

Methodology of Coyuntural Analysis

Notebook # 6: The Problems of Special Delimitation in Coyuntural Analysis

GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE SERIES

This material that you have in your hands is the product of a practice and reflection of many years of work. As a product of this process, we in SIPRO arrived to this systemization with the contribution of many people and with the valuable collaboration of Enrique Valencia who made the basic text of this edition possible. From his document we try to be loyal to the methodological process he plants in a difficult theme, but essential for those who carry out a labor of education and accompaniment to social processes and the reality of our country.

These materials are aimed at contributing to all of those people from the ngo's, promoters, advisors, students, professionals, educators who accompany processes of popular education and of social organizations, and for those intellectuals who produce coyuntural analysis.

The notebooks we present here are a basic text, a contribution that does not signify the last word over this subject. There is a lot still to be said, proposed, and written over it. For many, the approaches and concepts can be debatable, questionable and anachronistic. We are in agreement over that and that is what it is about: generate a reflection and understanding that begins to find new roads and horizons in this galloping reality.

The content of these notebooks can be used in multiple forms depending on the interest. It can easily be part of an extensive course, used for a more deep and focused discussion on the theme, or it can be used as a tool for consulting. It does exempt its readers from the task of going into depth, questioning, criticizing, connecting, proposing changes and even less so of the challenge of sharing in a more accessible way if the theme is deeply comprehended. This would be the central objective of our proposal.

In the face of the disordered reality in which we live, we see the necessity of stopping to analyze it with the objective of accompanying the historical process of change and be participants of it. That is why in *Servicios Informativos Procesados, A.C.*, we revisit this document and we retransmit it for those actors who want to be an active part of their own history.

We hope that the systemization of these notebooks can be a modest contribution and useful for the best development of the analysis of coyuntura.

Gustavo E. Castro Soto

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PRESENTATION

In Notebook # 5 we referred to the periodization of coyuntural analysis. Yet we have not finished defining the time in which we will delimit our analysis, it is now necessary to characterize its space.

In this Notebook we will address the problems of special delimitation in coyuntural analysis.

Curiously, in many circles of analysts who are tied more to popular sectors, the analysts are fundamentally of the regional and local spheres in sight of immediate action forgetting the national-international context and relationship. In this Notebook we also propose different elements and criteria regarding the possibilities of these local analysis.

We also suggest that there exists the other extreme: to center the analysis exclusively in the national-international realm, putting aside other internal forces that make potential (?) the changes of the correlation of forces in the interior of a nation.

In which ever of the extremes that we find ourselves, this material will make us reflect over the necessity of amplifying our level of coyuntural analysis.

Gustavo Castro Soto

THE PROBLEMS OF SPECIAL DELIMITATION IN

COYUNTURAL ANALYSIS

What gives **unity** to the **coyuntural study** IS A:

**Cross of the temporary-space of the period and of the space
in which a correlation of forces is expressed.**

We have already talked about the **period** in the other previous notebooks. Now we will refer to the **space**.

In the **definition** that we have proposed (Notebook #1) we pointed out that:

The typical coyuntural analysis it refers to a national (tolldad ?)¹

In other words,

The analysis of **social formation** is the **global study** of a **nation**.

→Economic formation

→Political formation

→Ideological formation

- That has a **genesis**, but is already constituted or given.
- In the **present**, in which a practice of conservation or transformation is exercised.
- With possible **futures**.

¹ See LUENGO, 1982: 288-289; the models proposed by GALLARDO, 1988: 122-125.

In **Gramsci's** proposal regarding the <<practical canons of investigation and of particular observations>>, he considers central the <<**Nation State**>>.²

Nevertheless, in analytical practice there has been imposed the study of **regions**³ and of **localities**.⁴

We understand **REGION** as a:

(subconjunto ?) in the interior of a Nation-State

² GRAMSCI, 1975: 66.

³ See GALLARDO, 1988: 115, and RUIZ, 1988: 44.

⁴ ARROYO, 1977: 18, ZARCO, 1988: 89-92 y LUENGO, 1982: 288-290.

EXAMPLES

- A. In Mexico: various states in the Republic, the Southeast, North, (Bajío ?), etc.
- B. In Guatemala: Various departments of the Republic, the South, the North, the coast, the (Noroccidente ?), etc.

In other texts they amplify the concept of **region** to **units of various Nation-States**.

EXAMPLES

- a) Mexico and the Caribbean.
- b) Mexico and Central America.
- c) Central America.
- d) The Southern Cone.
- e) Bolivian countries.
- f) The <<northern countries>>.
- g) <<European Economic Community>> (ECE)

We will try to present some reflections, criterion, and elements concerning the possibilities of this practice.

A. ANALYSIS OF A NATIONAL FORMATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

As we have already mentioned the **privileged space** for coyuntural analysis is a **national totality**.

In this section we refer to another problematic and suppose the development regarding global analysis.

A social formation is not a (islote?) in the world instead it finds itself immersed in a <<world system>>.

We shall take **Fossaert's** concept:

<< A world system is not any juxtaposition of States, nor any random conjunction of international articulations. It extracts its form from the preponderance exercised by one or various States and from the relations of submission/rebellion (que arrastra aquella) that that one drags(?).

In the substructure of this state preponderance, each world system is characterized by the decisive importance of certain economic, ideological, and political articulations>>. ⁵

⁵ FOSSAERT, 1977: 117.

EXAMPLES

1. Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): formed by Canada, the United States and Mexico.
2. Economias Dinamicas de Asia (EDA) (not sure on translation—Dynamic economies of Asia? Possibly ASEAN?): formed by Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia.
3. Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC): formed by those countries most powerful in petroleum production.
4. BENELUX: Trade agreement formed between Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg.
5. Mercosur: formed by Latin American countries on the Southern Cone.
6. G7: formed by the seven major industrial (most wealthiest) nations in the world: Germany, United States, Japan, Italy, Canada, France and England.

International⁶ -----→ with the predominant nations -----

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\---In that in the coyuntura the **contradictions of forces**
should be situated in the context of its **relationships:**

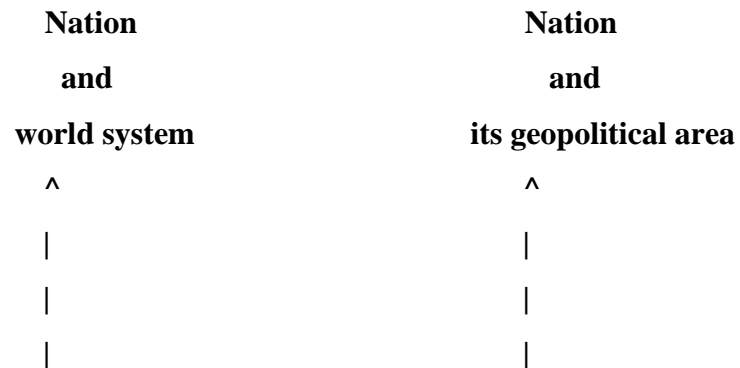
With the subordinate nations

←-----

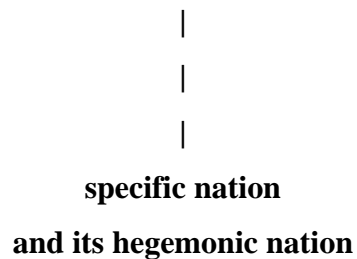
This is one of the most difficult tasks in the coyuntural investigation, in that it requires different levels of information and international analysis.

⁶ GRAMSCI, 1975A: 66. Especially see the methodological propositions of ARROYO, 1977: 16-18. GALLARDO, 1988:114.

At this point we shall return to the previous proposal:



the point of departure can be a conjunction made explicit of structural hypothesis regarding the relation between:



There is no absolute cut between nation and world system; there is a profound interrelation, there are forceful links that express the international in the national and visa versa.

Of course not in the context in which the **national** (agote? maybe exhausts?) the **international** nor the other way around.

For the concrete exercises of coyuntural analysis, the most fundamental thing is not to superimpose an exhaustive world analysis, but instead:

Establish the principle articulations between various realities:

The national and international.

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That is to say:

The systems of social relations that permit:

- a) The political or military predominance of some nations over others

CAUTION: *We should prevent ourselves from limiting the international context to simply relationships between countries.

* the transcendental aspect of the relationship between classes should not be forgotten.

- b) The <<the transference of a part of the value produced>>.

- c) The <<circulation of ideologies>>.⁷

⁷ Ibid: 66-67 and FOSSAERT, 1983: 391.

Resulting essential in these articulations the position of states.

We shall understand **Nation-State** as:

A <<mediator of battles by the internal classes towards the world system>>
and also the <<principle mediator, but not the only one, of battles by
international classes towards those battles by internal classes>>. ⁸

Through it, the **international analysis** necessarily passes—but does not (agota? exhaust
itself ?) through the **study of the relations between states**.

The **nation** -----→ Is not a reality always preexistent and eternal.
-----→ It is a social product and in constant redefinition
of its relationships in the world system.

⁸ Ibid: 413-414.

Nationality -----→ Is a <<form of social identification>>.
-----→ It is created under a hegemony.⁹

To create nationality it is necessary to have:

A <<national intellectual and moral block>>.¹⁰

AND

The competition of the <<leading classes>> and of the <<intellectuals>>.¹¹

From here the importance of the analysis of the central articulations with the world system and its transformations.

⁹ Ibid. 390 and 416.

¹⁰ GRAMSCI, 1976A:126

¹¹ GRAMSCI, 1975B: 72 and 18, respectively.

EXAMPLE

- 1. The actual redefinition of the presence of Mexico in the world economic scene, hegemonized by the (tecnoburocracia?), within the Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).**

This presence produces and circulates a discourse that legitimizes its modernity understood as productivity, efficiency and capability of competition in the international sphere.

For now we propose this summary:

The coyuntural investigation preferentially serves the national space, in its global sense, in the context of its fundamental articulations with the geopolitical area, the hegemonic nation and in general with the world system, as it concerns state and political aspects, as well as economic and ideological.

EXAMPLE

- 1. Marx in the Eighteenth (Brumario?) confronts the study of France.**

QUESTIONS

1. What gives the study of coyuntura unity?
2. Explain with your own words the concepts of <<region>>, <<nation-state>, and <<nationality>>.
3. Explain in your own words why the coyuntural analysis of social totality is privileged?
4. Give a few examples of the concept of <<world system>>.
5. Give a few examples of predominant nations and subordinate nations.
6. Give a few examples of geopolitical areas.

2nd 1/2 Gilbert's translations.....

B. A Regional Analysis in the National Context

For the creators of coyuntural analysis, it is important to consider regional space.

Example:

In his work "On the Southern Question," Gramsci analyses the two Italies: the northern industrialized one and the rural south.

This kind of regional analysis has been used often, many times forgotten in the national context; it is necessary that we advance some methodological criteria.

We know that in reality a country is neither uniform nor monolithic.

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The national region includes:

the contradictions between classes and hegemonic conflicts expressed in distinct forms in different parts of the country.

The use of a variety of language.

A unity of territories with distinct geographic characteristics and other potential differences.

This is why one often hears "our country is composed of many countries. Especially, in those countries with multiple indigenous cultures.

The problem is to conceptually clarify the region.

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We present with particular regional criteria, some uses of this concept.

- A. Region natural-when there is a unity of climate and geology
- B. Agricultural region – they relate the region naturally with agricultural activity
- C. Economic region – dominate either one product (i.e. Petroleum), sector (i.e. tourism),
a form of production (i.e. maquiladora), or a group of economic
Agents implement a development program that affects a zone

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- D. Political Region –cities and their agencies
- E. Sociocultural area – the establishment of a complex social organization and its
territory (ethnic regions, where one ethnicity predominates)
- F. Ecclesiastical Region – diocese, province, archdiocese, etc.
- G. Historical Region – the prolonged living of a collectivity in one territory, with a
collective will and identity
- H. Mixed Region – includes two or more of the previous kind of region

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The term region generally wants to express one of these options. How we observe it has many different forms.

But, for everyone we can take a common denominator:

There is a unifying factor or homogenizer in a given territory

Coyuntural analysis is complex because we need to be precise about these homogenizing factors

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We can sustain the hypothesis that in some coyuntural moments territories are regionalized because of conflicts or special situations.

For coyuntural analysis, we propose the following criteria to conceptualize a region.

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Criteria

1. The social totality expresses itself in a territory- economy, political, and cultural) or in the study of global complexity
2. There is a historic subsystem that articulates in the global.
3. There is a possibility to determine the relations between that subsystem and the and the national system

Gramsci affirms that there exist in the interior of every state multiple territorial sections with different structures and relations of forces in different gradients. Thus, the complexity of nation is produced through different territories in the international context

In summary, in a territory (the interior of a nation) the contradictory unity and the leadership of the exploitation, a hegemonic domination, include a form of social identification that we can call regionalism, which differs from nationality, and includes the hegemonic struggle.

In a nationality, we can find different regionalities that compete and confront one another.

In this way, a region and its form of identification are not always a given, but are a social product with in a historical trajectory.

Examples:

- 1. The division and later reunification of Germany**
- 2. Czechoslovakia being divided into a Slavic Republic and a Chechyan Republic.**
- 3. The division of the Russian Republic**
- 4. The division of Yugoslavia.**
- 5. Montreal's independence movement in Canada.**

Therefore, we need to pay particular attention to:

The (re)construction of nations and the rearticulation of those who live in that region and also with that their articulation in the global system

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A region in this respect can coincide with a political region, but not necessarily. The same could be said about natural regions or economic regions.

In process of permanent, regional, coyuntural, analysis can be initiated with

a regional hypothesis which include a theoretical proposition, sustained within regional limits: the characterization of the homogenizing factor and territorial precision.

But, what do we do in practical terms when we study states and other arbitrary groupings?

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You can start with a regional hypothesis to clarify the different regions or hegemonic subsystems that disrupt the categories and their relations to the nation.

General Theoretical Framework:

Define hypothetically the considered region.

Formulate a structural hypothesis regarding regions in the national context.

Investigate the relation of forces in a coyuntural.

Reconstruct or verify the coyuntural and structural hypotheses.

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Questions:

1. What does the national reality include?

2. Give examples of the diverse uses of the concept of region that are proposed here. Find others.

3. Explain in your own words the criteria for the distinguishing a region. Can you think of others?

4. Explain in your own words the framework proposed in this chapter.

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Especially in the political practice of organized groups there has been developing the study of forces of social groups including the regional that has come to be called the local analysis.

This refers to the microspatial where the microstructures and the microcoyuntural dynamism.

It does not make sense to differentiate between locality and region; in some cases, they are easily confused.

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For locality we propose the everyday world of the individuals, the space where they live, reproduce the relations of production, sell or buy labor power, consume, organize themselves into small groups, relate to authorities, express their religious beliefs, etc.

However, the expressions in daily life are far removed from a microspaces especially in urbanity, where people are generally divided. They have their homes and family life in one space and their work in entirely different one.

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The local is the space of daily practice for individuals. We do not forget that there are people moving, whose social practices in the regional and national environments.

This is the emotional and happy space for that reason its often imperceptible. This is the space that is only used by the force of labor, but fundamentally their reproduction.

Society is constituted through the microsocial plan in the everyday practices of individuals.

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We conclude with the four elements for the local coyuntural analysis:

a) The definition sustained from the territory or microspatial forms the analysis.

Example: the neighborhood, the community, the ejido, the factory, etc.

b) The structural consideration of the locality in its globality.

It describes an analysis of the structure, specifically, the locality. This is a fundamental aspect, because it is easy to confuse elements of the national structure within the local. In this cause, one can amplify what Foucault said: a global structure brings “an inhibitory effect” and the incapacity to realize an analysis of the local forces.

c) The relation of the local totality with the regional and national spaces.

d) The analysis of the relation of forces with the regional-national coyuntura

Coyuntural analysis corresponds to what Foucault calls the microphysics of power.

with an ascending analysis of power, beginning with its minute mechanisms, which have their own history, the forms of global domination become clear.

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It has a an enormous potential to detect the mechanisms of force

Analyses of local spaces, rejected by some intellectual circles, can serve as an aperture for local criticism of global visions amplified by closed theories.

Also, local spaces are the destabilizing germ of a hegemony and question the international project as it is actually, for example, the Zapatista conflict in Chiapas.

We propose the same scheme designed for the regional analysis, applied to the local.

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Questions:

1. Explain in your own words what you understand by a local analysis and locality.

2. Explain in your own words the elements for a local coyuntural.

3. Give examples of such elements.

4. From you experience, do other elements need inclusion?

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