6 The decline of the legitimate monopoly of violence and the return of non-state warriors

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Introduction

For the last few decades, political sociology has focused on state-making. We are therefore quite ill equipped to understand the recent rise of non-state violence throughout the world. Even if states still seem to perform more violence than non-state actors, the latter's actions have come to significantly transform relationships between citizens and states. Existing frameworks predispose scholars to treat non-state violence too as an instrument of state-building. However, we need to consider whether non-state violence serves other purposes as well. This chapter will first point out how the post-9/11 world problematises one of sociology's major assumptions (the state's monopolisation of legitimate violence). It will then trace the social prehistory of non-state political violence to highlight continuities with today's intensifying religious violence. It will finally emphasise that the seemingly inevitable rise of non-state violence is inextricably tangled with the emergence of the subcontracting state. Neo-liberalisation aggravates the practico-ethical difficulties secular revolutionaries and religious radicals face (which I call 'the Fanonite dilemma' and 'the Qutbi dilemma').

The monopolisation of violence: social implications

War-making, military apparatuses and international military rivalry figure prominently in today's political sociology. This came about as a reaction to the sociology and political science of the postwar era: for quite different reasons, both tended to ignore the influence of militaries and violence on domestic social structure. Political science unduly focused on the former and sociology on the latter, whereas (according to the new political sociology) international violence and domestic social structure are tightly linked (Mann 1986; Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1992).

Charles Tilly's (1985) classic essay on war- and state-making as a form of racketeering was an expansion of Weber's (1958) seminal *Politics as a Vocation*, in that it more systematically raised the question of how violence was monopolised by national states and how that monopolisation was rendered legitimate. In this essay, as well as in his subsequent book *Coercion, Capital and European States*,

Tilly (1992: 25–31) argued that the monopolisation of legitimate violence was a quite contingent European process, but nevertheless became a template imitated throughout (or imposed on) the rest of the world (Tilly, 1985: 185). Even though Tilly was quite cynical of the initial dynamics that resulted in the monopolisation of legitimate violence, he also reached the conclusion that its unintended consequences ultimately culminated in political, even social, citizenship as we know it (ibid.: 171, 173, 181). However, in much of the world this monopolisation did not lead to the same structures of citizenship as in the West (Tilly, 1992: 182–183), mostly because military organisation was not built through state–citizen compacts (Tilly, 1985: 186; Tilly, 1992: 192–200). In Tilly's overall ethical-theoretical construction, the further spread of political and social citizenship depends on challenges to the state from within – without disrupting its monopoly of legitimate violence, which appears to be the precondition of all modern civilisation. If we accept Tilly's line of reasoning, but also bring in to the picture dynamics which political sociology has been ignoring (decline of monopolisation), we are faced with the possibility that the current decentring of violence is disastrous beyond its immediate impact on security.

In similar fashion, Michael Mann argued that the form (and intensity) of military violence is one of the most determining forces in history. For instance, the more solid paramilitary and military organisation of the fascists allowed them to triumph over socialists in the interwar era (Mann, 2012: 322–323 and passim). But more broadly than that, escalating global violence (especially World War I) *caused* the interwar authoritarian upsurge itself: fascist violence was possible on a mass scale due to mass mobilising war, which had given a solidaristic, organic twist to citizenship (ibid.: 330–331). World War I also paved the way for fascism by building up frustration among defeated officers and weakening centralised militaries in the face of paramilitaries (in terms of capacity, unity and spirit). Mann brings his theorisation of fascism full circle by analysing its cult of violence and the 'New Man': what enabled the fascists to intervene effectively in Europe's economic and political crises (and also to defeat socialists, the only other actors equipped and willing to address the crises) was something lacking in all of their opponents – a deep and unwavering belief in the positive force of violence.
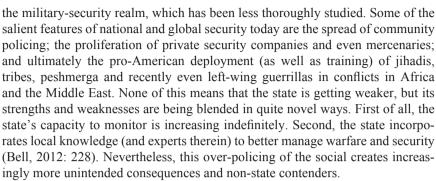
Even though these are indispensable contributions to the understanding of violence, they exaggerate the centrality of the state. Even Mann's later work, which recognises that much violence in the twentieth century was perpetrated by paramilitaries, assumes a state-directedness, as in his analysis of fascism (where the ultimate goal of paramilitary violence was to bolster the military-state apparatus). Have we today come to a point where (even when the professed goal of the non-state warriors is establishing a state) violent vectors that escape, evade or transcend the state need to be theorised autonomously?

The rise of the subcontracting-securitisation state

The state's transfer of its modern duties to private and semi-private agents in the economic realm, thoroughly analysed by scholars, has a strong parallel in

the military-security realm, which has been less thoroughly studied. Some of the salient features of national and global security today are the spread of community policing; the proliferation of private security companies and even mercenaries; and ultimately the pro-American deployment (as well as training) of jihadis, tribes, peshmerga and recently even left-wing guerrillas in conflicts in Africa and the Middle East. None of this means that the state is getting weaker, but its strengths and weaknesses are being blended in quite novel ways. First of all, the state's capacity to monitor is increasing indefinitely. Second, the state incorporates local knowledge (and experts therein) to better manage warfare and security (Bell, 2012: 228). Nevertheless, this over-policing of the social creates increasingly more unintended consequences and non-state contenders.

As surveillance techniques and embedded social scientists/journalists turn out to be far from efficient methods of putting down insurgency, the expanding subcontracting state turns to local fighters to defeat its enemies in occupied regions. This situation culminates in one of our age's most prominent paradoxes. As all states speak with one voice against 'terrorism', perhaps the dominant negative political trope of our times, they also accuse each other of supporting 'terrorist' organisations. They publicly (and vociferously) deny the logic that 'one's freedom fighter is another's terrorist', but this cannot hide their common predicament with others: increasing technical and ethical reliance on non-state warriors.

Biopolitics, nomadology and 9/11

This indeterminacy in the capacity of the state (and established military apparatuses) to effectively monopolise legitimate violence turns attention to non-state warriors. In mainstream parlance and scholarship, these have been called terrorists, rebels, gang leaders, warlords and insurgents, labels which draw attention to the blurriness of boundaries between different types of fighters and the difficulty of specifying them (as distinct from the easier-to-identify supervillain of the twentieth century, the Communist). While mainstream political science and security studies overemphasise the otherness of this 'unspecified enemy', varieties of poststructuralism enable us to see constitutive links between the subcontracting state and non-state warriors. Michel Foucault's arguments draw attention to the centrality of violence to modern governmentality, whereas Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari shed further light on the diffusion of violence beyond the state.

Inspired by Foucault's lectures on bio-politics and governmentality, social science and humanities scholars have started to analyse war and counterinsurgency as methods of population management. Scholars have argued that the endless expansion of liberal government (as a form of power that seeks to both render the population healthier and more productive overall, but at the same time protect the liberties of the individual and nudge him/her towards perfection) necessarily results in war: liberal government cannot tolerate what is outside its boundaries. It includes all that it can, and seeks to obliterate the rest (Duffield, 2001; Evans, 2010). Going one step further, and inspired by the works of Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt and Giorgio Agamben, others have argued that sovereignty is first and

foremost defined by the modern state's right to (arbitrarily, illegally) kill anyone who stands in the way of population management. Whereas in political sociology concentration camps and genocide constitute 'the dark side of democracy' – the specific occurrence of which needs to be scientifically explained and the frequency of which will decline as modernity spreads and stabilises (Mann, 2005: 4–5) – according to Foucaultians they 'are inscribed in the way all modern states function' (Mbembe, 2003).

While there is much that intersects with the state-centred literature here, a corollary to this analysis (as especially inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's 'nomadology' approach) is a focus on the ongoing significance of non-state violence. Whereas anti-disciplinary and anti-bio-politics forces remain under-theorised in Foucault (and get handled mostly as evasion of and escape from power),[1] Deleuze and Guattari (1987) come closer to a more substantive conceptualisation of what falls outside sovereign, disciplinary and governmental forms of power. This 'outside', they argue, is the real source of violence. According to Deleuze and Guattari, war and violence *prevent* state formation, rather than leading to it (yet both are usually appropriated and instrumentalised by the state).

Even though the 'war machine' is associated with the double evils of capitalism and the state in activist parlance, Deleuze and Guattari argue (drawing on anthropology and archaeology) that it is the non-hierarchical nomadic bands which are at the historical roots of the war machine. Nomad packs inevitably clash with the state (which strives to sedentarise them). War, then, is a necessary 'supplement' to the war machine, but is not its objective. The war machine's real objective is the population/occupation of space (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 417). The war machine is not produced by the state, but by nomads. The proper repressive organisations of the state are the police and the prison (ibid.: 418). War becomes the object of the war machine only when it is appropriated by the state. Capitalism further perfects the state's appropriation and politicisation of the war machine. This ultimately results in fascism and total war; but what follows fascism and total war is even 'more terrible': the state's full control of everything ('total peace' against 'terror', which has characterised the mid- to late twentieth century). The globalised war machine's current other, 'the unspecified enemy', is full of potentials. Revolution is reinterpreted in this perspective as the re-emergence of nomadic forces (guerrilla activities, minority struggles and rhizomic art) and their liberation from the state (ibid.: 422–424).

The event that ushered in the third millennium, the attacks of 11 September 2001, lends further credence to poststructuralist arguments regarding violence. The networks, techniques and organisations (most remarkably, Al-Qaeda) that led to 11 September were already in the making, but they had not yet attracted much mainstream public and policy attention. Zygmunt Bauman provocatively argued that the 9/11 attacks brought about the end of 'territorial' politics, which had determined the fate of Europe (and increasingly the whole world) for most of the second millennium. It is no accident that territory constitutes a core part of Weber's definition of the state (and much of the unconscious of political sociology). Bauman emphasises that huge militaries and endless destructive capacity

are no longer guarantors of security for people living within the territories of the stronger states, for we live in 'frontierland' conditions where the 'agility and cunning' of state and non-state warriors matter as much (Baumann, 2002: 83). The major wars no longer involve much battle, and the most striking operations are those of trial-and-error and hit-and-run (see also Mbembe, 2003: 30–31). Under these conditions, what separates the state from the non-state becomes intensely fuzzy as '[troops] and paramilitaries readily change their allegiances, while the dividing line between nonbelligerents and those in active service is tenuous and easily shifted' (Bauman, 2002: 85).

Long before the current (2011–2016) deadlock in Syria, poststructuralist literature on violence predicted that the most effective means in the hands of established states would be funding, arming and inciting yet other 'terrorists' to defeat the immediate terrorist threats. This would, however, further reinforce frontierland conditions and lead to an ever more intense and unwinnable war against *terrorism* itself (ibid.: 86). In sum, both the security state *and* terrorism are bound to expand indefinitely.

These analyses do not lead to clear-cut prescriptions. A handful of these scholars (most remarkably Bauman) prefer old-style modernist resolutions (based on the rule of law, but now generalised to the whole globe); in other words, they subscribe to the analytical angles but not the ethics of postmodernity. This resolution would globalise rather than undermine Tillyan links between the monopolisation of violence and expanding (political and social) citizenship.

Many poststructuralists, by contrast, remain rather ambivalent regarding any resolution of this crisis and share Foucault's hostility to prescriptions (and therefore tend to avoid questions of citizenship). An increasingly prominent tendency among Foucault- and Deleuze-inspired scholars, however, is sympathy with (if not always outright justification of) violence against centralised and decentralised power, especially when it comes in the name of 'self-defence' (of desperate subordinated groups) against either the state or the paramilitaries.[2]

The fascination with non-state violence is not restricted to scholars, but is a remarkable 'structure of feeling', as even the quickest glance at popular culture shows. Films like *Anonymous* and *The Matrix* glorify heroic individuals who stand outside of structures and power relations (most crucially, states, companies and political organisations) and engage in theatrical feasts of destruction. What is more, such films are not only means of entertainment. In our times, entertainment blends into politics.[3] *Anonymous*, for example, has inspired a network-movement of highly skilled hackers. They not only (technologically) attack authoritarian states and powerful companies, but also participate (with Guy Fawkes masks) in violent and nonviolent protest throughout the globe.

Performative, entertaining violence is arguably the spirit of our spiritless age: while these films and movements have a left-wing 'tone', it is quite easy to notice traces of the same spirit in jihadis. As distinct from state violence (hierarchically coordinated and organised in a unitary way by one centre of command), these *performative* forms of violence are also *rhizomic* (for rhizomes, see Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 6–10): they are perpetuated by a multiplicity of heterogeneous,

de-territorialised cells, which are contingently connected to each other. Is this resemblance between jihadi and some left-wing violence accidental?

Violence as social struggle: the Fanonite dilemma

An analysis of two apparently incommensurable ideological tendencies, Marxism and Islamism, demonstrates significant overlaps and differences in left- and right-wing mobilisations, constructions and justifications of violence. In classical Marxist scholarship, violence was handled as a (usually) necessary but mostly instrumental tool of class struggle. Engels famously called force/violence the 'midwife' of history,[4] underlining its facilitating (yet non-constitutive) role. Marx, Engels and Lenin perceived violence to be mostly unavoidable due to the inevitability of upper-class (violent) resistance.[5] Still, they granted the possibility of a peaceful revolution where and when the dominant class and/or the state lacks capacity for repression (Schaff, 1973: 266–267).

A parallel (instrumentalist) understanding of violence has been reproduced in most of (Western) Marxist and neo-Marxist literature.[6] Even perspectives that seek to thoroughly integrate Weber and Marx (such as the world systems perspective) tend to take wars as the continuation of politics by other means (though politics is redefined, in Weberian fashion, based on interstate interactions, rather than solely class struggle). World systems scholars' analysis of wars and violent social struggle appears to have great predictive value, as demonstrated by the unfolding (though as yet unfinalised) fulfilment of their prophecies regarding a coming world war in the 2020s (Chase-Dunn and Podobnik, 1995). While powerful in terms of predicting the amount and timing of political violence that we might expect throughout the globe, this perspective has less to tell us in terms of what kinds of violence are likely to predominate (with what level of material and symbolic effectiveness).

Nevertheless, another strand of Marxism (less reputable in the West and the academia, but relatively more influential outside the West and in political circles) grants a much more constitutive role to violence. Maoism (in its Chinese, Third World and Western incarnations) is relatively more invested in displays of destructive violence. In China itself, violence was *constitutive* of class struggle in at least two major ways (the Long Walk, which created a class of peasants out of dispersed family holdings; and the Cultural Revolution, when Mao galvanised the youth to violence to prevent a Soviet-type bureaucratisation).

A parallel development was the Cuban Revolution, which initiated Latin American and global waves of guerrilla activity (Wickham-Crowley, 2014), where *foco* (tightly knit cells, rather than mass organisations) broke 'artificial balances' through spectacular, heroic violence (dubbed 'vanguard war'). With Chinese, Vietnamese ('people's war') and Latin American struggles, violence came to play a much more central role in Marxist practice, but the theoretical implications were not clearly articulated in these contexts.[7]

African decolonisation (and the Marxisms it inspired) became the theoretical game-changer. In the writings of Jean Paul Sartre and Franz Fanon, violence

started to take on a more explicitly self-conscious symbolic (and therapeutic) meaning. Inspired by Fanon, Sartre argued that colonisation dehumanises the colonised, as a result of which the latter's subconscious starts to consist of 'murderous rampage', an internalised aggression which he turns against his own brethren until the day he turns it against the coloniser (Sartre, [1961] 2004: l–liii). Only 'killing a European' can cure the 'neurotic' damage of colonising violence. Violence 'is man reconstituting himself . . . Once their rage explodes, they recover their lost coherence, they experience self-knowledge through reconstruction of themselves' (ibid.: lv). Fanon ([1961] 2004: 32–33, 44) presents a multi-level analysis of revolutionary violence: at the individual level, it puts an end to 'passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens [colonised persons], and restores their self-confidence' (ibid.: 51). At the collective level '[factions] recognize each other and the future nation is already indivisible . . . [Armed struggle] pitches them in a single direction, from which there is no turning back' (ibid.: 50). Fanon's analysis thereby combines the therapeutic and strategic effects of violence (e.g. its prevention of reformist compromises, etc.).

This naïveté regarding violence gives rise, in the longer run, to an unpleasant dilemma. With Fanon, it became clearer that violence did not simply *empower* the revolutionary subject, but *constituted* it.[8] Fanon's argumentation was actually a mirroring adaptation of the conservative critique of revolutionary violence (which was initiated with Burke, and was later adapted by some liberals such as Arendt and, more recently, some poststructuralists). Fanon's writings became popular among not only Third World revolutionaries, but even Western political actors (such as the Black Panthers). But ironically, in Algeria (the context that inspired his theorisation), the Fanonite 'boomerang' swung back to hit the people: the film *Battle of Algiers*, a mainstay of left-wing culture, documents how the French colonialists had reproduced Nazi tactics; the same tactics, alas, were used against Islamist insurgents by the ex-revolutionary Algerian state in the 1990s.

The resulting dilemma constitutes a close parallel to the 'organisational curse' that has bedevilled all revolutions (organisation is necessary, but it is poised to steal the revolution). There is no major historical case where a social revolution has happened without organisation; and there is not one single case where that organisation has not monopolised power (we can call this the Leninist-Michelsian dilemma). Likewise, world history has not (so far) witnessed a bloodless social revolution, nor one where the machinery of terror has not turned against the oppressed.[9] In the contemporary scene, we further witness how not only ex-revolutionaries and states but also actors of contending ideological persuasions make ample use of discourses and practices intended for social-revolutionary use, rendering the Fanonite dilemma even deeper and more troubling.

As both states and citizens increasingly turn to violence, the history of the left and global Islamic insurgency intersects in unintended ways. The Islamist investment in symbolic violence borrows from the left (as well as the European revolutionary right: see below), but also prepares the way for al-Qaeda (and ultimately ISIS). In this bemusing context, not only the organisational forms but even the justification of right-wing violence come to rely on leftist repertoires

and tropes. For example, in response to jihadis' shooting of the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*'s caricaturists, the Turkish regime's semi-official newspaper featured an article with the title 'Feeling like Fanon' (Göka, 2015).

Fanon's and Sartre's exuberant rhetoric on violence gives tormenting insights into the pleasure jihadis savour when beheading Europeans and Americans (actions which apparently have strategic functions, but are not reducible to their instrumental dimension). However, Fanon and Sartre provide no tools to study (let alone predict) the ways in which tools of 'revolutionary' violence are frequently hijacked to be utilised against revolutionaries (e.g. ISIS suicide bombings of Marxists and Kurdish left-nationalists): the political pleasure in killing is hardly the monopoly of the colonised, and can easily be put to the service of colonisation (in this case, of the so-far failed colonisation of Kurdistan by jihadis).

These bedevilling interactions are not restricted to unintended exchanges between Islamists and Marxists, but involve established states as well. Left-wing and Islamist glorifications and uses of violence contribute to (and are further enhanced by) the making of the subcontractor state. The rise of autonomy and self-defence (as global leftist tropes) overlaps with and reinforces the making of 'the new world disorder': counterintuitively, the only place where autonomist ideals could survive and thrive after the failed global revolutionary wave of 2009–2013 (the Kurdish region Rojava, located in Northern Syria) partially owed its vibrancy to the American and Russian bombing of jihadis (Americans and Russians, in turn, depended on Kurdish revolutionaries as the only ground fighters against ISIS). In Rojava, the Kurdish movement was experimenting with new forms of citizenship and violence by, for example, arming (Kurdish and Yazidi) women against the jihadis; having police and military officers elected (rather than appointed by a central authority); and mobilising the same armed women to build the physical structures for popular assemblies. Many in today's global left see the germs of future, non-authoritarian ('autonomist') collectivism in these practices. Nevertheless, the mere survival of such practices was possible only through (willing or unwilling, active or passive) cooperation with the most aggressive imperialist forces. While revolutionary self-defence is therefore most likely to be complicit in the neo-liberalisation of the world, alternative strategies (such as nonviolence and/or the democratic reformation of the spiralling security state, with the goal of expanding globalised citizenship) may be as likely to reinforce the current global tendencies (either through neglecting the depth of the danger or through active cooperation with securitisation).

Violence as religious struggle: the Qutbi dilemma

Much has been said on the violent roots of Islam and projections have been made, based on that past, regarding the future path of this religion. Islam indeed spread through war-making in its initial century, and occasionally throughout its history, but, as in all other empires, Islamic ones soon routinised and developed relations to violence that are quite comparable with other cases of state and empire covered in political sociology (Barkey, 1994). Consequently, trade and spiritual

movements (Sufism foremost among them) have also been central in the spread of Islam, in fluctuating fashion.

The increasing role of violence in today's Islamic politics is undeniable, but needs to be historicised. Earlier on in the modern era (nineteenth to early twentieth centuries), Islamic scholars contributed to violent and nonviolent anti-colonial upheavals, but did not significantly shape their agendas or tactics.[10] Islamic scholars and lay religious intellectuals started to have a more determining role with the birth of mass Islamic organisations, which were initiated as mostly nonviolent. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, a paradigmatic case and a trendsetter, focused mostly on charitable and spiritual activities, and engaged in violence rarely and tactically (as in the peak of the anti-colonial struggle against the British). Nevertheless, the organisation nourished its military training camps whenever possible in order to prepare for coming wars. More or less the same can be said about the Turkish, Indonesian, Pakistani, etc. mainstream Islamic organisations. After the successes of Third World revolutions, however, the mass-organising strategies of the Brotherhood were blended with guerrilla and other violent strategies.

The case of the Iranian Revolution deserves attention, despite its exceptional status. The overthrow of the Shah was a relatively bloodless event (Kurzman, 2004), but violence occupied centre stage in the years following 1979. First, Ali Shariati-influenced Marxist-Islamists carried out assassinations (purportedly) in response to the new regime's execution of religious minorities (Abrahamian, 1989). Regime violence and left-Islamist counter-violence soon encompassed broader sectors of society, leading first to mass imprisonment, executions and torture, and then to the export of the revolution (and the war with Iraq). The Shia myth of martyrdom cut across most ideological camps in Iran and enabled violence on all sides. As significant was Ali Shariati's reinterpretation of this myth, which inspired both the new regime and its enemies.

A careful reader of Heidegger, Sartre, Fanon and Islamic sources, Shariati formulated one of the most intricate theorisations of revolutionary violence. Although he frequently referenced Fanon to show a violent path to the constitution of the 'New Human Being', he deployed Heidegger to criticise this Martiniquan thinker: a hermeneutic relationship with the past (from which Fanon sought to liberate anti-colonial struggles), and most of all the religious past, was necessary to construct the new human being (Davari, 2014). Moreover, while Fanon insisted that the revolutionary should *live* to serve the revolution, Shariati drew on the Shia myths of Husain and Karbala to glorify martyrdom as the best way to exemplify an ethical stance and provide guidance to the masses.[11]

Shariati and his earlier followers had a rhizomic bent but, 'captured' posthumously as a regime ideologue, the Iranian thinker's spirit served the remaking of the Iranian state. In other words, despite the multiple potentials in his texts, Shariati's regime reception put him on the same path with other Islamist ideologues, whose revolutionary contributions were absorbed into various bureaucratic and capitalist apparatuses. By the end of the twentieth century, the global leaders on this front (the blending of mass bureaucratic/capitalist organisation and rhizomic violence)

came to be HAMAS (itself an offshoot of the Brotherhood) and (the Lebanese) Hezbollah. Still, before the 1990s, violence was only one part of a broader set of Islamist repertoires, most of which focused on mass organisation and provision, and spiritual/ritualistic training. The Lebanese Hezbollah still sticks to this route and has expanded it to include real estate development and urban planning – without, however, losing sight of possible wars to come (Bou Akar, 2012). In the Islamic world, then, Hezbollah has become one of the exemplars of the centrality of the 'citizen-soldier'.

In all of these cases, the mass organisational and bureaucratic practices of modernity have the upper hand, even if we can catch glimpses of rhizomic tendencies in the interstices. With the success of the Afghan jihad against the Soviets, however, rhizomic tendencies have received an additional boost, paving the way for al-Qaeda and similar organisations. The Afghani jihad has initiated a new set of patterns, whereby people with mixed (religious, anti-Western, criminal, etc.) motivations roam the earth to spread quite unpredictable and uncontrollable violence. In the bosom of the new jihadi groups, these rhizomic tendencies have found an organisational form: the cell (*foco*) structure, the conscious or unconscious imitation of which amounts to an Islamic globalisation of Guevarism (Derluguian, 1999), arguably a significant step away from the citizen-soldier archetype and an unshackling of the 'soldier' as such.

From Qutb to ISIS

Much has been made of the Qutbian roots of today's Islamic violence, but the links of this history to the writings of Qutb, and also to the ideological-institutional trajectory of the Egyptian Brotherhood, are non-deterministic. For the earlier Egyptian Brotherhood, the development of a non-formalised, non-legalised, secretive mass organisation was the utmost goal. Violent practices and military training were subordinated to this framework. Qutb's rise in the organisation and its intellectual circles shook these foundations. In his last book, *Milestones*, Qutb ([1964] 2006) broke off from earlier Brotherhood ideology not only by declaring all existing Muslim societies and states *jahili* (ignorant of God's commands), but also by holding each truly Muslim individual responsible for waging a war against them.[12]

Qutb's writing has been mistakenly dubbed 'Leninist' due to his explicit call for a 'vanguardist' revolutionary war. Qutb's idealised vanguard (and the Muslim society-state it would build) is anarchistic (or better 'rhizomic') rather than Leninist.[13] His main interlocutor is the Muslim individual, whom he obliges to obey nothing and no one but God and his commands.[14] As a logical consequence of this anti-bureaucratic call, Qutb never stipulated a democratically centralist, hierarchical organisation led by professionals, where systematic, rationalised training of all levels of cadres are the key to victorious revolution. Whereas the two contradictory principles Lenin sought to marry were revolutionary heroism and (what a Weberian would call 'bureaucratic') professionalism, for Qutb they were revolutionary heroism and Sufi-inspired individual purity.[15] Moreover, even though Qutb labelled the polity he would want to build *dawla*, the way he

defines *dawla* is far from the modern understanding of the state. Finally, unlike in Leninism, Qutbi violence is not simply an instrument to smash the bourgeois state, but a self-purifying method to cleanse both society and one's soul. In all these regards, Qutb was closer to Fanon's spirit[16] and Guevara's practice[17] (where even losing guerrilla wars, such as the one that led to Che's death in Bolivia, were worth fighting since this was the only conceivable ethical course of action).

Upon the hanging of Qutb, the Muslim Brotherhood's spiritual leader published a pamphlet denouncing Qutb's views. Qutb always remained a beloved figure among Brotherhood activists, but the followers of *Milestones* split from the group to establish violence-centred groups such as Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Group, and ultimately contributed to the making of al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was directly inspired by Qutb. The organisation called for a single state that would encompass the whole Islamic community (*ummah*). Yet, it de facto fought to spread *violence without a state* in quite *de-territorialising* fashion for three decades. Al-Qaeda's and other similar organisations' inability (or, depending on interpretation, reluctance) to establish a functioning state led some scholars to conclude that jihadism as a whole was a retrograde activity that simply exacerbated the unfolding demise of Islamism (Roy, 1994) instead of showing a practical way out of the secular world system. Jihadism had proved either incapable of or uninterested in holding territory for long stretches of time, establishing institutions and implementing policies – becoming a state in the modern sense.

As compelling as Qutb's thought is, one unresolved ambiguity at the heart of his texts leads to an Islamic counterpart of the Fanonite dilemma, which reinforces this jihadi incapacity/reluctance. If the authentic Muslim individual is to reject all existing authorities and wage revolutionary war against all ungodly systems (many of which claim to be Islamic), how is he to differentiate an emergent, authentic Muslim community from those that have so far (falsely) claimed to be so? Who has the authority to decide what a literalist reading of the Qur'an would entail in the present circumstances? Does not the person (and/or group) that claims to practise Qur'an in the right way indeed become an authority and thereby defy the anarchistic-rhizomic spirit of *Milestones*?

This unresolved issue has indeed led to many splits among groups that claim to be the followers of Qutb. Even in small settings, Qutbis have accused each other of betraying Qutb's spirit (and therefore ultimately, the Qur'an). Some have taken this rhizomic-*takfiri* line to its logical extreme by announcing that Qutb and his texts have become ungodly authorities (Tuğal, 2009). In short, rhizomic tendencies have become self-destructive.

ISIS represents the re-territorialisation of this rhizomic explosion, and promises a resolution of the Qutbi dilemma. The Qur'anic-Qutbi *dawla* indeed becomes a state, but a state of permanent war. In order to prove its authenticity, it is pushed to refrain from any diplomatic or instrumental moves. The members of the emergent polity are 'soldier-citizens' of the fascist type, but their soldier-ness outweighs their citizen-ness by a significant margin.

The flat journalistic reading (Coker, 2014) of ISIS as the further radicalisation of jihadism by the relatively more 'impatient', less knowledgeable, 'more

fanatical' and more 'brutal' young generation (i.e. Baghdadi and Zarqawi vs. Zawahiri) misses a fundamental dynamic: the *institutionalisation* of violence. The American invasion of Iraq, the disestablishment of the state, the sectarianisation of the country and the subsequent flocking of Saddam Hussein's generals and military personnel to jihadi ranks (not the impatience of brutal fanatics) have enabled the establishment of the arguably most institutionalised and effective jihadi state so far. The invasion of Mosoul (and beyond) would not be possible without the jihadi incorporation of the remnants of Baathism. We still do not know how much infrastructural power this will result in (i.e. whether ISIS's fledgling welfare applications will turn into long-lasting institutions and policies, and whether and how these will interact with its investment in perpetual violence).

Conclusion: the inseparability of the subcontracting state and the Islamic rhizome

Whatever re-territorialising dynamics ISIS (and future jihadi states) might bring to the table, they seem to be pushing the world quite close to the pre-modern situation as described by Tilly, problematising deeply ingrained social scientific assumptions regarding the irreversibility of the monopolisation of legitimate violence:

> The uncertain, elastic line between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' violence appeared in the upper reaches of power. Early in the state-making process, many parties shared the right to use violence, its actual employment, or both at once. The long love–hate affair between aspiring state makers and pirates or bandits illustrates the division . . . In times of war, indeed, the managers of full-fledged states often commissioned privateers, hired sometime bandits to raid their enemies, and encourage their regular troops to take booty. In royal service, soldiers and sailors were often expected to provide for themselves by preying on the civilian population, commandeering, raping, looting, taking prizes. (Tilly, 1985: 173)
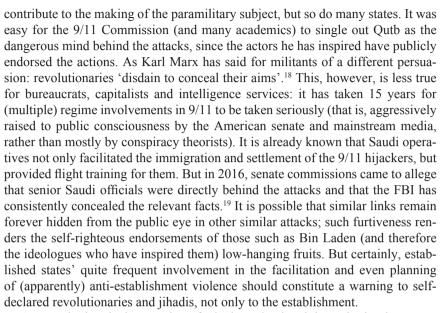
There could not be a better description of the relationship between several Western and non-Western powers and jihadi bands; the simultaneously centralised and rhizomic torture practices in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib; the more frequent subcontracting of torture to non-Western states through 'extraordinary rendition'; and the atrocities these state–jihadi relationships facilitate. The added complication is that 'bandits' (today's paramilitaries) also use religious, citizenship, and social movement vocabularies and techniques (and therefore have a claim to 'universalist' legitimacy long before their appropriation by states). However, the world they are building (with ample aid from established states) leaves little room for citizenship and social movements.

The complexity of these relations renders meaningless the question of whether 'Islam' or 'American imperialism' lies at the root of today's global violence hike. Qutb's and others' reinterpretation of jihad, *jahiliyya*, *tawhid*, *takfir* etc. certainly

contribute to the making of the paramilitary subject, but so do many states. It was easy for the 9/11 Commission (and many academics) to single out Qutb as the dangerous mind behind the attacks, since the actors he has inspired have publicly endorsed the actions. As Karl Marx has said for militants of a different persuasion: revolutionaries 'disdain to conceal their aims'.[18] This, however, is less true for bureaucrats, capitalists and intelligence services: it has taken 15 years for (multiple) regime involvements in 9/11 to be taken seriously (that is, aggressively raised to public consciousness by the American senate and mainstream media, rather than mostly by conspiracy theorists). It is already known that Saudi operatives not only facilitated the immigration and settlement of the 9/11 hijackers, but provided flight training for them. But in 2016, senate commissions came to allege that senior Saudi officials were directly behind the attacks and that the FBI has consistently concealed the relevant facts.[19] It is possible that similar links remain forever hidden from the public eye in other similar attacks; such furtiveness renders the self-righteous endorsements of those such as Bin Laden (and therefore the ideologues who have inspired them) low-hanging fruits. But certainly, established states' quite frequent involvement in the facilitation and even planning of (apparently) anti-establishment violence should constitute a warning to self-declared revolutionaries and jihadis, not only to the establishment.

As meaningless is the question of whether Islamist violence is simply an outcome of the fascist-communist-Islamic essence of Qutb's writings (Cohen, 2007)[20] or a betrayal of Qutb's individualistic core (Binder, 1988; Kundnani, 2008). Absent from much of that discussion is the *practical* uses of theology in a world where liberal states no longer promise much to either their citizens or humanity as a whole. A much more meaningful debate could be constructed if the unresolved dilemmas of Fanon's, Shariati's and Qutb's writings were studied in the context of their contemporary, practical appropriations in concrete global-local institutional and structural contexts. As the liberal world order collapses, and as established states not only dilapidate but also turn to non-state warriors to sustain order and/or pursue their interests, new actors appropriate old calls to violence. Rather than simply resuscitating fascism or communism, the new violent actors encounter a barrage of dilemmas, which are only intensified by the subcontracting activities of neo-liberal states. This is not to deny the quite high likelihood of the emergence and spread of new fascisms (now legitimated by Islamic discourse), but to draw attention to the contingent potentials of violent discourse and practice in a world where centrist forms of military, economic and political organisation are either collapsing or actively being decentred.

Decentralised political violence will become a productive site for research precisely because the Fanonite and Qutbi dilemmas are not theoretically resolvable. Only empirical studies of ongoing processes of revolutionary violence, terror and securitisation can reveal the dynamics that might lead to fascism, total collapse or something closer to the militants' and thinkers' desires. Each of the perspectives covered here has much to contribute, and the intensifying explosion of socio-political brutality throughout the globe will allow scholars to gauge which one of them will speak more effectively to the changing intensity and forms of violence.

Notes

 1 See Butler (1990: 127–150) for a critique of Foucault along these lines.
 2 See Mbembe (2003) for a striking example of how one key text in this tradition avoids any negative judgment against Palestinian suicide bombers, even after virulently condemning all kinds of counter-revolutionary and revolutionary violence.
 3 For more examples of the blending of entertainment and fatally risky politics (and occasionally violence), see Tuğal, 2016.
 4 www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1877/anti-duhring/ch16.htm. Note that in much of (Marxist and non-Marxist) scholarship, violence and force/coercion are not conceptualised separately.
 5 See Leon Trotsky's *Communism and Terrorism* ([1920] 2007) for the most thoroughly argued version of this position.
 6 The key exceptions are Sorel (who might or might not be placed within the Marxist legacy), Benjamin's scattered reflections (Finlay, 2006: 382–384) and, most recently, Žižek.
 7 See Debray's theory of focoism or *foquismo* (*Revolution in the Revolution*, 1967), which arguably remains on the strategic plane and downplays the subjective productiveness of violence. Debray later disowned much of this theorisation.
 8 Arguably, militants and politicians realised, *in practice*, that street violence constituted (rather than only empowered) the revolutionary subject as early as the French Revolution (Sewell 1996), but a self-conscious revolutionary theorisation of this process had been lacking.
 9 See Chatterjee (1986) on how nonviolence was among the guarantors of the non-revolutionary, elitist content of Indian emancipation (which would discredit the objection that Gandhi's nonviolent resistance amounted to a revolution). For initial (and so far incomplete) attempts to resolve the Leninist-Michelsian dilemma, see Gramsci's work ([1929–1933] 1992: 318–326). One speech by Marcuse (1966) attempts to address the difficulties created by the instrumentalist use of violence, but does not go far in tackling its therapeutic/symbolic aspects.
10 The one major exception to this is Wahhabism.
11 It would be too facile to attribute this difference exclusively to Fanon's secularism and Shariati's Islamism: violent action that primarily aims to expose the brutality of the system (rather than immediately overthrow that system) and performatively flesh out an alternative (the selflessness of the revolutionary) is arguably at the root of much nationalist and Marxist guerrilla action, especially when carried out by smaller groups.
12 For a discussion of Qutb's ambiguities regarding *takfir* (excommunication), which subsequent Qutbists allegedly eliminated, see Calvert, 2010.
13 This confusion is partially due to the 'Marxist-Leninist' self-designation of many Guevarist organisations of the 1960s and 1970s, which has led to a metamorphosis of this term.
14 In this regard, Qutb also deviates from the other major *takfiri* lineage in Islam, ibn-Taymiyya's version of Salafism, which culminated in Wahhabism. Ibn-Taymiyya assigned this duty (to excommunicate Muslims) to madrasa-trained scholars (and thereby legitimised existing, formalised hierarchies). However, ibn-Taymiyya's and Qutb's messages can be aligned, as the discourse of many contemporary jihadi organisations demonstrates.
15 Qutb's earlier exegesis-book, *In the Shadow of the Qur'an*, had already eulogized permanent war, not only as an instrument to build the perfect society, but as a mystical self-purifying experience (Carré, 2002, ch. 10).
16 Whereas for both Fanon and Qutb violence is constitutive of the revolutionary subject, they seek to constitute that subject through different paths. In Fanon, the desired achievement is freedom (through removing the internalised coloniser), while in Qutb

it is puritanism (through removing two key *sins* as defined by Islam, arrogance and selfishness), as much as freedom.

17 For the resonance of Qutb's ideas with another major, syndicalist-turned-fascist theorist of violence (Sorel), see Calvert, 2004. Rather than a Leninist, Qutb could be called an Islamic Sorelian-Guevarist.

18 www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch04.htm.

19 www.npr.org/2016/04/28/475985517/28-pages-in-sept-11-report-should-be-declassified-ex-sen-graham-says.

20 See Davari (2014) for an evaluation of similar accusations in the Shia context. Davari convincingly shows that Shariati's Heideggerian criticism of Fanon does not necessarily put him in the same political-ideological league with the German thinker, but underestimates the fascistic potentials in Shariati's writings.

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