

Johan Galtung: **FAMILY-SCHOOL-WORK BULLYING: WHAT IS ON?**

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There is much talk of global warming and overheated finances. But society is also overheating, only that sociologists have not come up with good figures for heating, melting and negative growth.

The three pillars of our societies, the Family delivering children reasonably socialized to School, which in turn delivers students reasonably educated to Work, which in turn delivers people to the garbage heap for useless citizens called Retirement, are fraught with violence. There is massive beating of wives and children in families all over--Spain is shaken by the level of wife killing--massive bullying in schools all over the world, and that bullying is also reaching the work place together with massive absenteeism. There is the physical violence of boy-male bullying, usually of the weaker by the stronger, and the verbal and social isolation violence of girl-female bullying. There are signs of dissatisfaction with family, school and work all over. How come?

Because we are leaving one social formation, modern society, and entering the next one, post-modern society, characterized by massive dissolution of binding social tissue and compelling social norms. Violence unthinkable a short time ago becomes normal, even the norm. If violence is seen as a monument over unsolved conflict this makes us ask, what are the underlying conflicts?

Modernity gave us three new logics, basic rules to live by: state logic, capital logic and rational logic. May the state accrue more power, capital more capital and science more science to serve them both as opposed to serving the Prince, Property and Providence--with the school serving all three. The family message was rule by men over women and adults over children; discipline was the message of the school sorting children by gender and age in space and time, like for work. Race and nation added a layer still deeper down.

Feudal stratification by gender, generation and race survived modernity, adding class for white adult males. Among them some social mobility became possible, facilitated by such ideas as human rights and equality of opportunity. It worked, literally speaking.

Then the whole construction was shaken, in liberal terms by the values of equality and individualism, and in marxist terms by a new means of production, the computer, not the company monster, not even the PC, but the laptop or cell phone computer, as BlackBerry or SMS, available anywhere and anywhen. That double revolution is unfolding for our eyes; we are all living it, willingly or

not.

The little girl sneaking out of bed after bidding good night to surf the computer her own way incorporates all of them. A boy with the computer on his lap under the class room desk is doing the same. So is the worker checking the wisdom of the SOPs, Standard Operating Procedures, of his company. finding them short of whatever insight he can google. The computer is gender-generation-race-nation free, a major vehicle for equality. And also, given its enormous diversity in content and process, custom-tailored for those equally bent on constructing their own individual space.

Given this, how will Family-School-Work shape up in some time?

Family: a fair guess will be further erosion of monogamy, also serial monogamy, and love and sex will probably find triangular and quadrangular forms. There will be children, but they will probably be raised more communally, more like in the extended family by blood of yestercentury, less by the nuclear family. Ties will be flexible, including accommodating the nuclear family of yesteryear. Retired people will be reintegrated, like in the extended family; some kind of commune defined by equality and individualism, by horizontality and diversity. There will be individual and communal space, property and inheritance; a lot of intertwining structures.

School: the Internet cafe with less rock and more books and better service is one model. Come, seek, dialogue, commune. The classroom of yestercentury, for the cohort even of the same gender, will be replaced by project and theme rooms. Students will compose their own curriculum for the day, the week, the year, the schooling period - which will overlap with work, with less watertight divides.

Work: increasingly defined by self-employment, computer-based, and increasingly at home. The madness of the whole family hurrying in a hectic morning hour to leave home for school and work, leaving their most expensive property empty, will be overcome. Massive structural violence will be overcome through self-organization, with contract work--destroying the classical position with social care as part of salary--breaking individualist tracks for good and for bad.

The pillars are shaking because they are adjusting to post-modern society. And to a post-modern world where the state system will gradually wither away, yielding to localism, regionalism and globalism. But what is the role of bullying in all of this?

Generally as a symptom of some basic malaise deeper down. And generally as violence between those who prefer the new order and those who stand for the old. In the family parents have for

ages used violence against disobedient children, with no space for a dialogue over what they want. Today's males defend the old order against females in search of parity, fearing that women want to run the whole game. At school teachers may have to use other forms of punishment than spanking, but again with little or no space for a dialogue over what students want. At work it is fair to guess that workers with dissident views will be fired first and hired last.

We are driven by giant forces of equality and diversity, so better understand them, accommodate and find some dry land. And react and proact against being driven by greed and selfishness only.