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MAPS AND GEOREFERENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN MEXICO

Adriana Guadalupe Rivero Garza

PhD in Contemporary Studies

at the institution:

``Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas``

Zacatecas; Mexico

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8226-7424>

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Abstract: In Mexico, statistical data on violence against women were considered Information of National Interest in 2005, and since then methodologies have been developed to carry out situational diagnoses on this phenomenon. The creation of relational databases and georeferenced maps of feminicides were the first to be published, and later these representations were extended to other forms of gender violence. Therefore, this work aims to analyze some maps and georeferences made in four federal entities to show the different forms of territoriality of violence against women. The methodology consisted in a comparative geostatistical review, with a gender perspective, of the maps and georeferences of the states of the State of Mexico, Nuevo León, Puebla, Zacatecas and the National Platform for Care Services for Women, Girls, Boys and Adolescents, as they are considered useful tools to make visible the variables used for the study of gender-based violence, the configuration of high-risk areas and higher incidence of crime against women. As a result and because in our country there are still no methodologies that standardize the ways of mapping and georeferencing this phenomenon, it is urgently necessary to build standardized variables and categories that allow the interconnection between different manifestations of gender violence. And so the effort made by institutions, governmental or academic organizations are important to have precise geographic and contextual information systems on the territoriality of violence against women.

Keywords: violence, gender, territoriality, georeferencing.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women in Mexico is a social problem that manifests itself through acts or omissions that cause physical, psychological, emotional, economic or property damage in both public and private life.

As a structural phenomenon, a form of power exercise and a control mechanism that is exercised mainly for gender reasons; and represents a continuum because it is tolerated and justified on a daily basis, causing serious social consequences and very high economic costs at the individual and social level.

By knowing the seriousness of its expression, both, international and national regulations require it to be analyzed, recorded and published by government authorities, in order to have quantitative and qualitative data that allows to account for the various manifestations in certain contexts and, thus, prevent it. Hence, some of the tools for the elaboration of studies of this problem are maps and georeferences, which are representations of what we call the territoriality of violence against women.

In this sense, the objective of this research work is to analyze some maps and georeferences made in Mexico, as a form of graphic and descriptive representation of the territoriality of violence against women; as a way of carrying out an exhaustive analysis of the territory, analysis of the context, specifically reviewing where this phenomenon is reproduced in and, also, what are the specific spaces where various types and modalities of this are commonly fostered and perpetuated.

Finally, it is important to say that the territoriality of violence against women is the domination exercised towards them in certain contexts and characterized by aggressions on female bodies according to the areas, regions or geographic points where they are committed. And, it is in the official and unofficial maps that one can observe the classification and conceptualization that the specific cases gave rise to, but also the contextualization of the various manifestations of gender-based violence against women.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this research work consisted of a comparative analysis of the maps and georeferences prepared in different federal entities, which serve as a basis for studying the graphic and descriptive representations of violence against women, as well as crimes committed based on gender. This way, the geostatistics, with a gender perspective of the maps and georeferences of the states of the State of Mexico were reviewed, Nuevo León, Puebla, Zacatecas, as well as the National Platform for Care Services for Women, Girls, Boys and Adolescents, as they are considered useful tools to make visible the variables used for the study of gender-based violence, the configuration of high-risk areas and higher incidence of crime against women. The variables that were reviewed were those that allowed us to make comparisons, at this stage there are no standardized categories and variables to review the trend in the level of occurrence of these acts: types and modalities of violence, femicides, intentional homicides and disappearances. Likewise, the Gender Atlas produced by the four aforementioned federal entities were analyzed.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

CURRENT REVIEW OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is structural, systematic and multifactorial and, depending on the context, shows multiple ways in which it manifests itself but with common denominators such as that it is reproduced within the framework of a system of domination, of control over women, which is learned through “pedagogies of cruelty” that “teach, accustom and program subjects” (Segato, 2021, p. 1) to commit them and to strip women of autonomy, because it objectifies and isolates them, while sending

a message about the feminine as an available and disposable object.

Until very recently, gender violence was considered a state matter, until the seventies “when the murder of a woman by her ex-partner was described, it was explained as a crime of passion and treated as isolated, diverse and discontinuous cases” (Amorós, 2009, p. 3); this is no longer the case, thanks to studies on this phenomenon, conceptualizations and categorizations, as well as the development of indicators that measure it, it is now recognized as a social and public health problem spread worldwide, it has even been declared a pandemic.

Nowadays, it is a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which partially or totally limits the recognition, enjoyment and exercise of such rights, which is why it has been defined as “any action or conduct based on gender that causes death, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, both in the public and private spheres” (Belém do Pará Convention, 1999, article 1).

By reviewing the specific conditions or situations of women, mainly in the private sphere, it began to become clear that when a critical mechanism of rationalization of a certain type of practice, of facts, of aggression against women is activated, a generalization mechanism is triggered that perceives a relationship of actions committed against women: “women assaulted by their partners, women sexually assaulted, women harassed at work, women segregated in employment, women murdered” (Amorós, 2009, page: 4). Then the conceptualization of specific types of violence arises and, in addition, the conclusion is reached that it has a structural and patriarchal character; that is, women are assaulted for reasons of gender, as a form of expression of dominance and control over their bodies and self-determination.

Critical concepts—such as violence against

women—make it possible to make visible certain phenomenons that existed, but were not seen. They were not visible because it was necessary to classify them, name them, conceptualize them, categorize them and even politicize them. This allows us to account for the multifactorial nature of a phenomenon that, in our country, has meant that seven out of ten women have experienced some episode of violence at least once in their lives (INEGI: 2021, p. 24); which means that, in fact, on a daily basis, 35 million Mexican women have been victims of violence in the national territory, with their own particularities depending on the region or geographical point where it was committed.

It is now known that violence against women, in any of its forms, is based on relations of inequality and power asymmetries present at all levels of social organization. Nowadays, we recognize types and modalities, we have concepts, categories and indicators, but unfortunately it continues to transform or, instead, it presents characteristics so particular and/or specific to specific times and spaces that it spreads, sometimes, almost imperceptibly.

Some forms of violence can be seen — unfortunately the most serious ones such as femicides, rapes, disappearances— on maps and georeferences that, having started almost a decade ago, began to be developed to account for the behavior of the multiple violations of women's human rights and that, at the same time, allow the identification, location and reference of areas, regions and geographic points of greater risk or vulnerability for women to violence and to have an x-ray of the territoriality of gender violence. This has served to understand the magnitude of the phenomenon and the way it has been spread, as reviewed in the following section.

MAPS AND GEOREFERENCING OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A map is “the geographical representation of a terrestrial surface in which information related to a given science is given” (RAE, 2023). This way, implies the graphic and exhaustive description of a site or place, which can be geographic or thematic. On the other hand, georeferencing is the technique of spatial positioning of a geographic location based on a system of coordinates and specific data, which is why it is considered the basis for the correct location of the information on a map (INEGI, 2014). That is, the map shows the representation and the georeferencing the location through coordinates.

Maps and georeferencing, then, allow the location of a specific point on a terrestrial surface; they are a fundamental value for data analysis to achieve the most precise location possible of a place, space or territory.

According to Andreas Heins, the use of georeferencing began in the United States in 1942, after security authorities discovered that crimes were not committed in isolation or at random in urban spaces, but rather followed certain patterns in specific contexts and spaces (s.a., p. 22) which also indicated stable rates of crime incidence.

In terms of security, the first analyses of georeferencing for the study of crime incidence were by Shaw and McKay, who began to use certain variables to investigate and understand the factors that explain the concentration of crime, reaching the conclusion that there are two of them: situational and social (Heins, s.a., pp. 22 and 24).

Regarding the former, they explained that “the spatial concentration of criminal acts in certain areas is due to the fact that they share characteristics that facilitate and/or precipitate their occurrence” (Heins, s.a., p. 23), such as areas where there is inadequate lighting or a lack of formal or informal

surveillance. Regarding social factors, it has been found that some areas with high crime rates also concentrate social problems such as unemployment, poverty, low levels of education, resident turnover, among others (Heins, s.a., p. 24).

In this sense, it is also important to mention that regarding the georeferencing of crime incidence, there are two types of insecurity maps: 1) behavioral; and 2) cognitive or perceptual. The former refer to the registration of the places where certain behaviors related to the commission of a crime occur. On the other hand, the latter indicate or come close to the way in which people perceive the levels of insecurity in the areas, zones or places where they live or commonly coexist (Heis, s.a., p. 23).

This way, it is necessary to say that georeferencing and maps on violence or criminal incidence contribute to policies for the prevention and attention of specific crimes and social violence.

In the case of violence against women, georeferenced maps are used as a technological tool, which uses statistics from surveys and censuses, as well as administrative records from government institutions, which serve to locate, through coordinates, crimes committed against women, as well as the types and modalities of these crimes that occur in specific geographic spaces.

The maps and georeferences of violence against women aim to make visible “risk zones, the place of the events or the discovery of a body and, thus, be able to develop diagnoses, plans, programs and actions for prevention and care” (SEPASEV, 2019, p. 40) of the different ways in which violence against women is expressed and are the graphic and descriptive representation of its territoriality,

which occurs in specific contexts with spatial-temporal expressions and characteristics.

It must be noted that the detection and mapping of violence against women, as well as care services for it, in Mexico, in 2015, begins to reveal the need to have specific information and statistical data, as well as maps of its incidence, which could explain the factors and/or causes of this phenomenon spread throughout the country, but with characteristics specific to each region.

Based on the Declarations of Gender Violence Alert (DAVG), which in their resolutions began to indicate to the federative entities the need to have diagnoses, periodic reports, maps and georeferencing of feminicidal violence¹ which currently claims the lives of ten women a day. Although it was not until 2016 when the first georeferencing of feminicides was carried out by civil society, specifically by geophysicist María Salguero, and until 2017 in an institutional manner by local authorities in the state of Zacatecas.

In addition, both INEGI and the National Institute for Social Development (INDESOL), in 2019, began to map and carry out geospatial analysis with a gender focus on the services offered in our country in terms of attention to violence, including: 1) attention to female victims; 2) attention to family violence; 3) attention to child violence; 4) legal support; 5) centers for attention to violence; and 6) centers for attention and prevention (INEGI, 2019, p. 4).

Likewise, the National Bank of Data and Information on Cases of Violence against Women (BANAVIM), has worked on information on the types and modalities of violence that comes from the administrative records provided by the federal entities, it has

1. Femicide violence has been defined as “the extreme form of gender-based violence against women, adolescents and girls, resulting from the violation of their human rights and the abusive exercise of power, both in the public and private spheres, which can lead to social and state impunity. It manifests itself through hateful and discriminatory behaviors that put their lives at risk or culminate in violent deaths such as femicide, suicide and homicide, or other forms of preventable deaths and in behaviors that seriously affect the integrity, security, personal freedom and free development of women” (LGAMVLV: 2017, Article 21).

an interactive map; however, it does not have the georeferencing or location by coordinates of this phenomenon at the national or local level.

In this regard, it is important to highlight that in Mexico, all authorities, within the scope of their powers, must develop actions to prevent and eradicate it. To do so, they have had to develop measurement instruments such as surveys, censuses, specialized administrative records, reports, diagnoses, maps and georeferencing that help explain it.

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention) obliges member states to progressively adopt specific measures to “guarantee the investigation and collection of statistics and other pertinent information on the causes, consequences and frequency of violence against women” (DOF, 1999, article 8, paragraph h). Therefore, our country has various instruments for measuring and providing information on the ways in which this scourge is committed against women, including georeferenced maps, to obtain data on occurrence.

In this same sense, General Recommendation 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) states that “States Parties have the international responsibility to create and constantly improve their statistical databases and to deepen the analysis of all forms of discrimination against women in general and, in particular, against women from certain vulnerable groups” (DOF, 1981), which is why Mexico has georeferencing of crimes committed against women, in order to detect priority areas and polygons where these serious crimes and violence must be addressed immediately. Furthermore, the General Law on Women’s Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAMVLV), in its article 38, section IX,

indicates the obligation of the Federation and the states to “guarantee the investigation and the elaboration of statistical diagnoses on the causes, frequency and consequences of violence against women, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures developed to prevent, address, punish and eradicate all types of violence. (DOF, 2021, p. 11). Hence, maps and georeferences have been created that report, in a graphic and descriptive manner, violence against women based on gender.

As it was stated, the first map made in our country that geolocated one of the most serious forms of violence is the Map of Femicides (2016) “I name you”, which was created by the geophysicist María Salguero Bañuelos. This instrument began to give an account of the feminicidal violence throughout the Mexican territory with press reports that had information by categories such as the age of the victim, relationship with the femicide, the legal situation of the same, the way in which they were murdered, the scene of the crime and the way in which the body was found, the status of these crimes, the way in which they were murdered, membership of the security forces, transfemicides, feminicides by connection, orphaned children and patterns (Salguero, 2016). After this tool was implemented by civil society—with data from the press, that is, not official—government institutions began to develop measurement instruments with official statistical information to show, through maps, the crimes committed against women, as well as some forms of violence.

From there, official maps began to be published—almost a decade ago—to account for the various forms of violence imprinted on women’s bodies, mainly when it came to crimes such as femicide, then it was extended to other crimes such as trafficking, disappearances, rape, among others.

The state that first published the

georeferencing of femicides from an official web portal was Zacatecas. From the State Data Bank on Violence against Women, in 2017, under the direction of Eng. Alejandro Dena, the first map was shown that indicated at what geographic point in Zacatecas territory this crime had been committed since 2013 (BANEVIM, 2017).

Since then, other states have begun to join forces to make public their official maps and georeferences—based on surveys, censuses, and administrative records—on femicide and other crimes committed against women. This is the case of the State of Mexico, Nuevo León, and Puebla, among others, which now show data on femicides, homicides, rapes, disappearances, trafficking, and other crimes.

Based on these maps, whether official or not, whether they come from non-governmental organizations or national or local authorities, different indicators and catalogs are now available, depending on the contexts in which the various expressions of gender violence against women are committed, and based on them, it is possible to exhaustively analyze the specific domination that is exercised against “being a woman,” individually and collectively, in a given time and space.

Georeferencing of femicides and maps of violence against women in Zacatecas

The article 17, Section III of the LGAMVLV establishes that the Mexican State must guarantee women the eradication of violence through the establishment of a Data Bank. Therefore, as stated above, the National Bank of Data and Information on Cases of Violence against Women (BANAIVIM), of the Ministry of the Interior, administers information on the entities responsible for preventing, addressing and eradicating gender violence in Mexico.

Therefore, BANAIVIM is responsible for preparing statistics and diagnoses that allow us to understand the characteristics,

causes, effects and patterns of behavior of this phenomenon and this way, coordinate all the entities for the implementation of public policies.

BANAIVIM, then, as a national reference, must facilitate the identification of cases of victimization against women, the services provided at the national and local level, among other information on types, modalities and crimes committed based on gender in our country, data that in turn, must be provided by each federal entity through its state banks.

In Zacatecas, since 2017, the State Data Bank on Violence against Women was created, as a decentralized technical body of the Secretariat for Women (PO, 2021). Public policy that allowed the creation of a Directorate that would be in charge of managing and systematizing data on gender violence and, in addition, of preparing reports, diagnoses that would serve as a basis for the implementation of programs, plans, public policies and actions to prevent, address, punish and eradicate violence against women.

One of the first public policies implemented by BANEVIM, since its creation and with the support of geophysicist María Salguero Bañuelos and INEGI, was the creation of the georeferencing of feminicides committed in Zacatecas since 2013. From there, the Secretariat for Women and with administrative records from the Attorney General's Office of the aforementioned state began to make visible the place of the events or the discovery of the victim's body. Likewise, a heat map of these crimes was created, which subsequently allowed for the preparation of annual diagnoses that revealed the number of feminicides, the geographic location where the crime was committed, the municipality, the place of the events, the place where the body was found, characteristics of the victims, such as age or marital status, data on the feminicides, the relationship between

the victim and the aggressor, attempted feminicides, and the evolution of this serious phenomenon (BANEVIM, 2021).

To date, there are four reports on femicides and feminicidal violence in Zacatecas (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). These reports show the evolution and trend of this crime. This made it possible to see that the main municipalities where these crimes were committed were Fresnillo, Guadalupe, Zacatecas, Pinos, Calera, and Ojo caliente; and, by reviewing the coordinates of the areas where the women's bodies were found, it was possible to verify a corridor or territoriality of feminicidal violence in the center of our entity.

In addition, it was possible to verify that the majority of feminicides occurred in the family environment, given that there was data on the streets where the victims' homes were located, that the aggressors had less education than the victims, and that feminicides increase in January, March, and July, among other findings.

Georeferencing of risk zones for women and girls in the State of Mexico

The georeferencing of violence against girls and women in this state was developed within the framework of the second Declaration of Gender Violence Alert, once the Ministry of the Interior informed the authorities of that entity of the recommendation to establish measures of prevention, security, justice and reparation of femicide violence, trafficking and disappearance of women.

It is worth mentioning that the first AVGM declared in the State of Mexico was on July 28, 2015, within the framework of the 16th extraordinary session of the National System for the Prevention, Attention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, which unanimously agreed to declare the provenance of the Declaration of Gender Violence Alert in eleven municipalities of

the State of Mexico. In this first resolution, the federal entity was recommended to have a security strategy to address femicide violence, among other measures that involved the preparation of situational diagnoses of violence against women. The second AVGM, declared on September 20, 2019, indicated, in the fourth resolution, prevention measure 2, that the State of Mexico must "georeference the cases of missing girls, adolescents and women in the indicated municipalities (Chalco, Chimalhuacán, Cuautitlán Izcalli, Ecatepec, Ixtapaluca, Naucalpan de Juárez, Nezahualcóyotl, Tlalnepantla de Baz, Toluca, Tultitlán and Valle de Chalco) in the period 2016 to 2019, which raises the relationship with other crimes that mainly affect that population" (CONAVIM, 2019, p. 17). As of February 2021, each municipality reports, on a monthly basis, the risk zones for girls and women in each of their localities, so that the georeferencing of the crime incidence is mapped according to the violence and crimes committed: sexual harassment or stalking, homicide, rape, violence against women, partner violence, family violence.

Likewise, it shows whether the crime incidence occurs on state or federal highways, roads, street axes, neighborhoods, neighborhood limits, or blocks. Hence, on the Gender Alert page of the State of Mexico (http://alertadegenero.edomex.gob.mx/zonas_riesgo) the reports from February 2021 to December 2022 are published, on the georeferencing of the risk zones and the highest rate of gender violence.

Georeferenced map of violence against women in the state of Nuevo León

With the objective of “identifying, locating and referencing the specific geographic areas and points in the state of Nuevo León where there is a higher incidence of crime against women”, the Women’s Institute of that entity has been producing, since 2018, quantitative and qualitative information to identify the areas of greatest risk and vulnerability for women (IEMUJERENL, 2018).

The report on the georeferencing of the risk zones of that federal entity presents the crimes and categories of emergency call incidents related to: indecent assault, forced disappearance of persons, comparable to rape, comparable to domestic violence, statutory rape, femicide, wilful homicide, sexual harassment, missing persons, pornography of a person deprived of their will, kidnapping, abduction, human trafficking, rape, domestic violence (IEMUJERES, 2018, p.11).

In addition, the categories of emergency calls related to cases of violence against women in the database of the Secretariat of Public Security are shown: homicide, kidnapping, attempted rape, touching, human trafficking, rape, violence against women, intimate partner violence and family violence (IEMUJERES, 2018, p. 11).

In this case, the state of Nuevo León georeferenced the risk zones of the 51 municipalities, in order to have detailed and focused information; and, this way, have a contextualized statistical analysis in the time period from 2008 to 2017.

Risk Atlas for Georeferencing Violence Against Women in Puebla

Like other federal entities, Puebla, based on the DAVG, the Attorney General’s Office of that state, in 2020 published the report on the georeferencing of violence against women, through an interactive map that shows the number of crimes and victims in those municipalities where this violation of human rights has higher rates (Government of Puebla, 2020, p. 18).

The data or sources of information with which the interactive map was worked come from the INEGI, the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System, the State Attorney General’s Office, the State DIF System, as well as the Secretariat for Substantive Equality. This way, the Electronic Registration System for Attention to Women (SIREEAM) is integrated, which processes the information to carry out the risk analysis (Government of Puebla, 2020, p. 25).

Regarding the georeferencing of crimes and victims in Puebla, information is shown from January 2019 to January 31, 2023. Hence, it is indicated that a total of 52,955 crimes have been recorded, and there are 54,760 victims, in the 2017 municipalities of that federal entity.

National Georeferencing System on institutional services and programs in favor of women

It is worth mentioning that, in 2020, the National Institute of Social Development published the National Georeferencing System, a project that began through the Program to Support Women’s Agencies in the Federative Entities (Paimef), whose objective is to support and accompany with 429 Fixed and Mobile Care Centers, women in conditions of violence in 1,500 municipalities in the 32 states of the Republic (INDESOL, 2020).

This way, the National Platform for Care Services for Women, Girls, Boys and Adolescents in Situations of Violence shows the georeferencing of the services provided by different federal, state and municipal government agencies to prevent and address gender violence.

An effort that brings together administrative data from women's agencies, violence care centers, justice and victim care centers, specialized prosecutors' offices, child and adolescent protection attorneys' offices, specialized health centers, women's development centers, among others (INDESOL, 2020). This represents a major step forward not only in the geolocation of acts of violence against women and the incidence of crime, but also in mapping the services that deal with this phenomenon, which claims the lives of ten women a day and is part of building a policy to prevent and address the territoriality of violence, that is, to locate and understand the different manifestations of this serious violation of the human rights of girls and women in our country.

CONCLUSION

Although the territoriality of violence against women and the analysis of the context are very broad topics, each requiring specific treatment, this section relates both with the study of maps and georeferences, which are the technological instrument that allows us to see graphically and descriptively what territoriality means and why the analysis of the context is important. That is, through maps that indicate where the aggressions against women have been committed, meaning is given to the territorial dominion over women's bodies, as the maximum expression of said power, which is violence.

The territoriality of violence against women, as already stated, is understood as an exercise of dominion, of power, historical

and contextual, which is committed against the body of women, but also over their entire being: their thoughts, feelings, emotions.

It is expressed through dominance, control, power, "lordship" over bodies in spaces that can be geolocated and at specific times; where victims of violence "are expropriated from control over their bodies" (Segato, 2016, p. 17). And, it is through maps that one can observe or geolocate where and when these human rights violations are being committed.

So, what the maps show is that there are patterns of behavior, places and times where violent acts against women are carried out, whether physical, emotional, sexual, in different areas such as the family, in the community or femicide. Through georeferencing, the conceptualizations of violence embodied in women's bodies are made evident.

Thus, the processes of categorization go beyond the processes of rationalization that name a specific form or type of violence against women; these also pass through the bodies of women, who are objects and subjects of research; thus, women become objects of violence and of its analysis, it is their bodies that allow for graphic representation, with them, as violated subjects, who are finally represented in maps and georeferences, it is the bodies that are marked in geographic points with different expressions, contextual and specific to a certain mandate.

That is why we affirm that the elementary structure of violence can be seen graphically and descriptively through maps, where it is represented where and when the events are occurring and it also allows for geolocation in order to deal with it effectively, it is there where we can find the territoriality of violence.

Furthermore, through georeferenced maps, the interlocations of power relations that end up being expressed in forms of violence can be analyzed, which have control over the lives and

bodies of women, which means that maps are the closest way to graphically account for the territoriality of violence.

This way, from the analysis of the context that maps facilitate, from the study of the territoriality of violence against women, the facts, behaviors, discourses and sociocultural information of this phenomenon can be reported. That is, what does the mandate of masculinity over the body of women mean in this context, which was expressed in various forms of violence that even took the life of this contextualized body.

Through the analysis of the territoriality of violence against women, a certain phenomenon or event is explained in a comprehensive way, without artificially isolating it from other phenomena or events that occur. It allows for the consideration of a multiplicity of significant factors (facts, behaviors, discourses). Thus, the fact or case can be interpreted and placed within a given context.

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