**First observations to historicize violence in a theoretical key: Niklas Luhmann - Gesa Lindemann**

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**Abstract**

How is it possible to historicize violence based on Niklas Luhmann's theory of society? The question recognizes that what is called violence depends on the communicative conditions of society about itself, it is historical. These reflections seek to observe the reproduction of violence in modern society and in modern conditions from the positions of social differentiation and complexity proposed by Niklas Luhmann. In this sense, it is an exploratory work that seeks to describe the structural conditions of society that can influence the systematic reproduction of violence. Given the magnitude of the work, only a brief theoretical diagnosis is presented, this means that, based on the analytical tools of contradiction, conflict and violence of Niklas Luhmann, links are proposed with Gesa Lindemann's reflections on violence.

The key to observing the historicity of violence is the difference in the regulation that the symbolically generalized media carry out on symbiotic mechanisms. Violence, as a symbiotic mechanism, is effective on the organic or physical and symbolic planes. From Gesa Lindemman's perspective, the presence of violence responds to procedural regulations for its exercise, hence he proposes violence as mediated immediacy. The relationship between Luhmann and Lindemann is possible because Lidemann's recognition of the procedure in which violence occurs is a way of specifying the relationship between the physical and symbolic planes.

**Key words:** complexity, self-observation, contradiction, conflict, violence, communication, historicity

**Introduction**

*They dragged me away somewhere…And I saw how they first shot the children. They shot and watched how the parents suffered. My two sisters and my two brothers were shot. Once the children were killed, they began killing the parents. I didn´t see my mama any more…Mama probably fell…*

*I´m surprised that I can live after all that. I survived as a child… But how do I live as a grown-up? I´ve been a grown-up for a long time now…(Alexievich, 2019)*

The following reflections propose a way to historicize[[2]](#footnote-2) the violence that occurs in society, in modern conditions, from the theoretical proposal of Niklas Luhmann. Society is a communicative system of meaning, which when updated has more than one option available; however, it affirms only one, that is, it produces and reduces complexity. In accordance with the expectations that guide its reproduction.

The path proposed recovers that the binary code of communication, yes/no, marks the possibility to update the 'no', as a link of operations. In this sense, contradiction and conflict are conditions proper to the reproduction of society (Luhmann, 1998). At the same time, they are forms of distinction of communication about communication, that is, they produce observations. Society -its structures- and its systems -specialized in dealing with the problems of society-, take charge of the contradictions and possible conflicts in the permanent reproduction of society.

The recognition of contradictions and conflicts in the medium of communication, its binary code, are the bases for observing the depth of the statement by the German sociologist Gesa Lindemann, on violence as a form of socialization (Lindemann, 2019). In addition to disaggregating her argument, given that the updating of society coordinates expectations (structures), decisions (organization), themes (interaction), it allows observing the reproduction of violence in the different levels of society.

Therefore, it is possible to observe violence as a form of socialization, first, of contradictions and, possibly, conflicts. This depends on the disposition of the structure with respect to the contradictions, the conflicts. Second, to distinguish the production and reproduction of violence, although it is true that the action falls on the body, this presupposes a transversal condition that makes it possible, even if it prohibits it (Luhmann, 2010).

The conditions of communication links mark the present reference for the actualization of society, that is, its structures are historical. This present happens with the actualization of society and, thus, is modified once it has passed. Among other factors, due to the very web of possibilities that opens up the meaning, as a medium of communication. Therefore, in the present of reproduction is the limit for society to actualize or not, certain possibilities. In this case, it is pointed out that within the limits and from them, different arguments can be formulated that influence communicative contradictions to formalize conflicts, trigger violence, social movements, protest movements.

The limit that the structures represent for the updating of society has effects on the observations. First, because of the distance between the time of the operation and the observation, it is not reduced, it is coordinated. Second, this distance is accentuated because the conditions of the structures, -latencies- of the semantic self-descriptions, from which it is observed, are far from the reproduction of society. Precisely, because of the temporal difference between them, the historicity of the observations becomes relevant to recognize that there is no point-by-point relationship between the distinctions of the observation on the operation.

Therefore, because it seeks to argue that reproduction responds to regimes of historicity, from there, it is possible to observe how forms of reproduction that, now, can be labeled violent, in other times were not assumed in that way. As well as, trying to identify the differentiated reproduction of violence in expectations, decisions and communicative themes. Here two paths are proposed regarding historicity as a criterion to recognize the differentiated reproduction of violence and always limited. On the one hand, the general expectations that guide society, and on the other, the latencies from which the structural conditions in which violence occurs are observed.

Thus, through a form of historicization of violence, these reflections distinguish between the structures (operation) and the latencies (observation) of society as two areas where violence is reproduced. The former signify the limits of society, the latter the observations on said structures. Without losing sight of the fact that, when referring to the limiting structures of the reproduction of society, there is a double distinction, decisions and issues. The former refer to organizations, the latter to interactions, what Goffman (Goffman, 2006) calls face to face.

The disaggregation of the levels of society allows us to place the statements of the German sociologist Gesa Lindemann, regarding violence as a form of social reproduction. In particular, the expectations or not regarding violence, the communicative presence in the decision-making of organizations and its reproduction in interactions (Collins, 2008). In addition to the difference between the levels of society, the possibility of contradictions in communication, conflicts and social organization is recovered. The aim is to show how in the Luhmannian device the conditions of society make it possible for these elements to be present, from their limits.

The historicization of violence has the function of emphasizing the limits of violence, in terms of its operation and the possibilities from which it is observed, for example, what are the criteria that govern the form of differentiation. That is, if the differentiation is functional, the primacy of control is held by the systems of function, particularly the symbolically generalized means. The impossibility of orienting the symbiotic mechanisms with respect to the symbolically generalized means and the coordination between function and structure is the clue to raising the historicity of violence in the peripheries of modernity.

Historicizing is a way of returning an operation to the conditions of possibility that gave it relevance in communication. This means assuming the impossibility of aspiring direct observations on said conditions, to try to make it explicit. Assuming the impossibility of belonging to the contexts that are signified or characterized as violent, or to the actions that are recognized as violence. Instead, we must assume the incompetence and strangeness of what we want to observe (De Certeau, 2024). In such a way that the more distant it is, the more it is possible to account for it. We are precisely at the border, at the limits that signify forms and contents.

The article explores on the one hand, Niklas Luhmann's theoretical elements regarding contradictions, conflict and violence. On the other hand, it recovers Gesa Lindemann's exposition of violence to operationalize the historicity of violence. Thus, it seeks to propose a first way to observe how the historicization of social events can be understood from Niklas Luhmann's systemic perspective.

The definition of historicity has as its starting point the conceptions of time of society and observations of time of society, focused on recognizing the difference between the control of symbiotic media through symbolically generalized media. Observation is proposed from a historical perspective, where history is a knowledge that produces scientific knowledge (Betancourt, 2015). It means a way of reading time as the irreversible deployment (Luhmann, 1998) of communication that leaves marks on expectations, structures of reproduction of society. Precisely, through these marks an observer can point out, separate, distinguish and problematize the conditions of updating of society.

Historicizing is a way of observing the time of society by referring it to a particular communicative operation, referring it to its structural conditions of possibility, whether they are expectations, decisions or communication topics. In this case it refers to violence, as a unit of analysis of observation that unfolds in the different levels of society and seeks to recognize itself according to the expectations from which an observer defines himself. In this direction, it is proposed to establish limits to observe violence, according to the conditions of possibility, for example, the limits that define functional differentiation and, in it, the distinction between centers and peripheries.

The article proposes a theoretical form that seeks to trace a path to historicize the violence that can occur in the social world. Therefore, in the first section, contradictions, conflicts, and organization are presented as support to observe the basic conditions to understand violence from the systemic perspective of Niklas Luhmann. The second section, the elements that German sociologist Gesa Lindemann sets out to analyze the reproduction of violence in society are recovered. Finally, a way of reading the structural conditions in which violence can occur is proposed, from a historic perspective, that is, from the limits of society itself.

**1. Contradictions, conflict: possible keys to identify social violence**

Society understood that a communicative system of meaning strengthens links according to the structures that work as limits and oversee its reproduction, permanent updating. If the binary code of yes/no communication is recovered, communication is linked to the ‘yes’. But this does not mean that the ‘no’ is cancelled, it simply does not update in a generalized way. However, when it is selected, the system is faced with contradictions of communication itself, of society.

Contradictions are a determined form that selects the linking operations. Therefore, the contradiction is presented in the autopoiesis of the systems of meaning and goes through their organization, the themes of communication. Unlike observation, where contradictions refer to indecision. Result of the impossibility of covering the distinction with mutually exclusive indications. Therefore, contradictions are characteristic of systems of meaning, as much communication as consciousness are their specific operations.

The presentation of contradictions as a condition of self-reference brings a specific sequel, showing that a second contradiction is produced from the base of the systems. The fact that the contradiction enjoys an operative function in the systems leads them to increase in their operations the restrictions aimed at counteracting the presence of contradictions in their internal processes. It forces them to reduce the internal possibilities of contradiction. It must be remembered that the first moment of presence of contradictions is in the self-reproduction of the systems, in their self-reference. The one that derives from them inaugurates, already internally, the presence of contradictions, which, if they appear, must be faced.

The double presence of the system represents a problem, the resistance, response and coverage of the gradient of capacity of restrictions/possibilities that limit the contradictions. Because here not only the autopoiesis of the systems is at stake, but also the condition of its environment, the meaning. The gradient of capacity of restrictions/possibilities is always exposed to all references of meaning (Luhmann, 2007), because the sustained reproduction of the systems generates this pool of distinctions.

The other, if it only outlines it towards said expectation, in which case the relationship that the system maintains with it is different, only points to the condition of reproduction of communication. Where the contradiction (Luhmann, 1998) is a product of communicative self-reference. The difference with respect to the first is that, heading towards the expectation that guides the systems, indicates the possibility of transcending the position of self-reference of communication. Because it may, or may not, come to formalize its condition of negation, now within the systems, it can question the standardized reproduction of social systems.

The formalization of contradictions implies that the system recognizes them as its own, which happens now of the reproduction of the system. Because, as has been insisted, contradictions are one of the basic conditions. In such a way contradictions are always contradictions of the systems of meaning, in this case, contradictions of social systems[[3]](#footnote-3). Their presence does not have a specific time in the system since the opposition to what is established can happen without warning. The moment it is incorporated into communication, with which it is incompatible (the one on which the system is updated), it becomes a contradiction.

It should be noted that contradictions contribute to self-reference of systems of meaning, but this does not mean that they can work in the same direction as updates that are not (Luhmann, 1998). Just as possibilities are not updated when the system updates a distinction, since their function is in their condition of possibility. From this perspective, the specific function of contradictions is to question, to endanger the security of the system, to destabilize it. When contradictions present themselves as a threat to the system, the direction and character of the system are questioned.

The direction is, at least initially, uncertain; its direction depends on the way in which the contradictions manage to be updated in the system. Another faculty is the character that they can acquire, whether it will be reconcilable for it; contradictions establish specific ways of structuring themselves, of positioning themselves[[4]](#footnote-4). Faced with them, systems have general response resources that specialize based on the demands of the contradictions[[5]](#footnote-5).

The instability produced by the contradictions in the system has a specific function, the insecurity about the direction of the link between the events of the system, about the communications links. The system expects that each update will face and overcome the contradictions that arise, when this does not happen then it must work in two directions. One, the preservation of its autopoiesis, the other, the management of the contradictions, of the instability that they can produce. The resonances are immediate because the system is not fully prepared internally to respond to them, it is faced with something new, with information, and this takes time.

For this reason, special provisions are considered to amplify the insecurity of the system, the paradox occurs, because this happens while the system updates the standardized distinctions, those that it considers real. One of the impressions that it generates in the system is that it makes contingency an element that the system excludes, because it places them on the side of impossibility. The system cannot assume it as a resource inherent to self-reproduction, it must take charge because what is at stake is the exclusion of the system in the system (Luhmann, 1998).

The system moves because a resource that marks self-reference demands the same status as the distinctions it claims as its reality. One way to deal with the insecurity promoted by contradictions is to show that they can produce links in the system. That the exclusion on which they emerge can be included in their quality of exclusion.

The function that contradictions have in immune systems is as a permanent alarm (Luhmann, 2007), since: “They serve as an immunity system within the system itself, which demands great mobility from them, a continuous readiness to enter into action, occasional activation, a universal application” (Luhmann, 1998). Contradictions are arranged in an organic way in systems, their function is vital because they activate the immunity circuits and thus permanently protect them. This is the most abstract explanation of contradictions, which shows the depth of their roots, both in the structure where the limit and difference of the systems lie, and in their immune system which is where they are protected from their complexity.

The updates of the “no” belong to the system from its constitutive resources, as possible as the yes, as binding as the yes itself, as mobile and volatile as the yes. Where contradiction is the best vaccine against contradiction[[6]](#footnote-6), according to Luhmann. It allows systems to face change in terms of change itself, because it contributes to rigid structures maintaining flexibility and to distance themselves from the annihilation that the strangeness of contradictions would cause. Because contradictions always presuppose the relationship that structures maintain with their events. Events can take the form of contradictions, as well as the form of events that affirm the course of the system.

The emergence of contradictions as events is closely related to the systemic present, it is in it where they occur, where they happen and expose the duality of events. One is as highly probable as the other, and, in fact, because one happens the other also happens, the difference is that one actualizes the ‘yes’ of the communication, while the other actualizes the ‘no’.

By seeing more precisely the way in which contradictions work in the system, the assertion of systems theory that the actualization of the “yes” is possible through a “no,” where the “yes” is seen and the “no” can only be seen through that yes, becomes relevant and clearer. Such a motley assertion now acquires dimensions and depth for the understanding of the functioning of social systems.

Since the function of the no is related to contradictions, to negation and change, according to the moments, planes, relations, functions and positions described above. The warning and alarm triggered by the contradictions strengthens the “yes” around which the system is organized. Only it does so from its position, paraphrasing Luhmann, because they destroy the world's pretensions of ordered invariance and reduce complexity. Its condition as an event of the system is strengthened every time they occur, they are also responsible for the links of elements of meaning (communication).

The relationship between contradictions and conflicts is the basis for the emergence of social conflicts. The specific difference is since the contradiction becomes independent of the conditions of alarm, immunity, and protection of self-reference in which it occurs in the system. To manifest itself as a contradiction in a communication, it requires communicating its expectations and the non-acceptance of the communication accepted up to that moment. In this framework, conflict is a communicative procedure that refers to a non-communicated response to a previous communication. The “no” around which the conflict revolves has as a reference the previous communications, it is a “no” with respect to them.

The conflict has an anchor in the permanent updates of the systems, it questions their autopoiesis and self-reference. It does so when it forms a unit of meaning of two communications and from there it assumes autopoiesis at times. The synthesis of two communications, the “no” of the contradiction and the communication that the system reproduced previously, on which the “no” is associated. The path of conflicts is that of communication, they are also its continuation, on the specific possibility of the “no” itself.

Where are conflicts placed? The elements arranged by Luhmannian theory establish that conflicts are social systems, their specificity is in their place of emergence, because they emerge in other systems, they are parasitic systems. Because it is oriented by the negative version of what the systems update, on the one hand, this negation opens the horizon of the systems, leaving it completely open for positive events. On the other hand, it acquires self-reference, hence its specificity: “what harms alter is considered by ego to be its own advantage” (Luhmann, 1998), this is valid for alter[[7]](#footnote-7).

Conflicts have a scheme from which they are elaborated: double contingency. That is, first, they are structured from the impossibility of the “standardized” communication of the systems to continue its reproduction. Secondly, this standardization of the systems, of which the “no” is an undeniable condition, denies communication. Hence, conflict systems are the product of the double contingency (Rodríguez Mansilla and Torres Nafarrate, 2008) of the reduction they make of their impossibility of happening.

The level of their integration around the conflict contributes to their specificity; they are strongly integrative because of the subordination that makes all action to rivalry. The general context of the conflict is the rivalry itself; hence it is the cardinal point for integration. The strength of rivalry as an integrate mechanism is considered first-rate due to its content, because it brings together actions regardless of how heterogeneous they may be; the key is to associate them with the double negative contingency that they rely on. In other words, the more possibilities that harm others and achieve their goal are produced, the closer they get to their incorporation.

Social systems of conflict are self-referential and autopoietic units of communication, from which they establish their internal dispositions and dynamics, the threats to which they are exposed, or insecurity. Which is a product of the inclusion of third parties in the conflict system.

Third parties build their way in conflict systems. It seems that their function is to depolarize the conflict. Conflict refers to two opposing positions. The third party's intrusion affects this disposition. The path traced by the third party, now included, is defined, first, by a neutral position of impartiality in the face of the conflict, without solidarity or preference for either of the two positions.

The next moment is its inexorable adherence to one of the positions. Here the conflict system faces its disintegration because it must rethink its initial positions, since one of its objectives is to add that third party to its side. The duration of the process makes the conflict system insecure, because when its starting assumptions are rethought, unforeseen structures can be generated, as well as new relationships and new possibilities for selection.

What is put in check is the principle of restriction of the alien, if the alien exceeds what is established by the system, it itself attacks its limits. It faces the management of the restrictable, a resource on which it was built, hence the relevance of the process of inclusion of a third party. Operationally, social systems of conflict realize that, in their definition and defense of autopoiesis, they also domesticate the breadth of the “no,” as much as the “yes” on which their host systems rely.

**2. Social violence: observation proposals**

The presentation of contradictions and conflict from the perspective of Niklas Luhmann's systems theory is the general framework for proposing horizons of possibility to resize the statement of sociologist Gesa Lindemann, when she states that violence is a constitutive element of society, a mode of socialization (Lindemann, 2019). Thus, the frame of reference for understanding the contexts of violence is meaning.

The reproduction of violence is paradoxical, because on the one hand, it is prohibited, on the other it happens and from meaning it is given meaning. Violence is an action endowed with social meaning from the expectations that exclude it, the decisions that prevent it to accentuate its exclusion, the issues that can censor it in the formal world and, precisely for this reason, it acquires specific weight in the reproduction of society[[8]](#footnote-8).

Violence is an action that physically attacks, transgresses the body and produces irritations to communication and consciousness, both systems of meaning (Luhmann, 1998). At the limits of communication from where it is signified, it can function as a symbiotic mechanism that society rejects, but which happens. For example, in peripheral societies, it is formally a matter of preventing, avoiding, but for it to happen has a function, not only as Gesa Lindemann points out, ¬-mediated immediacy-, but also as a way of introducing codes on the body with communicative functions[[9]](#footnote-9).

Violence is an environment of communication that blurs the symbolic codes of the modern condition of society. A negative symbiotic mechanism that questions the abstract and symbolic weight of communication, its material predominance irritates it. Technically, it should not happen, but it does happen. At first one might think that the presence of violence responds to a pre-modern condition of society; however, it is reproduced in a systematic way in the peripheries of modernity. As a form that questions the modern condition.

In this direction, violence is reproduced as a correlation that positions its expectations, decisions and issues as a form of socialization of its own. For example, we can cite the war against organized crime implemented by countries such as Colombia and Mexico, placing civilians in the middle of a war that, as a societal expectation, occurs in the opposite direction to the expectations of the centers of modernity.

Violence is positioned in societal expectations, in the decision-making of organizations and in the issues of communication reproduction. The general question is how to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate violence. Then, how to reverse violence as a State strategy, how to return to peace, to the weight of the symbolic when violence was chosen as a strategy? Aside from the decisions to abandon the war against organized crime, as a faculty of the State, it remains to be seen how to eradicate said violence in everyday experience[[10]](#footnote-10).

**3. Notes from the mediated immediacy of violence: observations from the peripheries of modernity**

The objective of this section is to engage in dialogue with Gesa Lindemann's proposal on violence, to note elements that contribute to rethinking the systematized reproduction of violence in peripheral spaces of modernity. Based on the axes of analysis that recognize: 1. That violence is immediately corporal and can almost completely absorb the attention of the participants immersed in it; 2. Violence takes place within the moral terrain; 3. The normative claim claimed in the violent act governs in a general way if it is legitimized by third parties; 4. Violence takes place within the social sphere (Lindemann, 2019).

The elements to analyze violence consider a proper place that has been made in the reproduction of society, it contemplates expectations, decisions, and communication issues. Here, the analytical depth of Niklas Luhmann regarding violence is also recovered, by relating it to the ‘noes’ of communication, those that are not actualized, but that can grasp onto actualization and compete with the ‘yeses’ that are reproduced with society. Tension is the way in which the body is reintroduced into society when in a modern condition.

Particularly, because the body is an environment of communication, through symbiotic mechanisms communication bridges are built (Lindemann, 2019). By giving meaning to actions that fall on it, one of the examples is violence, as a way of reading actions that transgress social frameworks of reproduction that, or place it in pre-modern spaces, or, when happening, question the symbolic primacy of communication in the centers of modernity. Assigning violence[[11]](#footnote-11) to a series of actions that transgress the body is a possible attribution by the functional context from which society is reproduced. From there to the social construction from which biological and psychological data are observed (Luhmann, 2015).

The context of functional differentiation or modern condition of society means, it establishes ways to contain, question, eradicate, keep violence in the margins of social reproduction. Even when it cannot intervene directly in it, only, to limit it from the plane of communication, that is, in the plane proper to communication. Therefore, it does not mean that different forms of violence cannot be exercised, but that in the social world we seek to eradicate it, at least in the formal presentation of society.

Physical violence is thus stabilized on the level of the possible, which already functions as pure possibility, with a high degree of independence from organic processes and from the differences in psychic dispositions to fear or aggression. The binary schematization that we mentioned at the beginning seems to be closely correlated with the production of a relatively independent variability; although it is not a presupposition, it is nevertheless decisive for the measure of reciprocal neutralization. (Luhmann 2015)

The reproduction of violence in society affects the coupling between the psychic and organic systems, as well as the couplings of these with society. In addition to expectations and reproduction in the themes, in the interactions, introducing symbiotic mechanisms makes it possible to problematize the exercise of violence close to the bodies and the irruptions that occur in the organic and psychic couplings.

The ways of relating to the body from modern society, as a communicative system, occur through the triple disposition: functional differentiation, symbolically generalized means and their co-differentiation and co-development with symbiotic mechanisms (Luhmann, 2007). Symbolically generalized means condense the functional systems, whose primacy is to put and guarantee that the symbol (Luhmann, 2015) prevails over negative effects, one of these examples is violence.

For example, if observed from the perspective of power, the success of the symbol is to get others to do what they are told without legitimately using violence. When that happens, the symbol is questioned, as Lindemann points out. If that happens, expectations of eradicating violence from organizations will have to be repaid. Repaying expectations of non-violence.

**4. Historicization of violence: a path from communicative complexity**

How can we propose conditions of possibility to historicize violence? This is the question to recover one of the axes of analysis proposed by Gesa Lindemann, when he points out that:

The accreditation of violence presupposes social expectations, decisions within organizations, and issues that are reproduced in interactions as contexts that modify, for example, the starting points from which expectations, decisions, issues that can be recognized as violent are considered. Violence is conceptualized as an integral component of the plexus of society. (Lindemann, 2019)

Precisely because violence cannot be understood as an immediate, pure phenomenon, historicizing it makes it possible to reconstruct the context in which the immediate acquires meaning in a broader social horizon. Where the putting into play of certain expectations, decisions, issues of face-to-face reproduction, make explicit the function of the plexuses of meaning.

Time is the element that multiplies the contradictions of social systems in each update, since affirmations and contradictions are produced that become exponential based on the surplus of references to meaning. In this situation, systems must select a distinction in their present, except that this selection faces the multiplicity of possibilities.

The relationship between the possibilities to be selected, the time in which this must happen and the contingency that the selection faces produce the time of the system. This means that time is the price that the system must pay in order to be able to reduce the complexity (understood as possibilities) that its reproduction costs (Luhmann, 2007).

The distance established between the system update process and the update event requires mechanisms that make the update happen, the immune system is one of them, as well as the contradictions. Proposing the contradictions closely related to time, leads to understanding the need that the system has for them as an alarm that runs in the immune system. Because it means that they oversee discarding those contradictions that are not compatible with the moment in which the system update occurs.

The reason is that in the selection horizons they are not recognized as contradictions that the system can recognize and incorporate. Without forgetting that the deployment of time between the update process and the update itself is what multiplies the contradictions. Therefore, time maintains a paradoxical relationship with the system's contradictions. Just as it multiplies them, it can dissolve them, this depends on the time horizons: future-present and present-future. The first horizon multiplies them, the second postpones them.

The future-present multiplies contradictions because its function is to test the system, since it helps its structures to accommodate unexpected links and to be able to respond to them. By testing, it alarms the system and activates the immune system, the system becomes stronger. Unlike the role of the present-future where the preponderance is the reduction of contradictions in favor of planning, the system must continue. The organization of contradictions is a priority for this.

**Final Questions**

The plan proposed here seeks to establish an approach to violence in the arrangement between centers and peripheries of society in modern conditions. On the one hand, it presents Luhmann's contributions to contradiction and conflict as a frame of reference to show that the 'noes' are a condition of society itself. To provide depth to Gesa Lindemann's observations on violence, which he sees as a condition present in sociality, as mediated immediacy.

On the other hand, it seeks to accentuate the structural asymmetry between centers and peripheries of modernity, given that, in the peripheries, the reproduction of violence replaces social functions. This means that, far from being eradicated and opting for the weight of the symbolic in social reproduction, it is granted a function that strains between expectations and the function of materiality in society, the latter, as a condition present in its reproduction.

The observation point of violence is based on reproduction in interaction, organization and the societal level. Without granting a reading that prioritizes the organization of the Modern State as a decisive axis in the reproduction of violence. On the contrary, the approach advocates the disposition of the modern condition of society and the difference between centers and peripheries, as the nodal elements to explain its presence and reproduction.

Here, the paradoxical condition of communication is appealed to, which, precisely because of the restrictions to support the maintenance of the modern condition, opens the possibility for the presence of violence. This, it seems irreducible, can only be contained or displaced to the peripheries of modernity. Therefore, we should think of a gradient of containment for the reproduction of violence or, alternatively, assume that it maintains its function as a social organizer, at least, in the peripheries of modernity.

The introduction of the notion of ‘symbiotic mechanisms’ provides resources to understand the depth of Gesa Lindemann’s statement about the role of violence in the reproduction of society. Because it allows us to show a long-term context to visualize why, even in central contexts of modernity, it is still present. Its historicity can even be recognized, both by the change in observation and by the modification in the reproduction of society, as a communicative system.

The differences in the meaning of actions that can be considered violent, the difference in the scale of observation of violence, as well as the reproduction of normalized violence in different social contexts show the need to historicize it. Its historicization opens the possibility to recognize the different ways of referring to actions of transgression as violence, given that it is proper for the society that observes it.

The reproduction of violence opens the possibility of observing the complexity of time in the reproduction of society, because it faces a central question: how to historicize the reproduction of violence in the modern condition of society, if observation occurs in the peripheries of society as a requirement for its reproduction? A tension is seen between time as a clause of communicative reproduction and the presence of violence, as a transgression of said condition.

These reflections show that violence cannot be totally eradicated, it is on the other side of modern expectations. Therefore, it establishes a paradoxical relationship with society, because the threat it represents permanently irritates the immune system of society. That which makes it possible for society to respond to disturbances. At least for the centers of modernity, it is the aspiration.

However, the relationship in the peripheries of modernity is different, although the formal aspiration is to establish a paradoxical relationship, like the centers of modernity. The differences between how the correspondence between expectations and structures is achieved opens the possibilities for violence to acquire a structuring function in society. One of the open questions is how to establish connections from the complexity of communication and the contexts in which violence is reproduced, even in flagrant opposition to the symbolically generalized means, the organizational provisions.

The difference between time as an expectation and the structure of reproduction of society is pointed out as a path to identify and delineate. As well as the need to recognize a paradoxical historicization of time. On the one hand, from the generalized social referents; on the other, the configuration from the experiences and the contrasts with respect to the general referents of time. For example, the specific conditions of violence and the effects on expectations and decisions that are questioned when it occurs.

Violent physical action occurs in the immediacy of the present; however, when distinguishing the contexts that make it possible and produce paradoxical situations, time is contextual. On the one hand, astonishment and surprise connect communication observed within the organization itself, are thematized in face-to-face conversations, and challenge expectations. At the same time, paradoxically, a caesura in social expectations is only meaningful within the social boundaries from which it is designated as violence. This paradox is considered an indicator for considering ways to historicize violence.

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2. Initially, historicizing is proposed as the structures that link communication respond to the present conditions in which this updating occurs; the structural present determines how the links of its reproduction are produced. Therefore, they cannot go beyond it, in such a way that, in the structures is the historicity of society, at least as an expectation. Thus, both the decisions in the organization and the issues in the interaction respond to its present to be updated. From this perspective, historicity sinks its roots in the operational bases of society, at least in modern conditions. This first historicity can be coordinated with the observations on society that an observer distinguishes; however, it is far from being able to observe the structural condition of the present in which society is reproduced. Observation is orthogonal to reproduction, therefore, between the historicity of reproduction and observation of society there are irreducible differences, product of the distinction between operating and observing, also, due to the complexity and time that separates them. (Sánchez, 2024 A); (Sánchez, 2004 B). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. When we talk about communications that are denied, it is important to keep in mind that denial is a denial produced by systems; they establish it at the same time as the devices to deal with it. Therefore, work on denials responds to the historicity of the social systems present, both in their operations and in their observations. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Precisely for this reason they satisfy the self-reference of the system because they challenge the system from the contradiction itself. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The process of specialization in the face of contradictions is due to the historicity of both the contradictions and the system itself and is therefore neither predictable nor predictable. The system produces general resources to deal with contradictions, particularly those that threaten its self-reference. Contradictions put the system to the test, which also requires latent instability so that it can strengthen and develop its own limits. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This relationship is designed for negation itself, because systems confront the negations they produce with their own negations, which explains why it is in the reentry of negation that it is observed as alien to the system. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The formulation alter and ego respond to the communicative positions that individuals assume when they activate communication. These positions imply that anyone can be alter or ego, according to the position they acquire when reproducing communication. They are used by Luhmann to establish distance between old European nomenclatures such as subject or individual, just to mention two of the most relevant theoretical references. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Here, it is pointed out that this exhibition has prioritized the central condition of modernity in order to approach violence. This means that it opens up possibilities for rethinking the reproduction of violence in the peripheries of modernity. Where, according to Luhmann, there is a gap between expectations and the formal structures of society. This difference allows the satisfaction of modern expectations to allow the introduction of forms of reproduction that, in the centers of modernity, are not present. (Luhmann, 2009) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In this regard, one can think of the function of marking the body, for example, among gang members, as well as acts of violence to belong, to ascend in the hierarchy. Cfr. Moreno and Sanchez, Homies Unidos. Estrategias de reestratificación desde la sociedad civil 79 – 134. Even in the phenomena of forced disappearance or feminicide that occur in Mexico. (Segato, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Here we must observe how the immune system works in the peripheries of modernity, because the borders are lax, the frameworks of immunity move, given that the borders between legal/non-legal, legitimate/non-legitimate must respond to the symbolic and the material almost simultaneously. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Here the approach to violence is raised from the modern context, including the observations that the centers of modernity make of the peripheries. This does not mean that violence is not exercised in pre-modernity, the question is how the different forms of social differentiation are positioned in relation to it, how they observe it and what are the places it has. It is from this difference that the historicity of violence is raised. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)