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Editorial

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Unraveling the violence that run through and sustain the school

*After they expelled me from school,
my mom kicked me out of the house.
I hung out with the gang all day in the street
until that night when my best friend from school
waited for me outside her house,
to give me sandwiches and water, and let me sleep there.*

José Juan¹

The interest to build a space to reflect on what happens with the violence that surrounds and runs through schools has since very early in the twenty-first century included in its aims shedding light into what has remained hidden because, when speaking about violence in schools, the (governmental and media) spotlight has been focused on bullying as the only expression of coercion, limiting the discussion on the structural violence and social violence that are also involved. Our proposal intends to scrutinize the processes that the school has gone through in recent decades, since violence could be discussed from a historical perspective as a notion that has accompanied the way in which the school was constituted as an institution. We believe that violence in the school is not as it is often argued just a mirror of what happens in society, but that as an institution it also produces it.

There is thus a disposition to take an inquiring look at and build explanations about what happens in a blurred space as a place of containment, of formation of citizenship, of production of knowledge, of socialization and encounter among peers for children and youths, while from different fronts of discourse – loaded with prejudice and yellow journalism – the school is shown as a place rife with violence, lending credence to its dismantling. Against this current, there is also a concern to outline interpretations that contribute to an understanding of what is actually happening and what can be done about it, maintaining the school as a place for encounter where community, recreation, learning, identity and security are created for children and youths.

Therefore, we see the need to analyze the results of diagnoses that claim that in recent years Mexico leads the countries with the most cases of school harassment in basic education. In this respect, what are the social contexts in which this takes place? Which subjective forms are enabled in these experiences? And, in the light of what the pandemic has exposed, we

¹ Interview conducted at the Center for Comprehensive Attention to Youths in the State of Jalisco, Mexico (CAIJEJ), as part of research work on "Youth Culture in Prison: Violence and Reflexivity" by Anayanci Fregoso, 2019.

might wonder how the collapse of the pedagogical device has been inhabited in the face of numerous on-screen testimonies about the inability or lack of expertise of teachers and the vulnerability represented for families by the need to have the technological devices and internet connectivity to continue their children's education. We believe that this alludes to the fact that the symbolic foundations that supported the school as an institution for decades have been weakened, losing their "performative power" (Duschatzky, Corea, 2014) for the subjects of education.²

Violence in schools is not only about what happens between peers: it also has to do with sexual and other forms of harassment, threats, corporal and symbolic punishment, as well as the most expressive violence that goes beyond the students and reaches even parents, exposing gender perceptions and norms, social learnings of violence, absence of parental figures, family destructuring and worsening of working conditions, for which we must take into account the circumstances in which they are produced; that is, as phenomena situated in spatial, social, and cultural terms. The current conditions, which under any light could be read as those of uncertainty, may be invested with meanings that may also point to routes for invention and openness.

Seeking to understand and find ways to crack down on the violence that has become ensconced in schools in the last decade, and arguably in more complex ways in these two years of health contingency due to the Covid-19 pandemic, *Diálogos sobre Educación. Temas actuales en investigación educativa* offers our readers "School, violence and experiences". We are moved by our concern to encourage deeper and more open discussion on an institution historically constituted as self-contained and shaper of ideal subjects that have become slippery in our current social reality. We are profoundly thankful to Doctor Hugo Moreno Hernández for his intelligence and devotion throughout the editing of this issue, and to our attentive readers.

Anayancy Fregoso
Editor

2 Duschatzky, S.; C. Corea (2014). *Chicos en banda. Los caminos de la subjetividad en el declive de las instituciones*. Argentina: Paidós.