

Presentation

Violence and social vulnerability

Three of the articles included in issue number 155 of *Relaciones...* analyze a phenomenon that, unfortunately, appears recurrently and increasingly in our contemporary societies at levels both local and global. We refer, of course, to the uncontrolled and immoderate expressions of the imposition of force exerted against the integrity of individuals –or oneself– on different planes, in distinct circumstances, and with varying effects. Galtung’s¹ typology make us conscious –beyond our own ability to perceive it– of the presence of this phenomenon in virtually all spaces of human interaction; something that, surpasses, or even overflows, contained spaces, including the critique of violence that exposes its relation to law and justice, as Walter Benjamin² has argued in good faith; for violence may be embodied in the very socio-cultural constructs that regulate it. And law is just that –a construct– as is the administration of justice. Hence, juridical reasoning reeks of a “sweet violence”, to paraphrase Hespanha.³

Violence is found in every type of social interaction. It exists in prisons, as Añaños and Chávez demonstrate in their study of women inmates; in the interior of intra-familial relations in indigenous

¹ Johan Galtung, *Tras la violencia, 3R: reconstrucción, reconciliación, resolución. Afrontando los efectos visibles e invisibles de la guerra y la violencia* (Bilbao: Bakeaz, Gernika Gogoratuz, 1998), among other texts by the same author.

² Walter Benjamin, *Iluminaciones. IV*, trans. Eduardo Subirats (Madrid: Taurus, 1998).

³ António Manuel Hespanha, “Sabios y rústicos. La dulce violencia de la razón jurídica”, in *La gracia del derecho. Economía de la cultura en la edad moderna* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1993), 17-60.

zones of Guerrero, as Raby describes; and in the introduction of highly –or perhaps not so highly– exogenous agents, such as organized crime, in localities of the Meseta Purépecha, studied by Gasparello. Of course it exists in many other spaces as well, but these three cases suffice to establish this reality, especially since one can compare them to one's own experience in the context of a convulsive everyday life where people have even been murdered at the very doors of this –our– institution. Acts of violence, even when appeased, never fail to leave scars. This is the topic of the document on the removal of land mines in Colombia, where the armed conflict has extended far beyond the date negotiated for its elimination.

An especially personal preoccupation concerns the ways in which our disciplines are being transformed in an epoch marked by the technological-digital revolution. I cannot but remark on the fact that one of the methodological foundations of Añaños and Chávez' article is the use of computerized programs –like SPSS– to perform statistical analyses in the Social Sciences. Those of us who are dedicated to studies in the Social Sciences and Humanities are increasing our utilization of informatics methodologies, tools and techniques in our daily activities. However, a serious problem in Latin America as a whole, and particularly in Mexico, is the availability of digital data that is suitable for research. In this regard, the article by Isabel Galina Russel offers an acute, critical entranceway into the issue of the digitalization of archives and libraries in Mexico.

Sophia Schnuchel, meanwhile, delves into the problems of language, bilingualism and the speakers of indigenous languages in urban centers, using the example of León, Guanajuato. Verónica Norando, in turn, leads us through the experience of women textile-workers in Argentina, their relation with the Communist Party, and their militancy at the onset of the second third of the 20th century; whereas Nicolás Cárdenas, in his contribution, examines the perceptions of rural life in Sonora in the decade of 1920 manifested by government functionaries and teachers. Finally, Patricia Arias analyzes the experiences of migrant Mexican entrepreneurs in the 1960s.

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