The Discrimination Imbedded in Social Theory

This paper seeks to underscore how present sociological characteristics favour the naturalizing of current discriminations. Starting with the example of the axiological discrimination between experts (observers) and the groups they themselves stratify (objects of study). Favouring the naturalization of the normal (i.e. objects of study whose behaviour is similar to that of the observers') and of moralism (i.e. the implicit strangeness imbedded in the social theories and the classifications of the objects of study). Favouring the search for the causes of misery and violence in individual free will, evading the configurational co-responsibility of social conditions in the construction of the mechanisms and environments with which people live and to which they react.

The dissimulation of intentions and socio-political views that legitimize institutional violence is one of the characteristics of our times. It is worthwhile remembering how the separation between the action and its representations, the nomination of those against whom violence may be exercised, is ancestral. What should the role of the social sciences be: simply to monitor stigmatized violence (its negative form) or to participate in the construction of violence as instrument of social orientation (sometimes positive others negative)?

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António Pedro Dores

The hyper specialization of the social sciences over the past few decades (Lahire 2012:319-356) accompanied social theory's disinterest for violence (Malešević 2010:17; Wieviorka, 2005:68). Forgotten among the elements judged relevant in characterizing society (Giddens 1985).

On the other hand, critical criminology, sociologically inspired, saw an expansion. Social conflicts are reduced to judicial disputes. Professional experts, jurists and their associates, transform social problems into problems of their field, like Kafka, reducing persons to mere spectators of what happens to them, in their lives and in the institutions (Ruggiero 2000:38). Like the economist and the criminologist, the sociologist stylizes the complexity of existence in the name of sociology's own specialized rational (according to Mouzelis (1995), social theory combines reductionist and reification processes – of individuals in the first instance and of the interpretation of behaviours in the second). These professions regulate themselves, living from the prerogative to organize, partially, the regulation of others. Alleging to work toward their integration and social wellbeing, professionals target disorganized population fringes. They fall back on essentialism to interpret social relations according to their disciplinary interests and fight to impose such manifestly partial, self-serving perspectives as comprehensive visions.

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formative co-responsibility of social conditions in the construction of the mechanisms and environments with which people live and to which they react.

Photograph 1.

In January of 2015, in the centre of Brussels, Capital of the European Union, beggars, kneeled on the ground with their heads bowed all day in order to elicit the charity of passers-by with the cup they held. Whether this was a commentary on consumerism; adoration of the money accumulating in the cup; a political statement as to Greece's humiliation is not known. Passers-by, questioned as to the meaning of that posture, typically shrugged with disinterest and posited: "might it not just be more profitable!?!" Could this non-social issue deserve sociological attention?

A few days earlier the Charlie Hebdo, Paris shooting had taken place. A hotel reception clerk identifying as Algerian related that event to what had led him to leave France, his place of birth, to seek refuge in Brussels: discrimination against people of African descent. Troubled by a certain inexpressible, ambiguous sympathy for the attackers, he prognosticated a civil war for France. The reason: "the contempt the French have for the 5 million North Africans living in France." (In 2001, following the 9/11 attacks, on a visit to New York, I recall African-Americans, in a similar state of mind, explaining that "those that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind.")

Discriminatory social configurations linger for centuries. In January of 2015 Syriza won elections in Greece demanding respect and dignity for the people. In June, with the default by the Greek state on its debt payment to the IMF, a state of verbal war had taken over the EU and the media. European public opinion was divided: should the Greeks (and other oppressed peoples) be promoted to equal partners or, for failing to respect the *status quo* and its hierarchy, should they be disqualified or expelled?

Each of these episodes reveals and camouflages tensions perhaps suppressed by selective memory, possibly mobilized politically to appeal to emotions (fights against poverty, terrorism, debt). When we process our actions, the outcome is different depending on whether we see the beggars, the aggressors, the bankrupt, as different from us (observers) or as like ourselves.

This paper will present mainstream references of the current sociological discussion on the definition of violence. Next it will discuss the social relevance of violence, as well as its sociological importance

to the questioning and development of social theory. Finally, taking into account the marginalization of the sociologies of emotions and bodies, on the one hand, and of time, money, and other systems of social orientation on the other, we discuss the necessity of not losing sight of, and of studying the specificity of human nature: people as part of an eminently sociable species and in the process of transformation. That discussion should raise the level of understanding of what is society and its discriminations.

The Sociological Theories of Violence

The most objective conception of violence limits it to those action which cause physical damage (Collins 2008:24-26). All that goes into producing violent situations is disregarded: physical violence is difficult and hard. Threats and symbolic violence, as mentioned by Bourdieu (2013), is easy and soft, writes Collins. In both cases violence carries a negative evaluation of its consequences and causes. In Collins' work, the microsociology of direct violence, distinct from the macrosociology, aims to escape the controversial uncertainties of the applications of the common sense of the word. Is violence the river or the banks? The actor or the situation? The individual or the institution?

To microsociology, as to the tabloid news, violence emerges from nothing, unpredictable, localised, rare, played out by a few violent individuals confronted with conducive situations (Collins 2008:370-411). If, as Collins observes in relation to direct violence, people avoid violence and it is the situations that force their involvement in violent acts, the efficient causes of violence are not violent: there is a chain of non-violent social actions that make violence difficult to avoid.

States of peace, compared with states of war, can be distinguished by, in the latter case, the suspension of the spontaneous avoidance of situations that render violence inevitable. In war, so that they will exercise their extraordinary competencies, there is freedom, impunity and honours for the rare violent individuals. The opportunities for people to become violent are multiplied. In a state of peace, however, the repression of the rare violent individuals does not impede the functioning of cults of violence, namely for the purposes of the established powers. There are military or militarized barracks and training camps, for activities euphemistically called of defence or security, hiding programmes producing rare professionalised violent individuals. People trained to avoid the non-violent instincts that condition every human being.

Both in war as in peace, preliminary violence (if we can call it that), is frequently concealed for the benefit of the *status quo*. The humiliations or the provocations of enemies, or merely of the helpless, make them subjects of a self-fulfilling prophecy: the special difficulty of orientation inherent to violent lives. Reinforced by secretes of war and of state.

The reductionist conception of violence works well for those who are protected from the street. Access to social positions is restricted. It requires what is deemed civilized behaviour, specifically non-violent behaviour (Elias 1990). For those to whom the sort of misery and exclusion described by Victor Hugo or Dostoyevsky are alien experiences, direct violence can only be instrumental, never expressive. From this perspective violence should be efficient and discrete. Generally such violence being delegated to professionals rather than exercised personally. Alternatively, it may be staged, such as in the form of a sport (Collins 2008:193-334).

According to Max Weber, such a conception misses certain social realities, such as the very foundations of the state. The monopoly on legitimate violence permits its masters to close their eyes

to certain violence and to disproportionally punish any threats based on their social origin: the state violence that buttresses social stratification, for example, protects wealthy neighbourhoods from assaults and assaults "problematic" neighbourhoods.

In his work on violence, Wieviorka (2005:217-218) expressed his conviction that it is necessary to step out of social theory for it to be possible to understand a) the various meanings of violence and b) the paradigms that organize violence in each period. Which is to say, sociological reductionism is not enough to explain the phenomena of violence. Therefore, research efforts should expand to include the normative study of *individual* motivations, according to Touraine's proposals. Of violence, it is necessary to know the origins and sources through a) the meanings of social life made possible and organized by b) dominant, institutionalised geostrategic planning.

Bourdieu (2013) conceptualizes symbolic violence like an anthropologist who recognises the gender discrimination imbedded in embodied social practices. Collins calls for a scientific study based on the physicality of violence, rather than on threats of violence. Wieviorka calls attention to the narrow limits of social theory in the study of violence. Nowhere is state repression, as violence, included in the analysis (Wieviorka 2005:281).

When a German university decided to create a space where social scientists interested in violence could interact and share knowledge (AAVV n.d.), it took into account interpersonal, interstate and intrastate violence. State violence against the people was not considered. This, of course, is what is prescribed by the dominant theory, but it omits a significant part of the problem.

As mentioned by Wieviorka at the 2010 ISA Congress in Gutenberg, the study of violence worries the leadership of social research institutions and can cause problems to academic careers. Research funding, as we will see in an example below, shows that the best track is to ignore the role that the state plays in the origins of violence. The acquiescence on the part of investigators to such constraints on scientific ethics is not exemplar, but corresponds to the general behaviour among all workers. Three mental health clinicians made a presentation at the June 22, 2015 Conference of the Observatory on Wellbeing (Congresso do Observatório das Condições de Vida) in Lisbon in which they gave a balance of their professional experiences. They revealed how, during the years of economic austerity, the patients they saw identified as one of the causes of their pathologies the breakdown of social relations between colleagues and with supervisors, which impacted the work atmosphere. Yet, none of them mentioned the political atmosphere, nor any possible ethical or social dysfunctions of their respective work activities.

The economic crisis generated by the financial crisis and the need to reorganize production and employment systems is on everyone's mind as the cause of generalized and diffused effects, as identified by Wilkinson and Pickett (2009). What is lacking is the imagination and energy to confront the social and political problems, such as the ecological limitations on growth, the effect of discrimination of immigrants, poverty and others.

It is probable that the more profound causes of the difficulties faced by, and dismissal of so many workers is the failure of the existing economic system to adapt to the possibilities and necessities of society. In today's Portugal, as per the indoctrination during the dictatorship of Salazar, the politics of the workers, as individuals, continue to be a preoccupation with work, or the job. Alienated from pressing global problems by dint of, despite undeniable democratic progress, remaining disqualified to participate in the decision process of common interests.

Social discrimination is imbedded in the very process of becoming aware of social inequalities. The classifications are limited to the facts, as if transformations did not take place or were impossible.

Some political scientists identify in this alienation of the decisions and inability to conceptualize problems, put together, the cause of the normalization of the political life: the confidence delegated in the system, that is, in the experts and the institutions. Holliday (2003) says that the alienation of politics and of the relationship with nature is the consequence of the division of labour; the consequence of the ignorance of specialized workers about the operation of complex systems of which they are an integral part. They know how to perform their specific task, but know nothing of what others do.

Might not sociologists, like other workers, also be victims of a confidence disconnected from certain realities, such as the functioning of political institutions and their respective armed forces?

Who, from their individual position, is in a situation to think and discuss anything outside of their respective specialization box (Amaral et al. 2008)? Who is willing to think of society as if their intervention not only can make a difference, but, above all, is required as an act of solidarity and participation? Why is it that the best sociologists, those o dare to contemplate society, are presented to the public, and other sociologists, as extraordinary individuals, some even being the subject of cults of personality?

None of the authors cited explains why violence as a subject is relegated to the background in social theory. Wieviorka recognizes violence as being outside of the scope of action of social theory. He does not explain how the study of violence can be made to take a place in social theory commensurate with its central importance to life in society. Why did Anthony Giddens' (1988) proposal to consider violence omnipresent not have any traction?

Social Relevance and the Sociology of Violence

The reaction of sociology to the ongoing civilizational crisis should not be limited to returning, in a specialized manner, to forgotten themes, such as violence, among others. Sociology must prepare its own transformation, participating in the social transformations in progress. One stated necessity is the opening up of the social sciences to a cognitive dialogue between not only its various disciplines and sub-disciplines, but also all the humanities and the sciences (Wallerstein 1996). The consideration of the proper place for new objects of study, such as violence, asks for the adoption of new perspectives (Giddens 1988). Experience shows that, to employ those perspectives, voluntary acts are not enough. It is necessary to know how to use the spirit of the time, now, to update prior proposals and critiques, with the future in mind.

Traditionally, sociology mines other sciences and schools of knowledge for resources in its own development. Can it not, therefore, learn to treat violence like physics treats time: a highly abstract cognitive instrument, produced in an evolutionary chain of practical orientation processes, each time more efficient and incorporated so as to become a second nature of society and, at the same time, have the capacity to holistically relate and integrate all levels of reality (Elias 1998:20-23)?

Like money, language, or time, violence too can be conceived of as a system of orientation both instrumental and cognitive, evolving and inherited. Violence unfolded in control of social and individual action, in wars, as a productive discipline in relations of production, etc. Human rights movements, pacifists, labour activists, environmentalists, feminists, all criticise various aspects of traditional violence, seeking to condition, transform, redirect that violence by reorienting institutional and individual actions to that end. Torture and persecutions, warmongering and discrimination,

exploitation and social inequalities, resource depletion and pollution, sexual abuse and patriarchy, are particular types of violence, more or less connected to each other, more or less specific. All of them also more or less promoted by other orientation systems, particularly families, political parties, state institutions and other forms of organization and perpetuation of power.

There are those who argue that fighting specific types of violence, the sexual abuse of children in this case, cannot be done efficiently without articulating the effort with the generative social conditions of violence, that which Wieviorka called the paradigm of violence. This particular proposal requires a more profound approach within a much greater timeframe than the lifespan of a single human being: five generations is the conceptual framework (AAVV 2013).

Violence is not just an abstract cognitive reference. Violence is experienced existentially by people. It is from the elaboration of that experience that tools for orientation have been constructed. The violence of the police forces or modern armed forces comes to substitute direct disorganized violence the more that symbolic violence is capable of orienting the lives of people and societies, based on previously accumulated experiences. For example, Nationalism created the double statute of national and non-national persons. From that differentiation arise the police forces, to organize the logic of violence among the citizenry. The armed forces specialize in violence between states. Therefore, violence is subject to epochal paradigms.

The social orientation capacity of violence is always uncertain: the imbalance of deployable force is important to give credibility to the threat of violence; however, no apparent imbalance guarantees the outcome. David and Goliath struggles are legendary, the India of Gandhi, the Vietnam of Ho Chi Minh, The South Africa of Mandela, the East Timor of Xanana Gusmão, and so on. Revolutions are feared. In the modern world the populations are actors at the same time abstracted and decisive in violent situations. It is this that explains the need for specialized police forces, as tools of modern state repression in compelling its citizens to conform to the designs of the dominant classes. In wars populations are also not spared, often becoming its principal victims as the fighting rages about them.

Institutional violence discriminates between the undifferentiated masses of people and the individuals known personally through their politics or the media. These latter are thought of as self-determined actors over a liquid magma of people (Bauman 2000). In a state of war the underprivileged are discriminated, from the powerful, by means of psychological tactics employed by the belligerents, through the media, convincing their respective peoples of the inhumanity of those under control of the enemy. The same process, on another scale, is used by police forces.

The orientation tools and processes promoted by violence result from the evaluations of the quality of that violence made by individuals, institutions, states, international bodies, populations, peoples. The synchronization of violent action – the way armed forces submit themselves to civil powers, for example – depends upon social configurations, that is, traditions, development, culture, economic and technological development, geostrategic alliances. There is no violence, nor concepts of the meaning of violence without manipulation of symbols given emotional weight by past experiences.

For example, presently, in the western world, speaking of violence has a negative connotation. The same is not true in times of war, when a willingness to sacrifice one's life is considered to be heroic and brings social prestige. Violence against one's own, in general, remains repugnant. Violence practiced by "ours" against "others" is generally viewed positively and lauded: as a defensive reaction, an exercise of power or an act of justice. In the face of the contradictions between opposites in a conflict, how might social science find a rational examination platform – a universal measuring pattern

for violence? And what criteria to employ to distinguish, as is done with cholesterol, between good violence, as in sport, for example, and bad violence, such as sexual abuse?

Finding answers to these questions is not merely a scientific exercise. Finding such answers is central to human evolution, and something to which science can contribute. To begin with science can recognize the many cognitive and social processes of production of tools for orientation that not only condition how people think but are incorporated in social infrastructures, such as transit and warning signs (one way, work ahead, rock fall, private property, state property, etc.).

In different societies, such as European aristocratic societies or colonized societies, violence has different uses and provokes different emotional responses. In "Scenes from the life of a knight," Norbert Elias (1990:239-250, vol. 1) explains how honour meant a willingness to face assaults and death which is now abhorrent to us. Emotions and symbols changed in obvious ways between aristocratic and bourgeois societies.

In spite of our being heirs of the Crusades and the Inquisition, we are incredulous in the face of current terrorist suicide attacks. Our history has been isolated from our present. History and present are used as bases of discrimination against other peoples, but they could just as easily be used as foundations for understanding and sympathy between adversaries.

Past, current and future violence is not a mere exchange of aggression between antagonistic individuals or groups. It is not only a type of communication in which the winners are aggressors and the losers victims. Violence is a much more complex phenomenon. Family and friends are, in many ways, those who may exercise most violence against those closest to themselves, sometimes with good intentions. The misunderstandings relating to violence, about who sought to avoid it and who provoked it, demonstrate how moral evaluations risk being Manichaean. From the viewpoint of its usefulness for cognitively sophisticated systems of orientation, violence, in the form of thereat, control, abuse, torture, signals and tests limits of behaviour which some want to, and can break, and others not. To paraphrase Randall Collins (2008:4-5), it is the situations that are violent, and people avoid as much as possible exercising the violence that the situations require (the exceptions prove the rule). Collins describes having confirmed how in violent situations, given the previous rule, it is above all the most defenceless people who are actively sought out to be victims of violence (Collins 2008:9-11). Presently, unarmed populations serve as targets of choice: in Iraq under the embargo, and then the war; in Syria, with 4 million refugees. Much as it happen before in Somalia, in Afghanistan, in Libya and many other places. And as it is happening to the Greek people under austerity, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, without an armed conflict.

The elderly, women and children are particularly frightened by violent situations because they are actively sought out as targets. But there is in violent situations something of a challenge to masculinity. A telluric appeal to the survival instinct, capable of transforming the spontaneous aversion to violence into a necessity of violent expression in defence of honour, which is nothing more than the defence of one's social status, which may be threatened, weakening or at risk of extinction.

It may seem strange that the most powerful are the greatest promotors of violence if instinctively violence is a last resort response to the most radical threats. A more careful analysis may provide understanding of how the artificiality of positions of power and their transfer to individuals makes them vulnerable. Something which may explain the common use of special security services by individuals in high positions, as well as the rhetoric between politicians as to their being warriors. Effectively, to a greater extent than less public figures, these individuals may be the target of attacks or have the necessity of resorting to police or military actions.

As long as history has been recorded, the affirmative aggressiveness of young males, during a particularly unstable part of life, has been provoked and moulded by older individuals for, for example, military purposes. Institutionalized violence directs, through leadership systems, the youthful need for social integration towards ends legitimated as natural. Humanity's evolution has generated religious and political systems capable of developing the cognitive legitimization of the actions of masses of youths, and therefore orient their behaviour. The capacity for collective action seems divine when it rouses charismatic leaders and identifies peoples. Leaders and identities establish Manichaean patterns between us and the others. The violence of the latter is always negative and malicious, the mirror image of our own, which generally we prefer to call reaction, defence, keeping order, rebuilding morale, revolution.

The fights for the legitimacy of violence, particularly hiding it behind many other words, protect the moral survival of the aggressors and, above all, of their leaders. This is as true in a close relational circles, where abused women and children frequently are not in a position to recognize themselves as being victims, as it is in cases of war, in which soldiers do not recognize their own war crimes. There is a long, ancient chain that connects the specie's spontaneous and instinctive nature relative to violence and the institutional methods to use it culturally.

The questions of gender, of the creation of social hierarchies, of physical and moral knowledge and repressions, are at the centre of the study of violence. Social discrimination sustained and contested through violence structures modern societies. Violence based on the evolution of instincts and characteristics of the human species, as a particular lifeform on Earth.

To better understand violence it will be necessary to substitute the dichotomy of society-individual (naturalized discrimination closed within itself) with the study of the interdependencies between nature, societies and individuals as inextricably linked processes (Elias 1998:17). Prior to communicating, people want and need to orient themselves in the environment and internally (improbably, according to Luhmann´s classic theory). People need to give meaning to their actions and to their lives, through the evaluation of habits and inherited dispositions (Bourdieu, 1979). In the virtual world, that of speech, of writing, the internet, society intellectually and laboriously develops recursive critiques (Corballis 2011), perhaps violent: this is the world of symbolic violence.

Reemtsma's definition of violence as "reduction to body" (2011:111-115), produces not only a better analysis of empirical cases (permits to integrate symbolic violence or Foucault's notion of bio-power) but also a more clear separation from moralism (the consequences of violence, greater or lesser reduction to body, are not dependent on the legitimacy of the causes).

This definition also permits us to see how social theory has been complacent with the social discriminations implicit in the use of Manichaean concepts of violence. Namely, in what pertains to the consequences of inequality of opportunity between genders, age groups, social classes, ethnicities, peoples. It allows for a critique of the tautologies that confirm the legitimacy of the violence used against the most vulnerable, at the same that it denounces the ancestral character at the base of institutional practices, implicitly dissimulated through self-justifying rhetoric.

Reduction to body defines violence as an effect, rather than a cause – the wickedness of others, generally the most fragile, exactly those who suffer the most violence throughout their lives. When situations escalate to violence it is because, rather than individuals rising to the situation, avoiding the use of force, they become disoriented as someone caught in a maze. With tension at a breaking point, they look for the weakest to inflict violence upon, exhausting the built up tension on the bodies – often to satisfy a need for vengeance.

Once violence is triggered, the action is fast and is over quikly. The exception being when the violence is systematically, professionally, or institutionally instigated (Bouthoul 1991). Peoples' separation from the natural world, where violent situations were controlled individually, has a parallel in the process of social exclusion: the construction of humans separated from the current pattern of humanity.

Human Nature

No one knows how the human race appeared on Earth. In any case, it is accepted that it was as it happened with all other species: through evolution. If there is an ecological niche sufficiently favourable for a determined life form to take hold, and if that life form has the capacity to reproduce, a new species can arise from other forms of life.

In the case of the human species we can establish that it exists, capable of adapting to virtually all ecological niches on Earth – uniquely, the human species has developed the capacity to artificially create the conditions of its own habitat. Culture became its second nature, being difficult to distinguish instincts and habits.

Nevertheless, it is possible to chance some assertions: human nature has always been social. As a result of the particulars of its evolution, the individuals of the human species do not survive outside of organized social frameworks. The young of the species are too fragile for too long for it to be possible otherwise.
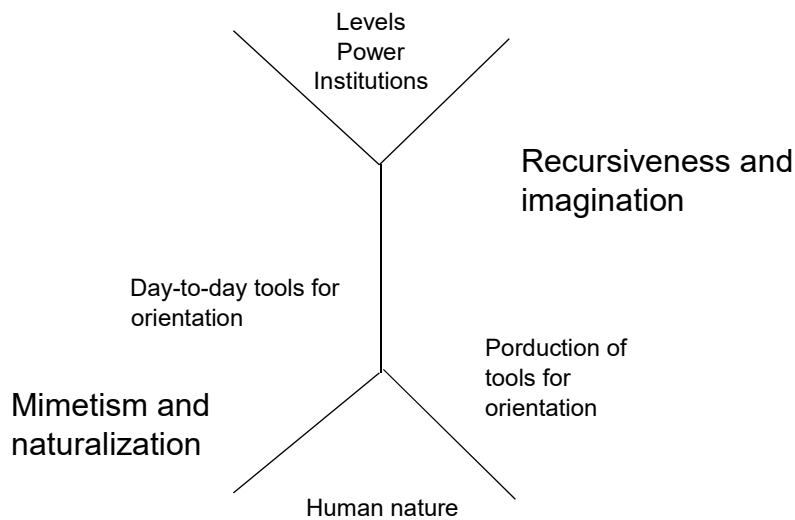
In the words of Virno (2014:79),

> "(…) the permanence of childhood characteristics even in adult individuals (…) [forces] man, environmentally disoriented as he is, to have to fight against a torrent of suggestions devoid of precise biological purpose (…). [This] 'openness to the world' (…) generates an uncertainty and disorientation which are never completely reversible."

The singular adaptability of the human species, due to disorientation, arises from its not very instinctual nature, leaving survival very dependent on learning and on the time necessary to produce it socially, in each generation and in each territory.

Figure 1.

Human nature and culture

Levels
Power
Institutions

Recursiveness and
imagination

Day-to-day tools for
orientation

Porduction of
tools for
orientation

Mimetism and
naturalization

Human nature

The left side of the diagram represents social reproduction and the right side social production, in practice merged with each other. They are institutionally regulated through social closure (Parkin 1979).

The human species has an acute need for protection. Along with the organization of childcare, without which there is no survival, societies organize their environmental disorientation, due to malleable and insufficient instincts, in the form of preparation for violence. Environmental violence and the violence of other human groups. The organization of violence continues to be a source of hierarchisation and power, in families, on the streets, in institutions, between states. In the bourgeois societies that organization of violence is legitimized by an ideology of peace, a way to conceal the intentions behind their bellicosity (Hirschman 1997). The doctrinal hope of constructing egalitarian societies, of free people and of universally fraternal relationships, has survived, with advances and setbacks, while gender, ethnic, social, hierarchical and, above all, dissimulated discrimination prevails. As Pierre Bourdieu (1979) discovered with respect to tastes.

Social theory has not been able to avoid the trap of the ideological dissimulations produced in modern societies, as classically described by Voltaire at *Candide*. Which is why Collins (2008:25-26) prefers to look at violence as a thing, rather than a process, so as to be able to employ more controlled methods of investigation. In his observations, Collins noted how posturing and threats of violence are used to demand social protection against violence, when in fact there was none. Actual violence, although appearing eminent and easy, present everywhere and very dangerous, is very rare. In the vast majority of the cases when it happens, physical harm is minimised by people's spontaneous reluctance in physically assaulting another. On the other hand, symbolic violence calls attention to how, in the day-to-day, habits of subordination are created, the emancipation from which requires confronting a cascade of threats of violence triggered by violation of the social norms. For example, the cases of women who denounce being victims of domestic abuse (AAVV, 2013) or the situation of deserters. Attempting to avoid social and institutionally legitimized violence triggers a torrent of added violence.

Instinctively there is great difficulty in exercising individual violence, much like bees which in using their stinger do it as the last act of their lives. Even in favourable situations, as during wars or enlistment in military campaigns (Collins, 2008:44; 53), the anti-violence instinct imposes itself on the circumstances. Minimization of risks, in case of social imposition of violence, establishes de principle of searching for the weakest upon whom to most safely exercise violence. On the other hand, the experience of violence is exciting and pleasurable to the extent that it is an affirmation of the individual's being, arising from the virtual or tangible encounter with one's mortality.

Juxtaposed to the infantile, naïve side of our species, always ready to experiment, to Rousseau's noble savage, is, in such an apparently contradictory manner, the extreme violence of Hobbes' *homo homini lupus*. The disorientation innate to the species generates, in individuals and societies, an instability that is transmitted to the environment. In a sort of boomerang effect. The noble savage and the *homo homini lupus* are two sides of the same coin.

Collectively, we are aware that violence may arise at any moment, without warning or known cause. We have always lived in risk societies. We know that when violence becomes epidemic survival is unpredictable. But our daily lives are full of hidden, common violence. All politicians know that their priority must be the protection of society by force – one of the principle functions of the state. A fact that legitimizes almost everything else, starting with the special protection of the more powerful and the general obligation (excepting those protected by the power) to collaborate with the collection of taxes. Instinctively, each person does what it can to escape violent situations (Collins, 2008:4-5), including the social structuring dynamics and the threats made by the privileged to use the state's own defence forces against its citizens. Disoriented, people and societies, in exchange for some orientation imposed by the most powerful, submit themselves. As with the Stockholm syndrome, the masses allow themselves to be oriented, sparing themselves that work, which they do not know how to do from moment to moment.

To better understand how even democracy has not been able to abolish hierarchies it is necessary to study human nature. For example, how has it been possible, in a historically singular period when children benefit from rights never before recognized, for child abuse to be so common in the privacy of families and institutions (AAVV 2013; Almeida, André, and Almeida 1999)? The dominant methods of the social sciences are manifestly insufficient to explain what might be going on. Not only insufficient but misleading. They are susceptible to being used to reinforce the dissimulation typically surrounding violence, negating it for lack of institutionally and socially recognized evidence.

For example, since 2004 it has become fashionable to study ideological radicalization as a cause of terrorism. In an evaluation of that state of that field of study, Daniel Pinéu and Christien Leuprecht agreed that the search for causes of terrorism in the intellectual life of its operatives is a limitation to understanding terrorism (roundtable Radicalization Leading to Violent Extremism). In the case of terrorism, according to the speakers, radical thinking does not explain the willingness to act (the vast majority of radicalized individuals does not practice nor plan terrorism, even if not feeling any repugnance in the face of certain acts of terrorism; in the same way that cases of extreme violence against enemies of Western states, such as Saddam Hussein or Bin Laden, are welcomed with joy in the West). Imagining that ideological radicalization leads to terrorism obscures possibilities of scientifically investigating the causes of the phenomenon. Daniel Pinéu cited the disappearance of funding for studies of state terrorism, including by Western states, in particular as it pertains to the instigation, training and financing of irregular militias to attack enemy states with which war has not been declared. To ignore the informal declaration of global war made, in the wake of the Cold War, by the West against radicalized individuals and groups seems particularly anachronistic to any study

of terrorist violence: it is as if, in studying a war, only the violence of one of the sides were deserving of note (inclusively, independently of intensity, duration, persistence, and institutional capacity).

Pinéu averred that the quality of the data to inform the issues in question (a reality equally emphasised by Leuprecht in his presentation) or even basic methodological errors were not the principal evaluation criteria used by funding sources. Rather, the principal criterion is the ideological conformity of the argument with what the funders wish to confirm. That is, the social sciences have not stood in opposition to these propaganda practices.

Loïc Wacquant (2000:4-17) denounced the effect of think tanks and of their evaluations in function of the financers' interests. In the field of policing, he cites, zero-tolerance policies were scientifically legitimized, without distinction of what was the associated corporate and political propaganda.

Conclusion

Modern thought, particularly as established by Descartes, radically negates the intimate relationship between nature and human beings – it systematically separates the elements from the systems, for example the cells and the human beings made up of them (Damásio 1994); as it separates the individuals from the societies (Elias, 1998:9).

It also makes relations between different types of people more difficult. The legitimization of observed separations was searched for in biology, in sociology, in evolutionary theory seen of as hierarchy. In spite of criticism, the scientific legitimization of discriminations continues to be pushed, supported as it is by popular culture. Politically it is incorrect, the realm of racist (sexist, classist) politics, to legitimize discrimination. To do it would be to recognize social intent, the latent phobias that need to be dealt with. Nevertheless, discrimination has not stopped to be regularly used to divide and rule, even as institutional racism is systematically denied – for example, in the case of immigrants (Palidda and Garcia (org.), 2010; Palidda (ed.), 2011).

Disguising political and social intentions and feelings that legitimize institutional violence is one of the characteristics of modern times (Hirschman, 1997). It is worthwhile to remember how the production of that separation, the naming of against whom violence can and should be practiced, is ancestral (Agamben 1998; Girard 1978). This production was modernized starting with the Age of Discovery, from which resulted the naturalization of the atavistic inferiority of the colonized peoples, ordered among each other according to a presumed level of docility. Similarly, the same criterion was and is used to justify violence against the poor of the colonizer societies.

The beggar in Brussels is, in fact, as invisible to the modern public as any colonized and "inferior" human being has ever been. He has a degree of transparency specific of naked life (Agamben, 1998). Never could he be understood as an anti-consumerist or anti-troika protestor. This in spite of, in theory, equality continuing to be a distinctive value of modernity. The same reasoning can be applied to the difficulty, near impossibility, of expression of the mistreated North-Africans in France or of the African-Americans, despite the success of civil-rights campaigns half a century prior to the election of a black president in the USA. It was necessary for the Greek state to be pressurised by debt blackmail for some to remind us how the German reparations to Greece for Nazi depredation became dead letter after WWII. Was it as contribution toward the recovery of German dignity lost with the military defeat, or due to the incapacity to collect given the disproportion of power between the two countries decimated by the same war?

The recent signs of political discrimination against the homeless, in European countries, are, for now, exceptions that strengthen the rule. But the question here is this: why does modern societies admit the existence of the homeless or the poor among its citizens? Better yet, how do societies function so as to make invisible the misery and repression that befalls so many? And for social theory, should not the abolishing of the conditions that permit our discriminatory indifference against the poor be an objective to explore, at least in the name of scientific rigor? Rather than merely confirming the persistence of inequalities, is it not incumbent upon social theory to uncover that which the moral repugnance against discrimination covers up: the discriminations themselves?

The definition of violence as a phenomenon of communication of physical characteristics, between an aggressor-emitter and a victim-receptor, imbedded in social surroundings to be determined, meets the aim of being apolitical and independent, as the ideal of journalism. It separates direct violence (popular, commonplace, and factual) from symbolic violence (mainstream, elitist, and dissimulated), inextricably linked in practice. The discriminatory effects of this artificial decupling typically unchecked in dominant social theory: the factual, if reductionist, observation that violence is found, above all, in the life of the weakest, drives social theory to conclude that the victims themselves are the cause of the violence. A reified ratiocination that is wrong. Thinking of violence as an effect shows the problem clearly: actions become perversely violent when they reach beings that cannot offer resistance. When there is resilience, violence can be educational, formative, sporting, positive. That is: the malice of the violence that infects the lives of the helpless is not just bad because of the violence. It is bad because those individuals live in states of weak resilience, to the contrary of people from other social groups.

The definition of violence as "reduction to body" calls for an understanding of how human nature and cultures are part of a whole: the human species in evolution, in the context of the evolution of life on Earth, and of the Earth in the universe. Like a worm, human existence expands in convulsions successively contractive and extensive. Both at the individual and social levels. At the physical level and the cultural level. Violence would be a phenomena inherent to the contractive phases of the human experience. As inevitable as pain is and, like it, serving purposes, sometimes mainly positive and, other times, negative. Many times the effects are ambiguous, or protracted in time. Time, pain and violence, as language and money, can be conceptualized as means of relation between nature, the individuals and the societies constituted by the species for its own orientation.

What should be the role of the social sciences: to simply monitor stigmatized violence (in its negative dimension) or to participate in the construction of violence as a tool for social orientation (sometimes positive and others negative)?

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