

Editorial

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In his 1961 classic *The Labyrinth of solitude*, Octavio Paz offered his much discussed metaphor of Mexican masks, referring to the gap in Mexican culture between formal expressions and actual intention or content. This gap between formal agreement and practical rejection is abundantly clear in the field of Human Rights.

Mexico is a founding signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and in contrast to its Northern neighbor an early adopter of almost any other additional treaty thereafter. Importantly, it also recognizing the corresponding institutions such as the Inter American Court of Human Rights. The mask fits tightly. Yet the Human Rights record in the past decades, both visible in formal investigations as in the everyday experience of its citizens, speaks of a different reality. Here we don't just refer to the disappearances, lack of security, etc., but also about the frequent violations of rights related to work and the provision of services like social insurance, education and healthcare. This in combination with the notorious impunity and failure of the legal system to effectively address such rampant violations, makes the smiling mask look all the more cynical.

Alternatively, we could also accept the challenge that Human Rights pose, and try to match pretention with reality. Mexico does have a basic legal, educational, democratic, social, etc. infrastructure that, given reforms, can serve to build an institutional landscape that supports Human Rights. At the moment of writing, a new progressive government shows revamped interest in social and economic rights, alongside the more usual promises of more transparency, democracy and fighting corruption. If this can be achieved, and if it will be done so with respect for civil rights, it could mark a point of hope rather than a tradeoff.

One precondition for any of this to happen, is an awareness of the human rights framework itself. Starting with one's own rights, but also those of others. Yet the violations of certain groups happen either far outside of our view (in forests or prison sells), or are not understood as Human Rights violations (such as obstacles to joining syndicates). By speaking to transnational migrants making the journey to the U.S. through Mexico from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, my team learned a lot about hidden horrors. Murder and rape by criminal groups on trains, robbery and extortion at the hand of security forces in the forests, destitution from drought and disease the Northern deserts. All indicate a systematic failure of protecting, respecting and providing of rights like security, freedom of torture and health, amongst many others. Yet we only knew because of the survivors.

The relative visibility and enforceability of the human rights of certain groups form the red thread that connects the first four articles in this special issue of *Política, Globalidad y Ciudadanía*, which is focused on Human Rights. Articles five, six and seven are part of the normal publication cycle of this journal, although it is difficult to truly stray far from topics that are relevant to human rights, as the entries on gender and policing demonstrate.

As far as the first part on Human Rights is concerned, the goal is to draw attention to the systemic, continuous and often less visible human rights issues of Mexico. The aim is to do this in two ways:

1. By presenting studies on systematic HR problems and the surrounding struggles, often involving marginalized groups.
2. By reflecting on the recognition, visibility and handling of these human rights issues as human rights issues.

Although to some extent present in all, the first will be mainly covered in the entries on disappearances (2) and foster children (4), while the second question surfaces more prominently in the this text (1) and the entry on the media representation of human rights (3) of this special issue.

We will engage in this endeavor with an interdisciplinary approach and assemble. Various authors have identified the field of human rights as fertile grounds for interdisciplinary work (Freeman, 2002; De Feyter, 2008). A frequent starting point for the study of universal rights is the field of international law (and with that, international relations), yet the focus of this issue is national and thus not primarily concerned with the international aspect of HR. The analysis borrows much from a sociological approach, since the focus is often on “the societal processes and relations that shape and define how human rights are generated, defined and employed in specific social and political arenas” (Madsen, Verschraegen, 2013, p. 4). Besides law and sociology, our interdisciplinary assemble of authors employs perspectives from communication sciences and political science.

In what follows, I will briefly walk the reader through the index of this issue of *Política, Globalidad y Ciudadanía*:

In the first article, Tuur Ghys offers a general introduction to the topic and logic of human rights that will be useful in understanding the other entries in this journal. It also deepens the discussion of the central topic of unequal attention and why certain groups struggle to construct their grievances as Human Rights abuse. This article was written in English.

In the second article, Darwin Franco Miguez makes a deep reflection on the problem of disappearances in Mexico. Approaching the problem from a communication point of view, he explores how the disappeared are often stigmatized and forgotten, as well as the resistance of their families to try to re-frame these human rights abuses. The article was written in English.

In the third article, Beatriz Elena Inzunza Acedo presents an empirical study on the knowledge and social imaginaries about human rights. This study, focused on Monterrey, presents data on what people know about HR, how they know it and what issues they imagine as human rights issues. This article was written in English.

In the fourth article, Leticia Ivonne López Villarreal offers a case study of the interplay of public policies and private actors in organizing the protection human rights of foster care children in Nuevo León. It shows that a complex web of multi-level processes and actors is required to give voice to the rights of a particularly voiceless group. This article was written in Spanish.

The fifth article deals with public policy in the field of sports. Francisco Javier Mendoza-Farias, Rocío Ivonne Quintal-López and Leticia Janet Paredes analyze the limited and slow process of implementing gender equality and sensitivity in CONADE between 2012 and 2018. This article was written in Spanish.

In the sixth article, Lenin Ramírez Matus and Genaro Hernández Velazco make a case for improving

police mediation in neighborhood conflicts. Reviewing literature, they conclude that local police need to further develop their role and responsibility in pacifying community relations. This article was written in Spanish.

In the final, seventh entry, Said Dahdah Antar takes a more historical approach to the topics usually discussed within this journal. His article attempts to trace back the roots of rhetorical speech in political communication and citizen participation back to the ancient Greece and the Roman empire. This article was written in Spanish.

As the editor of this issue, I would first of all like to thank the authors, especially the group that had the patience to stick with the human rights project until the end. Second, I want to thank any anonymous students and student assistants for their contribution, as they often form a hidden part of the academic production process. Lastly, in the name of the authors I want to thank all interview or survey respondents for their time and testimonies that gave empirical substance to our research. Enjoy the read.

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