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Calvillo Barrios, Juan

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Violence in Mexico: the politicides in Puebla from 2010-2020

La violencia en México: los politicidios en Puebla de 2010-2020

Juan Calvillo Barrios juan.calvillo@correo.buap.mx
Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, México

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Abstract: This paper argues that the decision making of the political class is one of the main causes of violence and poverty, by presenting statistics that show the evolution of violence in the state of Puebla, Mexico, evidencing manifestations of violence: kidnappings, extortions and murders in the political class. The method used in the process is of a mixed type, used to collect and present statistical data and, through inferential analysis, project their future behavior, thus seeking a change in their behavior, which gives it a normative character. Among the main results, there is evidence of a rise in politicides in Puebla, normalizing violence within the population, this leads to identify a dystopia, following Lorenzo Meyer "the negative aspects of the exercise of power dominate to an extreme degree" (Meyer, 2017, p. 13). There remains for discussion the need to reinterpret the scope of violence, which, although it may reflect a sense of defense, the evidence shows the opposite. In this way, a reflection is drawn on the risks of such violence and the possibilities of turning the state apparatus into a failed one.

Keywords: Poverty, Violence, Politicide, State, Political class.

Resumen: El presente trabajo, sostiene que la toma de decisiones de la clase política es una de las causas principales de la violencia y pobreza, al presentar estadísticas que muestran la evolución de la violencia en el estado de Puebla, México, evidenciando manifestaciones de violencia: secuestros, extorsiones y asesinatos en la clase política. El método utilizado en el proceso es de tipo mixto, utilizada para recolectar y presentar datos estadísticos y, a través del análisis inferencial proyectar su comportamiento futuro, buscando con ello un cambio en su comportamiento, lo que le da un carácter normativo. Entre los principales resultados, se evidencia un alza en los politicidios en Puebla, normalizando la violencia dentro de la población, esto lleva a identificar una distopía, siguiendo a Lorenzo Meyer "dominan en grado extremo los aspectos negativos del ejercicio del poder" (Meyer, 2017, p. 13). Queda a discusión la necesidad de reinterpretar los alcances de la violencia, que, si bien puede reflejar un sentido de defensa, las evidencias muestran lo contrario. De esta manera, se dibuja una reflexión sobre los riesgos de dichas violencias y las posibilidades de convertir al aparato estatal en uno fallido.

Palabras clave: Pobreza, Violencia, Politicidio, Estado, Clase política.

Introduction

The problem of violence in general, and homicide in particular, are of a social, legal and political nature, which in recent years have worsened in the country, and although there are several investigations on it, due to the growing trend of the phenomenon, they are quickly left behind, not to mention that, for professional, media or political reasons, there are some lines that are addressed, but others are not.

As a complement to the research that attributes the rise in violence indicators to factors associated with poverty, culture, the war between cartels (Quiroz-Felix et al, 2015), and even the emergence of new actors

such as the national guard, the army or the navy, we start from the thesis that the main cause of the upturn in violence lies in the behavior of the political class, without thinking about the temporality of their position (they believe that they will always be part of the political class and therefore will enjoy immunity and impunity), nor about their margin of affectability (they consider themselves untouchable and that this immunity and impunity can be extended to their relatives), they approve policy measures (economic, labor, educational, energy, or legal) that have harmful consequences for society, mainly poverty, which creates a propitious ground to generate the problem we are dealing with: violence.

The objective that guides us is to show politicians the magnitude of these consequences through statistics that reflect the spiral of violence in the country, and in the state of Puebla, mainly the one that they themselves have begun to suffer through the record of politicides perpetrated in Puebla during the period 2010-2018, trying to notice that the problem they have generated turns against them, which should make them more responsible because, as recently pointed out, negligence, incompetence and corruption also generate violence, which puts at risk the permanence of the state, the political class and society because in socio-politico-economic systems, based on dispossession and exploitation, violence is a consequence (Barbosa, 2017, pp. 6-23-24) that in our country causes each current year to surpass the previous one in the indicators that measure it.

In 2019, the most violent year of the last 22, 34,582 homicides were committed, while femicides were 10 percent higher, with 1,6 thousand 6 cases compared to 912 the previous year. The entities with the highest incidence of homicides were the State of Mexico, Mexico City, Jalisco, Guanajuato and Baja California, while in femicides Veracruz, Nuevo León, Puebla and the State of Mexico (Rivera, 2020).

To directly address the issue, in a context of high levels of violence, and an environment of increasing poverty, we refer those interested in these issues to the specialized literature that addresses them, to focus on some brief explanations about the inclination of man and the state to violence.

Violence and Man: Much of the theoretical reflection rests on the interpretation of the nature of man, however, few are those who stuck to their reality, the vast majority preferred their idealization, either as a starting point or arrival, which affected the research, not only on the political act, but also on the social, since although they observed that the contradiction encloses the explanatory totality, by opting for the good part they achieved acceptance and greatness but lost explanatory capacity.

Among the few who preferred certainty, despite the controversy, we have the Marquis de Sade, who points out that "crime and virtue are <<equal>> in <<nature>> (and therefore) there is no reason to prefer the latter to the former, if the latter can contribute to the happiness of the individual.... (being) evident that in a constituted society such as the one in which it has fallen to him to live, the exercise of crime is more profitable than that of virtue", although his case is the only one that, having refused the systematic practice of virtue, has failed in

the access to power, perhaps due to the little confidence generated by his frankness, literary and experiential, which evidences that, only by mockery or sarcasm he defends virtue, a process that others achieved in a better way. (Sade, 2004, p. 14).

In this way we can say that, "in the imperfect constitution of our...world there is a sum of evils equal to that of good" (Sade, 2004, p. 17), or in the words of Smith, in human conduct we find at the same time selfishness and piety, the desire for freedom and the chains of property (Roll, 1994, p. 128), and by highlighting the forgotten part, vice and not virtue, we propose to rescue the political dimension, as opposed to other views, which hinder it.

Violence and the state. The state, says Weber (1984, p. 8) can only be defined by reference to a specific means that it, like any political association, possesses: physical violence, although this is neither the normal means nor the only one it uses, but its specific means, while the government would be that human community which, within a given territory, claims (successfully) the monopoly of legitimate violence. Thus, in the theorists of the state, we observe the transition from the individual to the social, as well as the need for the state to concentrate power and ensure obedience, either by pact, by cession or by submission, making it clear, as Maestre (2000, p. 237) points out, that society is power relations.

Machiavelli, in *The Prince* (1983), was one of the first to point out that the formation or reformation of states, and even their organization into different forms of government, is in reality the confrontation between different social classes to maintain or conquer power, although he later points out, in the *Discourses* (Machiavelli, 2000, p. 417), that men gathered to defend themselves, and to flee the evils they proceeded to elaborate laws and order punishments for those who did not respect them, choosing as chief the most just. 417), that men came together to defend themselves, and to flee from evils they proceeded to elaborate laws and order punishments for those who did not respect them, electing as chief the most just, a point on which he agrees with Bodin (1997, p. 42), for whom the state is a society of men gathered to live well and happily, where "the prince is obliged to assure his subjects, by force of arms and laws, their persons, their goods and families, and the subjects by reciprocal obligation owe their prince faith, submission, obedience, help and assistance".

Hobbes (1994, p. 11) also follows a similar line, since he is among the first to deny the natural altruism of man and to affirm his innate rapacity, his initial position of war against all, and stresses pride, ambition and vanity as the basis of human happiness. Although he later points out that man needs other beings on whom to rely, whom he seeks by conviction or by force, expansive energy whose limit is the fear of death, which is the origin of the law and the state, which arises for the protection and defense of man, being reward and punishment his nerves and sedition and civil war his death (Hobbes, 1994, p. 3).

We can point out that Machiavelli (1984), Hobbes (1994) and Rousseau (1982) gave their conception an imaginative form where the ruler represents the collective will although, in reality, the prince neither

existed nor exists, it was a resource to convince, although the modern prince managed to concretize a collective will that we must understand as a historical necessity, but which also reflects the effort of the ruling class to prevent its formation in the old terms and to do it in its own terms, hence its efforts in an intellectual and moral reform that allows it to achieve this by establishing the distinction between rulers and ruled.

At first, the rulers were attached to the political parties, which formed them as leaders and gave them ideology, which allowed them cohesion and leadership capacity, but at the present time, with the crisis of the parties, the social groups are distancing themselves from them, because they feel that the politicians no longer represent them, that they have no loyalty to the party and offer it to the highest bidder, changing programs and reassuming control quite quickly, which ends up making everything anachronistic.

This is reflected in Mexico's economic evolution from the second half of the 20th century to the present day, where we can also identify two stages, one of accelerated growth, which allowed the transition from a rural to an urban country, from predominantly agricultural to industrial activities, with decreasing illiteracy and mortality rates, and another one of stagnation, where job creation was not enough, wages went down, poverty belts proliferated in the big cities, and the state's character of regulating inequalities disappeared, disincorporating the companies it had created and becoming a promoter of the market and the private sector.

This is a consequence of the abandonment of the social model emanating from the Mexican revolution and the establishment of the neoliberal model, which is also accompanied by the renewal of political elites where those coming from popular sectors or public universities were completely replaced by graduates from private universities and business sectors Calvillo (2010). The problem is that its implementation deepens social phenomena such as insecurity, human rights violations, migration, illiteracy, family disintegration, poverty, social marginalization, corruption and juvenile delinquency, among others.

This justifies our interpretation that with their decisions, product of their incapacity and/or their interests, the political class has generated poverty, and with it conditions for the rise of illicit activities with its corollary of violence, since these offer the poor the possibility of wealth in a short time, being the risk something assumable, at the same time that the entry of dirty money to political campaigns opens the door to political power, thus reinforcing the spiral of violence that by its levels today questions the monopoly of the state over it.

Next, we present the method used that allowed us to identify the theoretical perspective from which to approach the problem of violence in general and politicides in particular, as well as to obtain the statistical data we present to demonstrate the magnitude of the violence experienced by politicians in Puebla, especially with regard to politicides.

Materials and methods

The research uses a mixed methodology, since it combines the quantitative aspect, used to collect and present statistical data, obtained through research on Internet sites, with the purpose of supporting the hypothesis based on identifying their behavioral regularities and, through inferential analysis, projecting their future behavior, thus seeking a change in the behavior of the political class, which makes this research an exploratory-descriptive-correlational-explanatory type.

Once the research topic had been identified and delimited, we proceeded to compile the materials necessary for its development, which we were able to separate into two types, bibliographic and periodical, which were found in two ways, in physical form and in electronic format.

During the literature review, we found that there is research on violence that has generated widely developed theories, but not on the topic of interest to us, politicides. And although some of these theories could be adapted to our topic, we consider that they would yield partial interpretations, so we decided to approach it from a more humanistic and institutional perspective, as we pointed out in the previous section.

Our first approach to the topic was an exploratory type of research, which allowed us to familiarize ourselves with the subject and obtain information that convinced us to carry out a more in-depth investigation, although the extent of the topic inclined us towards a more particular context. At this second level, the statistical data obtained allowed us to identify people and profiles, establishing correlations between the data, making possible a more descriptive knowledge of the phenomenon. Subsequently, we tried to give an explanation to the problem in relation to the subject's activity, advancing to a solution proposal based on it. The statistical data found about violence against politicians in Puebla are presented below.

Results

The official national homicide figures available place 2019 as the most violent year in the last 22 years, reaching 34,582, and reflect that, if nothing effective is done, the trend will continue in 2020 (see Table 1). In 2018 the country ranked second in the world in homicides only behind Brazil, which in 2017 reported 57.4 thousand homicides according to the "Report on Citizen Security in Latin America: Facts and Figures" of the Igarapé Institute.

During 2019 the states with the highest incidence were the State of Mexico, Mexico City, Jalisco, Guanajuato and Baja California. Registered femicides were 10 percent higher reaching 1,000 6 cases against 912 the previous year with Veracruz, Nuevo León, Puebla and the State of Mexico being the places with the highest risk.

Comparing the figures, Peña Nieto's six-year term surpassed Calderón's by 60,304 homicides, since during the 2012-2018 period the figure reached 147,767 homicides compared to 87,463 during the

2006-2012 period. The figures for the first year and two months of the new government are not encouraging.

Table 1. *Annual Homicides 2007-2018.*

Table 1
Annual Homicides 2007-2018

War on Drugs	Mexico in Peace	Culture for Peace
2007: 2,826	Dec. 2012: 2,325	Dec. 2018: 2,842
2008: 6,837	2013: 23 thousand 928	2019: 34 thousand 582
2009: 11,753	2014: 17 thousand 336	2020: 2,892 Jan. 34 thousand 704e/
2010: 19,546	2015: 18 thousand 707	2021:
2011: 24 thousand 068	2016: 22 thousand 962	2022:
2012: 22 thousand 433	2017: 29 thousand 168	2023:
	2018: 33 thousand 341*	2024:

Looking at the data in Table 1, we can see that homicide figures do not go down, on the contrary, year after year they rise (with the exception of the last year of Calderón and the second and third years of Peña Nieto), placing Mexico in the first places worldwide. This contradicts the official discourse of the current government of a supposed "downward criminal incidence" in terms of homicides, and that "violence has been reduced to its minimum expression".

Comparing the annual figures we can say that the entities where there is more violence are the State of Mexico and Guerrero, since in 2017, 2 thousand 529 homicides were registered in Guerrero, in the State of Mexico 2 thousand 368, in Baja California 2 thousand 317 and in Chihuahua 2 thousand 12 while during 2016 in the State of Mexico 2 thousand 749 cases were reported, in Guerrero 2 thousand 542, in Chihuahua 1 thousand 757, in Michoacán 1 thousand 339 and in Jalisco 1 thousand 294. For the period 2012- 2015, the State of Mexico is the bloodiest, with 8 thousand 845 executions, followed by Guerrero, with 6 thousand 040, Chihuahua with 5 thousand 176, Jalisco, with 3 thousand 946 and Michoacán with 3 thousand 629.

In the 2017-2018 electoral process alone, up to May 31, there have been 177 aggressions against politicians in the country, which have cost the lives of 103 people among whom we find pre-candidates, candidates, mayors, former mayors, councilors, militants, party leaders, former councilors, deputies, trustees and former trustees.

And while it is true that since 2006, and until May 31, 2016, 82 mayors, former mayors and elected mayors had been assassinated, from June 1, 2016 to April 16, 2018, 40 more have been murdered, so that in less than two years half as many crimes are committed as in a decade, with the most dangerous entities for mayors being Guerrero, Oaxaca, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Durango, Mexico, Michoacán and Puebla where 59 former mayors, 54 incumbent mayors and 9 elected mayors have paid with their lives, figures with which Peña Nieto reaches the figure of 114 mayors, former mayors and elected mayors murdered during his term, a figure

that exceeds almost 3 to one the 48 of Calderón Hinojosa. (Ángel, 2016; Núñez, 2018).

Of these 122 mayors murdered from 2006 to date, 55 belonged to the PRI, 29 to the PRD, 16 to the PAN and 22 belonged to other parties, while 103 were officials of towns with less than 50,000 inhabitants, 11 of towns with more than 50,000 but less than 100,000 people and 8 of municipalities with more than 100,000 people.

Regarding violence rates, Puebla closed 2019 among the 5 entities with the highest incidence of crimes such as vehicle theft, kidnapping and femicides, however, in other crimes such as rape, homicides and domestic violence, it also ranked among the top 10 (Melchor, 2020). According to the Semáforo delictivo de Puebla during the last 5 years homicides increased from 493 in 2015 to 581, 894, 1105 and 1108 for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively. Femicides reached 6, 12, 27, 27, 32 and 58 cases, rapes 548, 649, 668, 817, 919 and family violence complaints 5024, 5586, 6327, 7296 and 9077 in each of these years. (Government of the State of Puebla, 2019).

In the state of Puebla, 52 politicians have been murdered during the last 10 years (the figure does not include homicides of family members), of which almost 60 percent (23) have occurred during the government of Antonio Gali, the year 2017 and the first 5 months of 2018. More worrying, for politicians, would be to note that 70 percent of the homicides occurred during the Gali administration, are homicides occurred in the framework of the electoral process to renew the elections for President of the Republic, Governor, Senators, Federal and Local Deputies as well as mayors, to the extent that, of the homicides recorded in 2018, 40 percent are of candidates for elected office, 20 percent of collaborators and 10 of electoral officials.

Table 3 shows the names of the municipal officials in office, former officials and elected officials who have been assassinated by year, political status and party. Cases that had a significant media effect such as Juany Maldonado and Erika Cazares, Ángel Morales, Efraín García, Aarón Varela and Jairo García stand out in said table, while in 2017 those of Miranda Ponce, Hernández Pasi3n, González Sa3nos, Delfino Hern3ndez or Antol3n Vital.

Likewise, although violence and robbery or extortion as a motive are notable, the lack of transparency in the identification of the motive, the large amounts of money requested when it came to collecting ransom, and the use of bodyguards are especially striking. This can be seen in the case of Gustavo Mart3n G3mez, murdered with 11 shots; Lenin Portal S3nchez with five; Manuel Hern3ndez Pasi3n; Isa3as M., ex-director of Public Security of Zacatl3n, murdered during an alleged robbery, as well as Delfino Alfonso Hern3ndez; Jorge Hern3ndez, murdered along with three other people; Jes3s Antonio Hern3ndez Jim3nez, who was shot; Rigoberto Barrag3n Amador, assassinated and attempted kidnapping; Neftal3 Hern3ndez Mej3a murdered for robbery.

The above stands out even more if we incorporate, although we do not go into it in depth, the kidnappings and release of politicians and

their family members for ransom, such as the cases of Joaquín de la Rosa, who was released for 4 million pesos, as happened with Fidel Arcos and Marciano Hernández; of Esteban Fosado, for whom they asked 10 million pesos; or those of the brother of Mariano de Gante, or the children of Juan Ojeda; or those who were not paid and were murdered, such as Manuel Gómez Fosado and Isarve Cano; and some who never appeared, such as Zito Ángel Zanatta, and Edilberto GarcíaCamacho (2016).

This situation, homicides, kidnappings, extortions, disappearances, although not exclusive to the state of Puebla, should call our attention because they reflect the ineffective management of the Mexican political class, which by privileging their interests has established a regime contrary to the interests of the majority, which produces poverty, unemployment and misery, which makes it possible for criminal groups to find people willing to expose their lives for the promise of a better life.

The inexplicable enrichment of the political class is exposed by noting the large ransom payments demanded and sometimes paid, without the need to investigate white houses or properties of politicians, such as those exposed during the electoral campaigns in each corresponding entity. This is an issue that deserves to be investigated since it raises questions such as: how many politicians elected to elected office have not been corrupted? to what levels does this corruption reach? in what areas is it possible to steal the most without being caught?. Politicides are a variant of the problem of insecurity and violence that needs to be made visible because only in the heat of the political competition it is noticed, but once the election is over it is forgotten, which is reflected in the few articles on the subject and the confusing information that exists about it. However, disturbing questions arise, such as: What will a politician be willing to do or accept in order to guarantee his and his family's security? Or what is he doing today to ensure it?.

Besides the fact that such situation contrasts radically with a previous moment where such problems, even if they existed, did not have such magnitude, perhaps because, as a result of the GDP performance, there were not so many pressures on the economy. The worrying thing is that the political class does not take responsibility for anything, not even for the violence against it, and, as for all other evils, blames the other, society, the state, drug trafficking, the public school, the family. He never blames himself for having abandoned a more or less successful system to impose one that throws more poor into the streets, into the jails, into the neighboring country. But the following doubts arise: are all the politicians who influenced the change of model, such as Salinas or Zedillo, abroad? what motivated them to promote the change of model? have they benefited from it? who were the main ones? who are still in Mexico? who went abroad? how many are still in politics? in which positions?. The reality is that Mexico and Puebla went from being safe zones to high-risk zones to live in, and today, practicing politics in Puebla is a high-risk activity. The data are there and do not lie, and in Puebla all this happened

in less than a decade, although at the national level it did not take much longer, since the trigger was the six-year term of 2006-2012.

Conclusions

The goals in security and violence are not being met. Neither by the current federal government nor by the local governments, neither new nor previous, leaving the promise of reducing it frustrated because, on the one hand, on a national level we occupy the first places in the world in violence, and on the other, the state occupies the first places at the national level. Violence manifests itself in homicides, femicides, kidnappings, extortions, lynchings, robberies, unequal development, poverty, social protests, criminalization of protests, migration, among others, issues that are associated with the indicators of the Failed States Index of the Fund for Peace.

These problems of insecurity are accompanied by governments that are distant and insensitive to society and its demands. The constant increase of politicides in the last 10 years, a situation that contrasts with previous decades when this phenomenon was not observed, the frequency of violent events make people get used to them, normalizing violence with simple arguments such as: they were in the wrong, the sense of impunity and force generate in criminal groups demonstrations of power that seem to demonstrate the lack of an effective monopoly of legitimate and effective force over a territory. As a corollary we can state: politicians who win elections and live, maintain commitments with the mafias, those who do not maintain them or want to charge them dearly are executed.

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