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## Alternatives to retaliation (abstract)

Prisons are endpoint institutions on a line fed by state predatory actions.

Endpoint in a double sense: as a last stage after which the only option is to go back. Social reintegration, when the individual survives, means to go back; in another sense, endpoint means the naked power of the state, legitimate violence in all its ineluctable cruelty.

The expression predatory actions also has a double meaning: the responsibility of the state for the living wreckage of social life, which it sweeps up or is delivered to it; and the state's interest in making the social selection of who should be condemned to prison and who should not.

Alternatives to prison have, in practice, been mere extensions of prison reform; that is, a way to reinforce the legitimacy of the prison, responding to the overproduction of prisoners which has characterised past four decades.

Without making the critique of the disposition for retaliation which inspires the predatory column of the state that ends in the prisons, alternatives to prison will never be anything more than an overflow space for the social and institutional pressure for which the prisons are the final phase.

Prisons are neither a keystone of the combat on crime nor institutions which respect the law. Rather, they are a method the state employs to manage societies' insecurities. Societies submitted to the security of the state which prioritizes the security of the elites. The main criticism of alternative sentences is their supposedly being too easy on the condemned and, therefore, not being capable of satisfying social retaliatory needs.

The loss of freedom, in modern times, means the suspension of the individual right to private initiative. Yet, generally, it is applied to those whom, for not having access to means of production, are not in a position to make use of such a right. This is, therefore, a rhetorical way to remind everyone, incarcerated and free, that it is only their voluntary collaboration with the order imposed by the state which allows for its goodwill. Society, under threat of brutal retaliation, must behave as if the equality of the citizens written into the law were a reality.

The social sciences could allow themselves to analyse the state sectors responsible for the control of insecurities and fears through the manipulation of the disposition for retaliation. The proposals for alternatives to prison should be accompanied by studies about life alternatives for the victims of crime, including those which are committed in the prisons. Alternatives to the social polarisation of criminal impunity, for the businessmen, and of the punitive harshness for the populations for whom incarceration is commonplace. The social sciences could seek to understand how the social relation between those who possess the means of production and the workers devoid of such means depends upon the bitter social medicine for the retaliatory feelings caused by the insecurity and fear which characterises modern societies.