Abstract

From the point of view of an ethnographic perspective, any attempt to understand the categories that organize thoughts and practices of the people implies to take into account the idea of "community" as a point of reference and belonging for the articulation of its members that share a common set of values. In that sense, to talk about the work of Federal judges in the city of Posadas, Misiones, Argentina, is to describe the categories that organize their criteria in taking decisions on the freedom or on the imprisonment of individuals that violate the law, which is done inside a bureaucratic political organization which is the National State. These criteria are influenced by social relations and the decisions taken neither are out of the society in which they originate, nor are them individualistic judgments that only reflect an abstract and pure rational action. I am not saying that these decisions are influenced by univocal and non contradictory values. These values come from different communitarian belongings, sometimes from different spatial and historical contexts. To put it in other words, they do not reflect a "pure" rational action. Instead, they are the consequence of concepts and values created by different communities in which the judges participate with certain feelings of belonging-these feelings are not except of conflicts, ambiguities, and contradictions. In this work, I will describe categories that influence the criteria for the taking of decisions of Federal judges of an Oral Court that solves cases for trafficking in narcotics in Posadas, an Argentinean city at the border with Paraguay.

Keywords

Federal justice; Taking decisions; Argentine.