 1997, p. 5). This understanding of visuals as part of a wider, fluid network suggests that “visual images [are] part of a comprehensive organization of people ideas and objects” and not stand-alone icons (Poole, 1997, p. 8; Mitchell, 2002; Campbell, 2007; MacDonald, 2009). In adopting a visual economy approach, one can start to understand the tiered organizational levels of the networks surrounding visuals and the relations of power amongst them. In his work on the geopolitics and visibility of the Darfur conflict, Campbell (2007) maps out: “this organization involves three levels: the organization of production comprising the individuals and the technologies that produce images, the circulation of goods, meaning the transmission and publication of images and image objects; and the cultural resources and social systems through which images are interpreted and valued” (p. 361). Understanding visuals as commodities allows us to see the labor behind, distribution claims of, and interpretational space around a single image.

Moreover, in recognizing the economy of image production, circulation and interpretation, it is made “clear that the visual field is both made possible by and productive of relations of power, and that these power relations bear at least some relationship to wider social and political structures which are themselves associated with transnational relations of exchange” (Campbell, 2009, p. 361). In relation to crisis contexts, it is imperative understand visuals as *part of* a system. Taking this approach means opening analysis to: the surrounding market demands for ‘raw’ visceral imagery, the risk-prone labor of visual producers, the circulation power of mass media, and the socio-cultural interpretational arena (Anden-Popodopoulos, 2014).

Moving away from iconographic approaches to visual studies can also allow us to unlock the true power of images: “the idea of a ‘visual economy’ also signals a shift from an understanding of visual images as illustrations and carriers of information to an appreciation

of their power to enact and perform in the social field... it thus highlights the ever-increasing power of images and their circulation to shape the collective imaginary” (Anden-Popodopoulos, 2014, p. 755-756). Although the performative potential of images has been explored in the post-modern turn, research has not explored the potential for different actors to imbue images with sets of layered realities.

Reflecting upon the strong imagery that has and continues to surface from the bloody socio-political unrest in Nicaragua—an inhabited house up in flames, line-ups of police cars encircling university sectors, black-uniformed clusters of police chasing and ruthlessly beating young protestors and masked men in unmarked cars seizing known protestors from the street—suggests the criticality of considering the network of actors, things, and arenas that surround it, particularly the camera-clad witness. Within the context of crisis, the stakes of understanding the mortal labor of visual producers and the power relations between production (citizen camera-witness) and circulation (mass media) become much higher.

Witnessing and Crisis

In his seminal essay, *Witnessing*, Durham-Peters (2001) offered a detailed account of different modes of witnessing that are particularly fruitful for our understanding of citizen observers of crisis. Historically an “agent who bears witness,” has been inextricably linked with pain, death, and punishment (Durham-Peters, 2001, p. 709). The essay touches on the martyr and survivor modes of witnessing, both in which the act of passive witnessing is inherently imbued with a painful physicality of being “survivors of hell” (Durham-Peters, 2001, p.708). From another angle, however, *laying claim* to witnessing has also been a process in which the body is placed as collateral to attain credence or authenticity; whether through torture, subpoena (threat of punishment), or even death, owning claim to truth is a painful, bodily experience. Durham-Peters (2001) writes, “To bear witness is to put one’s

body on the line. Within every witness, perhaps, stands a martyr, the will to corroborate words with something beyond them, pain and death being the last resorts” (p. 713).

The conundrum of witnessing, for Durham-Peters, is the inability to translate embodied experience into discourse. However, with the camera-phone phenomenon, witnessing has inextricably transpired from an exclusively physical experience to a simultaneous moment of embodiment *and* translation, of physical presence *and* digital recording (Frosh & Pinchevski, 2009; Reading, 2009; Anden-Papadopolous, 2014). It is not merely enough to stand and bear witness through the senses, to claim witness now means to have proof of embodied presence (Anden-Papadopolous, 2014). This conceptual shift is notable in what Frosh and Pinchevski (2009) call *crisis readiness*, a shift in the procedural experience of crisis wherein it is no longer experienced as an isolable break in continuity, but is rather as a “generalized routine condition—crisis as an experiential ground of contemporary existence rather than a momentary irruption into it—that is sustained and performed by a new configuration of mediation, representation, and experience that we call ‘media witnessing’” (p. 296). It is this idea that’s reflected on Durham-Peters’ (2001) last line: “watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the event will come” (p. 723).

It is in the vein of this new form of witnessing that Anden-Papadopolous (2014) proposes the concept of the *citizen camera-witnessing* as “the ritualized employment of the mobile camera as a personal witnessing device to provide a public record of embodied actions of political dissent for the purpose of persuasion” (p. 757). In this sense, she theorizes a politically-charged citizen modality of the camera-witness: it is not just the accidental spectator “recording banal moments,” but the “affected and affecting embodied subject who may stake his or her life for testimony” (Anden-Papadopolous, 2014, p. 756). Anden-Papadopolous (2014) also explicitly connects this witnessing to the civic and political

notions of citizenship—the citizen camera-witness uses “filming as resistance to brutal repression” (p. 756; see also Ristovska, 2016).

Although the conceptualization of the CCW as a subject that bears witness to “appeal to an audience” is open and encompassing, researchers have pointed to a skew in the conceptualization of that audience as “distant others” (Anden-Papadopolous, 2014, p. 756). As Choulariaki (2014) contends, the “disposition of ‘I have a voice’” has been widely celebrated “as facilitating cosmopolitan solidarity that transcends borders and makes a difference in people’s lives” and yet fails “to go beyond communitarian recognition” (p. 51). Furthermore, this disposition of thought operates under the assumption that the CCW’s drive to photograph and film comes from “the hope and implication that increased transparency portends the possibility of greater... accountability and a method to arrest state violence” (Wall & Linnemann, 2014, p. 136). The literature centred around the civic dimension of citizen witnesses favors both a cosmopolitanized sense of the world and liberal notions of transparency and accountability. However, as Wall & Linnemann (2014) stated, “greater accountability...is a decidedly liberal hope and one not nearly radical enough” (p. 136).

From a different angle, literature on the use of social media during Iran’s Green Movement and the Arab Spring point towards a citizen drive to spur collective mobilization (Wolman, 2008; Bruns et al, 2013; Wolfsfeld et al., 2013; Ahmad et al., 2015; Honari, 2018). Citizen imagery was activist-spirited in this context. In Egypt, Asmaa Mahfouz’s viral vlog, in which she challenges fellow Egyptians to join the uprising in Tahrir Square, is credited for sparking the subsequent magnitude of street presence (Wolman, 2008). Meanwhile, in Iran, citizen organizing through social media was a testament to the populace’s zeal for protesting despite intense repression from the government (Honari, 2018). This understanding of citizen content as a tool for organizing and covering protest reveals another possible dimension for citizen witness work: a means to unify the local populace and ignite collective mobilization.

Exploitation or Subversion? The Labor of the Citizen Journalist

Citizen journalists, who consist of a hefty, unpaid workforce online, have been defined in manifold ways (Terranova, 2004; Kperogi, 2011; Palmer, 2014). As Lewis et al. (2010) have acknowledged, the various and distinct manifestations of ‘citizen journalism’ have made it “hard to define” (p. 4). The usefulness of such a broad umbrella term has been contended, especially when one tries to apply it to non-Western contexts where the term ‘citizen’ and ‘journalist’ take on different meanings (Palmer, 2014). Nevertheless, there is some consensus around the definition of citizen journalism as a participatory phenomenon, wherein “the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another” (Rosen, 2008). Distinctions between the citizen witness and the citizen journalist remain even more unclear, given that some conceptualizations resemble each other.

Allan (2013) suggests that employing the term “witnessing” rather than “journalism” is more elemental and thus open to describe behaviours that are too quickly, and erroneously, subsumed under the term “journalism.” His emphasis on the “objectivity,” “responsibility” and “authority” claimed by the professional journalist sheds some light on the ideological baggage of the term citizen journalist: an act of “journalism” would encompass verification of facts, detail curation, and a narration of a ‘definitive’ account (Allan, 2013). Citizen journalists, under this rubric, are widespread—although perhaps not as easily encountered as citizen witnesses. Citizen news bloggers, news-relaying Youtubers, and contributors to ‘indie’ news sites like WITNESS.com, can be construed as citizen journalists.

In the context of Nicaragua, citizen journalists are not commonly encountered. This is due to the fact that it is a small country with not many indie markets for alternative ‘citizen’ news, in addition to the historical presence of loud, revered professional media. Nevertheless, in the context of the ongoing crisis, the proliferation of citizen video witnesses has been

incommensurable— they have become primary sources for national knowledge. These persons fit under a generalized definition of citizen journalists—“people formerly known as the audience” who employ “the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another” (Rosen, 2008). However, due to the Western ideological baggage surrounding the term journalism, I adopt the term citizen witness to refer to them throughout this paper.

The labor of citizen journalists.

In 1989, Herbert Schiller warned of the ‘corporate takeover of public expression’ in his book *Culture, Inc.* Since then, much has changed in the arena of media culture— particularly with the rise of prod-usage, or the proliferation of capital production by consumers in the digital age (Bruns, 2008). With the rise of prod-usage specific sites, such as Reddit, ‘free labor’ in the digital marketplace is widespread and rapidly growing.

Researchers that study the labor of the citizen journalist is often focus on the corporate “cooptation” of citizen journalism and, as so, are concerned with big, global media conglomerates that have specific platforms for citizen journalism ‘contributions.’ Kperogi’s (2011) work on iReport, a CNN platform created exclusively for global citizen journalist allies to ‘disseminate’ their work, argued that “while the vigorous profusion of web-based citizen media has the potential to inaugurate an era of dynamic expansion of the deliberative space and even serve as a counterfoil to the suffocating dominance of the discursive space by the traditional, mainstream media, we are now witnessing a trend toward the aggressive co-optation of these citizen media by corporate media hegemons” (p. 314). In this sense, he aligns with Terranova (2004) who proposes that “collective cultural labor” is “being voluntarily channelled and controversially structured within capitalist business practices” (p. 80). The optimistic, counter-hegemonic interpretation of citizen journalism is here dismantled by pointing towards its manipulation and funnelling into an inherently hegemonic neoliberal system.

Although Terranova (2004) and Kperogi (2011) give us a somewhat decidedly ‘cooptation’ answer to the free labor conundrum of citizen journalism, Palmer (2014) suggests that the answer is not as definitive. Focusing on CNN’s iReport, Palmer argued that “iReporters draw upon CNN’s clout to disseminate their messages across a wide variety of multimedia platforms” and that “their unpaid labor simultaneously bolsters the power of the CNN brand while also illuminating the social hierarchies long associated with traditional journalism” (Palmer, 2014, p. 28). Borrowing from Bruns (2008), Palmer (2014) highlights that the ‘harvesting’ of CJ material inherently changes CNN’s knowledge-base—they are now drawing from audience knowledge and not exclusively from elite sources. She argues that, in this way, CJ work *does shift* the hegemonic structure of journalism. Her conclusion is “that citizen coverage of global conflict is a story of both exploitation and subversion” (Palmer, 2014, p. 29).

This imaginary of CJ ‘subversion’ concludes on the note of cosmopolitanism and transparency. Palmer (2014) argued that her interactions with iReporters “involved in the protests of 2009 [Iran] revealed that participants’ hope of *telling the world* about the events in Iran was the driving force behind the hours spent working without pay” (p. 35) (emphasis added). Her results shed great light on what CJs perceive as the compensation for their work and furthers academic literature on the civic and global modality of the citizen journalist. However, there is little research that aims to trace the lived labor of citizen journalists through their produced visuals; approaches to the economic system of citizen visual production are often based on interviews or disseminated discourse from corporate media sites. Although these approaches allow us to explore how CJs view their work and how professional journalism distances itself from it, they limit our potential to understand what CJ work is, what it entails for the body, and the unperceived compensations it may have.

Journalism and Citizen Visuals

Within the Western tradition, images have held a tremendous amount of knowledge-power (Zelizer, 2007; Anden-Papadopoulos & Pantti, 2013, Bock, 2016). Stemming from the “conflation of seeing and knowing, and from the camera’s technical perfection,” visuals have and continue to be “a powerful form of evidence in modern life, a virtual trump card in modernity’s games of truth” (Bock, 2016, p. 17). As Durham-Peters explains (2001), ‘dumb media’ such as the camera and microscope purport to uphold ‘truth’ as passive, sterilized observation while their own “cultural authority... lies in the claim to document events without the filter of subjective experience. Since witnesses were supposed to be like machines, machines are also held to be good witnesses” (p. 716).

This shunning of the body in the praise for mechanical authority is traditionally embraced within the Western journalistic tradition:

...journalism placed authority within the *camera*, not the photographer. To acknowledge the work of photographers would reveal the constructed nature of images and the role of the body and human decision-making in their origins. The camera, as an infallible and technological recorder of visual truth, provides journalism with credibility only as long as the people who operate those cameras remain unseen. (Bock, 2011, p. 4)

Here, it is visible that the journalistic notions of blank objectivity are almost irrefutably at odds with the subjective, embodied nature of “the survivor, whose witness lies in mortal engagement with the story told” (Durham-Peters, 2001, p. 716). How, then, can we reconcile audience eyewitness images with journalistic tropes of objectivity, neutrality, and machine-like truth telling? Crisis reporting, in particular, faces the paradox of journalistic ideology and the “indispensable instrument” of user-generated visuals head on (Pantti & Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013, p. 962). Operating within a field of view that spans across the globe, the ubiquity of audience images and videos of crisis has made their inclusion in journalistic

narratives a convenient and critical addition (Allan, 2009; Pantti & Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013; Ristovska, 2015; Farrell & Allan, 2015). This is a relatively modern move; news-making prior to the new millennium was monoperspectival and relied on elite information subsidies (Gans, 2004; Gandy, 1991).

Although at odds with hard-pressed values of objectivity and neutrality, the field of journalism can “recognize that ostensibly dispassionate reporting” in the context of crisis and war can appear “‘balanced’ to the point of editorial sanitization” (Farrell & Allan, 2015, p. 239). Furthermore, the *authenticity* that is perceived and drawn from ‘raw’ audience eyewitness images and videos has made it “crucial for marking the on-site presence by which journalists constitute their authority for reporting distant crisis events” (Pantti & Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013, p. 962; Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013). As Bock (2016) asserts, “the very imperfections of citizen media—as with poorly lit, shaky, obviously handheld phone video—imparts what visual critics call an aesthetic of authenticity” (p. 17). The paradoxical notion that the very embodied subjectivity of CCW content is what then becomes authenticity capital for news organizations, however, is not as straightforward as it may seem.

Much of the literature around this new phenomenon highlights discursive strategies employed by journalists to attempt to ‘normalize’ audience eyewitness images and/or to attempt to distinguish ‘professional’ from ‘amateur’ work (Zelizer, 2007; Bock, 2011; Pantti & Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013; Bock, 2016; Ristovska, 2016). References to the ‘image’ or ‘camera’ rather than the photo/videographer, for example, create a discursive separation between the objective image and the embodied construction of the shot (Bock, 2011). Furthermore, due to the fact that “words have long held a privileged place in journalism,” verbal additions that accompany images can be construed as another journalistic tactic to ‘control’ or ‘tame’ the graphic citizen visual (Ristovska, 2016, p. 351).

This literature suggests the importance of exploring the context journalists curate unto citizen visuals. Zooming in on the elements that traditional journalists add to citizen visuals (i.e. captions, hashtags, and other text) can open interpretation to the layers of meaning they add to this “more real” yet “less packaged” material, and suggest the journalistic values they are attempting to recover (Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013, p. 348). Audience studies have suggested “that crowd-sourced video affords distant (i.e. national) audiences a quality of connectivity with global crisis events that is characterized by a productive ambivalence between, on the one hand, an appreciation of ‘being there’ and, on the other hand, a suspicion of lack of context and verification” (Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013, p. 350).

Placing focus, then, on how professional journalists interact with ‘raw’ citizen-produced visuals in practice is critical to understand their role in this visual economy. Are professional journalists merely co-opting gratuitous capital? Or are CCWs co-opting journalistic ‘circulatory’ power? These are important questions that can start to be tackled through close analysis of *both* CCW and traditional journalistic work around citizen visuals of crisis, which this project aims to do.

Summary

As it stands, research on visuals has taken both image-focused or visual economy-focused approaches. Visual economic approaches to journalism studies have explored video- and photo-journalists’ visual production (Bock, 2011; Bock, 2012). There has also been work done on the production of citizen visuals, though it is a much smaller repertoire (Bock, 2016). Further, research on the labor of citizen witnesses has focused on its co-optation by corporate media platforms (such as iReport) and has been based off of interviews and analyses of corporate discourse (Kperogi, 2011; Palmer, 2014). Research on the citizen witness of crisis has tended to be more theoretical and focused on the ‘global voice’ of citizen video. However, there has been little to no empirical research on the risk-prone work of the citizen

witness of crisis as analysed through their embodied product, and thus no interrogation of the many modalities this character can undertake. The early days of the Nicaraguan crisis provide a fruitful case study, as they unleashed a wave of citizen witness visuals on Twitter.

Subsequently, I pose the following research question:

RQ 1: What do crisis tweets reveal about the various roles that the citizen witness (CW) undertakes?

In addition to the gaps these questions seek to address, this project speaks to research on the relationality between professional journalists and citizen witness visuals. Though there has been significant academic interrogation of this relationship, this research has been propense to examining how citizen visuals are incorporated into more formal journalistic formats (i.e. TV reporting) (Anden-Popodopoulos & Pantti, 2013). In the less formal, more immediate ecology of Twitter, and within the fast-paced crisis context of Nicaragua, it is important to examine the kind of resource citizen visuals played for professional journalists. The Nicaraguan case study is ideal for this investigation, as many professional journalists relied on the myriad visuals coming from citizens all over the country in the crisis' first days. I thus introduce another research question:

RQ 2: How is citizen witness (CW) material used in Twitter news reporting?

These questions lend themselves well to qualitative methods, as I seek to understand the *qualities* of CW roles and of the ways in which CW material is incorporated into news tweets in times of crisis.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Method

Methodology

Studies aiming to understand the embodied work of journalists and citizen journalists have tended to be qualitative (Allan, 2010; Bock, 2012; Bock, 2016; Palmer, 2014; Usher, 2014). These often employ ethnographic methods like participant observation and interviews to witness or interrogate the citizen subject him/herself, although more theoretical essays have focused on iconic citizen crisis images (Anden-Popodopoulos, 2014). Ethnographic tools seem particularly productive for this line of research, although it is often close to impossible to employ them in the context of continued violence and crisis. Through iterative analysis and qualitative attention to image composition, layout, and textual cues, visuals and audio-visuals can provide a clear window into the different roles undertaken by citizen witnesses during crisis (Anden-Popodopoulos, 2013).

This study uses critical discourse analysis as a tool to study the ‘grammar’ of citizen crisis visuals; namely, not just the “connotative meanings of the people, places and things in images,” but also “the role of composition and layout as structuring devices” of meaning-making (Van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 138). This CDA approach is best suited, given that this project aims to look beyond the ‘visceral’ icon of crisis and into the realm of the camera-man/woman’s roles. As Van Leeuwen & Kress (1996) explain, “most accounts of visual semiotics have concentrated on what linguists would call ‘lexis’ rather than ‘grammar,’ on the ‘vocabulary’—for instance, on the ‘denotative’ and ‘connotative,’ the ‘iconographical’... significance of the individual people, places and things depicted” rather than the on the way these elements and the ‘behind the scenes’ come to signify meaning (p. 2). In this way, we can come to understand CWs’ visual meaning-making roles. Furthermore, I align here with Van Leeuwen & Kress (1996) in that “visual language is not transparent and universally understood, but culturally specific” (p. 3).

A multi-modal CDA approach is favorable in order to probe how professional journalists' interact with citizen witness visuals in the context of the Nicaraguan crisis. In the case of Twitter, where journalists were retweeting citizen visuals, textual additions like captions and hashtags prove to be significant as an added layer of meaning (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017). Inclusion of "written commentary" associated with the visuals is imperative, as these have important "roles of connotation and denotation" that can add *or* shift the visual meaning-making (Engel, 2008, p. 3). Taking from Barthes' (1982) notion of accompanying text as 'anchorage,' insofar that "the linguistic message no longer guides the identification, but the interpretation" and that "the text directs the reader," layered text surrounding visuals can be construed as both 1) textual meaning added unto visuals by CWs and 2) textual meaning added or shifted by journalists curating the original content (p. 31-32). Barthes' (1982) notions of 'new signification,' or the after-the-photo-event text interpretation of the image, is also significant for analysis as it allows us to understand how journalists add new meanings to CW content.

Method

This project extends into two different research foci, but I employ the same method for their study. Firstly, I looked at original citizen Twitter posts to interrogate the different roles undertaken by citizen witnesses during the first week of the Nicaraguan crisis. Secondly, I examined how professional journalists and media organizations were employing citizen visuals in their news tweets.

Data collection & cleaning.

For this research, a total of 400,000 tweets spanning across the first week of the sociopolitical crisis in Nicaragua were collected using the hashtag #SOSNicaragua. These tweets were collected through an online paid server called Netlytic, which collects tweets in real time. These tweets were then exported in a csv file format and accessed through Excel,

where I then proceeded to sorting the entire body of tweets alphabetically according to tweet author. Once tweets were sorted, I proceeded to manually search within the author column for tweets posted by all Nicaraguan media organizations and individually-prominent journalists that had a publicly posted and accessible Twitter account. These accounts included that of *La Prensa*, *Confidencial*, *Carlos Fernando Chamorro*, *Juan Carlos Ampie*, *Articulo 66*, among others. This corpus was then manually examined and all tweets that did not include visuals were discarded. I then previewed tweets that included visuals and discarded all that were not a re-tweet of a citizen visual and not a news tweet that attributed their visual to a civilian. The final corpus, which is representative of citizen visuals retweeted by professional journalists and news tweets including attributed CW visuals during the first week of crisis (April 20-27), includes 140 tweets. This corpus is the base for the multi-modal critical discourse analysis.

Phases of analysis.

To answer RQ1, which interrogate the roles of the citizen witness of crisis, I first analyzed civilian tweets on their own right. As mentioned in the Methodology section, my critical discourse analysis approach takes into account the structures of the visual that speak to its behind-the-scenes work. In order to answer RQ2, which asks about the positionality of professional journalists within the visual economy of crisis images, I then moved on to analyze professional journalists' and media organizations' re-tweets of these images. In this phase, attention was placed on the textual context added unto the visual as an added layer of meaning. Lastly, I did an informal content analysis to be able to quantify perceived modalities of citizen witnesses and patterns of use adopted by journalists in their re-tweets.

Iterative coding.

For analysis, I employed Glasser & Strauss' (1967) constant comparison method to develop themes and then theme clusters from the data, making sure to account for exceptions

to the rule. The first round of analysis began with rough thick description, followed by analysis of description itself in order to recognize overarching themes and develop pithier codes (Rennie, 2017). Once I identified these ‘pithier’ themes, I then went back to the data to verify whether these themes accounted for all of my corpus. Although I approached my data from an open and partially grounded perspective, I was informed by the existing literature on CWs and convergence journalism.

Chapter 4: Findings

To understand the roles of citizen witnesses during crisis and the ways in which media players incorporate CW content in their Twitter reporting, I did a critical discourse analysis on a total of 140 Twitter posts. More specifically, the corpus consisted of tweets shared by Nicaraguan media that included visual content (i.e. image, video) produced by the citizenry. The collection was substantially heterogeneous (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Distribution of Tweets

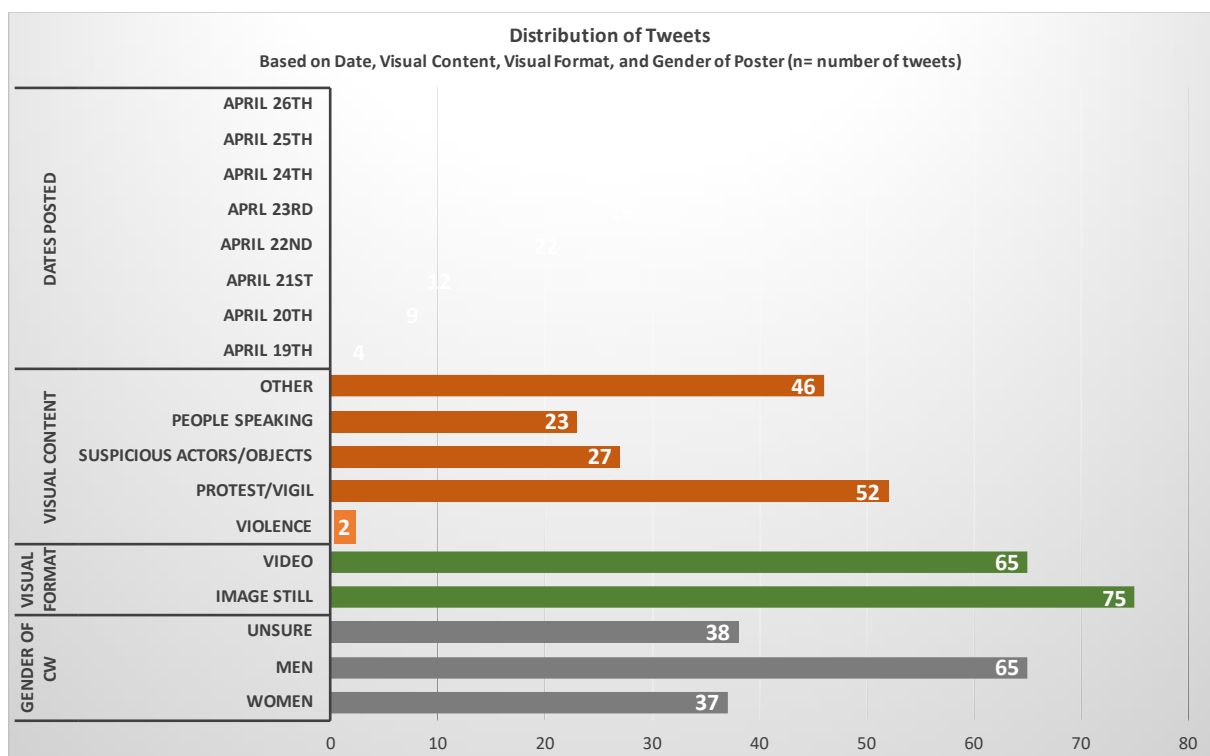


Figure 1

The analysis of visual and textual Twitter discourse identified multiple roles undertaken by Nicaraguan CWs during the first week of the crisis. These modes of CW work were not distinct and mutually exclusive—often, they were found to co-exist in one post. The multi-dimensionality and fluidity of CW work found in the sample point towards the productivity of understanding CWs of crisis as subjects who can rapidly adapt, shift, and multi-task in a chaotic context.

The second part of the analysis looks at the ways in which journalists and media organizations used CW content in their news tweets. I examined whether media actors were adding layers of textual information (i.e. captions, hashtags) to the original citizen posts. These results show that the overwhelming way media players were using CW content in their news tweets was by re-tweeting them with no added content.

Brief Typology of CW Roles

Through analyzing the corpus of 140 tweets, I identified four types of CW roles that I call: verifier, watchdog, unifier, and dissenter. Within these roles, there are distinct patterns regarding the way these roles emerge. For example, a CW that falls under the type of community watchdog can either operationalize this type by warning neighbors about outsiders entering the community *or* by holding members of the community accountable for crimes. Furthermore, types are not necessarily distinct from one another and can operate simultaneously within the same post. This is to say that a CW can be identified as both a community watchdog and a political dissenter in the same post. Table 1, embedded below, surveys the different roles, their dimensions and the amount of posts coded under each category.

Table 1. Typology of CW Roles.

CW ROLES	OVERVIEW	DIMENSIONS	# OF POSTS
THE VERIFIER	Here, the CW is seeking evidence. This can be to dispel other testimony, claim truth to potential repression, or highlight important voices.	This role manifests as: - embodied collection of evidence - indirect collection of evidence provided by witnesses	51
THE WATCHDOG	Here, the CW is warning, investigating, and holding people accountable—all facets of policing.	This role manifests as: - policing the bounds of the community from outside actors - policing community members to hold accountability	13
THE UNIFIER	Here, the CW is inviting the wider public to unify—both in an affective sense and a physical sense.	This role manifests through: - calls for collective remembrance (i.e. honoring the dead) - calls for collective mobilization	70
THE DISSENTER	Here, the CW is expressing explicit political resistance to the Ortega regime. Dissenters operated locally and internationally.	This role manifests through: - explicit repudiation of or demands on the government	47

*Table 1***The Verifier**

The analysis of tweets identified a predominant type of role enacted by CWs during crisis, namely verification. Patterns in the analysis suggest that the function of testimony gathering can be here understood in two ways:

- as evidence gathered through the embodied presence of the CW at a scene
- as verbal attestation provided to a CW by embodied witnesses of a scene.

Embodied verification.

The role of embodied testimony-gathering showed through across videos and images taken by the CW in: scenes of overt violence and scenes of protest. The distinguishing characteristic of embodied testimony-gathering was an explicit or implicit goal of *claiming truth*—the visual was corroboration. For example, in a tweet of a Facebook live video documenting the protest of April 22nd in the road to Masaya, the CW does a 360 degree turn

to sweep over all of the people present at the march. He then zooms into the faces of multiple individual protesters, lingering in order to show the Nicaraguan flags they're carrying, their attire, and cardstock signs demanding justice. While doing this, the CW narrates: "I'm showing you here what Ortega has called 'delinquents,' 'murderers,' 'vandals' when in reality what is here is the Nicaraguan people calling for a social change." Here, the CW is providing verbal contextualization to the scene. In addition, we also see a dimension of the CW as an embodied documentarian for the purposes of laying claim to truth and dispelling 'official' testimony.

Visual evidencing to dispel alternative testimony is also exemplified in many embodied images of protest, wherein the visual of huge masses of people are used to dispel perceived myths of lack of participation. An image shared on April 23rd taken from a bridge above one of Managua's main streets showcases the full magnitude of those occupying the road: thousands of people are dressed in white, carrying Nicaraguan flags. The caption reads: "Photo dedicated to those that tend to say that 'in Nicaragua there is no opposition,' the hundreds of thousands that came out to the streets today ARE the opposition."

Embodied testimony-gathering is also discernable in videos that anticipate a potential violent occurrence. In this sense, the videos can be construed as a method for securing claim to truth regarding who injured or killed whom, why, which weapons were employed, etc. For instance, a CW video shared on April 26th depicts the chaos of confrontation between neighborhood members of Barrio La Fuente and the national police. In the scene, community-members can be seen blockading police entry to the neighborhood by throwing rocks towards the area they were coming from. Shortly into the video, two shots are heard. The CW's camera starts to point downwards and shake more, suggesting heightened commotion. Neighborhood members start to retreat away from the police and the CW starts to approach the laying body of a young man who was shot in the jaw. We see here how the

beginning of the CW's recording precedes any actual injury or death in a way that suggests a foretelling attitude and positions the visual as potential evidence.

This act of gathering evidence in prediction of possible violence was at the forefront of videos where injury was an eventual part of the recording, though this was not always the case. A video from April 20th, captioned “WE WERE IN THE CATHEDRAL PREPARING SALINE AND BICARBONATE SOLUTIONS AND THEY CAME TO ATTACK US #SOSNICARAGUA #SOSINSS” is recorded by the CW in foreshadowing of potential violence. In the video, noises start to be heard outside of the cathedral's main doors, but no violence or dangerous actors are shown. This can be construed as an act of gathering *potentially* useful testimony.

Indirect verification.

Instances of the CW indirectly gathering evidence materialized in videos where embodied witnesses to a scene provided information through interviews and public proclamations. In these events, the CW acted as a witness *to* witness, recording and thus memorializing the testament of citizens who experienced events the like of police brutality and people dying.

As outlined, the CW function of indirect evidence gathering surfaced in informal interviews. Though this was rare, it proved significant as it emphasized populations of extreme relevance, like medical students (the only medical help made available to the wounded) and political prisoners. A video from April 21st, captioned “Medicine students helping youth in the protest #SOSNicaragua via @YouTube,” for example, illustrates an active testimony-gathering modality of the CW. The frame is steadily focused on two young men around the age of 20 clad in medical scrubs; from behind the camera, the CW begins to directly address the two students, asking questions like “have you observed that the police has, unfortunately, hurt many people—are there many injured?” The CW also shifts the

frame focus to the student taking turns to answer the question. Prompted, the students share testimony: “that—now they weren’t shooting rubber bullets, they were *real* (emphasis) bullets that our peers received and unfortunately, there were two people that we couldn’t work on because of our precarious position and we feel frustrated.” The CW continues to coax them into sharing testimony about their lack of medical gear, resources and food. At the end of the video, in an exercise practiced by professional journalists, the CW asks for the students’ names in order to specifically highlight who they are. This further alludes to the importance of *their* attestation.

In other instances, the CW gathered testimonials from informal public pronouncements—gatherings where witnesses would share their witness narrative. This was the case with CW recorded corroborations of police treatment shared by newly released political prisoners. In a particularly rich video shared on April 24th, we see the CW physically move closer to three newly released prisoners standing in front of a crowd; one prisoner in particular starts to provide a very detailed account of their process being taken into the prison and how already-there inmates provided them with food, blankets and clothes. While the prisoners continue to give detailed testimony, citizens all around yell out names of their loved ones, ask whether they saw them, and distinguishably cry. However, the prisoners are engaged almost one-on-one with the camera and continue focused on providing their full testament. The CW’s frame remains steadily on the prisoner providing testimony. The CW’s after-edit of the video, further, blurs out everything in the frame except a narrow rectangle in center frame where the individual of interest is speaking. After the prisoners end their testimony, the CW then starts to shift the camera’s frame towards nearby citizens, though he/she does so slowly. Prompted by the lingering presence of a camera phone, citizens nearby start to offer their own testimony: a man offers the CW’s camera a better view of his bruises, clamoring “this is where they hit me.” In this sense, the CW isn’t always verbally probing for

testimony, but rather places him/herself in primary testimony-giving areas, where the presence of a camera is probe enough for testimony-sharing.

Other instances of CWs as testimony-gatherers take place in more traditional testimony-giving environments, such as a press conference panel put on by the Nicaraguan feminist alliance. However, actors of interest, like entrenched UPOLI students, had to create makeshift, clandestine panels to protect their own safety. In these scenarios, the CW testimony-gathering modality was even more critical. A short video shared by a CW on April 24th illustrates the precariousness of being in the presence of these widely-persecuted students. In this video, members of the university alliance stand behind the panel wearing masks that cover their entire face in order to protect their identity—anything from medical masks to ski masks. Filming at night from within the university complex, as can be deduced by the mountains of school desks stacked behind the panel area, the CW faced great risk of being present at times of attack.

The Watchdog

Another resurfacing CW role was that of watchdog. This function placed the CW as both as:

- a policer of forces attempting to penetrate a specific area,
- an accountability-holder for fellow community members.

This inter- and intra-community policing function mainly manifested through videos, but a few still images also displayed it.

Inter-community policing.

Videos and images where the CW instantiated an inter-community policing function tended to have non-human foci. They were mainly concerned with sightings of police cars clandestinely parked down neighborhood streets, helicopters roaming suspiciously, and police cars stocking up on gas at late hours of the night. These visuals were often extremely

shaky and, in the case of videos, short. However, CWs often framed visuals from a vantage point immediate to the object or scene of interest, given that these visuals were often taken before or after any actual violence or alarming occurrence. For instance, an image shared on April 21st, captioned “Saturday 21st of April, 9:10 pm three trucks, one minibus and one big bus all full of riot police in the Puma at the Rotunda of the Journalist #SOSNicaragua #SOSINSS,” pictures the vehicles described at the Puma gas station. Three of the vehicles sit next to gas pumping stations. The CW is positioned in close proximity to the yellow bus and a police truck, in the parking spot two spots down from the bus. The image is not extremely clear, as there are spots of reflection from the flash—the picture was taken from *inside* a windowed vehicle. We see here, then, that there is not necessarily any action taking place in this image: the CW isn’t ducked—the image is taken at standing level—nor is she making any sudden movements. It’s a still, taken either before or after something took or will take place. This is the same case with warning videos that do not depict human actors, such as a seven-second video of a helicopter flying over an area of residences. In this scenario, the CW is filming from standing position, slowly tracking the helicopter, and zooms into it with her phone. Though the video is somewhat shaky, this is not due to sudden movement, but rather the camera being unfocused.

In the rarer case that there *was* a person depicted in inter-policing visuals, actors were members of the national police or military. Furthermore, there was ongoing action as the visual was taken. The warning was substantially more *in the moment* in this sense. A video shared on April 20th, captioned: “#SOSNicaragua be careful if you leave your house at these hours of the night :’(“ depicts two residential homes separated by an alleyway and cut across by a larger road. It is substantially dark, with the exception of a street light that casts light unto the center of the shot. Two motorbikes ride by with two men propped on each. After the second motorbike is about to exit the frame, there is a loud gunshot sound and a spark flies

off the weapon the man in the back is carrying. Then, another loud explosion is heard—this time resembling the sound of a bomb—accompanied by flickering light on the left side of the frame. Two uniformed men enter the center of the frame and start yelling towards the area behind the CW, followed by them shooting multiple shots in that direction. At this point in the video, the CW moves further to the right side, shifting the frame and making it blurry in the process (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The CW Hides Behind a Wall



Figure 2

Shortly after the CW starts to shift further into hiding, the video ends abruptly. Here we see the CW actively hiding and being involved in the action he is policing, which is suggestive of a more high-stakes, embodied form of community vigilance. Although there is no active ‘vigilante’ function—the CW is not intervening or attempting to disrupt the activities—this illustrates a martyr-watchdog modality: the CW risks possible capture, injury, or death, in order to warn others, through visual witness, not to venture out at night.

Intra-community policing.

The analysis also found instances of CWs acting as an intra-policing subject—being vigilant and holding fellow citizens accountable within neighborhood perimeters. The first week of the crisis saw a national context of mass lootings of supermarkets, appliance stores, fashion shops, fruit stalls, etc. Many of the visuals coded for CW intra-policing functions focused on either specific individuals that were connected to looting or caught looting, as well as on the trashed remains of looted areas. Furthermore, CWs in intra-policing videos were often very vocal in their accountability-holding through chastising looters or expressing disappointment at the rampant chaos caused by citizens.

Active chastising and accountability-holding is most exemplary in a video portraying a citizen as he is looting. In the video, shared on April 23rd, the CW is following two individuals—a man and a woman—carrying a plasma TV down the street. Neighbors and onlookers begin to yell at the two thieves. The CW then verbalizes: “it won’t work anymore because it’s damaged—it should—it should embarrass you! Take that shit—leave!” and an onlooker walks into the frame to take the TV away from the man. He then proceeds to bang the TV repeatedly against the ground, as the CW gets closer to record the scene and the two individuals’ facial features. As can be judged from the scene described, the CW is often not alone in these scenarios—rather, they are spectacles of shaming in which neighbors take active roles. In addition to verbal reprimanding, the CW also actively pursues community criminals. The CW’s act of recording, in addition adds to *national* self-accountability, wherein these micro-instances of stealing in specific communities are aggregated and made nationally-visible through Twitter.

At times, CWs simultaneously expressed disappointment in their community members and also attempted to hold outside actors—like the police—accountable. In a video, shared on April 22nd, captioned: “This is how the Linda Vista sector ended up after the

ransacking and the police two blocks away doesn't show up #SOSNicaragua," the CW slowly walks through the perimeter of a shopping street. He stops and enters well-off stores that sell clothes and appliances (i.e. Payless, El Gallo Mas Gallo) to show how empty they are. He reflects on his own knowledge as a community member and moves on to make remarks about what had previously been there and thus, points out what was taken. Walking through mounds of trash and objects left thrown on the street, the CW remains behind the camera and verbally expresses disappointment at the situation and at the fact that police didn't respond to stop the occurrences. In a sense, this kind of accountability-holding is in a more narrative style, rather than in the explicit shaming of particular people.

In other scenarios of intra-policing, CWs actively investigate potential suspects. Compiling images and video still-shots of CW recordings of lootings, Sandinista Youth group attacks, and SY news testimony, a CW shared a post on April 22nd that included comparative imaging of faces claiming the same SY members seen at rallies or in interviews were part of lootings. These instantiations combine policing modalities of investigation, pursuit and accountability-holding that place the CW as a key figure in make-shift policing efforts. Within a national context where the police force was no longer policing but rather attacking civilians, these efforts were crucial (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. The CW Compiles Images of Potential Suspects



Figure 3

The Unifier

The CW also manifested as a facilitator of national unity. This function surfaced in two manners:

- calls for collective remembrance
- calls for unified mobilization

Visuals that spoke to this role varied evenly across video and images that depicted collective night vigils, pictures of protesters collaborating with local police forces, and youth painting Nicaraguan flags and names of the diseased on public statues and electricity posts, among other scenes.

Collective remembrance.

Visuals that spoke to the CW's role in fostering a collective national remembrance often depicted scenes of group grieving, vigils, and an overall presence of the dead. These

scenes alluded not only to a sense of unification stemming from a collective loss of life, but a shared sense of suffering and toil. For example, a post shared on April 26th showcases three images with a caption that states: “#SOSNicaragua in Leon’s Cathedral plaza today 26/4 reunited after the march through the city to remember the 63 murders denounced by CPDH. Moments of suffering and pain. The fight continues until we overthrow the criminal dictatorship.” The images portray a group of people gathered together in front of the cathedral’s entrance, and the progressively timeline the group’s presence from daylight into the night, when they set up candles for a vigil. Although there is explicit political dissidence in the last sentence of the images’ caption, there is a sense that it stems from this tremendously overwhelming sense of collective loss. As the progression of the images suggests, the people were not only out in the streets to explicitly oppose the regime, they were also there to grieve alongside all those suffering. The CW, in this respect, is simultaneously a part and propeller of the collective grieving since he is sharing the moment in the images, but also visualizing and verbalizing these sentiments into further corners of the nation.

The entrenched nature of this CW work is further exemplified in a post from April 25th that shares a set of three images depicting a small group of individuals going around public areas of their city to paint public property in white and blue (national colors) and memorialize the date and name of a local death (see Figure 4). Because the shots are taken from such a close proximity, it is clear that the CW was either *in* the group or acquainted with them. The CW’s coverage of these memorials is in a way *a part* of the art itself. In the same way that the young people in the image are materializing and publicizing a local collective memory, the CW is elevating that local manifestation into the national collective remembrance.

Figure 4. The CW Showcases Youth Making Memorials



Figure 4

One can note that the CW's caption is also explicitly connected to a positively-
connotative sense of togetherness and pride in actively remembering those that have fallen:
“In honor of the fallen students, this is how the streets in my beautiful #Estelí look
#19ofApril #SOSNicaragua #BlueandWhite #Unitednicaragua @tweetsnicas.” Rather than a
joint sense of suffering, like the one exemplified in the previous example, this scene is
imbued with a positive sense of collaborative honoring. In this sense, we can see two
contrasting ways in which CW's displayed calls for unified national remembrance.

Other poignant instances of this modality surfaced in videos and images of vigils
where family members of the dead were present. In the case of one particular image, a young
teenager wearing all black is kneeled unto a memorial site stacked with flowers for his
brother; his face is facing away from the camera, but the CW caption states: “A teenager cries

for his brother Jairo Mauricio Hernandez, who is part of the 30+ dead during the protests against the government. A gunshot ended the life of Hernandez, who according to family members, wished for a country without oppression. @laprensa #SOSNicaragua.” Though the visual scene is guttural and calls for a collective solidarity with the grieving, the CW manifests as detached in his reportage and his language is almost journalistic. This suggests that expressions of CW modalities don’t necessarily have to be explicitly switched on or verbally expressed.

Collective mobilization.

The analysis further showed that the CW presented as a national-unifier through calls for collective mobilization. Visuals that presented this CW modality were of protest: they depicted the undefinable mass, individual faces of people, as well as the preamble to mobilizations, wherein people start to gather. These visuals are and can oftentimes be construed as an act of political dissidence—a materialized way to show opposition—yet the focus and captions of the cases that fit under this category also displayed an alternate dimension of unification. This dimension shone through images and videos of police and protesters collaborating, marches persisting even after attack, selfies of smiling demonstrators, and reels of cheerful mobilizing work such as singing and the use of vuvuzelas. Furthermore, captions explicitly or implicitly called for the participation of the viewer.

In the case of a Twitter image shared on April 24th, for example, the caption reads: “The demonstration in the zone of Camino de Oriente keeps growing. There’s still time to join! #SOSNicaragua.” Here, we see exemplified the CW’s explicit invitation to viewers to join the mobilization. This is furthered by a selfie of the CW with a woman holding a sign; they’re both wearing national colors (blue and white) and smiling to the camera with a backdrop of people holding Nicaraguan flags. It is particularly noteworthy that this is a

selfie—in this example, the CW is witness to his own joy and pride at being part of the national mobilization event. This personalized and affective call for unification contrasts more impersonal CW visuals of the masses in protest, yet they can both place the CW as a mobilizing force. In the example of video shared on April 23rd, the visual depicts hundreds of people crowding a two-lane street, waving Nicaraguan flags in the air while chanting and using vuvuzelas. As a sign of solidarity, cars passing through the road honk repeatedly as they pass through the protest. The CW is *in* the scene, not filming it from a distance, and the intense energy of the crowd translates into the shaky nature of the video. The CW’s caption reads: “Today, Managua was an example of civism. We want a better country! And we can achieve this in peace and with everyone’s participation! #SOSNicaragua #SOSINSS.” Again, this example casts the CW in an explicit mobilizing force, wherein participation is directly called upon to viewers and the positive connotations of collective protest are visually exemplified. Though “we want a better country,” does exhibit implicit modes of political dissidence—we see here the framing of the dissidence is positive, rather than angry, aggressive, and frustrated. In a national context where opposition had been scattered and weak since after Ortega’s first 2000’s election, a unified front can be perceived as crucial for *successful* and *productive* dissidence.

Through analysis I also identified less explicit instances of the CW as a prompter of collective mobilization. This arose in images that depicted unlikely forces working together to ensure safe protesting. In the case of a CW located in Jinotega, a remote department (unit of national area divisions) of Nicaragua, she shared multiple Twitter posts depicting Jinotegan police working *alongside* individuals readying to protest—a stark contrast to most other areas of the country (April 22nd). The caption to one of her posts reads: “Jinotegans start their third peaceful march in cooperation with the police to avoid conflict #sosnicaragua #sosinss #jinotega #ULTIMOMINUTO” and portrays six individuals aboard a pickup truck

holding Nicaraguan flags and wearing shirts proclaiming “que se rinda tu madre”—a popular chant. Even though the police are mentioned to be working in collaboration, they are not pictured in the image. One can see, however, that though the image is not used as evidence of the alliance, it is an affect inducing image of peaceful mobilization underway—there is no visual sign of anxiety, rushing, disarray, and panic (as was the case with many other protests).

Other expressions of the CW as a mobilizing force co-existed with that of political dissenter. This speaks to the fluidity of these modalities and CW’s multiple roles. For example, a post from April 22nd shares two images of protest: in one, the image focuses on the first individual in a line of protesters holding a Nicaraguan flag up to the camera, the second depicts the rest of the protestors. The text reads: “#SOSNICARAGUA a march through the streets of Leon starts in memory and repudiation of the murder of 64 Nicaraguans due to the crime of demanding freedom through peaceful protest. People Unite. They were students Not delinquents. Not one step back. These are slogans of the Leoneses. @laprensa.” Here we see that the CW as a mobilizing force *sprouts from* a generalized feeling of political dissidence, and yet expressing that dissidence is not his only role. The focus is on uniting the people in expressing this dissidence.

The Dissenter

My analysis suggests that the CW instantiates a role of political dissenter. I categorized into this role posts that exhibited, either verbally or textually, political demands and/or direct repudiation of the government for crimes committed against citizens. Visuals that positioned the CW in the role of political dissenter depicted images of both national and international protests.

Given that expressions of the CW as a prompter of collective mobilization also employed visuals of protest, it is imperative provide a description of explicit political dissidence. For example, a video shared on April 23rd with the caption: “Conclude protests?

Not until Ortega leaves! #SOSNicaragua #concluNicProtests @josemanuelcnn,” depicts a big group of flag-clad citizens occupying a national plaza. In the middle of the plaza, an individual is standing on top of a pickup truck with a microphone and verbalizes incriminating and repudiating statements about the national police: “it’s those that are in police uniform that are professionals—that shoot like snipers—truly, they are war weapons that have murdered the youth—(unintelligible)...shot in the head... this is why, today the struggle continues!” Not only is the particular focus of this protest visual a dissident individual, the CW himself is expressing political demands linked to repudiation of the Ortega regime. Furthermore, the CW directly tags an international CNN correspondent, linking political dissidence to desire for global visibility.

The link between political dissidence and global visibility is heightened through posts depicting Nicaraguan nationals expatriated in other countries around the world (Chicago, Madrid, Berlin, Guatemala and Paris). Images showing groups of individuals dressed in blue and white in front of recognizable monuments, like the Eiffel Tower, reiterated a sense of globalized political dissidence, wherein here, efforts were not at getting people to mobilize or unify, but rather express vociferous resistance in and to a global arena (see Figure 5). Images that depicted these international presences demanded the government surrendered, often alluding to it as a dictatorship.

Figure 5. The CW Pictures Expats Expressing Dissent



Figure 5

Also alluding to the Ortega government in negative terms is a selfie-video shared on April 20th. In it, the CW speaks to the camera after leaving a protest. His face has blood on it, and his expression is extremely stern—his brows are furrowed, he is not smiling, and his voice is loud, and unshaking. As he walks down a road by himself, he expresses: “the regime has blood thirst. Despite the fact that students, the young people, and even minors, women, took each other by the hands and said, ‘we’re here peacefully,’ they threw bullets, tear gas—what they don’t know is that the wrath of the people has awakened, and it’s a civic wrath.” Political dissent is evident in the verbal portrayal of a nefarious, violent government, but also

in the promise of a foreboding fury to be unleashed by the people. This is not necessarily about unison—but about defeat.

As carriers of sentiments of insurgence, CWs relied on employing powerful slogans and chants, as well making clear demands in their captions and/or visuals. Common chants included: “Justice!” “They took them alive, we want them alive!” “They weren’t delinquents, they were students!” and “It was the State!” Demands ranged but included: 1) that Ortega and his VP wife, Rosario Murillo, leave power, 2) that political prisoners be released, or simply, 3) justice.

CW Content in News Tweets

My exploration of the way CW content was used in news tweets shared by local media organizations and professional journalists showed that they were overwhelmingly sharing this content without adding textual content. Table 2, embedded below, reviews the media outlets and professional journalists included in the study and the amount of posts analyzed for each. The media player that shared the most citizen content was Radio Corporacion, one of the most popular radio stations in the country. Their branding is very populace-oriented, as they have a specific hashtag for citizen content on Facebook (#CitizenReport) and their motto is: “the station that speaks the language of their people!”

Table 2. Media Organizations and Professional Journalists Included for Analysis.

Media Organization/Professional Journalist	Number of CW Tweets
100% Noticias	7
Articulo 66	11
Dora Luz Romero	6
Juan Carlos Ampie	16
La Prensa	25
Lucia Pineda	9
Mario Rueda	7
Sofia Montenegro	26
Radio Corporacion	26
Wilfredo Miranda	7

Table 2

Out of my corpus of 140 tweets, 134 were retweets of CW content (the other 6 being original media posts shared that gave credit to a citizen source for the visual). Out of those 134 retweeted posts, 132 were retweeted with *no additional context*—it was a pure retweet of the original CW post.

Although this didn't provide for rich CDA on added textual context, I did register patterns in sharing practices. With longstanding, established organizations like La Prensa, one of the biggest national dailies, re-tweets shared were either: tweets by the citizenry that directly addressed the organizations' tweet by @ their handle; tweets shared by figureheads of the protest movement, such as Silvio Baez, a head of the Catholic clergy and strong voice of resistance; or tweets being shared from areas remote to the capital that were not the easiest to access during the chaos in the capital. These patterns suggest that the sharing of posts was not wholly random and tweets were used to fill gaps that the organization could not fill with

their reporting themselves, as well as to showcase important voices coming from sources themselves and giving circulation to those citizens who directly asked for it.

There was little variance within the small group of contextualized re-tweets and original posts with attributed visuals. The two re-tweeted citizen posts that *did* contain textual context added on by the journalist offered information about the scene and the context of what was being discussed, as well as dissident hashtags like #OustOrtega.

In the case of original news tweets that contained an attributed citizen visual, these were all video (n=6). Added textual context was very thorough and included descriptions of the scene in the visual, information on where the video was attained (i.e. the person that filmed it shared it with a human rights organization), added information about the place where the visual takes place, names of anyone hurt, and, in the case of one video, a disclaimer about gore. This video also added a blur layer over the graphic section of the video, exemplifying a case where content was not only ‘normalized’ through textual additions, but also through direct curation of the citizen visual.

Furthermore, an overview of the distribution of citizen content shared by these outlets confirms that visuals depicting violence were scarcely represented (n=2). The combination of video curation that blurred the blood, wounds, and effacement effected by violence and the infrequency of sharing these visuals point towards a journalistic distancing from sensationalist carnage. Rather, the majority of shared posts depicted citizen images of protest, vigils, and collective activities (see Table 1). Given the amassment of collective gatherings scattered all over the country—in the Caribbean coast, up North in coffee country, and deep inside urban neighborhoods—the reliance on citizen imagery is congruous. While journalists in the capital were abundant and active in documenting gatherings, the presence of media in more remote areas of the country was not as concentrated.

Two other citizen videos embedded in original media posts, shared on April 24th, depicted newly released political prisoners providing their narrative of torture inside the prison. Both of these ‘embedded’ posts were shared by La Prensa, one of the biggest and oldest media outlets in the country. In their textual add-ons, the media include a quote spoken by one of the prisoners: “It was three hours of torture, beatings, kicks, they lined up to kick us,” followed by a brief description of what is in the video. Though the prisoners’ narrative shared in the video is lengthy for social media (three minutes) and thus includes multiple poignant points (i.e. they describe the Sandinista Youth taking them from the streets), the quote emphasized by the media spotlights the police’s as a particularly brutal antagonist. Furthermore, one of the caption states that the prisoners “warn they’ll continue to fight,” echoing the mobilizing spirit present in many citizen visuals. A hashtag attached to the other video reverberates this further: #CitizenResistance.

These posts do not make specific reference to the name of the original citizen videographer, but rather state “video provided in generosity” within parenthesis. It is further made obvious that the videographer is *not* a journalist, when in the video, prisoners express they are waiting for some journalists that are coming to interview them.

Summary

The critical discourse analysis done on media/journalist shared citizen tweets provided rich material to answer the proposed RQs. In addressing RQ1, which asked about citizen witness roles as uncovered through tweets, the findings show that there were four distinguishable functions undertaken: verifier, watchdog, unifier, and dissenter. These roles were not distinct but could rather function in the same tweet simultaneously. Regarding RQ2, which asked about how CW visuals were used in news tweets, the analysis indicated that the overwhelming way these were being incorporated was through re-tweets without any added context.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The study of citizen witnesses of crisis and their use of digital media has produced a rich body of literature. However, previous research in this area has remained theoretical in nature or has been empirically focused on scattered factors. Theoretical papers have tended to stress the CW's role as a global political dissenter, while empirical studies have leaned towards analysis of citizen content, its selection, perception, and networked nature (Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013; Anden-Papadopoulos & Pantti, 2013; Anden-Papadopoulos, 2014; Johnston, 2017). This paper is a bid to focus on the roles of the CW of crisis through an understanding of visuals as part of an economy. In addition, unlike theorizations of CWs, my results seek to *open up* possible ways of understanding the materiality of CW modalities that extend beyond political dissidence. Lastly, I aim to understand how professional journalists use CW content in their Twitter news reporting.

Visual Economies VS. Iconography

Empirical studies have often focused on the visual product of crisis—iconic images of protest leaders, the dead, and brutality as it happens—and how they are selected for use in newsrooms, networked across global spaces in social media, and perceived by audiences. Like Poole (1997), Campbell (2007) and MacDonald (2006), I emphasize the contingent processes and relationalities that make images possible and visible.

My results highlight the fact that assessing crisis images as icons is unproductive for our understanding of their power, as these are produced in a myriad of ways and with a cocktail of imbued functionalities—namely that of evidencing, unifying, surveilling, and rebelling. This project's findings demonstrate how Nicaraguan CWs produced, cut, framed, and captioned almost identical images—of protest, for example—differently, depending on their aim. This further confirms Poole's (1997) claim that visuals have the ability to move across boundaries of signification and perform different realities.

In addition to contributing more generally to the visual economy approach, this paper provides several important insights about the economy of crisis images. Firstly, I qualitatively mapped the numerous paths of CW visual production in the context of crisis—something that had, to date, only been theorized. Understanding this allows us to envisage a visual economy of crisis images in which ordinary citizens are not only freely providing material, they are taking on *different roles of production*. This suggests that it is not merely enough to understand *who* produces *what* for *whom* in the visual economy of crisis images, but rather *how* and with what imbued aim(s) visuals are produced.

Furthermore, my results show that different CW modalities operated fluidly and, at times, simultaneously within the same visual. This fluidity speaks to the contextual and unstable nature of visual connotation—meanings themselves are contingent on interpretation. While a video and its caption may have had imbued meanings of national unification, these co-labored with others, such as inter-community policing. Again, this shows us that production in the visual economy of crisis images is an even more varied and complex process than just going out into zones of danger to take photos. Processes of production vary greatly in levels of risk-exposure and active work (i.e. interviewing, just standing, participating in protest, hiding). In addition, visuals suggest there is complex decision-making regarding what to film, what to caption and for what purposes.

In contrast, my results regarding the circulation of crisis images indicated it to be a very straightforward process. While my focus was specifically on the gatekeeping or distributive power of professional journalists and not on other influential social media actors, journalists have traditionally been regarded as circulators—the most strategically powerful position in visual economy systems (Campbell, 2007). In contrast to the variegated nature of production, journalistic actors operationalized circulation in a noticeably uniform manner: by simply re-tweeting.

This latter finding speaks to the power relations within visual economies. The relative ease and homogeneity of circulatory processes found in this study indicate that power-holders have maximized their task for ultimate efficiency and low-effort, while securing the multi-faceted, risk-prone work that citizen visual producers do. This power imbalance is further exemplified by citizen visual producers tagging media players directly in order to get their attention. This is not a monolithic vision of exploitation; citizen producers often expressed in captions that “sharing” and “spreading” was vital to their posts. In this sense, the citizen producer can be thought to, in turn, wield media’s distributive power for their own work’s aim. These layered power relationalities indicate a further need to assess power disparities within visual economies, as they appear to be complex and continuously negotiated.

Witnessing and Crisis

The results also extend existing ideas about media witnessing, particularly in regard to the role of the citizen witness of crisis. While the citizen camera witness, as Anden-Popodopoulos (2013) has termed, proves to be a promising start to our understanding of citizens’ use of cameras during crisis, this study offers new possibilities for assessing this phenomenon. Anden-Popodopoulos (2013) identified and defined political dissidence as one of the key modes of citizen camera witness work. However, emphasis on the relation between citizen-witness work and political dissidence could prove to be narrow when exploring CW roles in other contexts of crisis. My results confirm Anden-Papadopoulos’ (2014) claim that CWs enact the role of political dissident, yet they also assume roles geared towards national unity, community policing, and testimony gathering of important voices. These roles appeared as fluid and over-lapping at times, which further probes the importance of understanding all the different layered work citizen witnesses engage in. With this project, I extend Anden-Popodopoulos (2014) ideas around the CW of crisis and refine new ways in which CWs might be theorized in the future.

This project points to CW work that is aimed for localized—national, departmental, community-specific—populations. This contrasts work on CWs and CJs during crisis that overstress their aim to reach global visibility (Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013, 2014; Anden-Papadopoulos & Pantti, 2013 ; Johnston, 2017). The specific time period surveyed may have a hand in this consideration, as the early stages of crisis are the most hectic and, thus, individuals may be more concerned with their immediate surroundings.

Re-thinking how citizens are witnessing crisis with their digital devices also entails engaging with literature on social media activism. My results show that the most predominant role instantiated by CWs was that of unifier, particularly through calls for collective mobilization (n=70). This points to a strong relationship between visuals, social media, and the recruitment of protest participants. Although literature on the GM in Iran and the Arab Spring have shed light on the criticality of social media for the citizenry's organizing and conscription, there is a lack of investigation into the role of images in these efforts. My results contribute to this lack by showcasing the role of visually-conveyed affect in CWs' calls for mobilization. Furthermore, the positively-connotative nature of activist visuals (i.e. selfies of smiling protesters) found by this analysis contrasts calls for mobilization during the GM and AS that rested on shaming and challenging those not yet in the streets. This points to a need to further investigate repertoires for activist recruitment online, taking the use of visuals into consideration.

Journalism & CW Visuals

This project offers a divergent account of how news organizations use CW content in their news-making. Past research points to the recurring act of journalistic 'normalization' of citizen content as a means to maintain engrained journalistic ideology and practices (Zelizer, 2007; Bock, 2011; Pantti & Anden-Papadopoulos, 2013; Bock, 2016; Ristovska, 2016). Particularly in crisis, media use of citizen visuals, though widespread, is padded with

discursive add-ons that reify journalistic values such as that of accuracy (Anden-Papadopoulos & Pantti, 2013). My results, however, show that the overwhelming way in which CW visuals were being used in news reporting was without any journalistic manipulation.

Given that most literature on the normalizing of citizen content focuses on other modes of journalistic work, such as broadcast, this study is suggestive of a more informal type of emergency reportage on Twitter. In the context of Twitter's aim to provide quick, easily-digestible information *and* the fast-paced nature of crisis, a lack of journalistic 'normalization' appears congruous. These results advocate a need to further identify journalistic professional ideology within unsettling contexts—both format- and environment-wise. Outliers in the analysis, such as CW visuals embedded into 'original' news tweets, displayed normalization tactics such as the blurring out of violence. However, these instances were very rare and suggest that these normalizations only occur when citizen content is directly implanted into formal news reportage.

More generally, these results point to a normalized inclusion of citizen visuals in social media reporting as well as to the upholding of citizens' authorial claim. Contrary to the pervasiveness of monoperspectival news before the new millennium, this study confirms a move towards multiperspectival news reporting (Gans, 2004). Furthermore, the analysis opens up an understanding of citizen tweets as a news subsidy that dictates news content (Gandy, 1991).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This project used news tweets that included citizen visuals of crisis in order to investigate the research questions: *What do crisis tweets reveal about the various roles that the citizen witness (CW) undertakes? And how is citizen witness (CW) material used in Twitter news reporting?* This investigation was informed by a critical discourse analysis on both original citizen tweets and the version shared by media organizations and journalists within the context of the current sociopolitical crisis in Nicaragua.

The analysis found that citizen witnesses instantiated four distinguishable functions, namely: verifier, watchdog, unifier, and dissident. These results probe the existing literature on the circulation of citizen images of crisis through focus on the visual producer, rather than the visuals produced. Further, I contrast existing theorizations of the citizen camera witness by presenting CW roles beyond that of dissidence—the CW performs multiple, variegated, and over-lapping roles. The analysis also showed that media organizations and professional journalists were employing CW visuals in their news tweets through simple re-tweeting. Diverging from the literature on this phenomenon, these results point to a lack of journalistic ‘normalization’ of citizen content.

These findings open up new lines of research in the areas of citizen activism on social media, the visual economies of images, and the implementation of citizen content in the news. Given the proliferation of CW visuals that called for collective mobilization, future studies should aim to understand how images are used as a tool in protest recruitment. Studies seeking to understand the visual economy of particular images should, in line with this project, pay scholarly attention to *the ways* in which actors produce and circulate images and not only who actors are. More research is needed in order to understand the complexity of power relations within the visual economy of images, as this project suggests these are not straightforwardly identifiable. Lastly, research on the implementation of citizen content in

news reporting should place inquiry within unsettling formats and contexts—such as social media platforms and disaster.

In answering these research questions, this project aimed to explore new dimensions of citizen witness work and the variegated ways this content is used in news. The objective, thus, was not to generalize findings to a whole population, but rather to open up new avenues of research for thinking about news production—citizen and professional—during crisis. Studies aiming to generalize or survey bigger data sets could do a quantitative content analysis on qualitatively identified CW roles or news patterns.

The Nicaraguan sociopolitical crisis provided a rich setting to investigate these possibilities as social media played a huge part in bridging communications amongst citizens and media players. However, this case study has contextual particularities, and as such, results could vary when examining CW work during other catastrophes. Research on citizen visual production and its circulation in news would benefit from additional studies of CWs in crisis.

The time-frame of tweets (first week of the Nicaraguan crisis) examined for this project provided a rich body of data but is disconnected from the subsequent months of crisis that continued. Future studies should examine CW visuals of crisis longitudinally in order to gauge whether roles shift as the shock of emergency wears down. This would provide a more nuanced investigation into how CWs adapt and shift their functions depending on what is needed at different points of catastrophe.

Lastly, this project does not engage with actual CWs' understanding of their responsibilities and media players' decision-making when implementing citizen content, given that they are under threat of violence and death. Future studies could aim to consolidate these critically identified patterns by conducting ethnographic work with citizen witnesses of crisis and professional journalists. Ethnographic research that observes CW's labor as they

venture into the streets, as well as interviews could shed light on the physicality of CW functions. Ethnography might also determine whether CW's identify themselves with the roles coded here. Similarly, observation of and interviews with professional journalists could better help us understand why they implement citizen content in the ways they do, and whether they shift these practices depending on their mode of reportage (i.e. written article vs tweet).

This study, however, opens the doors to better scholarly understanding of citizen witnesses of crisis, their typology of visual production, and how media organizations interact with their content. Through accessing the materiality of visual productions, this project empirically grounded theorizations of the CW as a political dissident and found three other modes of CW work: unification, verification, and surveillance. The analysis also provided insight into media practices of CW visual dissemination during times of crisis. As such, it begins to fill a critical, but sparse area in research that aims to understand the digital production and dissemination of crisis images.

Appendix 1

Figure 1.

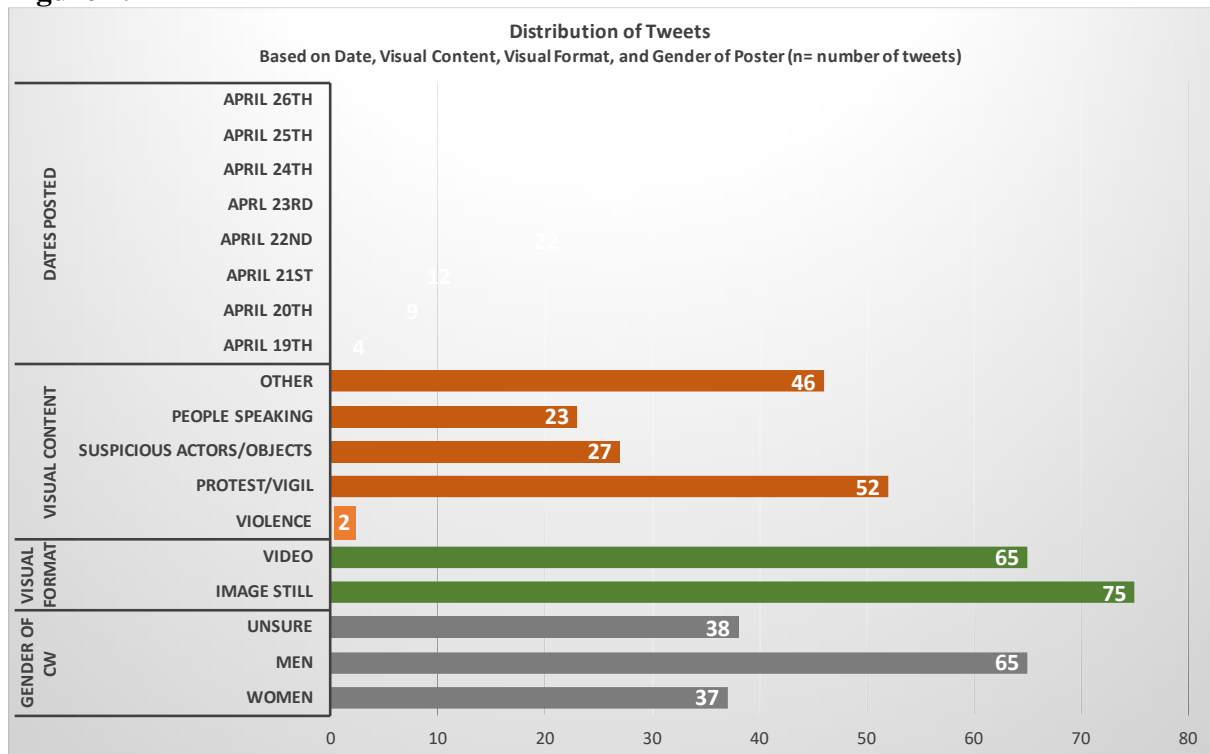


Figure 2.



Figure 3.

QUIENES SON LOS VÁNDALOS QUE
SAQUEAN TIENDAS??? NO SE DEJEN
ENGAÑAR **#SOSNICARAGUA**

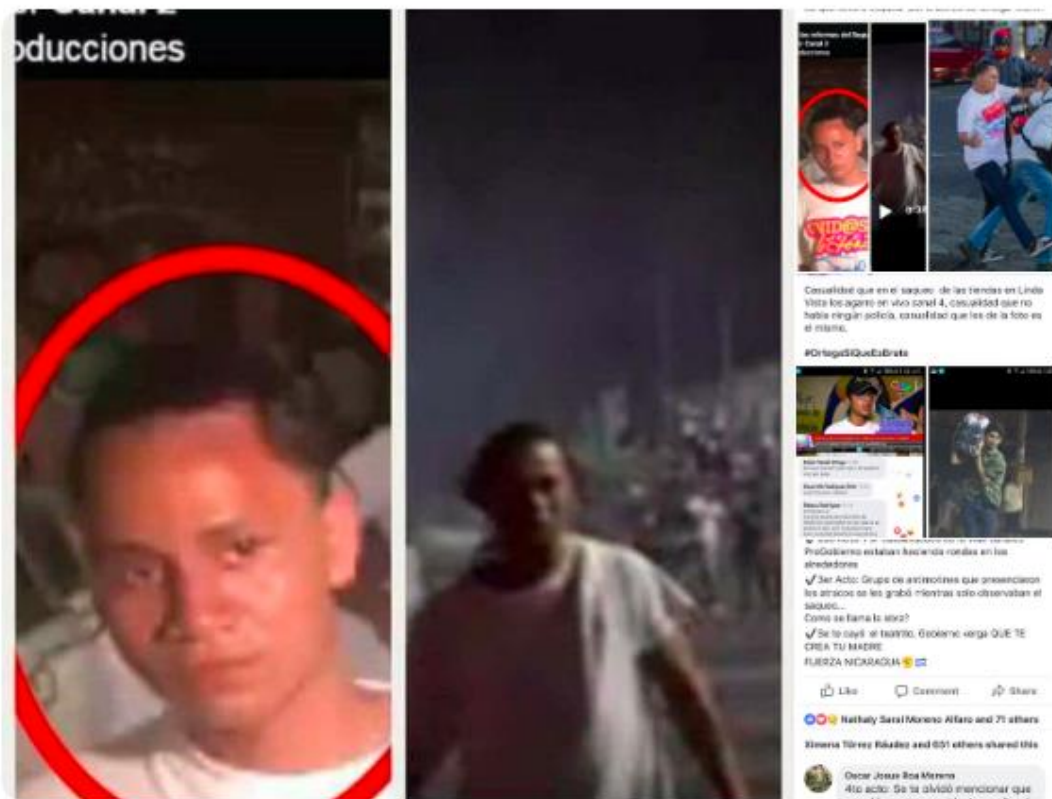


Figure 4.



Figure 5.

Nicaragüenses en París piensan en su país:
lo queremos libre de dictadura!
#SOSNicaragua #FueraOrtegaMurillo

Translate Tweet



7:42 AM - 22 Apr 2018

940 Retweets 1,048 Likes



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