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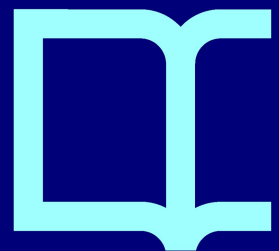
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Living in the frame of structural violence: Institutional regulations and daily life in Lleida, Spain

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Abstract

This article investigates how structural violence is reflected in the daily life of the peripheries of a medium-sized city in the interior of Spain. For this, three categories of analysis are used: inquisitive violence, coercive violence and horizontal violence. Forms of resistance are also highlighted. This makes it possible to trace the various ways that state institutions act and behave to exercise power over people. These actions have direct consequences for 'vulnerable' population, inducing feelings of humiliation, personal and group suffering, the perpetuation of social inequality, the lack of democratic freedoms, and the creation of violent or exploitative practises. Likewise, this path allows us to see how neoliberal logics are applied, their consequences and, most importantly, how they generate new normalities and livelihoods that serve as discursive support for new applications of antisocial policies.

Introduction

Antonia and Prudencio were hoping to start a new phase of life following after retiring, but after pressure from their neighbours, they had been forced to leave the apartment. They sold their 36m² home for less than 6,000 euros. They had happy memories of their life there and in the neighbourhood. They felt part of the neighbourhood and had a kind of nostalgia that is common for the older people of the place.

The movement against evictions has not stopped receiving new pleas for help from people who are about to lose their homes due to debts with the bank. As this issue is by no means resolved, the movement has decided to increase and intensify their actions becoming more aggressive. Banks are considered responsible and guilty for the evictions. The movement occupies their premises for extended periods of time. The result has been a spiral of repression against the movement through collective trials, fines and arrests.

At the Centre Obert (local social services) two brothers, Óscar and Johnny (15 and 17 years old) are being discussed again. According to the social workers, they have no discipline and a lot of adaptation difficulties. This morning they went to their home to see if it was clean and tidy. It is the second time in three months that they have gone there. The social workers say that the mess and dirt is terrible. In the afternoon, the

brothers fought with each other and went looking for fights with other boys whom they knew were always ready for a fight.

These three field notes exemplify the way in which different forms of structural violence are experienced in a specific local context: neighbourhood property harassment in the context of residential precariousness; forms of resistance to the suffering caused by the violence of evictions; and, finally, the constant humiliating treatment of the young men by social services, who continually invade their home, and the consequent youthful frustration, expressed via forms of horizontal violence.

These forms of structural violence are evident in the daily lives of people living on social peripheries. Peripheral neighbourhoods are understood not only as geographic territories but also as marginal political, economic and social spaces. In these, people's lives have been affected directly by the expansion of neoliberalism and, even more, by the Spanish austerity policies after the 2008 crisis (Brenner et al., 2010). The State, with a shrinking of its social function, has been one of the main agents of increased social inequality and has reinforced the marginality of certain groups (Wacquant, 2014).

Thus, the capitalist accumulation process has required an increase in violence and its forms (Harvey, 2014), which tend to act and manifest themselves in a more recurrent and profound way in these peripheries (Wacquant, 2007). In this work, we understand violence as a direct consequence of both processes of global economic readjustment and the neoliberal model itself and, as such, although it is invisible in the form of structural violence, it has ramifications that appear in these peripheries.

This text is based on three different ethnographies, which we intertwine and combine to study structural violence. All of them are centred in the city of Lleida, a medium-sized city of approximately 140,000 inhabitants. This city is relatively far from the great circuits of capital, industry and tourism, and its economy is based on the primary sector and the agri-food industry.

Two waves of migration in the periods of 1950–1970 and 2000–2010, together with specific elements of the Spanish capitalist expansion model, have defined the city in a unique way. Its socio-urban morphology has given rise to two impoverished and stigmatised neighbourhoods, namely, the *Centre Historic*, and *La Mariola*, on the outskirts. Currently, a large part of the social, urbanistic and welfare problems of the city are concentrated in these two areas. They are the location of the migrant population and the most severe poverty in the city. However, Lleida suffers from other types of problems that are linked to job insecurity in the agri-food sector. For instance, seasonal workers and migrant families in situations of social exclusion sleep for months on the streets in the city. In addition, in recent years, the so called 'problem' of unaccompanied minors -who live in precarious, marginal situations, with little state protection and without decent living spaces-has also become an issue in the city. Since the 2008 international financial crisis, problems related to housing have been particularly acute in peripheries. Different actors are involved – public administrations, banks, investment funds, real estate agencies and medium and small landlords– and have contributed to a market based on speculation that keeps rental prices rising, preventing families with fewer resources accessing the housing market. In this context, various conflicts have arisen, expressing the

struggle and agency of the working-class people in the face of violence. Some of them have emerged through popular movements, such as the *Platform for People Affected by Mortgages* (PAH) and *Mariola en Moviment*.

This paper illustrates (1) the way in which the invisible violence typical of the current political economic system becomes 'palpable' for the most vulnerable inhabitants of the city, and (2) how, faced with extreme shortages and severely limited access to material and symbolic resources, these residents transform structural violence into horizontal violence. We emphasise the concept of violence to examine in the ways and mechanisms through which structural violence operates in an urban context. Thus, we focus on various types of violence. First, we look at the violence exercised from above, to show the way in which the State reveals itself as a force capable of exercising dominance over the people who live in the peripheries through the presence of social services and the control over people's lives. Another way is to implement coercive forms, such as police presence and the lack of public investment in segregated neighbourhoods. Second, we look at horizontal violence, which is expressed in the increase of conflicts between neighbourhood inhabitants who suffer violence from above and who are destructive in the neighbourhood dynamics. Finally, we briefly look at forms of resistance, agency and the use of bottom-up violence through participation in different political movements that make visible the contradictions in the model applied in the city and that seek to reverse the situation.

In general, in an innovative way and through the dialogue between the common points of three different ethnographies, this article deepens contemporary understandings of structural violence, showing the multiple meanings such processes embody in peripheral areas of southern Europe.

An analytical framework: Steps from structural violence to domination and resistances

This study makes use of the concept of structural violence originally coined by Galtung (1969) and later developed by Paul Farmer. These authors understood the concept to refer to "a host of offensives against human dignity: extreme and relative poverty, social inequalities ranging from racism to gender inequality, and the most spectacular forms of violence" (Farmer, 2005: 8). All this is embedded within long-term structures, institutions and social practises that make such forms of violence seem normal, ordinary and often invisible (Farmer, 2005). Therefore, we place an emphasis on the processes of deprivation of needs and the ways of life that the capitalist system 'forces' citizens to develop, thus creating a paradox of capitalism: the contradiction between freedom and submission (Harvey, 2014; Polanyi, 1957) on a daily scale.

Likewise, we specifically follow the proposal of Bourgois and Schonberg (2009), who interspersed structural violence with daily life (Scheper-Hughes, 1996) for "calling attention to the effects of violence in interpersonal interactions and routine daily life" (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009: 17). We also consider the notes of Gupta (2012), who reveals how the bureaucratic systems that serve the poor represent forms of structural violence through the apparently mundane paths of documenting practises that normalise the oppression of the poor. Bourdieu

(2001) and Auyero (2012), extend the issue to waiting times: those non-innocent waiting times that are a political capital for domination.

The concept of structural violence is often used in studies of serious suffering, especially when it is evident in the form of physical pain. Thus, it is used in the health sciences or in related fields such as medical anthropology, social psychology or anthropology of the body and gender. But the concept is has a much broader applicability; a fact that is demonstrated by its use in studies in other disciplines such as political geography (Davies, 2019) and urban anthropology (Fassin, 2018). Therefore, structural violence is evidenced in multiple ways, varying according to the field and the social or political group in which it is practised. However, in all these studies, we can find continuities and convergences in the ways that structural violence occurs and in its purposes.

The notion of structural violence allows us to highlight processes of suffering that are often overlooked or difficult to describe. Furthermore, the concept allows us to show how structural violence functions in an urban context, where the interventions of political institutions and multiple forms of exclusion overlap. In our study, we aim to shed light on the permeability of structural violence by exploring different forms of these. These different forms allow us to see how social conflict occurs both top-down – between social classes – and laterally – within the same social class. For this, we make a distinction between the categories of inquisitive and coercive violence (Fraile and Bonastra, 2018) and horizontal violence (Freire, 1972).

We use the term ‘inquisitive violence’ to refer to actions related to the management of problems, time and information that inquire into people’s personal lives, which directly affects people’s feelings in the form of suffering. We are talking about meddling in the personal and daily life of people, and also in routines and ways of doing that are related to daily life: repetition of actions, multiplication of documents, waiting times, lack of solutions, among others.

We use the term ‘coercive violence’ to refer to actions that seeks to put pressure on behaviours and ways of life, in many cases approaching repression or threats, although not exclusively. Coercive violence serves to force the will or behaviour of someone even if it is in a subtle way. Generally speaking, these forms of violence are measures that affect social life and actions, especially in collective ways and are relatively removed from individual feelings. Examples include urban, police and employer-based violence such as police actions, lack of investment in social infrastructure, management of housing problems and defensive urbanism among other phenomena.

We start from the fact that these forms of management are not simply an instrument of action and knowledge but also of domination (Bourdieu, 2001; Freire, 1972). By horizontal violence we refer to how people who suffer inquisitive and coercive violence become aware of these forms of violence and how this leads them to assume contradictory positions and behaviours. Knowing themselves as dominated in a situation of power, their actions often lead them to move away from the habits of the mainstream and express their oppression towards other people who are in the same or worse situations.

Finally, it is necessary to highlight how this violence is not always assimilated in a passive way, but in some cases also generates reactions. In this sense, we speak

of the change of direction in bottom-up violence that manifests itself in two ways: through daily resistance actions (Scott, 1985), and through collective responses via social movements (Tilly, 2012).

Combining three ethnographies in a Spanish middle-sized city

In this article, we combine three ethnographic studies carried out independently by the three authors of this paper in the Spanish city of Lleida. In an innovative way, we collaborate ethnographically to obtain a deeper and more complex analysis of the political and social dynamics experienced in a specific territory. In order to make a real combination, in-depth reviews of each ethnography were necessary. This led to a re-examination of the data, which provided new perspectives. This process meant that we reviewed our narratives and re-analysed the research subject. Each author was positioned in a different light as their data was examined from the perspectives of the other authors. The authors had to adopt a new position and review the interpretation of the inductive forms of each ethnography.

The three studies are based on a committed and militant ethnography approaches (Scheper-Hughes, 1995; Russell, 2015). As all the projects were conducted in a relatively small territorial framework, the different authors had prior knowledge of the situations in each other's field sites. Therefore, dominant logics of conducting research in academia, where individual and competitive forms predominate, have had to be rethought, incorporating alternative ways to generate data and epistemic accounts. Sharing informed knowledge about the three ethnographies and generating workspaces that interrelate the different dimensions from which we start has been key to achieving our objectives. In addition, it was necessary to rethink our position as researchers and provide each of the ethnographies with an analytical reflection processes (Bourdieu et al., 1999) that could be shared with the participants of the research (final discussion groups, post-ethnography interviews, shared materials, etc.) (Rappaport, 2008). This ultimately led to a process of creating a shared theory that, for the peripheries, may also be politically useful (Rappaport, 2008; Guber, 2011). An attempt at fugitive anthropology has been made, "rethinking of the contours of the political in co-creating spaces of liberation and transformation" (Berry et al., 2017: 538).

For the purpose of this work, the main difficulty has been to find the key concepts and examples that make it possible to juxtapose the studies. Each study had its own key notions and perspectives (Table 1). Bringing them under the umbrella of a single unified concept has been a great effort in translation. However, a common point was the confluence in addressing different types of violence. Therefore, these studies provide the opportunity to look at different operation modes of structural violence.

Table 1. Synopsis of the studies.

	Ethnography 1	Ethnography 2	Ethnography 3
Main theme	Territorial stigma	Livelihoods	Social movements
Principal concepts	Stigma	Structural vulnerability	Youth
	Marginality	Temporality	Normalisation
	Social capital	Good life	Symbolic capital
Framework	Territorial	Social inequalities	Political
Forms of structural violence	Institutional	Institutional	Police
	Urban planning	Symbolic	Repression
	Aggressiveness	Horizontal	Direct action/Performative

The first ethnography focused on a marginal working-class neighbourhood called *La Mariola* (Solis, 2017). The central subject of study was territorial stigma and its consequences, so it focused on the territorial and symbolic issues of space. The study was carried out over seven months between 2013 and 2014. The starting point was an educational service for adolescents (*Centre Obert*). From there, the research expanded throughout the neighbourhood in a constant climate of structural violence, mainly centred around the housing situation and basic food.

The second ethnography (2017–2022) studied the livelihoods and temporalities of structurally vulnerable young people from peripheries of the city of Lleida (Úbeda, 2022). Based on the process of precarisation and social hierarchisation in the peripheries, the research inquired into how people articulated particular ‘tempographies’ in contexts of deprivation and uncertainty. The ethnography revealed how social services, health, intergenerational relations, reciprocity and conflicts are involved in their ability to project a life into the future.

The third ethnographic study explored social movements and internal power relations (Ballesté, 2018). The research focused on non-institutional politics and the evolution of different social movements from 2014 to 2018. The study showed the ways in which repression works according to the profiles of the participants of each social movement. In the dialectic between the movements and the State, the presence in the former of politicised youth, migrants, women and people of the working class, gave shape to both the actions of the movement (increased direct action) and the repressive and violent responses to the movement by institutions. It was through this process that the category of correct or normalised forms of protest was constructed, which represents those forms of protest that are accepted in the political field.

These three ethnographies converge on various themes: existential fragility, marginality, residential precariousness, youth and resistance. The themes were unified by comparing disaggregated data, translating concepts, carrying out a new relational and interpretive analysis, and creating common narratives and contextualisations. As a result, structural violence stands out as the central concept that links the three ethnographic studies.

The production of the three ethnographies at different times in the same vulnerable and peripheral neighbourhoods of the city has allowed a continued presence in the field (from 2013 to 2021), bringing on the three works to intersect and dialogue at some point. All this has produced a significant amount of data with more than 80 in-depth interviews. Beyond the interviews, the main body of research

was based on participant observation, which entailed taking part in the activities of local groups and getting to know the residents of the different neighbourhoods and their daily struggles.

In order not to reduce the joint analysis to a vertical perspective of the study problem (structural violence), a cross-sectional examination was carried out that transcended a 'top down' view of violence and allowed us to analyse horizontal forms of violence. Therefore, we highlight the cultural and material practises of the city's inhabitants including their strategies of lateral denigration, economic exploitation and prejudices etc.

Governing people in social and territorial peripheries

Inquisitive violence

For decades, different forms of intervention have been carried out on the peripheries of the city of Lleida in order to 'improve' the situation of the population that are considered from a normative perspective as vulnerable. Linked to a welfare-based and meritocratic conception of social benefits, the inhabitants of the peripheries are subjected to constant investigation into their ways of life as a condition for receiving social aid. These interventions imply intense control over the people. One of the most evident was the presence of social situations that involved forms of inquisitive violence that resulted in a transformation to the aims of local interventions by social services, and different actors as banks, charities and real estate agencies. This kind of interventions has affected the subjectivity of the people and has contributed to perpetuating a social order based on inequalities and the dissolution of community solidarities. Thus, structural violence in this case materialises in a political production of vulnerability, marginality and social exclusion.

We present below a series of ethnographic cases that go through different forms of inquisitive violence and in which the common point is sentimental and emotional pain. Our ethnographic discourse explores the difference in the management of the aid practiced by social workers in a marginalised neighbourhood as well as bureaucratic practises and the unethical and opaque strategies that are related to housing. Regarding the management of aid, we explore two exemplary cases: the advance payment of food aid and the constant threat of the withdrawal of child custody rights.

Until at least 2018, the inhabitants of the *La Mariola* neighbourhood were the only ones that had to pay in advance for the aid or emergency card to obtain food, popularly known as the 'food cheque'. A payment of 60 euros was required, which in some cases forced its beneficiaries into debt as they tried to get ahead in their daily life. Many of inhabitants perceived this as "an insult to their dignity". This prepayment is based on accountability, which aims to control the ways in which people manage the social benefits they receive. These mechanisms are carried out both by the social service offices that manage the aid, and the professionals that visit the homes of the people who receive aid.

During fieldwork in *La Mariola*, it was observed that, at certain times, social educators decided to visit young people's homes when they believed they had found

out about a disruption or misconduct in their lives. They generally arranged with the young person's mother to visit the young person at home. The objective was to observe their living conditions: tidiness, cleanliness, healthiness, the type of food they ate, among other things. These visits generally provoked a kind of chaos within the family, often resulting in discomfort, nervousness, domestic quarrels and visible stress as the family worried about having to 'pass the test'. This was the case for the brothers Óscar and Johnny. The suffering of their mother and the tension between the brothers, who often fought with each other, was palpable by the ethnographer.

People in the neighbourhood lived under a constant threat of sanctions and feared social services and, by extension, the municipal administration. One of the elements that causes the families the greatest fears was the possibility that social services may remove custody of the children if certain requirements and administrative procedures are not met.

Luna, a Catalan woman in her fifties from the *La Mariola* neighbourhood, recounted her problems with social services and her feeling of being outraged at the way she was treated. She said that when her son was a baby, she went with him to the social services office. Her son was a baby and she carried him in her arms. When the social worker saw her appear with the child, the social worker who already knew her situation pouted:

Luna: I had nowhere to leave him. I was alone. I always carried him with me. And the social worker told me: "Sign here! Sign and leave your child in custody with social services if you cannot take care of him. And you come to pick him up on Fridays and leave him again on Sundays". And I said: "What? Do you see he is dirty? Do you see him malnourished? Does he have marks even from a mosquito?" And she told me: "Sign here! Sign here!" And another social worker was writing everything on a paper. And the other said: "Sign! Sign!" When they told me to take my child to a centre, I did not deserve it. I have never handled my children badly.

Finally, there was no administrative reason for Luna to lose custody of her son and she was able to retain custody. But from that day on, Luna distrusted social services and lives with worry any type of interaction with them. Luna believed that the social workers inquired into her life only because she was poor. Situations like this, in which different social agents interfere in people's lives to assess whether they are deserving of social assistance and social benefits, are repeated daily in the urban peripheries of Lleida. More than simple negligence, these actions are part of a system that is aimed at controlling the vulnerable population and reflect how structural violence generates situations of oppression and suffering.

The negotiations to stop evictions that take place between banks, the administration and residents are usually full of documents and bureaucratic procedures that make the process confusing and unclear. One of PAH's (*Platform for People Affected by Mortgages*) aims is to provide mutual aid for those affected by evictions in the form of information to help people to understand the procedures to stop evictions. As Manuel, a 37 years-old male member of the PAH, explains, "the PAH was in the end a management agency (...) where attempts were made to study and understand how to respond to each case". One of the jobs that took the most time was case work. The amount of bureaucratic procedures that residents who were facing eviction had to manage in order not to lose their homes was extreme

and drastically affected the normal course of their daily lives. In addition, there were also waiting times, queues and travel between offices. The example of the PAH is not unique, these bureaucratic processes are repeated every day for issues such as concessions of social rent, income support and other social benefits, assistance with against energy poverty, paper regularisation and so on.

Throughout this last year 2021 we have met with Kalid, a Moroccan migrant in his 40s who lives in a semi-abandoned building, on several occasions. Conversations with Kalid always revolve around waiting:

Kalid: Hey! you have to help me!

JM: Tell me Youssef

Kalid: I'm in my place, I have nowhere to go. I can't go on there

JM: How long have you been like this?

Kalid: I don't know, friend. A long time. I can't go there. I don't want to occupy a house because I don't want to go to jail.

JM: Have you already been to social services? What do they tell you?

Kalid: Yes, I went several weeks ago and nothing, now I have an appointment in 1 month. Nothing, they say nothing. They don't solve anything...

The number of times that Kalid has gone to social services, and they have not resolved his problems (not only housing, but also health) caused Kalid to live in a constant state of anxiety and low self-esteem. The result was that his health is constantly getting worse. The union of this and the everyday fear that migrants have about ending up in jail made Kalid severely distressed.

The third case talks about the strategies carried out in relation to housing. Here we want to highlight how (in addition to long waiting times) disinformation, opacity and tactics appear and then break the mutual support.

One of the forms of violence that had part of the *La Mariola* population on edge and 'frightened' was the threat of demolishing buildings in the most degraded area of the neighbourhood. Between 2017 and 2020, a serious disinformation about the situation resulted in strong uncertainty among the population. Multiple meetings with the administration, 'participatory' processes, visits by politicians, did not served to clarify the future situation. In 2022, its inhabitants are facing an expropriation process. These actions are psychological torture for the affected families. The municipalities used strategies, such as the individualisation of the negotiations, that increased people's suffering ([Dalmau, 2016](#)). During the fieldwork, we could hear statements such as "We doesn't know what will happen", "What will happen to my apartment? Will they give me a new one?", "I'm too old for change, I'm alone and I don't want them to touch my home, it scares me". It is a process that will end with the construction of new homes, with the consequent expulsion of 'squatter' neighbours but also of people who will not be able to pay the new rent. This tightens the rope of suffering, of mistrust towards neighbours and the uprooting of the neighbourhood.

In this line of individualization, we must also highlight how one of the main focuses of PAH's struggle was focused on achieving collective negotiations with banks and administrations. In other words, both the financial entities (those who promote evictions) and institutions (those who mediate in the situation) always sought to find a single interlocutor within the movement with whom they could

negotiate each case. By doing so, they saved themselves the trouble of having to deal with cases collectively, thereby individualising the social movement to specific cases.

What we have described are therefore faced with bureaucratic and regulatory practises designed to improve efficiency, facilitate negotiations with banks and provide access to the resources necessary for the maintenance of life, but which end up producing large amounts of humiliation. These practises, manifested through inquisitive violence, also provoke a change in the moral disposition of individuals. They end up being responsible for the situation they are suffering, having to modify their behaviour, their way of life and their personal trajectory in order to adapt to the hegemonic model of citizenship.

In summary, rather than being read as negligent practises of the state itself, inquisitive violence should be considered as part of the welfare state model, a model wherein officials are required to distribute scant resources by inquiring into whether people are truly deserving of social assistance. This constant need for accountability (only required for specific groups of the vulnerable population) is considered by the affected people as insults to dignity, generating suffering and concern and instilling distrust towards the state and public servants. These inquisitive practises are not limited only to State action, but also involve banks, investment funds and real estate agencies. Each of these institutions causes suffering through complicated bureaucratic procedures and long waiting times, thereby exercising domination through structural violence. People not only suffer all these practises passively, but, as we will see in the following section as forms of horizontal violence as they navigate through them in different ways.

Coercive violence

Beyond the inquisitive, violence is explicitly manifested in the coercion exercised on people. Below we will point out different cases related to this type of violence. The four examples we discuss are (1) a protest that took place on a square and that entailed different municipal actions; (2) police actions against social movements and the so called 'racialised' young people who took part; (3) the lack of public investment as a form of poverty control; and (4) the blurring of the boundary between inquisitive and coercive violence.

Every day an informal flea market takes place in *Plaça del Dipòsit*, a square in the historic centre of Lleida and the main meeting place for migrants. It is not a legal market, none of the sellers have municipal permits and, for the most part, the goods for sale come from used clothing containers. All the vendors are racialised people and every day they are evicted by the police, often through force and with the use of other sanctions. Years ago, the square was the subject of an urban redevelopment that changed it from an ornate and unattractive square. Numerous houses in the square have been abandoned by their owners and the municipal administration has been forced to tearing down, leaving a bleak panorama occupied by car parks. Since the reform of the square, municipal investments has been practically nothing.

All of these actions are small examples of coercive violence. The police action is clearly an example of a coercive act against the flea market vendors. The urban modification is an example of defensible urban planning (Newman, 1972) – a model of planning intended to make the square an uncomfortable square to spend long

periods of time. It has been pointed out various times that this type of intervention is intended to prohibit unwanted groups from gathering in the square (Carmona, 2010). Regarding the demolition of the buildings, it should be noted that this is a matter of public safety. However, we cannot ignore the fact that many of these flats were inhabited by poor families (legally or illegally, either by squatting or informal rentals). Therefore, mass demolition has become a way to prevent so called 'misuse' by causing a high deal of displacement – a phenomena that has been termed by some as urban violence and real estate harassment (Lees et al., 2008).

Taken individually, these actions represent small forms of coercion. They seek to modify behaviour, especially collectively. However, if we are to consider them together, we have an example of a great coercive action in which we can see how public management, through a general lack of investment in housing and public space, has been aimed at changing the daily habits of families, migrants and the poor. Furthermore, these coercive policies are aided by the near constant presence of the police.

Policing is generally the least subtle form of coercive violence. This type of action is used in a discriminatory way both on the young people in the periphery, through racialised and territorialised practises, and on the social movements.

Looking for a better future Yasir, a 32-year-old Moroccan, emigrated to Spain in 2019. His short-term objective from the beginning of his travels was to obtain residency. In his case, the process of gaining residency can begin after spending 3 years in the country. Since he arrived, Yasir had been forced to constantly move between different cities and regions to work picking fruit and doing short-term jobs. He often slept on the streets and receiving help from charities. During this period of waiting and personal suffering, Yasir risked being thrown out of the country. Like other people in the same situation, he constantly lived with the fact that the police would stop him on a weekly basis and demand to see his identification. These ethnic profiling police stops occur even though they are not allowed under Spanish law. This type of policing promotes racial stereotypes that associate the racialized with criminals. After several encounters with the police, Yasir received an expulsion order from the country: "I want to work to earn money, I came here to make a living, and now, after almost 3 years, I have the order," he told me.

In social movements, the type of police action depends on two issues. On the one hand, the type of actions carried out by the movement. On the other, the intersectional component of the participants of each movement (social class, gender, origin, age, etc.). Thus, the PAH, unlike other movements, have carried out more conflictive acts such as occupying banks to demand a solution to the most serious cases. In these actions, the excessive police presence, also promoted by the intersectional component of the group, was exponentially higher than in other demonstrations of the city.

An example is the eviction of a bank that took place in March 2016. Reporting this event, the main newspapers in the city described how "an army of *Mossos* (regional police) evicts 15 activists" or "evicted by dragging them out of the bank". The excessive police presence and the forms of action show how biases effect the control of social movements. Finally, actions like the bank occupations, beyond police repression, led to different legal complaints against the members

who occupied the bank headquarters, so that defendants were sentenced to pay economic fines for having sat down in the bank.

In a more subtle and long-term way, coercive violence can be seen in investments in the city. In recent years, there has been little or no investment in equipment, street infrastructures and services in the peripheries. This has led to a general and constant decline in the neighbourhood's condition. This situation has been happening for years in *La Mariola*. A notable form of violence in this neighbourhood has to do with urban planning. The neighbourhood was already fragmented for decades, both with the city and internally through very differentiated and disconnected spaces. This fragmentation prevented cohesion between neighbours and it is an issue that, in last years, the administration has seldom attempted to resolve. All this has been exacerbated by the reduction of common spaces, elimination of benches, litter bins and drinking fountains and also of small, almost personal places such as flower beds in the doorways.

This lack of investment has served to entrench poverty in the neighbourhood. First, because of the consequent decline of the real estate market, and second, due to the relocation policies carried out by the various public administrations, which have constantly re-housed vulnerable families within the boundaries of the neighbourhood. There is also a lack of public services which no longer directly affect the people of the disadvantaged neighbourhoods themselves but modulate the relationship of the rest of the city with the neighbourhood. This leads to processes such as territorial stigmatisation (Solis, 2017).

In the city there has been a clear intention to guide the behaviour of the 'vulnerable' population. This has occurred through territorial control of poverty and by preventing daily contact in streets and facilities, thus avoiding the approach of the inhabitants. One of the reasons why this type of action can be called violence is because, over the years, it tends to translate into economic and health suffering, as well as evictions and rupture of social relations, as can be seen in the following example.

The forms of violence that are linked to housing are also related to the urban issue. The lack of housing assistance has caused an avalanche of evictions in Lleida. This has caused an increase in precariousness and inequality, which has had effects on social reproduction within many working-class families. The precariousness that has been accumulating in *La Mariola* due to the territorial concentration of poverty and low investment had exacerbated housing problems. Some of them are related to the macro-economy, such as evictions and occupations, which frighten and scare inhabitants. Others are related to the micro-economy, such as neighbourhood community defaults that cause internal conflicts and a lack of maintenance. There was also the problem of low public housing aid that results in contamination of water tanks or a lack of elevators in the residential buildings. This created a cycle of poverty, with the rehousing of inhabitants and the physical degradation of homes are constantly feeding back into each other. The consequences were profound for the fragmentation of the neighbourhood – a phenomenon that was experienced as lateral denigration and racism, and which has resulted in the erosion of already low levels of social capital.

The barrier between inquisitive and coercive violence is not always clear. As the following case demonstrates, sometimes they go hand in hand. The members

of *Mariola en Moviment* promoted solidarity among themselves and make accompanied visits in order to carry out bureaucratic procedures, because some neighbours had difficulties with language. In response, however, the councillor for people services processed a new regulation that put obstacles in the way of people being accompanied. Thus, in addition to bureaucratic difficulties – which, as we have seen, were used as part of a process of humiliation – there were coercive acts which not only limited personal agency but exacerbated existing process of humiliation, thereby breaking the ways of acting that were present in the neighbourhood.

Horizontal violence: Assimilation and resistance under violence

Both coercive and inquisitive violence, as we have seen, have direct effects on agents who live in the peripheries. Normally, these oppressions (that we have grouped here as forms taken by structural violence) generate a state of frustration at the inability to lead a decent life. Among the effect of this process is a phenomenon we call ‘horizontal violence’, which manifests itself in the relationships between people and in the relationships between groups. In this way, we can observe how structural violence is internalised in the lives of marginalised people, who sometimes builds relationships between equals that reproduce the violence they have received. In this section, we show how structural violence is connected to the violent situations that occur in the day-to-day lives of neighbourhoods and the residents who live there. In this way, we can see how horizontal exploitation processes appear among people who live in similarly precarious situations.

In the urban sphere, degradation, inequality and poor housing conditions, together with the 2007 crisis, led to an increase in problems related to loss of housing. As a result, an illegal market for the so called ‘management’ of empty-apartment occupancies has been created. It is a business that arises under the power relations that generate inequality within the dominated. Families are unable to apply for a ‘legal’ apartment because they do not have an employment contract (or papers, good references and/or because they are in debt) are often forced to go to this market. Thus, these organised groups manage the rental of occupied flats (generating benefits for themselves) or they also get uninhabited flats to occupy through what is known in the neighbourhood as a ‘*patada en la puerta*’ (kick in the door). This situation generates an expansion of violence and fear for the neighbourhood, both due to the effects of this semi-mafia exploitation and the possibility that other neighbours will lose their homes to these groups. This was the case for Antonia and Prudencio, whose narrative was partially discussed in the opening section of the paper. Due to the possibility of doing business with the flats, they were pressured by members of this semi-mafia through threats to leave their home. Both, Prudencio and Antonia reported the incident to the police and the municipal administration, but no action was taken. Finally, they sold part of their flat (Prudencio and Antonia had put together two flats of 32m² each) for very little money to a man with a functional disability while the other part was awaiting sale.

Therefore, their flat became part of the illegal market, without an effective solution from the municipal government.

Housing markets are not the only ones in existence. Similar cases occur every day with other bureaucratic issues such as census registration. The rush and difficulties of getting paperwork out leads poor people to pay large amounts of money to mafias or illegal companies to get ahead. This is a very common practice in the *Centre Històric*.

Another similar case is that of food vouchers provided by the State (food cheques). As explained above, these are vouchers of 60 euros that can be used by vulnerable families in supermarkets to buy food for 1 month. The scheme exists all over the city, but the *La Mariola* neighbourhood is the only one in which to obtain the cheque it is necessary to pay this amount in advance. This lack of coherence means that the majority of residents who need the cheque cannot access it unless they borrow money informally from other people. This has led to the growth during the last decade in the number of informal moneylenders in the neighbourhood, who lend 60 euros to families, but then demand to be paid back with interest (sometimes up to 100% interest).

Both of these examples show a filtering of exploitation from the structural to the everyday. This filtering in turn reproduces oppression and violence between neighbours (horizontal) and between those who have little access to resources to those who have even less. As a result, this leads to a hierarchy between neighbours in *La Mariola* or *Centre Històric* that establishes relations of oppression and control and generates a greater depth of marginality.

Beyond these forms of horizontal violence that are led by groups, we also find other everyday forms of violence that occur in the daily interaction between subjects. These forms should be highlighted because they show us the last step in the conversion of structural violence into horizontal violence, although they are often the most invisible or difficult to detect. On interpersonal violence, different authors have also analysed the 'codes of the street' to understand how relationships between people (mainly young people) from peripheral neighbourhoods are composed through rules that seek to build respect, a reputation for revenge and aggressiveness between neighbours (Anderson, 1999; Bourgois, 2003) and form of hyper-masculinity based on domination through violence (Jones, 2008).

This is found in the daily relationships between adolescents and young people. Mickey, a roma man of 22 years-old relies on the assistance of the *Centre Obert*, where he would often go in search of help to manage bureaucratic procedures related to his undergraduate studies. Thus, he would address the social workers submissively, expecting from them the help he was looking for, and understanding the different roles that each person plays in the situation (helper and helped, the institution and the recipient). However, on one occasion, when the educators had left the room, Mickey turned around and spoke to Anouar, a 15 years-old boy and, for no apparent reason, challenged him aggressively. It appears as if he were looking for a fight with Anouar. However, Mickey knew that Anouar would not fight him both due to Mickey's age and the situational context.

What this scene shows us is the daily relationship between these young people within the struggle. In other words, the need to be prepared for situations of

confrontation and imposition of respect by force. We can understand this situation as a direct consequence of 'structurally imposed daily suffering' (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009). Furthermore, by seeing these scenes repeated in our observation, we can also establish a direct relationship between the 'attitude' of confrontation, on the one hand, and the feeling of violence and humiliation that they incorporate in their bodies when they have to go looking for help to complete the bureaucratic procedures, on the other. At the same time, this assistance is given at a place (*Centre Obert*) where other young people and adolescents from the same neighbourhood also come for different reasons, which can lead to situations of embarrassment and humiliation.

Many of the cases we have discussed are reflected in everyday life in the form of horizontal violence: aggression, denigration, threats, etc. We can see how some of the cases mentioned are projected in the form of horizontal violence. For example, the accumulation of dispossessed families in *La Mariola* has led to an increase in the denigration of neighbours; it is not difficult to find accusations such as "since they arrived, this [the life] has become impossible". These stories adopted by a large part of the population have led to a direct rupture of social relations and social capital (Solis, 2017). Luna, the woman whose children were to be taken away from her, ended up assaulting the social worker who harassed her and insisted on signing the papers. Finally, the case of Kalid led to internal tensions in *Mariola en Moviment*. His situation has provoked internal tensions within the organisation that have led to constant threats about making police reports among the members themselves.

Resistances

Although they have appeared interspersed in the ethnographic examples, suffice to say that all these forms of violence that are imposed (and sometimes reproduced) on the agents who live on the peripheries also provoke forms of contestation. For instance, neighbours negotiate and interact with all the structural violence we have described above. One form of this interaction is its reproduction in horizontal violence among equals, which to a certain extent implies a reproduction of violence in everyday life as an escape route. Another form is the management of violence through the mutual recognition of situations of oppression and responses that attempt to return the violence 'upwards'. Examples of this include both daily actions by individuals and group actions in the form of political resistance. With the example of *Mariola in Moviment* and PAH social movements, we have seen how the neighbours organise a joint response to the violence they suffer. These responses are based on mutual recognition between neighbours and the creation of shared identities. At the same time, they also focus on the paradigm shift from feeling guilty to recognising themselves as exploited. The main premise of political organisation is based on breaking with the reproduction of these horizontal forms of violence, recognizing the structural violence suffered and seeking unity in the response.

An example of such a process can be seen in PAH. Since the PAH was created, the first task was often to try to change the perception that residents facing eviction had of themselves when they first came to the meetings (from feeling of responsibility and guilt about their situation to understanding that they are

oppressed subjects) (García-Lamarca and Kaika, 2016). Likewise, within the assemblies, support networks are generated between groups of neighbours who often previously did not have much contact (for reasons of origin, gender, age and others). Thus, the movement itself tried to break with the consequences of violence from above and not allow them to be reproduced in horizontal forms.

In addition, their main forms of struggle exemplify the responses to the situations they experience on a daily basis. We described above the struggle between seeking collective action versus the individualisation sought by the banks or bureaucratic processes in negotiations. Furthermore, if we observe the focus of the PAH actions we can also understand the perception of the violence that its members have suffered. This is clear when we look at an action by *Mariola in Moviment*. This action was intended to denounce and demand solutions to the housing problems (mainly social rentals) of six families. These families had followed a bureaucratic path to obtain this type of rent, but without success. Abraham, a 34 years-old father of a family facing eviction said: “The administration is in chaos, they send us from the Municipal Urban Planning Company, then to the social workers and then, later, they send us to the Department of Housing, but solutions do not come”. To respond to the situation, the group organised a demonstration in front of the local administration.

Although the action focused on making visible the housing situations experienced by these families, the protest expanded to general social services. Thus, the fact that the protest was carried out in the headquarters of the social services and not in the Department of Housing indicates the correlation of structural violence (inquisitive and coercive) and a reaction towards an institution that the activists saw as interfering in their private lives but did not solving the problems that the residents were facing.

Conclusions

Based on ethnographic work continued over time, our analysis reveals various political and institutional forms that we can describe as structural violence. These have direct consequences, including feelings of humiliation, personal and group suffering, the perpetuation of social inequality, the lack of democratic freedoms and the creation of violent or exploitative practises. Likewise, this path allows us to see how neoliberal policies are actually applied, their consequences and, most importantly, how they generate a new normality that serve as discursive support for new applications of antisocial policies.

We started from an unconventional ethnographic analysis that collaboratively discussed data from three ethnographic projects carried out in the same geographic space. This space of co-creation has allowed us to produce ‘thick’ reflections on the way in which structural violence is embedded in the peripheral spaces of the city of Lleida and the role that different actors have in its production and reproduction. We have outlined the process by which structural violence becomes palpable through institutional practises and techniques based on two key ideas: inquisitive and coercive violence. We have also demonstrated how this violence transforms into horizontal violence that affects people in similar situations and that makes abuse or humiliation filter from the top of social hierarchies to the bottom. Finally, we have

shown that, in parallel, there exists forms of agency that contest everyday structural violence, generating resistance to political responses. This form of analysis shows that these practises, which in many cases are carried out individually, have a collective nature, acting via generational, ethno-racial and territorial differences.

Analyses of inquisitive and coercive violence show how administrative practises, which even in some cases may lack a clear intention, generate situations of vulnerability for people. These situations expand to collectives such as the family, membership groups and to a territory such as the neighbourhood. The administrative and welfare techniques of the State seem to perpetuate situations of socio-territorial inequality and feed the reproduction of poverty. There are constant obstacles to solidarity and connections between the group and classes that are brought about through the operation of social service policies. This generates an erosion of social capital in which the state administration plays the role of a negative member. In this same sense, the lack of investments generates fragmentation within the same territory and results in segregation within its peripheral areas. Paradoxically, administrative disinterest in eliminating this fragmentation betrays an interest in the disorganisation of individuals. This is evidenced by the example we provide of urban planning, in particular the individualization of negotiations. Another clear example is the disproportionate amount of police that were present at protest actions. All this encourages processes of lateral denigration and racism.

These consequences, such as the perpetuation of poverty, fragmentation and humiliation are incorporated into subjectivities, which often leads to the reproduction of violent behaviours and practises received by peers. These forms of action were integrated and reproduced by many of the inhabitants of the two areas. Therefore, there are constant forms of interpersonal violence (such as fighting and mistreatment), intragroup violence (such as some members not having personal freedom) and forms of exploitation. However, by making violence visible, institutional practises sometimes make the subjects who experience violence aware of this and, thus, generate forms of group resistance.

What seems to be evident is that inquisitive and coercive violence initially have different objectives. While the use of coercive violence responds to a direct objective of correcting a situation, that of inquisitive violence does not seek so much the submission of the population in the first instance, but rather induces the use of forms of action external to what is regulated or forms of behaviour that are judged to be bad. Therefore, in a way, it frees the State from its duty and burden to protect.

In the cases of inquisitive violence, we have seen how the particular management of the 'food cheque' in La Mariola involved abusive lenders. We also showed how the long waiting times for migrant youths to find work induces some of them to look for jobs in the underground economy. These are examples of the State abandoning its duties and passing the responsibility to the inhabitants themselves, who seek work in undesirable sectors. On the other hand, we have shown how the behaviour of the population that experiences these humiliation processes can become 'politically incorrect' – e.g. fights and forms of aggressiveness in *La Mariola* or forms of direct action in PAH. These behaviours and practises are condemned by the leaders of the bureaucratic and political institutions, who take

advantage of these practises to withdraw aid, leave negotiations and/or increase control and vigilance over the affected people.

On the other hand, coercive violence almost always carries with it a direct objective: the counsellor who forbade people being accompanied to their appointments, the lack of urban investment was intended to prohibit social life in the streets, the lack of monumentalization caused dislocation in the territory and the lack of investment in housing is a form of socio-territorial control of poverty, that is, making a place to accumulate the poor. Moreover, the police have undoubtedly sought to end protest actions. However, we have seen that all these actions have consequences that affect collective life in general.

Despite these differences, all of this can be included within the operation of neoliberal policies against the community. The consequences can be seen in people's daily lives at a collective, family and individual level. One of the key issues throughout the descriptions of violence has been the breakdown or erosion of mutual aid: for example, in the individualised negotiations of the PAH with the banks or in the bureaucratic processes, visits to social services, etc. In turn, meddling in homes by social workers produces a change in domestic lifestyles that are now governed by the guidelines they set. In parallel to the effect on domestic lives of people, agents such as lenders and other abusive and gangster practises mix with the other forms of violence. The sum of the erosion of mutual aid with the appearance of these agents supposes a daily risk as well as a strong impact on the forms of social reproduction of the popular classes. These interferences in daily life promote and increase negative social processes such as, for example, social, racial or territorial stigmatisation.

In this paper, we provide analytical density to studies of structural violence. We have seen how these logics act directly against the community in two ways. In the first place, administrative practises promote individualisation in the management of aid procedures and negotiations. This results in people being held accountable and blamed for their precarious situation. This is a process fuelled by state paternalism. On the other hand, it encourages disorganisation by promoting processes of social fragmentation and the erosion of different types of capital. All this makes the inhabitants of the social peripheries look for new forms of subsistence and incorporate new habits and practises that end up involuntarily promoting the reproduction of different stigmas. Consequently, these forms of violence work to prevent the personal and collective development of young migrants, the poor and racialised people in Lleida.

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