



HOW VIOLENT EXTREMISM IS FORMED

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Violence is seen by a group of researchers as a "natural" human phenomenon. For such researchers, violence *per se* is rampant in all human history. As such, many philosophers have addressed violence as a natural disposition, albeit controversial.

Until recently, some would be surprised to argue that violence was not a stand-alone topic of meditation and philosophical reflection on human heritage. Historical sources reveal that the early beginning of violence as an independent piece of research date back to 1908, by George Sorel in *Reflections on Violence*. This does not negate the existence of some occasional references to the topic in such a heritage. Again, violence *per se* is the father and king of everything, so to speak, according to Heraclitus. It is the same statement that Friedrich Engels immortalized, friend of Karl Marx in the Communist Manifesto (1848), stating "Violence is the midwife of history".

It can be then said that the investigation into violence as a social phenomenon par excellence is born amid the time of modernity. The question of violence has become one of the most preoccupied philosophical and political problems within the modernist philosophical texts, from Nicolas Machiavelli to date. We also find that the philosophical lexicon by Lalande André is synonymous with violence and unlawful, or at least illegal or illegitimate use of force. When we put these concepts together with other concepts such as citizenship, freedom and equality in their historical context, we fully realize that we are in the modern era of human history.

As for violence as a human practice deeply rooted and ingrained in human history, one of the facts of history is that it accompanied humanity from its early infancy in the story of the struggle of the two sons of Adam: Cain and Abel. The scope of violence began to grow wider and bigger after being associated with politics. The relationship between violence and politics is as old as the legal authority in organized human society. Violence usually turns into a weapon in the hands of the opposition, which is at loggerheads with the authority. Once the former has reached the denial stage of the legitimacy of the latter, the path becomes open to violence, which may escalate to multiple manifestations, aimed at ultimately overthrowing the political regime and replacing it with another that adopts a different view of the world.

Gradually, the topic has begun to impose itself on the research areas, human violence has become notoriously rife in the contemporary world, hence snowballed into being rampant across land, sea and air by the action of people. Such human violence has become silhouetted against the violence of nature as differently manifested by rough seas, cold, thunderstorms, floods, earthquakes and volcanoes. However, we can see that the violence of nature is often more insignificant than that of human beings, in that nature appears more benign, lenient, and more merciful in its violence against people than their fellow citizens are to one another.

Violence: extremist opinion and "extremist action"

Violence has become one of the hot issues of the time unequal to any others, as it is present and manifested to varying degrees in all areas; in politics, economics and religion, as in culture, media and sports ... especially after its scope went beyond the idea of "legitimate violence" monopolized and instrumentalized by the government, based on a legal principle that expresses collective management in which individuals relinquish part of their freedom to the power that they choose – hence the government – to "unlawful violence", based on a difference of identity, mixed with the obsession of the pursuit of control and authority by building the ego and denying the right of the other (third party) that is different and opposite to existence and reality.

Eric Hobsbawm, a British historian, realized early this bitter reality and wrote a description of the twentieth century, specifically the period between 1914 and 1991, in a rich and massive book entitled "The Age of Extremists" (1994). However, this seminal attempt of extremism, framed by a clear-cut Marxist flavor, presented by Eric throughout the three sections of the book, has today become unable to accommodate all the underlying basics of this ambiguous and problematic concept, following all the subsequent transformational changes, since the fourth quarter of the twentieth century.

Research studies have developed the issue in such in a remarkable way; I do not think that a contemporary social phenomenon in the fields of human studies has received and is still receiving attention and research in various disciplines of the humanities, such as extremism, and in particular the "religious extremism" that has become associated with contemporary global terrorism. The extremist, according to Eric Hofer, an American philosopher, in his book "The True Believer" (1954), considers that any issue embraced is a sacred issue, and it cannot be excluded through logic and debate.

A group of American researchers specialized in terrorism issues, using such a qualitative accumulation of research, as a result of the overlap between the various fields of knowledge, found a distinction between two types of extremism; namely, "extremist opinion" and "extremist action." They have noticed that the majority of individuals who hold extremist ideologies do not end up doing a terrorist act. In other words, every individual of extremist ideology does not have to be a potential terrorist project, especially after the digital revolution that the contemporary world has lived through for decades in facilitating the spread of

extremism. Radical ideology, in its theoretical part in the form of a speech, or in its applied part through real-life practice in the field, became accessible to those looking for it, with a click of a computer or phone screen, without cost or effort, bypassing various traditional barriers. This further contributed to the increasing spread of the scourge of extremism in various parts of the world, without the need to move with the intention of actual and direct meeting with the icons of this ideology; everything is done remotely.

It is critically important here to distinguish between an extremist opinion, which is often individual, and an extremist action which is associated with the group or organization. Bringing the two teams together can backfire on treatment methods. It may contribute to the transfer of extremists who stand at the threshold of adoption and persuasion to the violent extremism forefront by action and implementation, as a result of the two sides facing the same measures to address the phenomenon.

Violent Extremism: Driving Factors

The 2016 report submitted by the United Nations Secretary-General, "On the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism," acknowledges the difficulty of consensus in identifying the "driving factors" that could transform an individual from extremism to violent extremism. The issue was further complicated by the fact that the concept of violent extremism was related, in terms of perception or debate, to specific groups with a religious background.

The literature on the causes of the spread of violence reveals that such a difficulty has been overcome; the association of extremism with politics transforms the extremist from a state of latency to a state of activity for the implementation of his or her ideas, thus highlighting the collective consciousness of "we", that is, the idea of organization. This is what was referred to by Cass R. Sunstein, Harvard law professor, in his book "The Path to Extremism: The Union and Division of Minds" (2009), when he considered that groups go to far extremism when they meet up.

This is clearly shown by the experiences of groups adopting violent extremism in various parts of the world, especially as they intend to create a "new identity" for their believers, who were on the margins of society (socially excluded or ostracized), by including them and assigning tasks and giving a sense of belonging and sharing ideas or the "political project". All these are attractive factors that play a fundamental role in the process of transition from idea to implementation, that is, the transition from extremism to violent extremism.

The article is seen by some readers as a form of overstatement for the link between violent extremism and politics. Their argument against this objection is the attacks that happen from time to time carried out by individual extremists in many places in the world. There is no evidence in these operations of the religious interaction with the political interaction; the extremist often takes over his or her operation from A to Z, including planning,

financing and self-implementation, without receiving any support from the group or organization.

Initially, this is true as "lone wolves" operations have become a major tool in operating the extremist organizations as part of a new strategy aimed at eliminating the central character within the organization's structure. Let's now imagine switching the roles: instead of seeking to join the group and the government, which may expose him or her to the risk of being detected and identified and security prosecution, the extremist turns into a project of a proxy or a local agent of the organization, waiting for the appropriate opportunity to implement his or her operation, which is often preceded by a tape recording declaring loyalty and allegiance.