

Rape, Body, and Cognition. A Case in Sierra Tarahumara
Violación, cuerpo y cognición. Un caso en la Sierra Tarahumara

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ABSTRACT

Through a case study, the article analyzes how the practice of sexual assault is a way to pressure indigenous people to leave their territories. It is discussed how some aspects of the O'dami worldview are related to embodied cognition. The study methodology is qualitative and ethnographic, consisting mainly of in-depth interviews. The analysis departs from an interdisciplinary approach between anthropology and cognitive sciences. The results show that O'dami culture establishes a link between body, soul, and nature. It is concluded that to analyze violence against indigenous women and girls, it is necessary to do so in an integral manner, including cultural dimensions. The main limitation was the insecurity that prevails in the studied region, which prevented visits to the community. Therefore, interviews were conducted in the city of Chihuahua.

Keywords: 1. sexual assault, 2. cognition, 3. Tepehuán people, 4. Sierra Tarahumara, 5. northern Mexico.

RESUMEN

A través de un estudio de caso, el artículo analiza cómo la práctica de la violación sexual es una forma de presionar a los pueblos originarios para que abandonen sus territorios. Se discute cómo algunos aspectos de la cosmovisión o'dami se relacionan con la cognición corporizada. La metodología de estudio es cualitativa y etnográfica, consistió principalmente en la realización de entrevistas a profundidad. El análisis partió de un enfoque interdisciplinario entre la antropología y las ciencias cognitivas. Los resultados demuestran que la cultura o'dami establece un vínculo entre cuerpo, alma y naturaleza. Se concluye que para analizar la violencia hacia las mujeres y niñas indígenas, es necesario hacerlo de forma integral, incluyendo dimensiones culturales. La limitación principal consistió en la inseguridad pública que impera en la región estudiada, que impidió visitar físicamente la comunidad, por lo tanto, las entrevistas se realizaron en la ciudad de Chihuahua.

Palabras clave: 1. violación, 2. cognición, 3. tepehuanes, 4. Sierra Tarahumara, 5. norte de México.

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INTRODUCTION

As a response to the request by *Comisión de Atención a Víctimas del Estado de Chihuahua* [Commission for the Attention to Victims of the State of Chihuahua], I carried out an anthropological assessment with a view to establishing the damage done to an underage female of the O'dami group, or North Tepehuanos, who was a victim of rape in the community of Cordón de la Cruz, Baborigame ejido, municipality of Guadalupe y Calvo, in Chihuahua, in the north of Mexico. This work comes from a research work utilized as an argumentative basis for such assessment.

To understand rape as a psychosocial phenomenon that affects not only the direct victims, but their entire ethnic group, the hypothesis of Rita Segato (2003, 2014, 2016) was retaken, which states that the rape of indigenous girls and women in the context of violence in Latin America goes beyond the rape itself. That is to say, this form of violence does not pursue sexual satisfaction only, as at a symbolical level it is related to the use of power by criminal groups on indigenous communities.

This same proposal conceives sexual assaults against women as forms of pressure used against ethnical groups in order to coerce and force them to leave their lands. Under this idea, the female bodies turns into a battlefield where men fight embodying the triumph of the invaders of the territory over the indigenous (Segato, 2003, 2014, 2016).

Sexual violence against indigenous girls in Mexico is a topic scarcely approached by anthropology. Most of the publications on rape and other forms of sexual violence focus on adult women in urban zones and mixed populations, with the exception of a handful of works, among which distinguishable are Bonfil, Marinis, Rosete and Martínez (2017) and Frías (2014). In the Mexican regions where there are political controversies on territories or other sorts of armed conflicts, girls and women tend to be the target of violence, partly due to the lack of legal mechanisms to protect their rights and also State omission (De Marinis, 2013; Sierra, 2008).

For the case of Sierra Tarahumara, there is scarce documentation on the topic, with the exception of Chaparro (2018), and a diagnosis produced by Villalobos, Martínez and Carrillo (2018) through *Consultoría Técnica Comunitaria A.C. (CONTEC)*. In such document, the main forms of violence experienced by the indigenous communities of this sierra are exposed, including forms of violence against women.

Chihuahua has distinguished itself due to its high violence index, product of traffickers' criminal activities. Ciudad Juárez and Sierra Tarahumara are the main poles for these activities. Ciudad Juárez locates at the border between Mexico and the United States, which makes it an obligatory route for the trafficking of people and drugs from the south to the north of the continent. Sierra Tarahumara is in the southern region of the state, where indigenous people usually live. Plus, at the border of the states of Sinaloa and Durango one finds the golden triangle, where poppies and marihuana are grown, and opium latex

produced. In this part of the sierra, the population has suffered the consequences of violence and the domination of criminal groups (Alarcón & Partido, 2018).

The layout of this article is as follows: firstly, the relationship between sexual violence, female body and territory is analyzed; the main ideas on how sexual violence in contexts of war has had the bodies of girls and women as main objective are exposed here.

Second, embodied cognition is explained; moreover, the similarities of this proposal with the O'dami conception of the body are presented. The benefits of using these standpoints to better understand O'dami conceptions regarding the body as well as the way this knowledge may be applied in the context of justice administration are stressed.

Then, the methodology utilized in this study is explained and there is a section on some conceptions on body, health, sickness and rape from the standpoint of O'dami culture. Finally, it is analyzed how the case study relates to land dispossession and the article closes with a discussion and some conclusions.

VIOLENCE, FEMALE BODY AND TERRITORY

Every form of violence has two dimensions: one expressive, and another instrumental. The former has to do with an action, for example, hitting someone in order to rob them; this means that the expressive dimension has to do with violence itself, with the harm level it may cause, with cruelty. That is to say, with the intrinsic expression of violence. On the other side, the instrumental dimension has to do with the ultimate goals the aggressor pursues (Company, 2014).

In rape, the expressive dimension is mistaken with the instrumental dimension. That is, it would be a mistake to think that a rapist only seeks sexual pleasure, since the actual purpose of a forced sexual intercourse is not to obtain an immediate benefit, but to exercise power on somebody else's body and dignity (Segato, 2014). It is almost a rule that during armed, territorial and inter-ethnic conflicts, sexual violence seeks to humiliate the victims' family members and ethnic group (Denov, 2006; Segato, 2014).

Sexual violence clearly attacks the individuals' corporeality, which has immediate repercussions, while it violates the people's dignity. This violence is signified differently according to culture. In armed conflicts, women of every age are directly and indirectly affected; rape is one of the most frequent direct forms. Women are indirectly affected via forced migration that entails the loss of their homes, which generates impoverishment, separation and family disintegration (Denov, 2006).

It has been found that in contexts of wars, sexual violence on women has followed a recurrent pattern: the victors take the body of women, girls and boys of the defeated side. Although boys and men can also be sexually assaulted, most of the times, attacks aim for girls and women.

This violence exhibits variations. For example, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbians systematically raped Islam women; in Ruanda, sexual attacks against Tutsi women were so recurrent that they were cataloged as genocide. Conversely, in the Israel – Palestine

conflict, Sri-Lanka and El Salvador, sexual violence was lesser. This restates that sexual violence against women and girls in armed conflicts around the world is a heterogeneous phenomenon that cannot be pigeonholed in a single universal cast. Though, sexual violations in wars are always a constant (Wood, 2009).

The most common forms of sexual violence in war are rape, slavery, sexual torture, forced marriage and pregnancy, prostitution, forced sterilizations and genital mutilations. It is possible that relatives are forced to witness the rapes, and that they take place in groups. The purpose of these acts is to take revenge, create fear and humiliate, mainly when young virgin women are chosen (Wood, 2009).

In Guatemala, the army resorted to violations as a terror strategy, using it as a punishment and taking the wives, daughters, mothers and sisters of the guerilla soldiers. Rapes were carried out with a view to “paralyze the organized population” and to annihilate every expression of opposition, rebellion and resistance (Fulchirone, Paz, López & Pérez, 2011, pp. 176-177).

In Chiapas, Mexico, as of the 1990’s there has been a low-intensity war, in which rape against women has been used to repress Zapatistas. By means of sexual violation, fear is created among the population, and it is forced to flee. In these contexts, rape is understood as a sanction against organized men (Hernández Castillo, 2002).

Sexual violence against women in Latin America has increased due to non-formalized wars inside the countries, not only does it take place in indigenous regions, we also notice it in some important cities, for example, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which have been pointed out by a number of agencies as the most conflictive zones in the countries. One of the gravest aspects of this war modality is the stressed sexual violence against women (Segato, 2014).

In Mexico, we are not living a traditional war, though there are forms of violence that come from conflicts between military and civil forces and drug traffickers. This phenomenon, known as narco-war, has produced a social context of hyper-violence. The northern region of the country is a necro-space of constant violence, which turns it into a naturalized practice (Misra, 2018).

In these regions dominated by narco-wars, mainly located in developing countries, women, girls and boys become the most vulnerable subjects owing to the structures of patriarchal context, which provide men with the concentration of physical, political and economic power. In these conflicts, violent practices on the body as an object of outraging, territorial struggle and colonialization show that often female corporeality can adopt meanings linked to the idea of surface, cartography and territorial tenancy, a physical and symbolical locus upon which the rules for cruelty are defined (Acosta, 2018; Milán, 2017; Segato, 2014).

BODY AND MIND INTERWEAVING AND EMBODIED COGNITION

The occidental explanation for what and how human mind is and functions has traditionally come from cognitive sciences, mainly from psychology, artificial intelligence and philosophy. Although cognitive anthropology has carried out important research, its role has been rather marginal. The above is maybe because anthropology has focused on studying models of human cognition of non-occidental cultures (D'Andrade, 1995).

At first, the occidental model of mind, created by cognitive sciences, was dominated by the idea that human mind works in a similar manner to a computer, that is to say, a processor of symbols. This conception of the nature of the mind implied that mental activity was exclusively attributed to the brain, while the rest of the body was detached from every cognitive process. In the same way, the cultural context and environment were relegated to a secondary role.

This model postulated that all kind of intelligence has the capability to account from the world by means of a subjective and individualized activity. This internalized vision of cognition has as a central hypothesis that human mind functions by means of symbolical representations that only take place in the agent's brain, that is to say, every intelligent system works as a symbol processor independently from the environment (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2011).

From this perspective, mind is devoid of body and what occurs inside of it is detached from the rest of the world. This means there is a heavily marked difference between the internal subjective world and the external one. That is, there is a clear difference between the internal subjective and the external world, which is totally alien and disconnected from the individuals' internal world. "In short, the main characteristic of the mind, according to cognitivism, was its ontological isolationism, which means that the mind is in a composite of internal states independent from the body" (Vélez, 2009).

Conversely, in enactivism and embodied cognition, emphasis is made on the relationship cognition-body-mind, this way, the human experience falls on the fact that we live in a body-mind that lives in a determined social, cultural and material world (Lindblom and Ziemke, 2008). Retaking the standpoint of embodied cognition, cultural psychiatry has stressed the way cultural variations shape the body experience regarding symptoms linked to psychiatric diseases, contesting the alleged universality of some symptoms, and underscoring that individuals interpret the diseases in accordance with their cultural contexts (Kirmayer & Ramsted, 2017). This comes to show that it is transcendental to take culture into consideration, mainly the peoples' worldview, in order to understand how traumatic events over the individuals' lives might cause various harms, provided we consider that a model of the human mind is not universal, but closely tied to the particularities of the social and cultural context.

Embodied cognition revisits some proposals from the anthropology of embodiment; for instance, the works by Csordas (1990), and Durt, Fuchs and Tewes (2017). This verifies that the interaction between cognitive sciences and anthropology might prove fruitful in the analysis of non-occidental cognition models.

In Mexico, the possibility of 4E cognition (i.e., embodied, embedded, extended and enactive) (Gonzalez-Grandón and Froese, 2018) is now being taken seriously. A particularly radical alternative has been developed from an enactive approach, which rejects the individualist-internalist traditional paradigm of the mind. Such paradigm has been pursued by the brain in a vat scenario, where external factors to the brain are simply reduced to possible input patterns, in contrast with a paradigm that conceives human mind as being in the corporeal, social and culturally constituted world (Froese, 2019).

This paradigm shift has produced philosophical debates that may seem rather detached from concerns regarding the world of tangible life; this is because, by and large, the philosophy that substantiates the paradigm of enactivism has been instead applied to the development of theoretical aspects or related to artificial intelligence. However, it is argued that the election of the paradigm of the mind has an impact on real life (Froese, 2019), which is clearly depicted in the possible consequences of the case of rape by two men supposedly associated to a drug-trafficking group. What is at stake here is being able to define the magnitude of the harm caused by this crime at individual and cultural scales.

The indigenous worldview interpreted from Segato's (2003, 2014, 2016) standpoint would conceive this event not only as the rape of a girl, but also of her family, community and entire ethnic group, and even the land they inhabit. Furthermore, the O'dami standpoint on the body intertwines into a body-soul-environment continuum, which does not easily fit into the internalist individualist paradigm, which would explain the damage, while possible reparations would exclusively focus on the girl, mainly on her body and mind; though, the damage to the family, community and even the entire cultural group would be treated as something external, thereby, as subjects of separate consequences.

The enactive approach, on the other side, concurs with the indigenous belief that body and mind cannot be separated, and it even goes beyond it by accepting that brain, body and social environment produce a significant whole (Fuchs, 2018), which has noticeable implications in the conception of health and its disorders (Kirmayer & Ramsted, 2017). Therefore, the damage done must be assessed in a culturally sensitive manner. In this way, the recent advance of philosophy and mind sciences allow better noticing the damage inflicted on indigenous populations with this sort of targeted violation, and allows doing it in a way that is more consistent with their own holistic worldview.

An embodied approach enables better understanding the relationship between body and natural world underlying the O'dami culture, in which body, health and sickness not only are physical, but go beyond and interlink with environment, nature and the spiritual. This conception verifies that psyche models proposed by classic cognitivism, which have

represented the hegemonic cognition for long, do not account for cultural variability, and from my viewpoint, the most important is that O'dami culture can teach us an alternative vision on the interweaving of body-cognition and world.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology consists in an ethnographic approach substantiated mainly on in-depth interviews, and in this way, the nature of the data and the analyses as well are fully qualitative. The study's point of view puts forward the interaction of anthropology and cognitive sciences.

Eleven interviews were held with the victim's family and eight with other members of O'dami people who migrated to the city of Chihuahua, and the municipality of Guachochi, in the state of Chihuahua. Fieldwork was carried out in three stages; the first from April to May, 2018; the second from November to December, 2019; and, the final from May to September 2020. In parallel, a desk research on O'dami culture was produced, the judicial inquiry of the charges pressed by the family was revised, which contained the narrative of the events on the day of the attack, the expert medical and psychological reports. Due to security issues, it was impossible to visit the community where the events occurred; also, due to ethical reasons and recommendations from specialists in psychology, the direct victim was not interviewed.

The interviews were recorded in audio and later transcribed using the software Transcriber 1.5.1. Later on, they were qualitatively analyzed; that is to say, an in-depth interpretative analysis of the informants' narrative as they expressed it was made with a view to grasping the anthropological meaning of the social and intersubjective situations they expose (Salgado, 2007). Also, some ethnographic data were corroborated with specialists who had previously worked in the region. An ethical approach was resorted to conducting the research, following project *ERIC: Ethical Research Involving Children* (Granham, Powell, Tylor, Anderson and Fitzgerald, 2013). In the present paper, pseudonyms will be used to refer to the victim and her relatives.

THE ATTACK

Esperanza's parents were not at home, her mother had gone to Baborigame with uncles and aunts to celebrate a *tónare*, a sort of ritual festivity in which meat is eaten and *tesgüino* is drunk, a fermented maize beverage consumed in festivities and rituals. Her father, Benito, had left with other *tepehuanes* to press charges due to an ejido dispossession. The affected had already tried to do so in the town of Baborigame, but they had not been paid attention, so they went to the municipality of Guadalupe y Calvo, the answer was the same; they decided to go to the capital of the state, the city of Chihuahua; he was there when the events took place.

In the house there were only the children, Leticia, 16 years, Efraín, 12, Esperanza, Jacinto and Roberto, 10, Andrés, 8, and, Jorge, 7 years. For them, it seemed an ordinary day, they were returning from picking up firewood with their dogs when they heard a truck and ran to see who it was.

Three men came out from the truck. They knew two of them well, but they could not recognize the third as he was wearing a balaclava, as soldiers do. The one in command was Carlos, they recognized him, as he was the nephew of the man who had taken the lands of their family.

Days before, Carlos had threatened Benito. That time, the former had been there to complain about the charges because of the lands, but as he did not find him, he shot a dog and threatened further the family. This time, Carlos was also intent on doing harm, he entered the house and started breaking the few items of furniture there were, and in return for the disputed lands he asked the children for money shouting and told them he was going to kill them.

Leticia ran away heading for the backwoods to reach a neighboring house, the rest tried to flee, but were not able. Esperanza was trapped inside the house, the only thing she managed to do was to hide under the bed. The men caught Efraín, who was trying to run, they beat him viciously, kicked his face and body, then they tied his hands up and him to a tree. Jacinto was dragged into the house and ordered to watch.

Carlos dragged Esperanza out of the bed, took her by the neck and clutched tightly. The small girl was barely able to breathe, he threw her onto the bed, and told her that if she resisted he would kill Jacinto and then her. Carlos took out a knife, Esperanza did not hesitate to fight back and she tried to take it from him, though she only managed to cut her hand herself, she struggled but the man was too strong, her efforts were in vain.

Esperanza shouted asking for help, then Carlos ordered the second man to rape the girl, to do it quickly. Carlos took Jacinto by his face and forced him to watch the brutal scene, Jacinto did not want to watch, he was very afraid and resisted, while the attacker threatened him and repeatedly said he would kill him if he told anyone. Then Carlos raped Esperanza with the same cruelty as his accomplice. Jacinto took advantage of the distraction of the men and fled as fast as he could and reached a cornfield which was near the house and he remained there still.

Time for Esperanza was eternal, she never stopped screaming and asking for help; her screams still resound in the now abandoned house. Finally, the men left, Esperanza ran away to hide in the cornfield, where she spent the night fearing the men would return. The next day, she found Efraín and Jacinto, who also had slept out in the open, hidden in the fields; Efraín was still bleeding and had his hands tied.

When her mother returned, she knew Carlos had been there and had wreaked havoc in the house, she saw her daughter hit and unwilling, just laying, she did not want to eat and

complained about bellyaches, but the girl did not tell her about the rape because she was afraid; the mother found out later about this, when the boys told her what had happened. She took her quickly to the hospital in Baborigame, but she was not assisted there; the mother said that Carlos had acquaintances there and they refused to help the girl. Then they went to the municipal head and finally, the girls were helped there.

The medical report confirmed a rape, plus the attack had consequences in her body, a result of the struggle she had with her offenders. The psychological report also verified the presence of acute post-traumatic stress disorder, which would last for indefinite time if she did not receive psychological assistance.

The process of expert reports as well as the charges re-victimized the victim, for the girl was ashamed of telling over and over again the occurrences. She was not able to do it in Spanish, this way, in addition to a psychologist, doctors and officials, she needed an interpreter, turning the suing process into a public act that generated angst and shame for the girl, which was verified in the psychological report.

At first, charges were pressed in the municipality of Guadalupe y Calvo, though the process was not advancing, because Carlos' family had a relation with prosecuting authorities. With the help of a civil association, Esperanza's family managed that *Comisión Estatal para los Pueblos Indígenas*, COEPI [State Commission for Indigenous Peoples] became involved so that the case would reach the prosecuting office specialized in attention to women victims of a crime due to gendered reasons, in the city of Chihuahua. Owing to this, Esperanza's father received death threats, and according to him, a sum of money was offered to kill him, this way the family had to go to live to the capital city.

The parents referred that after the rape their lives totally changed, mainly the fact that they had to move to the city, because they cannot visit their relatives and friends. After they left their lands, they stopped earning incomes, their cattle died, their house was abandoned, their groove and the backyard animals destroyed. The father had always been engaged in agriculture and also had an extra job as health care helper, but after leaving their lands he was not able to perform any of his tasks and was unemployed for a long time, unable to make a living.

The rape affected the social prestige of the family, Esperanza's parents mentioned that at school, children laughed at her and her being raped, to the extent she had to dropped out of school. Seemingly, the conflict over the land, the past attacks the family had received, and the rape of the girl made some community members stopped talking to them.

RAPE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DISPOSSESSION OF O'DAMI TERRITORIES

Territorial conflicts in Sierra Tarahumara date back to the time of the Spanish colony, when Spaniards opened the first mines and missions in indigenous territories. The

conquistadores settled camps to explore mines and funded evangelizing missions in lands that did not belong to them; these were the earliest dispossessions suffered by the indigenous peoples that live in Sierra Tarahumara.

Currently, these peoples are still fighting to defend their ancestral territories; O'dami people have been fierce, their opposition and resistance to acculturation have been well known ever since the arrival of Spaniards and the earliest missions (De la Cruz, 2008). Up to the present day, O'dami are still victims of dispossessions by families of mestizo caciques who claim to be the proprietors of their lands.

In the seventies, the government delivered 3500 hectares in the municipality of Guadalupe y Calvo to a single female mestizo proprietor, overlooking that these lands were occupied by O'dami people. In 1981, Tepehuán people legally reclaimed their lands, however they have faced the slowness of courts and pressure from mestizo individuals who claim to be the proprietors. Recently, they demanded agrarian authorities to recognize their property over the lands and that their collective rights as indigenous peoples were respected (Breach Velducea, 2007).

In 2019, the traditional authorities denounced a new dispossession by a mestizo family in ranchería *Cordón de la Cruz*; this family had requested *Secretaría de Desarrollo Agrario Territorial y Urbano* [Secretariat of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development] authorization to occupy lands inhabited by O'dami people since immemorial times. This family, believing themselves the legal proprietors, has harassed the families who live in these ranches (Raíchali Noticias, 2019). This last case is the one with direct consequences for the present research, as one of the members of this family sexually assaulted Esperanza.

The ranchería *Cordón de la Cruz*, the place where the events took place, belongs to a section of Baborigame, in the municipality of Guadalupe y Calvo, which has been ranked as one of the most violent in the country. The last decade has been particularly violent in the Sierra, this context has forced families to flee toward the capital city and other urban centers to protect themselves from death threats by drug traffickers (Breach Valducea, 2016).

To understand the rape of Esperanza, it is necessary to locate in this context, as it did not take place as an isolated event, but within a series of attacks her family and community have experienced.

As referred by Esperanza's family, some years ago the grandfather (father's side) was murdered because of territorial conflicts; as well, the grandmother from the mother's side and her husband were found dismembered in their house; the case remains unsolved. The rape of Esperanza is not an isolated event, but part of the practices that drug traffickers have constantly undertaken against the indigenous communities to force them to leave their homes and illegally take their lands.

It is necessary to understand that this dispossession in Sierra Tarahumara is not an isolated event, but part of a complex social context. For example, over the last three decades, the dispossession of lands, which are later used for growing marijuana and poppy, has made the Sierra a place of latent danger. This has unleashed multiple ways of

grievances against the life of indigenous peoples, mainly by means of illegal logging, territory expropriation, eviction of families from their communities, cattle rustling, torture, homicides, house burnings, massacres, forced recruitment of youths and enforced displacements (Villalobos, Martínez Esparza and Carrillo Domínguez, 2018).

All of these factors turn violence in the sierra of Chihuahua into something that has to be understood in a complex manner; that is to say, the types of violence that are lived in this region cannot be solely attributed to a single factor. Moreover, this context generates impunity and negatively impacts on the lives of indigenous peoples, in particular for women and girls, who generally are objects of sexual violence.

THE NOTIONS OF BODY, HEALTH, SICKNESS AND RAPE AMONG O'DAMI PEOPLE

For the O'dami, the conception of life cycle is the base for their representation of human nature, for human beings develop over various stages, which not only entail physical growth, but also social and spiritual development, so to speak, for the concept of person comprises the domains of body and soul (Rosas Mérida, 2006, 2012). In their worldview, men have three souls and women four, for they are the givers of life (Saucedo Sánchez de Tagle, 2004).

Their universe divides into three regions: heaven, Earth and the world below. Heaven is inhabited by God and his wife ("the one who is the father and the other the mother"), entities associated to the sun and moon; next to them, their children (who serve as helpers in the interactions with humans) and the souls of those who were congruent in life with the ethical and moral teachings of God. This way, any behavior and thought conceived as socially appropriate are related to God. In this sense, recognizing as indigenous becomes an indissoluble link with the principles and beings associated to the heavenly realm (Saucedo Sánchez de Tagle, 2004, p. 27).

By contrast, the world of mestizos represents the sphere of the immoral and bad behavior. This means that the non-indigenous and mestizo come from different natures, for the former are children of God, while the later, the Devil's, as stated in the following excerpt:

At the other end of the cosmos, in the world below lives the younger brother of God, the Devil, father of *obhai* or *chabochis* (those white), who together with non-indigenous souls and some beings and animals that help him, advise people to fight, steal, kill, cast spells, commit adultery or any other sort of practice opposed to the socially established behavior (Saucedo Sánchez de Tagle, 2004, p. 25).

When I asked Eulogio, a former representative and Tepehuán authority, about the division of the universe into three regions he answered as follows:

Here is the division. Here on this planet, we are here... here, there are bad people, it does not read there we are going to hell; hell is down there. Glory is upwards. Good human beings who don't owe and don't fear anything, or don't owe anyone, they don't owe anything. Then these are the ones that go to heaven [...] this is why the division is here in the center, the good go upwards, the bad downward. Well, that is the tradition very, very old, even before the creation of the world, that is the belief (Eulogio Hernández, personal communication, September 29, 2020).

We notice the way the actions in this world will define where the soul goes after death. For O'dami, the morally accepted behavior is very important, and as we will see further in the text, sexual assaults are deemed bad behavior, not only by the offender, but the victim is also socially and spiritually punished. Health is very important for O'dami, as this means:

[...] being strong to live and work. Likewise, the idea of health relates to the fact of having all souls inside the body. Sickness, a diminishing life, comes when the individual loses one of their souls. [...] If souls leave the body definitively the person dies. When someone falls ill, it is common to ask for the services of a traditional doctor, a *matikami*, who not only assists the diseased person but also their family (Saucedo Sánchez de Tagle, 2004, p. 27).

Conceptions regarding health / sickness surpass the physical and body level and comprise the human and non-human, environment and nature produce a whole in harmony with the subject. When the balance is tipped, disease comes, and physical and spiritual health are affected; health depends on the good care of body and soul, of their relationship with nature and the environment, as Martha clearly explains in the following passage:

When I was a girl, my grandmother told me that people who cut trees or hurt nature got sick of incurable diseases and died. There are some trees that grow where there is water, if people cut them down, the spring dries and those people die (Martha Hernández, personal communication, November 7, 2019).

The notion of person is linked to that of body, soul and nature, and despite there is no word in their language for the concept of nature, animals and other elements of the world that are parts of it are considered beings with a soul; this way, there is ontological continuity between humans and other living beings (Reyes et al., 2015). For the O'dami, the elements of nature are part of a sibling world and affect their physical and psychical health, which reflects the interconnection between the surrounding world and the people's psychic world.

In the springs there are trees that shouldn't be cut, it is said because the water dries, the person gets sick, many do. Once, I took a bull to drink to a spring that was angry, water moved like this (moving her hand in circles), the spring shouted, that spring ate cows. The spring gets angry if people drop garbage or cut trees, I was afraid of going, they also get angry at others, they don't like getting angry. That time, when it scared me, I was only filling the jars and returned home fast right away so that it would not scare me; sometimes the

springs get angry at night, they sort of whistle (Ernestina Clemente, personal communication, June 7, 2020).

What Martha and Ernestina tell attests that the individuals' behaviors that affect nature might affect their body and soul at once, even cause their deaths. This sort of conception of humans and their relationship with the world conceives that body and world are an indissociable unit. This perspective of the O'dami on the human universe and its surroundings bears similarity with that of the aforementioned embodied cognition.

Furthermore, enquiring on the conception of rape in Tepehuán culture is a topic very complex to approach; it was clear that people did not like to talk about it, seemingly, it is an embarrassing issue, which is easily eluded. After a year and a half of meetings, I was able to openly speak about it with my informants. This way, Catalina describes the repercussions an O'dami woman experiences after being raped by a *chabochi* (a mestizo):

Well then, it is when they say that man, if she was brutally raped, the woman says this man soiled my soul, and doesn't feel right with others, no, and even worse as it was a *chabochi*, if a *chabochi* raped her she feels her soul worse soiled, she feels she's not going to heaven with God, she feels she'll go to hell because she was soiled by a *chabochi* (Catalina Hernández, personal communication, September 29, 2020).

As it is noticed, the gravest harm is not physical or social damage, but greater, spiritual harm. The woman and her soul have to suffer the consequences, the impossibility of reaching God, and their sentence to "go to hell" with the Devil, associated to the immoral life the mestizo lead.

To comprehend the harm done by a sexual assault in a broad sense, it is necessary to understand that damage is not only dealt at physical and psychological levels; we would also have to talk about damage at sociocultural level, since for the O'dami, rapes that are mainly by mestizos entail culturally situated affectations, since according to their worldview, the soul of the victim is also seriously affected.

From this viewpoint, a raped body is considered sick, in the first place and because of obvious reasons, due to wounds and blows, which are noticeable at a glance, and the physical harm to internal organs may be verified by a doctor. In this case, physical damage was visible and was verified by a doctor. The severest damage is dealt at the soul, the body of the woman who has been raped has repercussions on what we might call the *health of the souls*, as it remains *soiled* before the eyes of God and the others'. And if the offender is a *chabochi* or mestizo, the damage is greater, for mestizos are associated to the netherworld, the Devil's world.

More than once, we asked whether it was possible for an O'dami woman or man to marry a *chabochi* men or women, the answer was always affirmative, as in point of fact it happens, in that case the O'dami man or woman would not go to heaven when they die.

In Tepehuán culture, women are the givers of life. It is important for a woman to be a virgin at the time of marriage; this way, women suspected of being with more than one man lack prestige and are relegated (Balbuena, 2007). For them, moral behavior is transcendental in this world and after death. Existence depends on the balance between feeling and thinking, on the contrary consequences such as sickness, death and suffering are unleashed on earth and in the afterlife (Reyes Valdez, Oseguera Montiel, Pacheco Bribesca and Saucedo Sánchez de Tagle, 2015).

From the O'dami conceptions on individuals and human beings pointed out by Balbuena (2007) and Rosas Mérida (2006), it may be inferred that for Tepehuán people in the north being victim of a rape as a child might be interpreted as a sort of social anomaly in the individual's development, since boys and girls are not considered fully grown people and it implies undergoing a series of consecutive development stages that cannot be skipped. In this manner, if a girl is raped, she loses her virginity before it is due time, for sexual intercourse usually takes place in marriage, and women who have had sexual intercourses before it break the individual, social and collective balance (Rosas Mérida, 2006).

On the other side, sexual violence is not denounced by Tepehuán women, due to fear of retaliation or because people call them "an easy woman, whore and others" or because most of them do not speak Spanish (Chaparro, 2018, p. 123). When a sexual violation takes place and is denounced, it is generally sent to mestizo authorities, as it is considered a felony. On this regard, I asked Eulogio Hernández, who has helped indigenous authorities:

Ah no, that we hand to the incumbent civil authority, I have to hand it over [...] We cannot manage them because it would be a federal crime, a big big thing, not that [...]. No, those are for the authorities here, if they make them marry or separate them, or as they say there, but have to pay there (Eulogio Hernández, personal communication, September 29, 2020).

The fragment above makes it clear that violations are considered a felony that must be denounced to mestizo authorities. But as in many indigenous peoples in Mexico, a solution may be to marry the victim to the offender as a form of damage restoration. This sort of justice administration blatantly runs against the rights of women, as Lang and Barrera Vivero (2009) state:

[...] in the cases that affect the specific rights of women, for instance, in gender violence cases, traditional justice in most of the indigenous American cultures, as in ordinary justice, does not respond to the specific conditions and situations of indigenous women, placing in disadvantage women who look for protection –on many occasions, violating their rights (Lang and Barrera Vivero, 2009, p. 10).

DISCUSSION

When a child is a victim of sexual violence, damage at physical and body level are observed, but also produces emotional and mental health harm such as anxiety and depression. Moreover, psychosocial affectations take place such as the development of poor capacity to relate to the others, lack of empathy or isolation; another is that the sexually assaulted child may experience social devaluation or rejection (Ramos, 2009).

Complications for the body go beyond the somatic dimension. In particular in this case, in the O'dami worldview, Esperanza's body was affected at the spiritual level as well. Plus, body is not only circumscribed to the boundaries of skin and the individual but has threads and interconnections with other elements of the world. This has implications in the context of embodied and enactive cognition, which puts forward there is a continuum between subjectivity, body and world. This standpoint offers a base to be able to argue that the damage done to the girl is cultural damage.

From the internal-individual paradigm, it is assumed that the psychological state of an individual may be totally independent from the surrounding relational context (Videla and Torrejón, 2019). This standpoint moves away from the enactive proposal of cognition, in which culture, social context and environment are a whole with the mind; enactivism offers a holistic vision of the body-mind-world relationship in full agreement with observations in O'dami culture. The individualist standpoint is not suitable to understand the violence against Esperanza, mainly when we notice as the damage inflicted to the girl goes beyond her own body as a biological materiality.

For Tepehuán people, human body does not only account for physiological processes, it also provides an individual with a place, though it is conceived from a social, collective and symbolical level. This way, by means of the body, human beings communicate with the various symbolical fields that provide collective existence with meaning (Rosas Mérida, 2006).

According to the interviews with Esperanza's parents, her community was not empathic toward the girl after the rape. On the contrary, the girl was revictimized with jokes and gossip. We may interpret this as a way to categorize Esperanza and her relatives as responsible for the events, as they denounced the dispossession of their lands. We also may understand this rejection behavior referring to Montes and Salice (2017), who put forward a psychosocial phenomenon related to the need to move away from people and situations we are ashamed of, what we might call a sort of collective shame, as though we may socially contract the shame and embarrassing situations of the others whom I identified with.

The rape might be understood as a sort of rupture with the collective harmony: Esperanza, being raped, is not a healthy individual. As we previously stated, the O'dami worldview contemplates a body and four souls in balance, thereby, the girl may be a

typical case of the perturbation brought about by the natural wickedness of *obhai*, i.e., the mestizo.

It is noticeable that not only does the damage caused by sexual violence against women and girls affect at individual level, but also the family and collective spheres. Three sorts of victimization are recognized; primary, that is, direct harm; secondary, the suffering that may be inflicted on the victims, witnesses and largely, the passive subjects of a crime, even via justice administration institutions; and, the tertiary are the stigmas society imposes on the victim (Novoa & Hernández, 2009).

I consider that the violation not only effected the family, as I have insisted, in interethnic conflicts the violation of the body of women is the symbolical violation of the invaded peoples. The raped body of the woman represents the victory of the strongest over the defeated, thus taking symbolical and political power on indigenous men (Segato, 2014; Yoc Cosajay, 2014).

From the decolonial standpoint of Yoc Cosajay (2014) and Segato (2014), the rape of the body of the girl represented the violation of her community and their territory. In this sense, the violation that took place in the context of struggle for lands represents the power of mestizos over the indigenous. The body of the girl represents the victory of the mestizo, which sends a message to anyone who dare to challenge the rob and dispossession of their lands, wreaking havoc and putting social pressure on the family and other community members, who are afraid of becoming victims of new attacks by the invaders.

I am of the same opinion as Segato (2003, 2016), who states that violation against women in contexts of violence and struggles to control a territory is not an action that seeks mere sexual pleasure, but the rape takes place to exercise power on the community, to warn and validate their power over the O'dami forcing them to leave their lands.

CONCLUSIONS²

Over the article, it was observed that the violation not only affected the victim, but her family as well, and to a certain extent, her ethnic group in her community. Therefore, the rape of a woman's body, in the particular context analyzed here, must be understood as a whole, not only considering the damage to the individuals. It was observed that among the O'dami, the cultural conceptions of an individual are closely linked to conceptions on the

² I am deeply grateful to the O'dami individuals who I interviewed in Guachochi and in the city of Chihuahua. I also express my gratitude to *Alianza Sierra Madre* association for the accompaniment while the expert report that motivated this research was carried out. I also thank my colleague and friend Dr. Juan Loera for his suggestions and comments to the first draft. I am especially grateful Dr. Tom Froese for his valuable advice and collaboration regarding embodied cognition. Last but not least, I thank professors Maritza Licón and Ana Murillo for their invaluable support for drafting, and Karla Ivette Fierro Alvarado and Ana Karen Caballero for their help in the transcription of the interviews.

body and balance between those individuals, others and the universe (Rosas Mérida, 2006). This enabled comprehending the social impact of rape as a crime that tears the social fabric of indigenous communities.

It can be stated that violence against bodies is also done onto the souls. In the worldview of O'dami people, the violented individual would be out of balance with the universe, with which they make a unit, the body-soma; that is to say, body, as a biological materiality, is intimately related to the physical world and the spiritual realm.

The conception of O'dami body, as a complex set of interconnections between the physical body, the spirit and the world resonates in the context of the ideas of embodied cognition, which may be extremely useful for cognitive anthropology, mainly to understand the differences between indigenous and occidental cognitive models. These ideas are useful as well in legal cases like this, in which it was necessary to prove that in indigenous cultures the harm done to the primary victim also entails grasping the damage within a culturally situated meaning.

It was analyzed the way the rape of Esperanza was not only motivated by the offenders' sexual drive, but it was motivated by a form of domination that criminal groups exert on indigenous peoples to take their bodies, lives and territories (Segato, 2003, 2016).

This research work enabled understanding the way an O'dami family, thereby, the community and ethnic group they belong to are dismembered by the violence in Sierra Tarahumara, specifically the one linked to criminal activities in connection with drug trafficking. Finally, it is important to add that it is of the essence to undertake more studies on the affectations to the lives of girls and adolescents, victims of sexual crimes in Sierra Tarahumara, since they are four times more vulnerable than the rest of the population, owing to their age, gender, and also because they are indigenous and poor.

Translation: Luis Cejudo-Espinoza

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