Underestimating the Political Dimension in Urban and Geopolitical Violence: A Possible Source of Bias in the Criminological Approach

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Abstract

In certain sociological and geopolitical studies of violence, the political dimensions of actors are often reduced to psychological and socioeconomic factors. This approach seems to presume that there is neither a subject nor an actor involved in violent expressions of power relations, but merely a "dominated" agent, even though the position achieved in production and reproduction networks, as understood in the Weberian *and* Baechlerian sense (i.e. as non-reducible to power), also depends on *personal* strategies and motivations. Indeed, as Marx emphasized in opposition to Feuerbach, humans are not merely the "products of circumstance." Otherwise we would be completely incapable of understanding occurrences, not only in so-called "difficult" neighborhoods, but also in Zimbabwe, Algeria, Mumbai, and elsewhere.

Keywords: sense of belonging, oath, motivation, affiliation, morphology, cohesion, symbolic, imaginary, norms, values, concealment, political dimension

Subestimar la dimensión política en la violencia urbana y geopolítica: una posible fuente de sesgo en el enfoque criminológico

Resumen

En ciertos estudios sociológicos y geopolíticos de la violencia, las dimensiones políticas de los actores a menudo se reducen a factores psicológicos y socioeconómicos. Este enfoque parece presumir que no hay un sujeto ni un actor involucrado en expresiones violentas de las relaciones de poder, sino simplemente un agente "domina-

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do", a pesar de la posición alcanzada en las redes de producción y reproducción, tal como se entiende en el sentido weberiano y baechleriano (es decir, como no reducible al poder), también depende de estrategias y motivaciones personales. De hecho, como Marx enfatizó en oposición a Feuerbach, los humanos no son simplemente los "productos de las circunstancias". De lo contrario, seríamos completamente incapaces de comprender los sucesos, no solo en los llamados barrios "difíciles", sino también en Zimbabue, Argelia, Mumbai y otros lugares.

Palabras clave: sentido de pertenencia, juramento, motivación, afiliación, morfología, cohesión, simbólico, imaginario, normas, valores, ocultamiento, dimensión política

低估城市和地缘政治暴力中的政治维度：犯罪学方法中一个可能的偏见源

摘要

在一些关于暴力的社会学研究与地缘政治研究中，行动者的政治维度经常被削弱为心理因素和社会经济因素。这种方法似乎假设，权力关系的暴力表现既不涉及一个主题，也不涉及一个行动者，仅仅涉及一个"占主导"的主体，即使是生产与再生产网络中获得的地位，正如与韦伯和巴舍勒的思路一样（即无法简化为权力），也取决于"个人的"策略和动机。的确，正如马克思反对费尔巴哈时强调的那样，人类不仅仅是"环境的产物"。不然我们将完全无法理解事件，不仅是那些所谓的"制造麻烦的"邻区发生的事件，还包括那些在津巴布韦、阿尔及利亚、孟买及其他地方出现的事件。

关键词：归属感，宣誓，动机，派系，形态学，凝聚力，象征性的，想象的，规范，价值观，隐瞒，政治维度

Introduction

In this paper, the political dimension will be first and foremost defined in its *general* morphological sense, as a *system* for organizing human life in society, beyond the historically situated social and cultural forms that determine its current state.[2] It will also be understood in its *narrow* (or specific) morphological sense as derived from the Greek *(politeia)* and European (*conjuratio*) meanings,[3] while being characterized by a permanent *polemos* for a "just division"[4] that concerns "the greatest number."[5]

This would certainly appear to be the form in which it is universalized today under the banner of *good governance;* which does not mean that this universalization occurs automatically, or even that it is desired (making it possible to *go beyond* the tensions raised by the work of Fukuyama and Huntington).

We thus observe that its *constitution* (or *nature*), in the sense of what it cannot not be—its quiddity[6]—has a dynamic element that is continuing to integrate the differences produced by history through trial and error. For example, *the other* (person or structure) is not only *an* other but also *my* other, as we have known since Hegel.[7] The issues that arise when classifying and delineating human moti-

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2   This article sits within the gnoseological framework defined by Jean Baechler (1985, 14 and 98) in his study of the concepts of morphology and in particular *régime* ["system"] along similar lines to those set out by Claude Lefort (1986, 8–9): "The research generated by the difference in forms of society, in the categories that make it possible to give them a reason and establish political judgment (...), [prohibit] politics from being designated a specific sector of social life; instead, [this research] implies the concept of a generating principle or set of generating principles for the relations that men maintain between themselves and with the world. The most eloquent account of this design is perhaps the most ancient. Plato (or Socrates) was perhaps the first to shape what I have just called a *form of society* into an idea, with his examination of the *politeia.* We are accustomed to translating the word into French as *régime* ["system or government"]. It is currently trapped in a restrictive meaning that risks leading us astray. As Léo Strauss has rightly observed, the word is only worth holding onto if we retain the full resonance it gains when used in the expression Ancien Régime. This combines the idea of a type of constitution with that of a style of existence or lifestyle."

3   Weber 1927, 319–20: "The occidental city arose through the establishment of a fraternity, the πολιτεία in antiquity, the *coniuratio* in the middle ages (...), the brotherhood in arms for mutual aid and protection, involving the usurpation of political power. (...) The *polis* is always the product of such a confraternity or synoecism, not always an actual settlement in proximity but a definite oath of brotherhood which signified that a common ritualistic meal is established and a ritualistic union formed and that only those had a part in this ritualistic group who buried their dead on the acropolis and had their dwellings in the city."

4   Delsol 2007, 3.

5   Bentham 1843, p. 142.

6   "The quiddity of a thing," as Ravaisson (2008, 512) beautifully puts it, "is not all it is, but merely all it cannot not be; it is the set of all the permanent and unalterable, primitive and underived elements, that persist through accidental modifications." See also note 3 by Jean Tricot in his French translation of the *Metaphysics* (Aristotle 1981, Vol. 1, 23, A, 3, paragraph 25).

7   1979, 357: *La théorie de l'être*, (NP, 112-113), § 92, (106) : « (...) C'est pourquoi l'être-autre n'est pas de l'indifférent extérieur à lui, mais son propre moment. (...) ». Voir également §45, pp.207-208.

vations are not—or not *only*—specific to a particular individual, class, structure, or era, beyond the variations in dissemination and the linguistic ways of expressing them.[8]

What is the *nature* of this other?[9] On the one hand, we can identify it as a *subject* (a person or structure) that belongs as an interdependent *agent*[10] to various networks of affiliative relations governing its status as a *moral person* in the legal and also Benthamite sense of deontology.[11] On the other hand, it is a question of

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8   This involves differentiating between relativity and relativism, and also logic and rationality. To respond (at least *relatively,* as it goes beyond the scope of this work) to Quine's objection, based on the work of Tarski, about the question of the truth of representation in general and of a given proposition in particular faced with empirical reality (1986), the problem is not so much the existence for example of different sorts of political life and different sorts of interaction with the presence of a "rabbit" (Quine 1977, 14, chapitre premier "Parler d'objets"), but that Reality XYZ may not only exist (like a stone, as Kant said) but be structurally and functionally active in *a* life and a *human* perception, i.e. not exclusively edible, like the vision of the rabbit discussed by Quine, which can for example tell the time in certain *realities,* as Lewis Carroll highlighted. Yet the difference between relativism and relativity on the one hand, and logic and rationality on the other, consists precisely in not making equivalent the fields of meaning, as does relativism—and in this sense Quine's thought cannot be said to be relativist as suggested, albeit tentatively, by a recent work on *social epistemology* (Bouvier and Conein 2007, 11)—since it consists of distinguishing the logical meaning that corresponds to a strict correlation between subject and predicate, cause and effect, from the rational meaning—which also includes its opposite, the irrational—and which corresponds instead to a meaning that goes beyond logic to move toward the interpretative, as demonstrated by Weber: that of a belief in certain actions even though it is not possible to verify their logical outcome. This includes the example considered by Raymond Boudon (1995) of the *fact* of dancing to make it rain. This is rational/irrational in the sense that there is indeed a reason to act, but it remains illogical in the sense that it is not claimed to work in a technical manner adequate for the demands of continuity reached by the pragmatic apparatus of the Western *techne,* also now universalizable. This implies that the effective correlation between dancing and raining from the morphological point of view of the human need for water must be *relativized* and not made equivalent to particular irrigation techniques. Thus the fact that electricity was invented in the West does not prevent its universalization, which is in no way a form of domination, even if *the historically situated form* of its production is of course questionable; just as there exist, have existed, and will exist different forms of life (mores) in society, which does not in itself contradict the idea that selection pressure *also* exists among species organized into a system and that a single one may withstand the storms of history and then spread precisely because it has the best *constitution* ... for example the democratic system, beyond the specific forms in which it is made particular (Baechler 1985; Boudon 2006).

9   Alain Besançon (1998, 75) defines the "political nature" of men as "their ability to form family ties, social ties, and organized relationships between the governing and the governed for the sake of forming a political community, a state."

10   Agent, in the sense of Weber, i.e. having "motivations" (Weber, 1995, T.1, 28, 34): chapitre premier, les concepts fondamentaux de la sociologie, §1. Notion de la sociologie et du « sens » de l'activité sociale. A. Fondements méthodologiques. 1. « (...) Nous entendons par « activité » (*Handeln*) un comportement humain (…) quand et pour autant que l'agent ou les agents lui communiquent un *sens* subjectif. Et par activité « sociale », l'activité qui, d'après son sens visé (*gemeinten Sinn*) par l'agent ou les agents, se rapporte au comportement d'autrui, par rapport auquel s'oriente son déroulement. » (...) 5. " (...) Nous « comprenons », parce que nous saisissons la *motivation (motivationsmässig)*, le sens qu'une personne a associé (...). Nous comprenons le mouvement du bûcheron ou l'acte d'épauler un fusil non seulement actuellement mais dans sa motivation, si nous savons que le bûcheron accomplit son acte (...) pour gagner sa vie (...) ».

11   Bentham 1834.

affiliation based on interaction,[12] i.e. of a subject also being an *actor* who is *capable of*[13] acting, understanding, and doing,[14] within the context of a group (from the couple to the state) as defined by the Parsonian model of institutional individualism,[15] and as currently understood for example by *social epistemology* in studying the degree of *naturalness.*[16]

This epistemological argument will be established as follows: in the light of various examples, we will assess the pertinence of analyzing a particular act or behavior (by a person or structure) in itself, not by simply describing a normative *ought*. In other words, we will consider a subject as the morphological sign of a *political* motivation to shape a reality in order to bind it to an affiliation and derive from it a particular status; and to do so irrespective of whether the historic social form in which it is *presented* varies across different individuals and societies.

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Political Affiliation Formalizes Status Affiliation

Yves Sintomer and Marie-Hélène Bacqué use the "*key concept*" of "*disaffiliation*" to study "former working-class towns in the Paris area," specifically Saint-Denis and Aubervilliers (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 217). The two authors observe that these neighborhoods must not be studied solely from the perspective of marginalization—with the integration/exclusion binomial in some sense replacing "*class conflict*" (ibid)—because the populations they study appear

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12 Weber (2019 [1921], 338-9): "(...) rulership is the chance that specific (or all) commands will be met with obedience on the part of a specifiable group of persons. It is not therefore each and every kind of chance of exercising 'power' and 'influence' over other people. In this sense, in the individual instance rulership ('authority') can also rely on the most varied motives for conformity: from dull habituation to purely purposively rational considerations. Present in every genuine relationship of rule is a specific minimum of willingness to obey, hence an (outward or inner) interest in obedience."

13 Julien Freund (1967, 37) states that the "specific objective of politics is determined based on the sense of a collective, i.e. it consists of the will of a political unit to preserve its integrity and independence in internal harmony and external security. (...) politics is also the place—but not the only place—where man attempts to give consistency to general and ultimate human ends, such as justice, freedom, happiness, etc." In *The Politics,* (IV, 4, 1291a, 15-20) Aristotle takes up the claim in Plato's *Republic* that a city is also *formed* "for the sake of the necessaries of life," one of which is "the common advantage" (III, 7, 1279a, 10), making it possible to lead a "good life" (I, 2, 1252b, 30). We should also not forget that for Aristotle his *Nicomachean Ethics* is "in a sense the study of Politics" in that the "Good," among others, "must be the end of the science of Politics" (I, 3), which he specifies in *The Politics* (I, 2, 1253a).

14 Baechler 2000.

15 Bourricaud 1977.

16 Bouvier and Conein 2007.

to be less in a position of *"exile"* (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 218) than in a process of weakening affiliation, itself understood as a *"social pact guaranteed by the state"* (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 218).

They thus observe that the former Communist suburb's affiliation *"to the wage society transitioned to an affiliation to the working-class town"* (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 220). They add that this affiliation:

> *not only relates here to the statistically significant proportion of working-class people in the population, but involves the existence of a collective identity founded on specific relations with work, modes of sociability, and an organizational network, crafted by a municipal politics in relative symbiosis with the population, and strengthened by strong local affiliations. (...) The strength of the PCF* [French Communist Party] *from the interwar period onward consisted in turning the social stigma attached to manual labor and living in the suburbs into a positive identity (...). In both its positive achievements and its stalemates, municipal communism constituted a material structure that in large part underpinned the organization of residents' lives in a counter-society, and was a source of symbolic identification that enabled them to face everyday deprivations, gave meaning to the contradictions of the present, and was thought to promise a different future* (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 220–1).

What we can take away from this is essentially that *"the existence of a collective identity"* results in the first instance from standing together, i.e. as a feeling of affiliation that is confirmed, established, and set down by and in a feeling of belonging, in this case to a *"counter-society"* inspired by a "*spirit of division*" (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 221).

As such, when the authors speak of affiliation to the working class *via* affiliation to the working-class town, it is crucial that within this "dual affiliation" (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 236), status affiliation on the one hand must be distinguished epistemologically from political affiliation on the other. Moreover, the latter must have primacy over the former since status affiliation is adopted *through* support for what the working-class town *represents* in terms of a counter-society and a spirit of division.

The authors emphasize this political reality, though only in part, when they observe that:

> *in this context, affiliation had a political dimension. Certainly, politics must not be reduced to the official political system, nor political affiliation to affiliation to this system. While a representative-based form is required for a social demand to truly carry weight in the political sphere, and while this form has its own logic, it is often merely*

a rationalization of practices and views that are largely established independently of it (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 222).

But when the authors go on to observe that disaffiliation—in their view the result of precarity and the loss of credibility of the spirit of division (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 222)—does not engender anomie but the conflict of norms (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 234), they seem to present this latter solely in terms of the power relations between "majoritarian" and "deviant" norms. But it is also and above all *dependent on the circumstances* of a conflict between, on the one hand, constitutive norms that embody the axiological and deontological values necessary to the morphology of a sociality, and on the other hand, divisive norms, i.e. those that symbolize a demand for the recognition of status that would stem from political recognition. In other words, the *divisive* political demand is not simply "civic"—for example in the demand for "participatory democracy" (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 240)—since its ideocratic/utopian or even theological/political dimensions could lead to the *violent* imposition of a counter-society, which could become a pole of attraction that eventually destabilizes the sociality of the morphology in question, if only at the micro level of a particular neighborhood, street, or building.

Thus, when the authors ask questions such as *"How do some troublemakers have a building, or even neighborhood, 'under their thumb'? Why is the neighborhood unable to spontaneously bring an end to such behavior?"* (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 233), they dismiss the idea that "*the explanation*" for such an inability is based "*on an illegal mafia-type structure, in which the population is trapped in the net of organized crime by fear and clientelism (...).*" They suggest instead that:

> *the latent fear of some residents can only be understood if we perceive that the handful of individuals committing the most serious acts of vandalism represent merely the tip of the iceberg of a larger group of young people who to some extent share their values and attitudes. The problem that some young people (that is, the majority of them, not simply the most "hardcore") pose to the other residents in general is not that they are acting outside the norm, but in accordance with other norms, which sometimes stand in such opposition to the dominant norms that they are unacceptable and incomprehensible to those who obey the latter. Rather than anomie, we should therefore speak of deviant norms and conflicts of norms. Taken to the extreme, the deviant norm makes integration into the rest of society without conflict almost impossible* (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 234).

But this explanation is limited solely to the nomological framework of the constructivist paradigm of social norms. It proposes the idea of norms that are deviant not in relation to the moral law of *ought* that is in some ways embodied by

the common law, but solely in relation to the idea of conflict, again presented as being between deviant norms and majoritarian norms, which in this case reduces the morphological necessity of the latter to a power relation, a dominant convention linked to a given conception of "the social order," rather than as nomological conditions from a morphological point of view.[17] The authors thus follow on from the work of Howard S. Becker, who in *Outsiders* proposes that:

> *deviance, far from being a quality inherent to the deviant, is a social construct involving the establishment of a majoritarian norm and the negative labelling of behaviors specific to a minoritarian subculture that is labelled as deviant. This dynamic involves the action of individuals ("moral entrepreneurs") who have decided, for one reason or another, to act in this way and to ensure the norm is applied once it is declared, meaning to exert pressure and sanctions on those who do not obey it* (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 234).

And when they discuss the role of these *"moral entrepreneurs,"* the two authors explain how the norms are disseminated and embodied. Thus, in the housing projects studied (Allende and Cochennec):

> *the formerly dominant group—broadly speaking, the working-class group—is increasingly unable to symbolically and materially remunerate and legitimize "normal" behavior. Moreover, while the internal organization of the dominant group is a key condition for its domination, the working-class group is too fragmented to impose its norms. The ineffectiveness of its power is shown by the fact that previously stigmatized behaviors are widespread and now represent a model that attracts (or at least does not repulse) a large proportion of young people* (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 235).

The authors, in summary, analyze the transmission of norms by subordinating their acceptance to the pressure of a hegemonic group,[18] in the sense that

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17 This evades the objection of François Chazel, who in his article "Retour sur l'orientation normative de l'action': Éléments pour une appréciation tempérée" (2001, 159) states that recognizing "a role for norms in no way means subscribing to the idea of wholesale determinism. Thus, a norm is neither a *slope* denoting a—supposed—underlying necessity, nor an *inclination* based on the acceptance of this necessity, but quite simply a *rule of action*. (...)." It is in no way contradictory to state that this latter *necessitates* morphological (and thus ontological) conditions of possibility and thus involves objective coalescences for this rule to be truly accepted and shared by the agents and actors considered.

18 The reader is referred to the collection of articles by Boudon et al. (2001) and in particular the article by Jean Baechler (*L'acceptation des normes*, 129), who states that the: "form of the norm inscribes it in a power relation, since there is a conjunction between a stated order and a hope of obedience. In a power relation, order, although as indispensable as its substance is to the norm, is secondary to obedience. (...). Following a norm means to obey it, just as disobeying means to violate it. From there, it appears that the reasons for the acceptance of norms are to be found in the motivation(s)

they do not analyze them in terms of an individual decision to obey[19] even though this fact *is* identifiable in the empirical analysis,[20] at least in relation to the legal institutions that support norms and do not simply defend them through control and repression—*"the vicious spiral of the police state"* (Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 237)—as the authors would have us believe when they build on the work of Loïs Wacquant. The latter proposes the idea of the *"prison state,"*[21] in specifying that if not the sole, then the primary objective of the state is to incarcerate, thus cutting to the quick of both the repression/prevention and transgression/sanction oppositions. The reality of this is faced by *all* political structures, as far back as the historical analysis of social forms goes.

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This reduction of the political and moral dimension of constructivist adherence to social norms can also be seen in another work by one of the authors, Marie-Hélène Bacqué, in her commentary on the personal testimony of a "gang leader," Lamence Madzou, when she relates the nature of his rebellion to the issue of the stigmatization of his "black" roots (Bacqué 2008, 194). And although Bacqué strongly emphasizes aspects of identity, these are perceived only in the reactive (Bacqué 2008, 202 et seq.), rather than the positive sense, i.e. with the aim of securing a more attractive way of life, one corresponding above all to a particular analysis of interhuman relations based on a desire for emancipation and thus self-determination (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 33).

Yet the actual testimony of this gang leader, the son of a Congolese teacher working at his country's embassy in Paris (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 13), who was good at French, very good at history (particularly mythology: Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 22), but not good at math, shows that it was in fighting that he felt *"accepted,"* even describing it as *"great"* (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 33). What has been called an overdetermination of political motivation preceded his change in status, as he took for his model of belonging (the one that *"stayed with"* him: Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 45) the story of the Zulu conqueror Shaka Zulu, who defeated the British army in South Africa. Madzou (who had seen the film version of this story) thus identified

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for obedience, in what it is that makes human actors, who are free to submit or not submit to an obligation, resolve to go in one direction rather than the other."

19   Baechler 2001, 129.

20   Thus Lucienne Bui Trong, (2003, 37) who led the "Urban Violence" team within the French domestic intelligence service from 1991 to 2001, has shown that in neighborhoods with the same unemployment rate, the relationship to violence varied depending on whether the mediatory role of institutions was still accepted, with their presence and actions not understood as coercion alone, but also as the embodiment of values and skills.

21   Bacqué and Sintomer 2001, 237.

politically with this *"young man, an illegitimate prince,"* who had gradually built up a reputation before his victory over the British. And it was by steeping himself in inspiration from this symbolic universe that Madzou obtained the *status* of a gang member. He recounts this as a technical detail: *"We became a gang because we were better organized, had greater numbers, had a hierarchy, and leadership"* (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 47). Their better organization and leadership inevitably turned them into a gang, even though they could have become a community organization. This decision cannot be explained by an automatic, but rather a political effect: it was with a view to achieving the political objective of being recognized as a vector of power that the gang status emerged.

And as Lamence Madzou seemed to have a talent for action and strategy, he became the *"leader"*:

> *A leader must be able to provide solutions. If he cannot provide answers, he paralyzes the group. (…). The leader and the people around him represent the core group that thinks and acts, the figureheads. They understand only too well the impact of a defeat: the troops are no longer motivated, no longer interested, and they leave. We needed victories for them to follow us, so they wouldn't lose interest. We had to be imaginative: he who wins is the one best able to manage men, their morale, and their stress* (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 48 et seq.).

Madzou then recounts his first stay in prison, aged fifteen, in 1987:

> *Juvenile detention, I later learned, was nicer than adult prison. But I had no interest at all in playing foosball or pinball. I was in there with a group of juveniles who I thought were useless, they were good for nothing. At the age of fifteen, I already had the mindset of a guy who has been dealt a few blows. I was already in charge of at least fifty to a hundred people; we did not have the same background* (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 60–1).

Finally, on his stay in a hostel following his incarceration, Madzou explains that he:

> *stayed for ten days and then got the hell out of there. I saw it as being for losers and felt out of place. There were young people there who I thought were idiots. They gave us tickets to the movies, a bit of pocket money. I wanted more. And the street was my world, I could take care of myself just fine. I think that must be in my nature: I want to take care of by myself, to fight, to win, and to prove to myself that I can do it and manage, without anyone's help. You always need help from people, but not like that. I found that being supported that way made people weak* (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 61).

The account of this former "gang leader" undoubtedly includes a whole set of reflections that act as a *deontology* for action (in the Benthamite sense). Far from describing someone who had lost his way, it recounts an unfulfilled desire to enter a particular profession that was compensated for by the gang, for want of a better alternative, as a form of escape. One of the possibilities for integration would have been for Madzou to go to military school (as others have been able to go on to Sciences Po with some success), and—at a time when he was looking to turn over a new leaf by working in the community sector—he also came up with the idea of working on a project with the army, before being deported to Congo:

> *My final initiative was a project with the army. We organized three days of careers presentations on a military base. In prison, I had done a placement at Base 110 in Creil, an airbase, and following this placement we spent one or two weeks at Saint-Cyr* [French military academy]. *There I had met the person who set up the placement, an admiral, and I got back in contact with him. The objective of the open day was to provide information to young people who might be interested in a career in the army* (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 133–134).

This raises several questions. Who *is* this *former* gang leader who does not see himself as a "loser" (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 61) and is drawn to a career in the military (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 133)? Notably, he is the son of a teacher. But while he reports being in prison in 1987 (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 60), Marie-Hélène Bacqué—who we should not forget was the instigator for the biography—refers to a "fall in social status," with his father unemployed (Bacqué 2008, 189). Yet this did not take place until 1992, strongly implying that the latter was not the cause of the former; she admits this (Bacqué 2008, 190) but argues for the role of a crisis of adolescence and exclusion. Thus, as "horrified" as she may be by violence (Bacqué 2008, 173–4) and as much as she speaks for example of "warlike values" (Bacqué 2008, 186), her analysis of gangs (Bacqué 2008, 184) remains constructivist, particularly when she links this trajectory to the decline of the French Communist Party (Bacqué 2008, 189), while it is unclear whether this had anything to do with Lamence Madzou's motivations. The gang leader's identity was not constructed on the basis of ethnicity—he did not identify with African culture (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 32)—but politics, since, as noted above, he identified with a Zulu prince (Madzou in Bacqué 2008, 45), and through his status as leader, his attraction to military strategy, and his desire to organize things.

Marie-Hélène Bacqué seems to speak in general terms, while conceding that her analysis is based only on one "black," rather than North-African, gang leader (Bacqué 2008, 197)—and one who furthermore does not see himself as such.[22] She

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22   On this issue, Lamence Madzou himself states: *"I'm of African origin and will never deny that, but I feel French. I don't have an ounce of African culture in me. That way of thinking, of acting, isn't part*

also explains that the history:

> *of young north Africans has longer-standing local roots, while a significant proportion of sub-Saharan families did not come to France until the 1980s (...). Their political and postcolonial heritage is not therefore the same: young North Africans had already benefitted from political experience in France, and it is no coincidence that the March for Equality and Against Racism in fall 1983 is often called the Marche des beurs* ["Arab march"]. (Bacqué 2008, 197).

Yet the young people with this other history are no less "stigmatized," if we look to this factor for understanding their lived experience in the here and now, while their relationship to identity is in fact much more strongly affected by a complex, competing relationship with French identity as a result of past events. It would therefore be wrong to say that these individuals are *merely* the mirror of a "social relationship," a statement based on unfounded assumptions, in the sense that it suggests their motivations for "division" are *merely* endured.

Let's take a look at a few examples.

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It is therefore odd to say the least, that some researchers have gone as far as characterizing the law against the wearing of overt religious symbols, including the Muslim veil, along with protests about refusals to sell pork and alcohol, as stemming from "Islamophobia" or an "Orientalist cliché." Thus Vincent Geisser (2003, 16) *singles out* the "Islamophobia" of Manuel Valls, the socialist mayor of Ivry, who in December 2002 *"opposed the decision of the new owner of the Franprix convenience store, Mohamed Djaziri, not to sell either pork or alcohol. Legally speaking, there is nothing to prevent someone from choosing which products to sell."* For this researcher, the shopkeeper's decision purely and simply embodies the *"essence of Islam"* (Geisser 2003, 17): *"These local tensions appear to signify a profoundly ambivalent relationship between French elected representatives and authorities and the essence of Islam,"* which is reductive. Unless we decide that it constitutes radical Islam, which takes an *integral* or literal approach to principles, how does the decision not to sell something express the *"essence of Islam"*? It should be noted the retailer's stance was not merely societal, circumscribed by the concept of religious and cultural affiliation, but *primarily* political, in the sense of constituting a physical and symbolic space that might eventually be frequented not by "all" Muslims in general, but precisely by those of them who reject the multiculturalism that would

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of me. (...). To us, it doesn't matter whether you're Arab or Black. We've experienced and shared so much together; for us, it was friendship that counted the most. (...). We were respected and listened to. Even if we scared people, we existed" (Madzou 2008, 32).

sell any object *indifferently,* as is the case for many Moroccan convenience stores.

Furthermore, and this is my key counterargument, this kind of reductionism is used to explain a lack of integration through the refusal to admit this "fact of being a Muslim," despite the fact that other work, such as that by Daniel Lefeuvre (2006, 199; 2008, 155) clearly demonstrates for example that the rejection of the Italians, Belgians, and Poles from the late nineteenth and to the mid-twentieth centuries was far more virulent in style, and far more xenophobic than racist in the sense that it was not a question of racial supremacy but of a refusal to see the other *take up space.* However, Lefeuvre's work fails to consider the specific nature of immigrant motivations (their speciation), in particular, whether or not they agree to alter some of their traditions—as in the case of the Christian and Jewish traditions—in order to better integrate into *another* shared history, notably one that is secular and Republican.

To that end, we will return to the work of Vincent Geisser, who reiterates his reductionism of the "essence of Islam" in relation to the issue of the Muslim veil. Here he lambasts the protests of certain *"high-profile"* individuals and uses the concept of a *"call to order"* developed by Daniel Lindenberg to characterize a *certain type* of recall to the values of the French Republic, which in Lindenberg's view constitutes a *new reaction* (Lindenberg 2002, 13–14). On the controversy over the Muslim veil, which began in 1989, Geisser thus writes:

> At the time, a number of intellectuals with a high media profile, including Élisabeth Badinter, Régis Debray, Alain Finkielkraut, Elisabeth de Fontenay, and Catherine Kintzler, had tried to *call to order* the socialist government by playing on the fear of Islam and drawing on all the orientalist clichés of the subjugation of the Muslim woman (…) (Geisser 2003, 18).

Notably, the author fails to specify that such a call, which he immediately charges with Islamophobia, was based on an almost universally uncontested report from the Stasi commission concluding that the overt demand to wear the so-called Muslim veil in schools had a *political,* and not simply a religious impact. And in any case, this latter aspect totally contradicts the *secular* (and not *secularist*) spirit of the Republican school, which is essentially based, at least formally, on an axiological neutrality that cannot be ignored in any evaluation.

It is also notable that the author again recognizes the "essence of Islam" in the wearing of the veil, which is highly questionable—for one can be a Muslim woman without wearing a veil—and systematically presents it as being impossible to equate this symbol to "female submission" (Geisser 2003, 31). This would be admissible without the author's systematic use of the negative, which amounts to ignoring the fact that in a certain number of cases, *identified* by the Stasi commission, wearing the veil was equated to oppression by these members *because it*

was imposed in certain places. It is also significant that Bernard Stasi and Alain Touraine, who were initially opposed to the idea of a law, changed their minds after hearing the testimony with which they were presented. But the author does not mention this, denying or reducing the specific nature of political Islam to the imaginary, fantastical construct of an *"ideology of withdrawal, of which the fear of Islam constitutes the driving force"* (Geisser 2003, 22).

As we see, and will focus on in more detail, the anti-Islamophobic analysis in fact poorly conceals a sociologist anthropocentrism that does not study the motivations of actors when they are hostile to the democratic system, as these are immediately presented—presumptively, paradigmatically, and condescendingly—as the reactions of victims to a specific rejection (although one experienced by previous immigrants). They are not considered as strategic elements of a political and tactical desire to reject the changes brought by modernity to the traditional relations between the sexes and statuses.

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For now, and more generally, let us note that in many sociological analyses of the issues of integration, their specifically political aspect is overlooked, in particular concerning certain demands. A number of field studies, often commissioned by institutional or municipal actors, do however open up several extremely interesting avenues of inquiry. In a study by Elisabeth Dugué and Barbara Rist entitled *Les frontières de la cité: Des jeunes entre pays d'origine et société dite 'd'accueil'* (2005),[23] this is shown by professionals working on employment and integration initiatives in a social housing project located in the heart of a ZUS (*zone urbaine sensible* or deprived urban area) in Seine-Saint-Denis:

> Young people from former colonies that retain strong links with French culture develop a particularly complex relationship between the country of origin and the host country. According to the social workers, they settle into a kind of blur in which they don't know what side of the Mediterranean they are on. One coordinator of the Mission Générale d'Insertion de l'Éducation Nationale (National Education Integration Project) described this position as follows: *"For example, there was this Tunisian kid in the ninth grade ... who was born in France and went back to Tunisia every two years for a month or two ... I asked him if he was going back to the country*

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23   http://pmb.cereq.fr/doc_num.php?explnum_id=1520 This study was part of the "Rencontres Jeunes & Sociétés en Europe et autour de la Méditerranée" seminar held on October 25, 2005. It was based on a survey conducted in 2001 and 2002 and statistically updated in 2004 in *Dans une zone urbaine sensible: Les acteurs de l'Education des jeunes en difficulté.* CEE/CNAM research report.

for his holidays. And he got it the wrong way round, he thought I was asking if he would return to France when he was over there … He got the suggestion the wrong way around … he was 'Tunisian' in France, and 'home' was over there! It wasn't here! That's the myth of return … The problem is rather that they're passing through here, that they will return 'to the country.' They are from there, and emigrated here. So they can't build things since they're from there and everything is over there' (Dugué and Rist 2005, 4).

We can see that this very ambivalence, which eludes any social causality—particularly in terms of determinist conditions—first and foremost considers the political dimension *as* a feeling of belonging. This explains how, on the one hand, mistakes in the teaching of history can exacerbate this ambivalence to the point of hardening identities, which I will discuss in detail in the following example.[24] On the other hand, the ambivalence can also be explained by the political significance assigned to arrival in France. This will be our focus here: I will thus argue that the arrival of *many* immigrants in France turned out not to be merely economic, but also *political*, in the sense that their relocation was motivated not only by the issue of living standards, but also of atmosphere (*Zeitgeist*), i.e. of freedom in its most qualitatively political sense, that of feeling oneself not only to exist but also *to be* able to influence one's own life and that of one's family, at least much more than in the country of origin, whose circumstances cannot be separated from the damage of colonialism. Thus many Kabyle people came to France to improve their living conditions and provide for their family back in the "village," *and* chose to remain there after 1962 to escape Arabization via Islamization (under Boumediene's ten thousand mosques program) during the 1970s and 80s.[25] Yet a common opinion is, *"France invited them to come over during the interwar period to take up unskilled jobs in industry and construction that native French people no longer wanted. They were thus the first sacrifices on the altar of deindustrialization, and their children were deprived, in turn, of the positive bearings required to integrate into society"* (Donzelot 2008, 11). This reduces the process of immigration to a single cause, by underestimating the specifically political dimension of the desire for a better life together. For example, in the country known as "Algeria"—assigned this name during French colonization in the 1830s—this political dimension was overlooked by those who came to power after 1962 and was strongly influenced by both Arab nationalism and communism (the Pabloists, as represented by Mohamed Harbi,

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24 A number of academic works thus go too far in the opposite direction, for example by omitting the Arab-Muslim colonization of Berber North Africa, and concealing its pre-Roman Christian roots, not to mention the often biased analysis of the Arab-Jewish conflict, in which Israel is often seen as the *sole* cause of this country's misfortunes. These various aspects of scholarly works are discussed in the books by Barbara Lefevbre and Eve Bonnivard (2005) and Emmanuel Brenner (2004), an analysis somewhat underestimated in the work by Michel Wieviorka (2005, 37).

25 Oulahbib 2007.

and the Trotskyists, including Ben Bella).

Furthermore, as seen above, the marginalization of children cannot be reduced to a mere lack of bearings that is also solely linked to the economic situation. First, because it is not a question of their having lost their way, as seen in the previous two examples and in the personal testimony of Lawrence Madzou, but rather of an ambivalence between two systems of bearings. Second, and in relation to economic immigration proper, Daniel Lefeuvre (2006, 158) clearly shows that *"contrary to the myth, French employers did not go over to recruit Algerian workers,"* and describes a veritable scam orchestrated by a number of conmen in Algeria who used the promise of a better life to lure over a workforce that was judged by employers—for example from 1920 to 1962—to be *"rather unstable and insufficiently productive."* In contrast, between 1945 and 1953 Moroccan workers were *"much praised, and constituted a valued and sought-after workforce"* (Lefeuvre 2006, 159), which directly undercuts the argument of racism, although this can indeed be identified in some cases (Lefeuvre 2006, 159). Lefeuvre thus asks: *"How do we explain the paradox of a workforce made to come over being hit by mass unemployment? In 1953, 115,000 of the 220,000 Algerians in France were unemployed, at a time when the official statistics recorded a total of 179,000 unfilled posts"* (Lefeuvre 2006, 159). Lefeuvre primarily explains immigration as a result of the demographic boom and the country's limited economic development *"at a time when the colonial system hindered opportunities for industrializing the colony and for bold agrarian reform"* (Lefeuvre 2006, 170 et seq.).[26]

Let us therefore consider the idea that, once it had thus become the provider for family still in their home country—Lefeuvre (2006, 174) also demonstrates that immigration to France was seen by politicians at the time as the way to maintain peace in Algeria—this population then stayed in France, even after independence in 1962, because it had a better standard of living there. However, in some cases, this was experienced as a certain *political* spirit of non-integration, in the sense of opting for voluntary non-integration due to the possibility of return. This involved not adopting, in the meantime, values and most importantly behaviors—such as the gradual emancipation of women—that were considered to be contrary to tradition, including Islamic values.

Another hypothesis to be considered is that, after 1962, when Algerian natives took Algerian nationality but stayed in France, and when they perceived that their new country was far from improving the situation at home, a multiform dissonance (*discrepancy*) emerged—as with some African nationals—in the sense of an increasingly painful tug between two value systems. This will be explored further in the next section.

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26   For a fuller analysis of the agricultural issues, see Goinard 2001, 138–67.

II

The November 2005 Riots

It should first be noted that statistics do not show that quantitatively perceptible levels of unemployment and deprivation *automatically* produce violence.[27] However, the majority of sociologists[28]—due to a hidden bias toward the automatic overdetermination of socioeconomic factors rather than politico-cultural and religious symbolic factors—systematically privilege these factors and thus immediately separate the political dimension, often reduced to an emotional reaction linked to a feeling of humiliation, from the specific meaning of identity-based malaise reported above, or the crisis of affiliation to French identity (recently embodied by whistling during the Marseillaise): *items* that elude empirical studies, which are in any case steered in advance to elude them. In other words, on the one hand, such studies reduce these problems of identity-based malaise, linked to the ambivalence previously described, to their uniquely socioeconomic aspects. On the other hand, they explain them by reducing the social relationship to institutional "symbolic violence," thus following the paradigm derived from Foucault and Bourdieu that presumptively reduces synthetic concepts of power and institutions solely to the aspects of conditioning and repression.[29]

Thus, in a collective work, the various authors persistently and insistently reduce the political motivation of actors to a reaction, an "emotion" (Mucchielli et al. 2007, 160). They fail to see it as a symptom of an identity-based dimension that expresses itself in attempts to appropriate certain elements of power (authority and strength). It is a symptom that wants to embody these latter, in addition to and in the place of the legally appointed agents. For example, they speak of "their" territory in relation to "urban violence," which this article qualifies according to the "eight-degree" classification set out by Lucienne Bui Trong (2000, 63) as acts indicating a capacity for *"collective, provocative, and destructive"* mobilization (Bui Trong 2000, 73). These are quite different from acts designed to *"seize the goods of the other, for personal use"* (Bui Trong 2000, 73). Bui Trong also explores how the concept of "territory" is used, stating on the one hand that when taken at face

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27 This is argued for example by Lucienne Bui Trong (2003, 37), who has shown that in neighborhoods with the same unemployment rate, the relationship to violence varied depending on whether the mediatory role of institutions was still accepted, with their presence and actions not understood according to the Foucaultian/Bourdieusian paradigm (Oulahbib 2002; 2003; 2006), as coercion stemming from a social and moral order that sought to bring into line the *social issue*, but rather as the embodiment of values and skills structured in institutions at a given social historic moment.

28 Such as Laurent Mucchielli, Laurent Bonelli, Stéphane Beaud, and Michel Pialoux (2007).

29 Oulahbib 2002; 2003; 2006.

value, *"vandalism quickly becomes a means of marking out space or expressing resentment,"* and on the other hand that:

> *collective violence also includes vindictive mobs rising up against anyone from outside the neighborhood, who has simply come to retrieve a stolen good. When a wronged owner turns up, those responsible for the offence rouse the neighborhood. No-one asks any questions but takes their side immediately, totally, and collectively, with neighborhood solidarity overriding all other considerations: without concern for investigation or truth, without even taking logic or the law into account, the entire group turns against those who are said to be enemies. One step further and the wandering travelers are attacked for having simply entered the territory (they force cars to stop and strip passengers of their belongings before stealing or damaging the vehicle)* (Bui Trong 2000, 65).

This violent marking out of territory involves not *only* seeing these behaviors as the impulse of victims of conditioned violence, but *also* as the expression of a *political* incivility seeking division from *another* reference system that often combines several cultural matrices, including—but not solely, contrary to certain urban myths—radical Islam. In short, deciding to destroy a kindergarten bus or a brand new gym can no longer be read as resulting solely from discontent. Depending on the circumstances, it must also and above all be seen as the will in the here and now if not to impose, then at least to live under another political order, sometimes underpinned by *true* appropriation of the territory: since the way in which this latter is organized does not meet certain expectations, why not occupy it in a different way? This does not mean the existence of long-held strategic political motivations, but rather demands that seek to come as close as possible to an imaginary world, like the one glorified by parents who have come to France from North Africa, the current decline of which is *still* attributed to the former colonial power. Particularly as, since 1954, and although considered to be inferior from the point of view of Arab-Muslim civilization,[30] the claim has been made that France destroyed an "Algeria" that was a "superpower" *before* 1830:

> Mouloud Kacem Naît Belkacem, a German-speaking leader of the FLN delegation in Bonn, did not hesitate in meetings to proclaim his cherished assertion that in 1830, Algeria was a "superpower" (Meynier 2002, 223).

Such a claim, which spreads like wild fire, cannot help but influence the perception of one's own sense of belonging to French identity, since even if it reaches a minority of people they may nevertheless play a liaison role in this symbolic

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30   Gilbert Meynier 2002, 220–23.

dimension. I therefore posit that it is because the latter cultivate such a state of mind that they exacerbate their exclusion, which is thought to be social in the first instance, but in fact, according to personal testimony, represents a refusal to integrate into an identity that is rejected due to its above characterization. A study by Claude Dubar comes to a similar conclusion:

> (...) Algerian independence brought about a paradoxical situation: the vast majority of Algerian immigrants in France rejected naturalization and became Algerians, or in other words foreigners. For them, the initial rupture inherent to the act of emigrating was thus intensified by this decision. The feeling of "defection from the community" and betrayal drove them to reinforce what seemed to be specific to the first generation of immigrants: the communitarian sentiment, the tendency to stay with one's own, the discourse of the hope of return, reinforcing family solidarities, maintaining the values and traditions of the country of origin in order to "remain true to oneself" and, above all, "control over the marriage of women." The Algerian immigrant, now a foreigner, was "torn between two worlds," i.e. "placed in an impossible situation."[31]

And this involves for example, by way of compensation, extracting all kinds of goods, including those relating to status, from the former colonial power, which is thought to owe a debt due to a glorified or conversely exacerbated history, such as that of the slavery of blacks in Africa (while the Arab-Muslim trade is systematically played down).[32] In this broad context, it is not surprising to see how this sequence plays out in reality in the account of Lamence Madzou (2008, 129), who explains that the relationship to violence can be instrumentalized in order to extract certain grants from the town hall:

> The violence grew. In 1996, there were riots, burned out buses, and clashes with the police. The residents of Corbeil felt like there was no real reaction despite the surge in burned out cars, burgled apartments, breaking and entering, and serial assaults. It felt like the municipal authority was focusing all its attention on the Tarterêts housing project, as if it were the only neighborhood with problems. The young people in Tarterêts were given all the advantages that the municipal authority could offer them: free vacations, a whole host of projects, help of all kinds. The young people in Montconseil felt like the more you broke, the more you got. So they followed suit.

It is therefore important not to see these clashes *only* as the effect of outsid-

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31   Dubar 2000, 188.

32   Tidiane N'Diaye 2008.

ers positioning themselves as interlocutors in order to extract a social status, but also and sometimes above all as a search for political recognition, in the sense of establishing an *imaginary* reciprocal relationship (in the sense of Durand 1969; 2003) with the elements of the former colonial power. This involves negotiating with them in almost the same way as freedom fighters seeking to legitimize their use of territory. Yet the 2007 book by Mucchielli et al. about the 2005 riots, does not establish such a correlation between the construction of identity and the relationship to violence. The events of the riots are described as follows:

> A profile of the rioters can be produced by studying the legal case files in the Seine-Saint-Denis region. They were exclusively boys, mostly between the ages of 16 and 21; almost all of French nationality and born in France, but the majority of "foreign descent," primarily North African. The rioters gave two sets of reasons for their anger. The first of these, not routinely mentioned, concerned the events that had triggered the riots, while the second, which recurred throughout their statements, did not concern the context of the riot but the everyday lived experience of these young people.
>
> Some rioters first mentioned the events in Clichy-sous-Bois, focusing on the fact that the police were responsible for them and that the Interior Minister had tried to hide this. But in reality, with one exception (a young man who had friends in Clichy), the initial tragedy was brought up with little emotion. Several focused however on the tear gas grenade thrown in the direction of the mosque and, again, it was less the grenade itself that outraged them than the lack of an apology from the police. In both cases, it was what was considered to be denial and lies on the part of the authorities that provoked indignation and the feeling of a moral legitimacy for the rioters' anger (Mucchielli 2007, 22 et seq.).

Thus several of them *"meanwhile focused on the tear gas grenade thrown in the direction of the mosque and, again, it was less the grenade itself that outraged them than the lack of an apology from the police."* This absolute search for an apology would appear less to indicate the expression of a humiliation produced by further "police violence"[33] against Islam, understood as a religion, but rather, evidence that Islam, symbolically embodying the relationship to their parents' country—as stated above, the majority of the rioters were of "North African" origin—*was* presented by the rioters as a *political* line not to be crossed between them (the French) and an "us" originating in the superior history described by Meynier in his description of FLN discourse. In other words, it would appear that

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33 Commissioner Bui Trong (2003, 65) relates that in over *"two-thirds of riots, the police are entirely absent from the origin of the event."*

in these strictly *imaginary* conditions, the supposedly reactive sentiment turns out to be political, in the sense of the identity of affiliation to *what is not only a religion* being violated. It is not therefore a psychological but *political* humiliation, in the sense of the warrior being able to take up the gauntlet because a grenade rolling on *one's soil* (that of the mosque) is equivalent to a *casus belli* that demands not civil apologies but in fact *diplomatic* ones, since Islam is unique in its legal connection between both religion and political *system* and personal and social life. This does not mean that all actors experience their relationship to the Islamic religion in the same way, particularly if it is a distant one, but it still represents an aspect of identity that is reinforced by the surrounding *doxa*, which overvalues it to the detriment of integration with French identity. This is already materialized in a lack of respect for institutions: as Lucienne Bui Trong (2003, 37) indicates, neighborhoods with the same unemployment rate, but a much lower rate of immigration, have a much less violent relationship to institutions. Yet for Mucchielli et al., this observation is instead perceived as originating solely in "stigmatization" (Mucchielli et al. 2007, 170) before they substitute this with the sociological and psychosociological dimensions of "exclusion" (Mucchielli et al. 2007, 164) and present "humiliation" as an explanatory primate/prism:

> It is as if in fact the need to *have the injustice of one's situation of humiliation globally recognized* overrides even the anger of having experienced a particular form of exclusion, discrimination, or violence (Mucchielli et al. 2007, 163).

I do not of course seek to downplay the genuine integration problems that are in part *also* related to the disconnect from systems of education and training, amid a particular techno-urban and media environment that gives a radio presenter much more symbolic "weight" than a teacher, or emulating dancing in a nightclub much more weight than school sports in which nothing is at stake, even if they are compulsory.[34] Nor to "stigmatize" by establishing *ad hoc* correlations between religion, culture, and violence. I do however want to confront an identity-based malaise that originates in a conflict of belonging for which the problem is also never *in oneself* but always and only in *the other* (police officer, bus driver, Jew, etc.).

Certainly, some young people mention difficulties at school, which may be of various kinds. First, it should not be forgotten that a confusion between intelligence and education makes all uneducated (and thus unqualified) people consider themselves to be idiots, and this can only foster "*hatred*" among some toward those who succeed, as an initial example, in exams. School-based violence is the most flagrant symptom of this, and now extends to attacks on young high school

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34 Which would of course require other field studies, of which this article attempts to consider the initial stages.

pupils celebrating the end of their written baccalaureat exams by young people from "difficult" neighborhoods. Second, we have also seen that a certain type of teaching can exacerbate these identity crises by stoking inaccurate analyses of the situation in the Middle East, and the glorified one-dimensional nature of North African identity (overlooking the fact that Andalusia, although glorified, was fiercely colonized). Meanwhile, a number of studies observe that the prerequisites for access to employment are based less on education than behavior—even simply turning up on time and having an appropriate attitude to various requests. When these two elements are combined, the crisis of affiliative identity overdetermines status affiliation, and for some can even reach a boiling point, particularly if fueled by national and foreign events.

Thus, the automatic link between lack of integration and violence cannot be considered pertinent. We observe for example that gang leaders, and above all those leading attacks, are well-integrated and educated. However, they prefer rupture due to a *political* desire to stand out from their peers in order to reinforce their feeling of belonging founded on this *imaginary* basis, which consists of various challenges to overcome.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

<p style="text-align:center">III</p>

The Specificity of Political Motivation and its Impact on Economic Development

Let us now turn to that other, more lethal form of violence represented by so-called "terrorist" attacks, which are also generally characterized as "social violence" and not, in the first instance, as *political* violence. What is the primary argument for "submerging" them in the vague concept of the "social"? Primarily, foregrounding the breakdown of traditional ways of life suggests that it is supposedly *they* that have in a way produced such radicalization. Historically, however, the permanent struggle between new and old traditions has always defined not only social relations to production but also political relations representing both the status linked to the social division of labor and also the symbolic forms of belonging that structure *the relation to the world* (via the imaginary, theological, or political order). This *struggle* (in the Greek sense of *polemos*) has always been the driver of history if we complete the Marxist formulation by considering it in its ontological permanency, rather than merely historicizing it by the weight of private property, which is in fact merely one of the aspects of this conflictual factor that can be perpetually identified, including as far as back as the reaches of human prehistory.

There are of course bloody conflicts in Africa with obvious social aspects. However, while these cannot be denied, they do not necessarily originate *only* from socioeconomic conditions, but also from the thirst for power, the desire to live as a warrior rather than a peasant or laborer/subordinate, and also the symbolic integration of models considered to be scientific, such as the Marxist-Leninist model. Hence the need to reintroduce the concept of human passion and recall the centrality of politics. Yet it seems to be rather underestimated that an individual can be African, North African, or Asian, *and* want to dominate the other by imposing on him one's way of seeing the world. Rejecting this secular fact, i.e. by overlooking such an influence on the Western historical form, equates to exaggerating or reducing factors solely to their sociohistorical and psychological dimensions, while sidelining the strictly political dimensions in the sense of belonging to a project of appropriation, in favor of a factorial unilateralism.

In fact, and through a strange paradox, the supposedly most comprehensive analyses of the resentments felt by various populations in the Global South fail to understand that states of consciousness may also—and perhaps above all, in this case—originate from strictly *political* motivations. These are represented by a rejection of change, a movement, a rejection of the foreign, a refusal to allow women or units of action (a person or structure) to make their own decisions; or instead, motivations that are constructed using sources other than religion alone.

The fact that the attacks in Pakistan are not solely a reaction to social deprivation is one that remains unfathomable to certain experts. Thus Bertrand Badie writes in his exploration of the endemic crisis of institutions in postcolonial states that this reveals not the way in which the universal concept of the rule of law is reflected institutionally, but its "importation," which is presented solely as <u>one</u> other dysfunction of the structure in question:

> The crisis of the state is even more marked in the Global South: the failure of the imported state and the universalization of the Western state have accompanied the process of decolonization. (...) Above all, this deprives international affairs of an essential point of liaison, since the collapse of governments in the Global South and the breakdown of institutions render the mechanisms of international regulation inoperable, including the old games of clientelism, while constituting a field day for a whole series of substitute actors: tribal or clan-based, religious, but also mafia-like, not to mention private militias (Badie 2006, 14–16).

It is odd to analyze the—secular—status of tribal, clan, and religious actors as one of "substitution" when these are the *permanent* elements of tribal, feudal, and seigniorial political structures (as the USA found out to its cost in Iraq). This rather underestimates the still-tribal way in which African, North African, and Middle Eastern societies function. It is also odd that Badie does not observe with-

in them the conflict between ancestral political and social structures and the structure of the democratic *system,* which may have originated in the West, but has now spread into this world as a method of good governance.

It is not a case of confounding the necessary ontological basis with the historically situated social form. Under these conditions, cultural diversity is not antinomic with the functional universality of the ontological elements that allow for the institutionalization, for example, of the separation of powers, which *is* the foundation of good governance.

Bertrand Badie does not seem to grasp this. He opposes for example the "multipolar" approach with the "classic" conception of geopolitics, even though the *realist* view of the *multipolar* existence of converging blocs, limited in fact by—but not only by—Hobbesian power effects, is not incompatible with the pluralist search for shared values that enable the human race to perceive itself as *one,* beyond inevitable differences; for example by general strengthening of interstate and transnational relations. But Badie dismisses this dialectic, which *sublates* (in the Hegelian sense of *Aufhebung*) the old universalism as too scientist and ethnocentrist, while also rejecting idealism. Instead, he proposes a classically deterministic paradigm by insisting for example on the fact that conventional interstate political violence:

> has now been overtaken by a new form of international violence, this time social in nature. This international social violence is the logical consequence of the lack of international social integration, the failures of development, and consequent material dissatisfactions, such as the humiliations suffered in conflict zones in the global space. (...) Embodied in the form of riots, civil wars, and targeted acts of violence, and leading to the normalization of terrorist acts, this social violence is accompanied by an international expression that is ready to identify the cause of all evils, and especially the lack of social integration, in power games, and in particular those of the *hegemon*. (...) Thus the international conflicts that arise from it rebel against the traditional modes of regulation: social violence is resistant to partnerships, negotiation, and the classic models of conflict resolution. It has made commonplace the many civil wars affecting Africa and plays a role in conflicts in the Middle East, benefiting from their stalemate, in Palestine, Iraq, and previously in Lebanon (...) (Badie 2006, 14–16).

Badie thus discards *political* nature, which he reduces to power. Yet it is possible to explain such acts of violence through the aggressiveness of *political* motivations, in that they want to achieve their end by any means necessary—the refusal to see certain traditions evolve has become *structural.* And yet this refusal has been described as *reactionary* when it derives from German, Italian, Japanese,

or French nationalism.

And while these motivations are stymied in their will to impose their own interpretation of belonging on the world, we must not see *this* as suffering a humiliation, as Dominique Moïsi (2008, 128) explains, but rather as a feeling of belonging to a political project (such as the Caliphate), which finds itself prevented from achieving its goal by a coalition of democratic nations. This *realist* analysis is also rejected by other experts, including Didier Bigo (2005, 53–100; and 2008[35]), who sees it instead as the reaction to a securitarian ideology established since 9/11, of which the true cause has also been called into question: was it not the *responsibility* of Western politics in general, and of the American administration in particular? And did it not signal the emergence of a "field of (in)security" whose institutionalization has created the "terrorist" object from scratch solely to satisfy sordid, covert power games? Moïsi (2008, 131) by no means takes such an ideological and unscientific approach, but primarily focuses on the "feeling of aggression" to explain certain violent reactions in the Muslim world, including the Parisian suburbs, without once considering that this feeling could *also* originate in a refusal, not to adapt to the West, but to *transform oneself*, as opposed to always projecting their own inconsistencies onto *an* other.

Conclusion

These various examples illustrate a *practical* underestimation of the political dimension in favor of an automatic overdetermination of environment. This cannot however explain *in itself* the abuses of oligarchy in place when it rejects all good governance, which is further presented as a "Western" view. Human development statistics are often therefore led when ranking variables toward explaining fragmented indicators for hunger,[36] living standards, health, and prison

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35   In line with Bertrand Badie, Bigo and his fellow collaborators in a book he recently edited (2008) relativize all motivation specific to Islamist actors, identifying as the sole primary factor an influence from society on some of the London bombers involved in the attack on July 7, 2005, as summarized by Bill Durodié (Bigo et al. 2008, 300): "*The heart of the problem is not therefore what pushes a minority from various backgrounds, including some fairly privileged backgrounds, to join extremist Islamic organizations, but rather why our societies and cultures are unable to offer ambitious, educated, and energetic young people a clear motivation and collective goal toward which they can direct their life and which will allow them to realize their aspirations. These individuals seek this goal and motivation elsewhere, including, for some, in arcane and perverted belief systems. In some ways, the nihilistic criminals who set off their rudimentary bombs in London in the summer of 2005 reflect the feelings of other discontented individuals in today's industrialized world. (...).*" Thus, unable to find their place, "discontent" supposedly pushes these individuals to turn themselves into suicidal machines: here we see that the factor X, the magic factor, the one behind this push, perfectly plays the role of the final driver, a hidden variable so useful for proving almost anything, up to the lack of a better political offer. It should be noted that Durodié describes the "belief systems" as "arcane and perverted" while they are in fact extremely clear and reasoned. This denies the serious *political* intention by psychologizing it in a way that is also inaccurate.

36   Sophie Bessis's work is the archetypal example of this (see for example Bessis 1981).

solely through concomitance. They do not admit that their genuine inadequacy is much more closely linked to the non-existence of the root causes, namely freedom of speech and freedom of choice, rather than simply the weakening of public effort, which is additionally corrupted by the non-existence of a genuine separation of powers and good governance.

In other words, the nature of the political *system* is far more the *root cause* of deprivation, and more generally of a lack of human development, than the excessive power of organizations like the CIA, although the monetarist reductions of public finances have rather worsened matters. Yet the reality of the latter—due in part to the concomitant crisis in statist and libertarian models, as seen in the unchecked securitization of the mortgages held by households on modest incomes—has been seen as solely responsible for people's misfortunes. However, it is not possible to overlook the fact that the sources of deprivation are *historically* generated by the drive to acquire goods, distinguished by Max Weber from capitalism,[37] that the *political* lack of good governance amplifies.

Finally, it is notable that this underestimation of the political dimension always subordinates the social sciences to the model of physics, whether Newtonian or quantum, because it posits movement, including living *and* human, as the only *automatic* product of given circumstances, i.e. manufacturing reactions or reflex stimuli (fury or humiliation) when they are interactions that involve a *relative* (not relativist) interplay between ends and means and results. In other words, not *all* motivations are automatically overdetermined in their substance by an existing structure (the environment); as such, the unit of action concerned (individual/group), while being interwoven within a system of interdependence (agent) *and* in a relational system of interactions (actor) is able to obtain the *power* not only to adapt, but also to transform the structure that *binds* it. Which means characterizing this transformation as *political* in the sense of wanting *this* segment of belonging to carry weight as the creator of history *and* status affiliation. These are precisely the terms of the political *system,* particularly when it is not reduced solely to the concept of power.

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37   Weber 2010, 236–7, and also note 7, 237: "A 'drive to acquire goods' has actually nothing whatsoever to do with capitalism, as little as has the 'pursuit of profit,' money, and the greatest possible gain. Such a striving has been found, and is to this day, among waiters, physicians, chauffeurs, artists, prostitutes, corrupt civil servants, soldiers, thieves, crusaders, gambling casino customers, and beggars. One can say that this pursuit of profit exists in all 'all sorts and conditions of men' (...), in all epochs, and in all countries of the globe. It can be seen both in the past and in the present wherever the objective possibility for it somehow exists. This naïve manner of conceptualizing capitalism by reference to a 'pursuit of gain' must be relegated to the kindergarten of cultural history methodology and abandoned once and for all. A fully unconstrained compulsion to acquire goods cannot be understood as synonymous with capitalism, and even less as its 'spirit.' (...) That which is *specific* to the West—[is] the rational organization of work (...)."