Political Violence:
A Typology

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Abstract. This paper offers a typology of different forms of political violence, linking them in a continuum and in an interdependent field of forces. The forms identified are systemic violence, institutional violence, group violence, armed struggle, terrorism and war. In the final section, after discussing how these types of violence influence one another, a strategy is suggested for their simultaneous reduction.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is at the center of theoretical elaborations around the creation of identities, the establishment of the law and the shaping of authority. Subjects are formed through violence, and the norms through which this formation is carried out "are by definition violent": we are given genders, positions and status against our will (Butler 2009, 167). Analyses of the state also focus on violence, describing it as a lawmaking force that establishes new systems and designates new authorities. Direct organized force, in sum, is deemed central to the process of state-making (Tilly 1985). This type of violence, however, can also amount to law-conserving violence, when it protects the stability of systems and reinforces authority (Derrida 1992; Benjamin 1996).

The analysis of violence, from this perspective, can explain how power is formed and distributed within society and how such distribution can be altered. This is also the aim of this contribution, which, after proposing a typology of political violence, attempts to suggest strategies for the reduction of the intensity of each type identified.

SYSTEMIC VIOLENCE

Social, economic and political arrangements contain elements of systemic violence, as they reproduce inequality, immobility, injustice and misery. Such arrangements are presented as ineluctable outcomes of human interactions and historical processes, and are supported by justificatory ideologies.

In the economic sphere, doctrines claiming scientific validity or divine nature were and are responsible for colossal amounts of violence. For example, Locke's idea of private property as a divine gift led colonialists to subjugate and destroy populations that were unaware of this gift. The victims of systemic violence, in this case, by ignoring the divine nature of private ownership, located themselves outside the human community (Stannard 1992). Mercantilist ideas justified the erasure of traditional economies, making the starvation acceptable in the name of progress. Physiocrats, through the notion that wealth derives exclusively from the exploitation of the land, caused the victimization of independent farmers, who were deprived of their mean of subsistence as a result of the privatization and concentration of rural property. Malthus theorized the culling of redundant populations, those who had not been invited to the banquet of life. His "scientific" doctrine was derided by Jonathan Swift's proposal to solve the problem of malnutrition through the use of children as foodstuff. Adam Smith's suggestion, one that unemployment caused by economic development is "in the long run" destined to be neutralized by new ascending productive sectors, neglected the lethal injuries caused by inactivity. A couple of centuries later, Keynes argued that the unemployed could not wait for the eventual emergence of new economic initiatives and that "in the long run" we will all be dead. David Ricardo's emphasis on risk and innovation in response to economic decline echoes Merton's deviant adaptations, particularly those of the "innovative" type, which pursue official goals through illegitimate means. Marshall's theory of marginal utility, in which acceptable wages are said to correspond to the money that the last available worker is prepared to receive, borders with a justification of slavery. We could go on, focusing, for instance, on what is commonly described as neoliberalism and the social and environmental damage its theories encourage (Ruggiero 2013). However, one should resist the temptation to impute particular callousness to current dominant economic doctrines: the systemic violence produced by the market itself,

whatever the philosophy inspiring it, places economic initiative beyond the reach of democratic contestation, let alone ethical assessment (Mitchell 2013). Many years ago, Durkheim (1974) rightly argued that the stock exchange may be more murderous than any ruthless serial killer.

Systemic violence, in sum, is found in the smooth functioning of economic and political systems, and can be termed "objective," as it appears not to require specific deliberations by individuals exerting it. On the other hand, "subjective" violence is likely to be perceived as such when it appears to be an anomalous, visible, a deviation from a social context characterized by non-violence (Zizek 2008). Objective violence, however, is, in its turn, visible in the outcomes listed above relating to different waves of economic reasoning. Even Marx, to be sure, supported the violence implicit in the destruction of primitive economies (i.e., India) in the name of progress and the creation of an industrial, revolutionary working class.

The violence produced in the economic sphere, in turn, is accompanied by that arising from the political apparatus, which may also cause harm through strategies of omission. Political systems, in this way, while officially displaying confidence in, or even boasting, their morality, contribute to the denial of life and injustice (Honderich 1989, xix). Advanced political systems, for instance, may be unlikely to send poisoned food parcels to starving populations; nevertheless, they do little to relieve their starvation. They pollute developing countries with their waste and, although they do not intentionally infect them with serious diseases, they omit to guarantee minimum medical care for them. At the domestic level, they do not remove books from poor schools, but cut the budget for primary education. They do not force people to become homeless, but omit to stop private profits being made out of people needy of accommodation. Such systems omit to remedy a situation they themselves have created, in which the economically worst-off tenth of their own population have a considerably shorter life expectancy than the average. They may or may not contribute funds to dictatorships, but certainly do not contribute funds to movements fighting dictators.

Omissions entail choice, but political choice is denied or blocked because it would be inconsistent with the injunctions of the economic sphere, which, as a "perfect science," only requires obedience. At the same time, for political power, decisions are important, but just as important are the decisions that are

not made, the proposals that are never considered, the innovative ideas that are somehow always out of the question. "Ruling a country means controlling the political agenda, defining what is thinkable and unthinkable, and this work is always done behind the façade of democratic politics" (Walzer 2004, 24). This is a form of symbolic violence embodied in language, which reproduces relations of domination while imposing a certain universe of meaning (Zizek 2008). Systemic violence, in brief, is the result of the policies dictated by, and intertwined with, the dogmas of economic thought. Let us now look at the law, another source of systemic violence.

When linking the law with the economic and the political spheres, the former ends up coinciding with a form of administration, a technique of government transcending generally shared values. As a consequence, principles mutate following the contingent objectives that individuals and groups set for themselves, thus triggering a conflict between advocates of strict legality and legal pragmatists.

Advocates of strict legality may be described as formalists, in that they derive rules of conduct from the logic of written texts, without attributing any role to the values, the ideological leanings or the very culture of those who administer law. "The law as seen from a formalist perspective is a compendium of texts, like the Bible, and the task of the judge or other legal analysts is to discern and apply the internal logic of the compendium" (Posner 2013, 3). The legal apparatus limits its task to interpreting and is indifferent to the consequences of its interpretations. On the contrary, the pragmatist is sensitive to the outcomes of judicial rulings, and considers systemic as well as case-specific consequences. Now, whether we believe that the law is nothing but a set of techniques for the perpetuation of power or that its universal values satisfy the needs of all, the dominant system finds a degree of legitimation in both beliefs. The former belief confirms that the dominant system is legitimate because supported by the law, while the latter helps systems to claim their right to ignore the law or change it pragmatically. Judges who are "cognitive misers" and regard innovation as costly will adhere to established texts, which are favorable to power. They will act as lexicographers, finding answers in books and codes. "Cognitive adventurous" judges, on the other hand, will "treat law as a branch of rhetoric, or literature – or (without acknowledgement, of course) politics" (ibid., 82). They will therefore alter previous interpretations and rul-

ings. The existing system of power, in brief, will win in both cases. Conservatives will manifest their judicial passivity by taking inspiration from original texts, while imaginative innovators will rewrite norms: both will condone the harm produced by power. Plato and Thrasymachus, finally, find an unexpected synthesis in the perpetuation of systemic violence (Ruggiero 2015).

Drawing freely on the interpretation of René Girard (1988), we might argue that systemic violence possesses some traits in common with sacrificial violence, whereby societies seek to deflect upon vulnerable victims the violence that would otherwise be vented on the members it most desires to protect. This mechanism appears clearly, albeit in a different guise, when the second type of political violence is examined.

INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE

By studying the crimes of the powerful, the conclusion can be drawn that economic and political institutions are major sources of harm, injury and violence. These transcend the systemic damage caused by the routine running of states and markets, being the outcome of violations perpetrated by individuals and groups against their own official principles and philosophies. State agents violating their own written norms engage in abuse, torture and killing. Organizations that violate their officially stated principles include enterprises standing up for market freedom while, in practice, showing little credence in such freedom. Price-fixing and other forms of unfair competition are cases in point, which are commonly enacted through corruption or intimidation but may also be supported by violence. Firms causing death and lethal diseases, in their turn, violate health and safety regulations or infringe norms for the protection of the environment.

Institutional violence may trigger a lawmaking mechanism: torture, military invasion, kidnapping of suspects and the use of prohibited weapons create important precedents and, when undetected, tolerated and unprosecuted, rewrite the international law and refound the principles of justice. This violence is, therefore, foundational, as it is capable of transforming the previous jurisprudence and establishing new laws and new types of legitimacy. Institutional violence is the result of the "blunted moral sensitivity" (Wright Mills 1956) adopted in response to contrived crisis and emergencies. For instance,

violence can be triggered by imagined threats, followed by a shifting of the balance between security and human and civil rights, leading to violations by the authorities of their own laws.

The analysis of institutional violence can rely on economic variables, for example, in explaining the illegality of firms and corporations as an attempt to neutralize or temper the decline they experience (or simply fear) in their profits. Violence, in the economic sphere, can be a means available to *foxes* as well as to *lions*, two categories of entrepreneurs described by Pareto (1935; 1966) respectively, as the short-term opportunists who combine diverse interests and adopt cunning strategies and those who are bound in persistent aggregations and pursue long-term goals (Harrington 2005). Violence can also be analyzed against the background of the anomie theory, whereby it is one of the numerous instruments available to the elite who operate in already normless contexts and are, therefore, encouraged to experiment with conducts and arbitrarily expand on practices.

Conflict theory would postulate that all violent manifestations in social systems are to be interpreted as the outcome of the polarization of power and resources, and that successful imputations of violent conduct are normally the prerogative of powerful groups who so label the conduct adopted by the powerless. Institutional violence, on the other hand, is the object of analysis focusing on micro-sociological aspects, more particularly on the observation of the dynamics that guide the behavior of organizations and their members. As organizations become more complex, it is maintained, responsibilities are decentralized, while their human components find themselves inhabiting an increasingly opaque environment in which the goals to pursue and the modalities through which one is expected to pursue them become vague and negotiable. Violence perpetrated by organizations can be regarded as an outcome of such opacity and vagueness.

Institutional agents may be led to violence by their inherent nature as *homo duplex*, with which Durkheim (1951) refers to the copresence of violence and sociability in social actors. Or simply because they inhabit such contexts as markets, seen by Weber as substantially irrational and inspirers of speculation, gambling and bullying. Merton's notion of "winning" rather than "wining according to the rules" provides yet a supplementary viewpoint, while another crucial aspect of institutional violence may finally derive from the appreciation

of the variable "uncertainty." Powerful agents, in the political as well as in the economic arena, are not only led to violations and violence by the "objective" dynamics of the free enterprise system or the concrete political situation. Their perception plays a central role, as does their subjective assessment of the position they occupy in the market and in the political system. Their acts are often inspired by the forecast of future economic and political developments. Institutional violence, like other forms of crimes of the powerful, therefore, could be partly deemed as the outcome of fear for the future. As Poggi (2001, 11) has perceptively argued:

> Power has to do with the future, with expectations, with hopes and fears. In this sense, it has anthropological significance… Hobbes was right in saying that humans alone, among animals, can feel tomorrow's hunger today. We can think of power as a way of confronting and controlling the inexorable sense of contingency and insecurity generated by our awareness of the future.

Institutional violence, ultimately, is the result of an obsessive relationship of powerful individuals and groups with their future; it is a form of accumulation and accretion of the power such groups already possess, inspired by fear that in the future, events may lead to them losing it. Returning to René Girard's suggestion that sacrificial violence seeks to deflect upon vulnerable victims the violence that would otherwise be vented on the elitist members of societies, we should add that institutional violence also expresses the fear that anti-institutional violence may be soon gathering force. It is to anti-institutional violence that I now turn.

CROWDS AND GROUP VIOLENCE

Defiant groups who respond to systemic and institutional violence have been depicted as inclined to destroy "those religious, political, and social beliefs in which all elements of our civilization are rooted" (Le Bon 2008, 34). The entry of the popular classes into political life marked the era of crowds, regarded as incapable of reasoning, quick to act, and adept at forging an "organized mental unity." The crowd was seen as a psychological entity, which makes its human components unify feelings and develop a collective mind: "crowds feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act were he in a state of isolation" (ibid., 36).

Individuals forming a crowd do not confine themselves to putting their qualities or characteristics in common, but confer new ones to the crowd they form. First, they acquire a sentiment of invincible power, which unleashes instincts commonly kept under restraint. Second, they are subject to contagion, a hypnotic phenomenon leading to irresponsible action. Third, they lose conscious personality and discernment. As automatons who cease to be guided by their will, they acquire "the spontaneity, the violence, the ferocity, but also the enthusiasm and heroism of primitive beings"'(ibid., 39).

Similar notions of the crowd were adopted in descriptions of organized group violence throughout the nineteenth century, when, for instance, positivist criminologists saw the participants in the Commune of Paris (1871) as "atavistic criminals," led to irrational violence by collective hypnosis. Conceding that agency played a part in rebellions, Lombroso (1894), however, detected in the insurgents several traits characterizing "complete criminal types and mad types," arguing that most were ex-convicts, robbers, pimps or prostitutes. Meanwhile, Marx stressed that the Communards were not criminal enough, because they showed a sacred respect for the Bank of France, and Louise Michel (1898, 11), a leading participant in the Commune, wrote about the "terrible days when freedom touched us with its wing." She recalled the greatness of the revolutionaries, but also the excessive hesitation resulting from their profound honesty.

Successive analyses of crowds have focused on their role in history and on the material needs that cause uprisings, be these grain shortages or rapid processes of industrialization (Rudé 1964). In the attempt to seek rational explanations, riots have been described not as "mindless, indiscriminate, or copycat incidents," but as "purposive actions of impoverished labourers or minority groups seeking to better their lot" (Jones 2000, 70). During the 1960s and 1970s, criminological analysis, too, tried to explain the logic of riots. With the premise that every crime incorporates a political element, Quinney (1971) contended that group violence can bring social change when other channels of the democratic process are inappropriate or insensitive to the grievances of sections of the population. Harsh laws regulating demonstrations, police intimidation and brutality were deemed responsible for turning protesters into rioters. It should be noted that, in this way, political violence was mainly equated to institutional violence, thus excluding that rational agents might

choose violence as an expression of political dissent. Anti-racist demonstrations were said to actually turn into "police riots," as officers engaged in violent acts in the name of crowd control. "Increased use of police power has been justified as necessary to combat violence. But the paradox is that the violence that the police attempt to control is inspired in many instances by the police themselves" (Quinney 1970, 315).

From the perspective of critical criminology, riots and organized group violence only possess a "pre-political" nature, and both are a reaction to the position certain individuals and groups occupy in an unjust social structure. There is, at times, a sense of pity and empathy for what is deemed pre-political violence as expressed in riots, which are normally attributed to frustration at the indifference or hostility of the media or the continuing harassment by the police. Looting, which takes place during riots, in its turn, is interpreted as a result of a consumerist culture generating possessive individualism (Taylor 1981).

Riots, on the other hand, can be included among those hostile outbursts discussed by Smelser (1963), who frames collective violence in a general set of concepts, including conduciveness and strain. Conduciveness is not only associated with inequality, injustice and, in general, social strain, but also with the presence of channels for the expression of grievances and the possibility for communication among the aggrieved (think of the use of social media in recent riots). These channels of expression and communication are better functioning when riots are linked with large-scale social movements. "The prime differences among terms such as a riot, revolt, rebellion, insurrection and revolution – all of which involve hostile outburst – stem from the scope of their associated social movement" (ibid., 227).

Strain may stem from established cleavages, which amount to social differentiation and which inevitably produce identity and, at times, resentment. Religious, ethnic, national, tribal and regional divisions are examples of such cleavages, which include divisions based on an unequal allocation of wealth and power. Besides these established cleavages, hostility can emerge from new cleavages created by a growing sensitivity toward previously neglected issues (think of the environment). Because global channels of communication are increasingly available for the expression of old and new grievances, it could be argued that repression in the form of preventing some groups from accessing

them would intensify rather than defuse hostility. Established cleavages can be termed "institutionalized strains" and may give rise to chronic conflict, as, for example, the conflicts caused by ethnic, political, class, and religious divisions. In these areas, riots may become an endemic feature of social life.

Recent riots in London and Paris could be framed as the result of a process that, at the first stage, entails a form of "brutalization," namely the experience of individuals as witnesses of violent acts suffered by others with whom they identify. The second stage of the process is termed "defiance" and is characterized by the resolve of actors to put an end to the violence they have witnessed. With the third stage, "dominance engagement," individuals and groups exert their violent responses as a way of deterring the violence by which they have been victimized (Athens 1997, 1992; O'Donnel 2003). In general, the violence deployed in riots is "non-teleological" in nature, in that it is not precisely linked to specific demands but constitutes a request for recognition based on resentment (Zizek 2008). There was no political program behind the burning of the *banlieues* of Paris or the inner cities of London.

ARMED STRUGGLE

Armed struggle, on the contrary, possesses exactly that: a guiding framework that prefigures specific objectives and inscribes action into a sociopolitical trajectory. The program followed by armed struggle is part of a cognitive map of sort that locates actors and their experience of conflict within a meaningful whole. Those engaged express values based on shared beliefs, which may prefigure a completely new social system and, while doing so, establish definite battle lines. The spread of beliefs is crucial for the development of armed struggle, while communication preparing people for action is normally expressed through an informal exchange of views or through organized propaganda and agitation. Again, what is important here is not so much the power of the images and beliefs exchanged as the effectiveness of the established communication machinery utilized. For this reason, those engaged in armed struggle are under the constant pressure to calibrate their objectives with those mobilizing social movements, so that these can provide sympathy, support or even recruits.

Armed struggle does not need to be led by highly motivated and "supreme" leaders, but may be conducted by fractions of well-organized social movements who take the leadership of already aggrieved and hostile social groups. The outbursts of these groups, in such cases, are not instigated by social movements or their leaders, but are part and parcel of their routine hostility toward the system. Armed struggle is, therefore, an attempt to give hostile groups and their outbursts an organizational structure and a rationale, a calculable trend, so that uncoordinated hostility is slowly turned into military action (highly specialized and integrated) toward a predictable end.

Preexisting structures within social movements are, of course, paramount, though new forms of coordinated violence may emerge because of the poor results achieved by such structures. Social movements, however, at times provide armed struggle with infrastructures, an inherited repertoire of action and beliefs and a memory.

Social movements, in their turn, along with the aggrieved groups they represent, interact with law enforcers, and the nature of such interaction is likely to determine the position taken by actors in respect of the battle line. Some individuals and groups will adopt peaceful forms of protest as an integral part of their rights, while others will come to the conclusion that protest is quintessentially violent. Radicalization of protest, then, may produce harsher state repression and unleash a vicious circle of violence-repression-violence-repression (Della Porta 1995). Minority protest groups begin to perceive, at this stage, that the use of violent means becomes necessary, as these constitute a mere extension of the social conflicts in which larger groups also engage. Some may opt for armed struggle, which, in their view, is nothing else than the extension of already existing social conflict. At this stage, targets are immediately recognizable symbols, as they are related to specific arenas in which protesters engage.

An escalating process may then lead to a different stage. While concrete achievements are relentlessly dismantled and the political space narrowed, violent protest groups may take a relatively independent trajectory. Their action, for instance, can be channeled into the pursuit of a limited range of objectives, the achievement of which, under normal circumstances, would not require the use of high degrees of violence. In other words, perfectly legitimate goals slowly come to be pursued through illegitimate means. Armed struggle, thus, turns into *armed trade unionism*, while the growth of the armed group,

the recruitment among activists and the accumulation of firepower start losing connections with the social issues originally addressed. In a subsequent phase, anti-institutional political violence may evolve into *armed propaganda*, as groups become completely disconnected from the social objectives allegedly inspiring them and devote most of their energies to the accumulation of military strength. Violent acts, at this stage, simply allude to the possibility that the monopoly of the state, in the use of force, can be challenged and that breaking away from legally accepted forms of contention is necessary. At this stage, military episodes, in most cases, are no longer decodable as manifestations of wider social conflicts, but as products of a military group seeking self-promotion. Social dynamics, as points of reference for political action, slowly become redundant, while the armed organization pursues its own reproduction in terms of membership and infrastructures. Targets are no longer chosen on the basis of their significance in relation to social issues, but for their capacity to illustrate the military power of the organization (Ruggiero 2006). Political violence, in such cases, aims at strengthening resolve and group cohesion, at conveying an image of determination, potency and involving an element of spectacular propaganda, making it attractive to potential recruits and menacing to the chosen enemies.

Armed struggle echoes the notion of the irregular fighter or partisan posited by Carl Schmitt (2007). Like those involved in civil or colonial wars, partisans do not abide by rules of battle, nor do they believe that regular forces are the only bearers of a *ius belli*. They expect neither justice nor mercy from their enemies, as they reject the notion of enmity prevailing in conventional wars. Another characteristic of partisans, beside irregularity, is "political commitment which sets them apart from other fighters and from common thieves and criminals, whose motives aim at private enrichment" (ibid., 13). There is then the characteristic of mobility, namely the capacity to choose targets located outside and beyond a legally demarcated battle field. Finally, partisans possess a tellurian character, that is to say, the ability to find hospitality among groups and individuals embedded in networks of dissent and active in social conflict. Hence, as argued above, the necessity for those involved to share beliefs and goals with sections of social movements.

As a rule, armed struggle involves violence against state actors, it implies the creed that some governments or states have no right to be obeyed by their

subjects. Such governments and states become the chosen targets of dissatis-fied people who "deposit" and accumulate rage in social movements and armed organizations, as if these were banks, before releasing it (Sloterdijk 2016). The use of violence, here, is perfectly congruent with views that social change is usually brought violently within the inevitable course of history.

TERRORISM AND WAR

"Attacks on soldiers are not terrorist attacks": this is the opinion of Michael Walzer (2006, 3), in a way echoing the statement above that violence against state actors is more appropriately defined as armed struggle. Terrorism, in-stead, consists in the deliberate killing of innocent people, of non-combatants at random. This definition brings us back to the different stages of the escalat-ing process I have already delineated.

When the accumulation of military force, though significant, appears to be insufficient to match that possessed by the institutions, armed propaganda becomes unrealistic. Political activists and social groups in general cannot be offered competitive structures and practices leading to a different social order. Defeat is most likely and social and political gains are replaced with gains in other, less palpable spheres. The choice of targets can no longer be justified by the specific social goal pursued, but is given a transcendental justification that Camus (1965) terms *historical*. According to Camus, there are some po-litical conflicts emphasizing history and others emphasizing humanity. The emphasis on history destroys all limits to human action, because history itself becomes the supreme judge of the morality of the action. Violent groups, in-spired by a sense of historical inevitability, appropriate the "right to punish" from their enemy and, after dressing it with a religious mantle, put punish-ment at the center of the universe. The sense of historical inevitability makes violence randomized, limitless: history will vindicate the legitimacy of that violence (Ruggiero 2006).

Contemporary wars and illegitimate invasions share several characteristics with terrorism: both contain elements of what is known as hate crime, namely the perception that victims are representatives of specific communities, and that they are not attacked in their capacity as individuals, but as individuals belonging to a real or imagined alien group. Hatred is also based on identi-

ties, lifestyles, cultural values and tastes, and it constitutes a reservoir of bitter memories that can trigger violent antagonism. Contemporary wars and illegitimate invasions are variants of state-sponsored terrorism and counter-terrorism. They share feud-like elements of vengeance with terrorism, answering random violence with random violence. The war on terror, in brief, puts terrorists in the inescapable position of waging a war when their fantasy was being acknowledged as real, that is, when they take on the bellicose features of those waging a real war on them. Terrorists are thus sanctified and martyrdom is encouraged.

Contemporary wars, state terror and the war on terror resemble terrorism in a number of other respects. Like terrorism, they ignore international and national legislations and are waged randomly. They claim to be responding in self-defense to prior or potential attacks by enemies. State representatives and terrorist leaders may claim that the random violence they use is a last resort, and that they are defending themselves by counter-attacking. Both can define the other party as "more terrorist," because both can claim that the other party has deprived them of every other means of interaction or negotiation; both can describe themselves as the victims of prior aggressions, rather than the aggressors. Despite the similarities, however, there is an obvious asymmetry between terrorism and counter-terrorism that needs to be examined.

The clash between two states endowed with comparable military strength may observe agreed conventional rules which are beneficial to both. These rules may provide a rational backdrop to the contenders, who will find useful the establishment of predicable uses of certain weapons and their impact, along with the precise ways in which prisoners of war will be treated. In asymmetrical wars, on the contrary, unconventional means are likely to be used by both parties: by the stronger as a way of expressing its unchallengeable superiority, and by the weaker as a way of redressing its manifest inferiority. Whichever party starts resorting to unconventional means, these will be used by the other in response, in an exchange whereby each claims to be drawn to such means by the enemy. In this respect, as all those involved end up resorting to similar illegal means, asymmetrical wars become totally criminal. By choosing asymmetrical wars, states accept to share the language of those they attempt to fight and extend "war against an organized enemy to war against a largely unarmed population" (Shaw 2001, 5).

Contemporary wars are, at the same time, becoming forms of paramilitary policing, non-Clausewitzian conflicts that do not involve the exclusive use of regular armed forces and do not entail distinctive, bilaterally accepted states of belligerence. For this reason, they are more likely to take place outside agreed rules and are bound to destroy the very principles in the name of which they are waged (Hirst 2001). They signal the failure of democracies to allow politics, in the classical sense of the term, "free play." They mark, simultaneously, a return to pre-political forms of conflict and the end of political possibility (Alexander 2004). The parties involved pursue a powerful religious legitimation, which is righteous and holy, and is arbitrarily derived from their respective tradition. "Drawing from sacred narratives of judgment, each tradition has produced ethical prophecies that legitimate violent means for holy ends, prophecies that culminate in apocalyptic visions of the pathway to paradise" (ibid., 93).

Holy wars, wars declared in the name of a god, attempt to avenge a sacrilege by imposing a destructive ban upon sinners. Through this type of war, the victors prove the superiority of their creed, therefore of their divinity, and hence their right to impose political and economic authority on the unfaithful. Contemporary holy wars engage conflicting theological doctrines that are trying to subjugate one another, and while they appear to be so distant, such doctrines, in fact, are very similar in their will to impose total subjugation. In this sense, while seeming to be the result of failed communication, they prove to be the highest possible form of communication, in that those involved utilize a similar religious vocabulary.

REDUCING POLITICAL VIOLENCE

That identities are formed through violence, as stated at the beginning of this paper, does not imply the ineluctable necessity that interactions are to remain connoted by violence. On the contrary, the typology sketched above aims to provide a preliminary orientation in a process that might reduce rather than justify the use of violence. In this sense, it is possible to operate a crucial "breakage" between our original constitution as social beings and the behavior we adopt in our current context. As Butler (2009, 167) contends: "It mat be that precisely because one is formed through violence, the responsibility not to

repeat the violence of one's formation is all the more pressing and important."

More attention is normally devoted to how terrorism springs, thrives and becomes durable, rather than how it declines and withers. As the end point of a funneling process, terrorism is said to find its inception in dispossessing or depriving conditions, which brew dissatisfaction that then turns into an ideology. Motivations arise, followed by mobilization and propaganda, accompanied by financial means, weapons and technology as resources (Smelser 2007). As for the decline of terrorism, a hypothetical process including the following stages has been identified. First, preemption through target hardening, imprisonment or killing of leaders. Second, deterrence in the form of harsher antiterrorist legislations. Third, burnout as one of the outcomes of harsher laws, which cause conflict among members and, ultimately, defections. Finally, backlash, resulting in the withering away of support or complicity the terrorist groups enjoy (Ross and Gurr 1989).

From the perspective adopted here, political violence is instead a form of joint action, in that it cannot be broken down into the separate acts composing it: in brief, terrorism cannot be separated from anti-terrorism. The different types of violence listed and discussed in this paper affect each other and determine the respective evolutions, shapes and intensity. More systemic or structural violence makes people more vulnerable and, at the same time, opens up novel opportunities for growing institutional violence. When social, economic and political arrangements cause increasing harm, those victimized experience a decline in their ability to react: their vulnerability, in other words, follows a cumulative trajectory. By vulnerability, here, it should be understood as a mélange of lack of material resources, lack of communication tools and lack of political representation that would be necessary for collective demands to be put forward.

A deficit of political representation causes a reduction of the space for opposition, and this, in turn, determines an expansion of the space for institutional violence. This type of political violence, as suggested above, consists of violations perpetrated by individuals and groups against their own official principles and philosophies, and it belongs to the family of the crimes of the powerful. With the consequent widening of the illegality of the powerful, the space for dissent becomes yet more restricted, with the dangerous result that political opponents may be led to adopt illicit means of contention. In this

way, the illegality of institutional violence will be mimicked by the illegality of aggrieved groups. The form of political violence, identified as group violence, will spread in the guise of outbursts and riots. But, as outbursts and riots will inevitably prove unsuccessful in bringing social change, a circular mechanism may then be triggered, whereby repression will select activists and protesters, pushing the most resolute toward armed struggle and, ultimately, terrorism. This process, in turn, will find scarce reactive energies among the ordinary population, which is made impotent by the lack of political representation and led to apathy and disinterest. Consensus and support for state agencies, as a consequence, may decline, leaving the field open to an increasing deployment of violence by state as well as non-state entities. Society will then act as a sheer spectator.

State and non-state agents may be emboldened by their success, and therefore intensify their violence as a way of achieving increasing power. On the other hand, they may radicalize their action by a reversal of fortunes, for example, a temporary defeat. This, in effect, might act as a warning that yet more radical forms of action are required. In both cases, however, what is strengthened is not their capacity to mobilize individual and collective forces, or sympathy and support for their violence. It is their military capacity and the general volume of warfare that might increase, leading state and non-state agents to distance themselves even more from the majority of social actors, their needs and hopes.

A general reduction of all types of political violence, therefore, could be produced, to start with by limiting systemic violence, refocusing on the vulnerability of ordinary citizens and attempting to minimize their deprivation and precariousness. The release of resources would make life possible for an increasing number of persons, which is not only an ethical requirement but also a civic obligation and, ultimately, a political necessity. Individuals and groups who flourish in a political sense constitute aggregations, express views that enrich the democratic process and formulate demands. Rather than limiting their action to the periodical electoral choice, they engage in dialogue with other forces and indirectly exercise a form of control or vigilance over institutional decisions affecting all. These aggregations include independent media and professionals, pressure groups, non-governmental organizations and social movements. Traditionally, these have played an important role as vehi-

cles for the expression of collective needs and sentiments, but also as umpires endowed with the critical faculty to articulate judgments. Social movements, for instance, express implicit judgments over issues and policies, creating boundaries between the goals and procedures that pursue the collective good and those that cause divisions and exclusion. Boundaries are also drawn on the ways in which demands are formulated and collective action is carried out. Most social movements may use force as a means of self-defense but would condemn the planning and organization of group violence, which would be likely to be assimilated to the military culture against which they fight. Social movements that mistrust leaderships and vanguards are reluctant to be represented by, or complicit with, armed minorities who purport to provide them with strategic guidance. Moreover, social movements may abstain from violent practices, so that the other types of political violence exercised by state actors, including war, can be more clearly exposed.

The decline of armed struggle and terrorism is simultaneous with the decline of systemic and institutional violence, and ultimately with the growth of social movements opposing all forms of political violence. The last decades have shown that armed organizations begin to collapse when some of their members feel that movements active in the civil society are no longer prepared to express their sympathy or complicity (Ruggiero 2010). They collapse when the political violence they express becomes too similar to the institutional violence against which social movements fight. Activists and militants can hardly be regarded as revolutionaries if they resemble their enemy and do what the power they want to replace does. Nor can one claim that the violence one expresses will eradicate violence from society, as this claim can too easily be enunciated by all factions, namely all representatives of the different types of political violence discussed here.

Resources granted to citizens would make them able to act politically, and, as such, to set up peaceful protest and negotiation, establish dialogue and pursue deliberative forms of democracy. These forms encourage the perception of public life as based on the interdependency of persons, but also entail the possibility of accessing the political realm and elaborating collective demands. Expanding the opportunity structure for groups devoid of representation can only be beneficial, as conduits for the expression of their grievances may develop along with less lethal means of expressing them.

The growth of social movements is therefore paramount in the process that might bring a general decline in political violence. Some may dislike this conclusion, as social movements convey ideas of protest, dissent, contentious politics. On the other hand, what distinguishes democratic systems is their specific capacity to respond to dissent and to deal with contentious politics.

Ultimately, democracy distinguishes itself from other regimes in that its elected political agents should be able to interact with challengers, with new political entities and their innovative collective action (Tilly 2004; 2007). Democracies, in brief, can be classified on the basis of the elasticity of their structures and the degree to which they encourage political processes and social dynamism leading to change.

CONCLUSION

Political violence is engrained in clashes around interests and values; it incorporates crime and punishment at the same time. Its intensity increases with the distance separating social groups and with fluctuations in the distribution of roles, resources and status: "nothing static causes conflict or crime" (Black 2011, 160). This paper has presented a typology of the different forms of political violence, linking them in a continuum and in an interdependent field of forces. Systemic and institutional violence have been described as expressions, respectively, of social, political and economic arrangements as well as of the illegality perpetrated by state agents. Group violence, manifested through crowd outbursts and riots, has been linked with rage and dissatisfaction, although not with general political programs. With armed struggle, we have entered the domain of politically organized violence, a type of violence the efficacy and duration of which rests on strong relationships with large social movements. Finally, terrorism and war have been characterized as random political violence targeting non-combatants or entire populations. As a strategy for the reduction of all forms of political violence, the creation of a reformed political arena has been advocated, one in which social movements thrive, and interactions among individuals and groups are guided by the awareness on their interdependency (Balibar 2015). In the course of history, clashes have often been accompanied by collective emancipation, liberation and democratization, particularly when politics has abandoned cruelty and embraced civility. In the current troubled times, it would be worth doing likewise.

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Politinis smurtas: tipologija

VINCENZO RUGGIERO

Santrauka

Šis straipsnis pateikia skirtingų politinio smurto formų tipologiją, susiedamas jas į tam tikrą kontinuumą ir tarpusavyje susijusių jėgų lauką. Įvardytosios formos yra sisteminis smurtas, institucinis smurtas, grupinis smurtas, ginkluota kova, terorizmas ir karas. Paskutinėje dalyje, pateikus diskusiją apie įtaką, kurią šios smurto rūšys daro viena kitai, pasiūloma strategija, kaip suderinti ir vienu metu jas mažinti.