

Physical Violence, Public Violence: Searching for Mechanisms of Social Domination

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ABSTRACT: The explanation of the worldwide spread and long-term maintenance of economic asymmetries and centralized and hierarchical political structures is a major concern for sociological and humanistic disciplines. This problem may be formulated as a paradox when exploited and victimized groups overtly support the social order that subdues them. Archaeology is able to address this problem from a broad and long-term perspective. The aim of this paper is to discuss the implications of public, lethal physical violence in the context of class societies. These are characterized by economic exploitation, centralization of political power, labour specialization and heavy restrictions of vital and cognitive perspectives for most of the population. It is suggested that key social relations under these conditions could be similar to the hostage-captor bond. Henceforth, inferences based on social and psychobiological reasoning are suggested in order to solve the aforementioned social paradox.

KEYWORDS: Violence; Social Classes; Civilization; Seclusion; Victimization; Appeasement; Social Control.

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RESUMEN: *Violencia física, violencia pública: a la búsqueda de mecanismos de dominación social.*-La explicación de la expansión mundial y el mantenimiento a largo plazo de disimetrías económicas y estructuras políticas centralizadas y jerárquicas constituye un tema fundamental para las disciplinas sociales y humanas. Esta problemática puede formularse como una paradoja cuando los grupos explotados y victimizados apoyan abiertamente el orden social que los somete. La arqueología tiene la capacidad de abordar este problema desde una perspectiva a largo plazo. El objetivo del presente artículo es analizar las implicaciones de la violencia física letal y pública en el contexto de las sociedades clasistas. Estas se caracterizan por explotación económica, poder político centralizado, especialización laboral y severas limitaciones en cuanto a las perspectivas vitales y cognitivas para la mayoría de la población. Se propone que algunas de las relaciones clave bajo dichas condiciones pueden asimilarse al vínculo entre rehén y captor. A partir de ahí, se plantean inferencias basadas en argumentos psicobiológicos a fin de resolver la paradoja social antes mencionada.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Violencia; Clases sociales; Civilización; Reclusión; Victimización; Apaciguamiento.

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INTRODUCTION: SOME KEYS TO DEFINE AND INVESTIGATE ‘VIOLENCE’

The role of violence in human societies is an issue of permanent interest. In Western academic institutions, this interest has increased during recent decades possibly as a result of (a) the outbreak of new, bloody and geographically close military conflicts and, (b) the recent debates concerning forms of violence that are tolerated institutionally, scarcely problematized or even socially unnoticed to date (i.e., male violence against women, mobbing, gentrification, grooming and bullying). Prehistoric archaeology has shared this concern and, given its chronological coverage, has been involved in debates about the controversial ‘origins’ of aggressive human behaviour, violence in general, cannibalism, war, warriors, heroes, soldiers and armies. As a consequence, the reassessment of archaeological objects and contexts linked to armed conflicts¹, as well as new osteological analysis focused on the diagnosis of trauma caused by physical aggressions, has been undertaken. Single-case studies and general synthesis have reviewed and assessed the first evidences related to aggressions between humans, from the early episodes dating back to the Palaeolithic, to the wars and military conquests within the context of the first civilizations².

However, like any scientific discipline seeking to push forward the knowledge of human violence, archaeology must define which criteria serve to identify specific facts as related to ‘violence’. Dodging this theoretical task or taking for granted that the definition of ‘violence’ is common sense or widely shared, might open the doors of ambiguity and confusion and, hence, lead to sterile debates. Thus, it is crucial to define the meaning of ‘violence’ and the subsequent research steps linking concept and facts.

The starting point of any research on violence is the ability to supply documentary evidence of harm/damage, whether at an individual or group level (Lull *et al.*, 2015). This identification helps to distinguish the ‘suffering subject’ or ‘victim’. Without documented harm/damage, there is no reason to invoke the category ‘violence’ to describe a given human relationship. Although ultimately all damage is or ends up being physical, we usually distinguish between psychological and physical violence. In this latter case, the denotative traits are different kinds of stigmas (traumas, injuries, destruction), often directly and unambiguously attested. Following this direct association, a further connection with the material means and the agents that caused the stigmas might be stated objectively (Lull *et al.*, 2006). The category for ‘aggressor’ could then arise.

From an epistemological point of view, the investigation of psychological damage is more difficult. While physical damage can be unequivocally inferred in each of its particular appearances, psychological damage can come to be the cumulative result of actions or circumstances that, taken separately, may seem harmless or ambiguous. In these cases, the relationships finally causing

damage would go unnoticed to the observer. Under other more favourable conditions, psychological damages are suggested as a hypothesis, after an inference process from indirect elements. The investigation would therefore leave more room for uncertainty.

With greater or fewer empirical difficulties, if the investigation is able to certify physical and/or psychological damage, and connect it to specific material means and to human promoters, it would be correct to classify a given social relationship under the label ‘violence’. Underlining the ontological priority of attesting damage leads to two key epistemological consequences:

1. Identifying certain damage and, therefore, a victim, must be the first aim of the investigation. The next step will be to identify the agent responsible for the damage, that is, the entity called ‘aggressor’.
2. ‘Victim’ and ‘aggressor’ will be recognisable entities regardless of the hypothetical conscious consideration of their protagonists about their respective roles. ‘Victim’ and ‘aggressor’ are the result of an inferential process based on empirical observations, not on the conscious statements of the subjects involved in the facts; in other words, subjective (self)awareness is not the main research requirement.

I have just pointed out that the identification of damages, of the material means directly linked to them and of the human promoters serves to attest a violent relationship. If this relationship maintains a constant directionality over time, it could be labelled as ‘violence without response’, with unawareness, at least from the promoter’s perspective, as, for example, has happened for millennia with what we now call ‘male violence against women’. However, if the victim is actively confronting their identified aggressor, a conflict is unleashed (Lull *et al.*, 2006). In both cases, it is expected that empirical research should detail their rhythms, frequency and intensity.

The connections between physical and psychological violence are complex. Physical violence has an *effective* dimension, because its episodes leave tangible evidence of harmful effects (destruction of settlements, victims) and of the means that produced them (weapons). In addition, its occurrences are rarely silent and invisible, but are usually noticed, echoed to groups other than those who witnessed them and remembered for a long time in the oral and material memory. In other words, *effective* physical violence also fosters an *affective* dimension, in the sense of subjective affectation. Frequently, the development of the affective dimension of violence resembles a performance, in which a large audience watches the real suffering of other people, creating an object for ideology and alienation; for waking up consciences or for silencing them; for collective celebration or frustration. Considering this social fact, it is worth asking, dialectically, which other *effects*, in turn, can these *affectations* help to build. Further exploring the relationship between public, overtly physical violence, psychological violence and long-term

and large-scale social control in the framework of class-divided societies will be the main aim of the following pages.

VIOLENCE AND CLASS SOCIETIES

The development of class societies with State political structures, also called ‘civilizations’, is one of the most relevant milestones in the history of humankind. Prehistoric archaeology has shown that these societies were not pioneering in the exercise of violence, but instead that violence in civilizations has specific goals and left behind more material, often unambiguous traces. One such goal was the maintenance of economic exploitation, sanctioned by the hereditary transmission of private property. The decisive instrument for this, although not necessarily the only one, was and is the activity of armed groups specialized in the exercise of physical violence (be it ‘army’, ‘police’ or similar). Furthermore, it is often noticed that the psychological dimension of violence is now conveyed through new forms of social gatherings, communication and exclusion promoted and/or monitored by specialized personnel acting on behalf of institutions (law and courts, religion and cults, official celebrations and remembrances).

Most of the research on violence in the so-called ‘ancient civilizations’ (or ‘pristine’ and ‘early States’) refer to open clashes labelled as ‘war’. The sides involved are usually conceived as unitary social subjects, struggling to achieve their aims: whether survival under the pressure of natural and social selection (biological-adaptive interpretations), or the desire for power and dominance by leaders, ruling classes or entire peoples (approaches that stress psychological and political motivations in explaining human behaviour). In contrast, research on violent acts or processes *within* these collective subjects is rare. The little attention to internal violence invites us to decide whether the investigation suffers from a functionalist and organicist bias that overlooks evidence of internal confrontations, or those prehistoric and ancient societies were so integrated that they managed to prevent the conflict within.

The theory that I seek to develop is that physical violence, in its ‘structural’ or ‘objective’ form (see below), is an inherent part of class societies, “but that the consolidation, maintenance and expansion of these societies depended on the affectation caused by certain forms of lethal public and remembered violence”. These forms of violence are globally documented and have two closely related components:

- a) Occurrences of physical violence with lethal consequences, promoted or sponsored by power/government centres.
- b) Extensive social communication of the development and effects of these occurrences.

Most of these social practices could be generically called ‘executions’³. This term is usually understood from a legal point of view, referring to a form of extreme pun-

ishment for those who have seriously transgressed the dominant order. Nevertheless, practices known as ‘human sacrifices’ could also be included under the same label. Regardless of whether or not religious or cultural motivations are invoked, ‘human sacrifices’ share with law-mediated executions the fact that both are overtly promoted by the dominant power. The key public nature of ‘human sacrifices’ places them at the centre of interest of the political issues addressed in this paper. In fact, recent research on a large sample of traditional societies in Australia and Oceania (Watts *et al.*, 2016) has shown that human sacrifice during ritualized practices is significantly linked to the consolidation of stratified societies. A subset of these practices, those taking place during the funeral of certain preeminent personalities, have also been closely linked to the acquisition or maintenance of political power by the ruling classes (Childe, 1945; Testart, 2004; Albert and Midant-Reynes, 2005).

Having said that, it is one thing to detect a close relationship pattern between executions and the consolidation of social stratification, and it is another to find an explanation for this association. To explore this explanatory path, an analysis of the sociological components involved in public executions is needed, aimed at exploring the core relationships between violence and other dimensions of social life in the context of civilizations.

DEFINING CIVILIZED SOCIAL LIFE

To further explore the possibility that public violence might exceed a strictly coercive effect requires basic knowledge of the society in which it occurred. Broadly speaking, class societies, whether with a State (civilizations) or in transition to Statehood, show common economic and political traits:

- a) Highly developed division of labour. Most of the working population perform full-time specialized tasks. The general context is fully sedentary, based on a solid farming and animal husbandry economy. In addition, artefactual production comprises multiple branches (pottery, metallurgy, lithic production, textiles, etc.) taking place in stable workshops. Hence, the satisfaction of most of the basic needs of specialized labour groups depended on a centralized redistributive system controlled by a sector of specialized bureaucrats-rulers.
- b) Sharp asymmetries in the distribution of the social production, that is, economic exploitation sanctioned by means of property rights. The appropriation by the dominant class of surplus produced by exploited classes defines one of the most acute and lasting forms of physical violence: the deprivation suffered by most of the population in the access to and consumption of socially produced goods and services (Engels, 2010, pp. 393-394, orig. 1844). This violence has been recently called ‘structural violence’ (Galtung, 1996) or, as named by Zizek (2008), ‘objective violence’. The striking differ-

ences in life expectancy according to socio-economic condition, even in the contemporary 'Welfare States' of the 'developed countries', are proof of this (Hattersley, 1999; White and Edgar, 2010; Olshansky *et al.*, 2012). In short, a significant part of the population in class societies suffered this deprivation and, therefore, was objectively victimized even if these did not receive direct trauma, lethal or otherwise, by armed individuals.

- c) The polities ('proto-states', 'early States', 'city-states', 'civilizations') maintain political borders defended or questioned militarily. The political borders settle property rights, now understood as appropriation of resources controlled by the ruling class. Political borders turn the 'land' into 'territories' that restrict the mobility of individuals and groups. In addition, a part of the population, especially in cities and towns, work and live inside densely packed fortified precincts. In some pristine, emblematic cases (Egypt, Mesopotamia, coastal valleys of Peru), political borders were strengthened by ecological boundaries expressed as arid or desert-like environments, which made it hazardous to survive outside the narrow fertile strips next to the river courses where settlements flourished.

Social life in such conditions has been globally documented. In fact, the emergence of closed, territorially bound political units with increasing inequalities and internal labour specialization is a worldwide trend in the last millennia. In certain regions, such as Egypt and Lower Mesopotamia, this trend intensified or accelerated from early times. In short, the life of most of the population in the early class societies and civilizations took place under the following conditions:

- reduced mobility in small, limited geographical and social settings;
- restricted experiences, sharing of information and expectations;
- political subordination;
- lacking economic autonomy, and
- suffering economic exploitation.

In a sense, most of the population in civilizations might be described as 'humans in captivity'. In these social contexts, what *effects* and *affections* could the public exercise of physical violence have had?

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC VIOLENCE IN CLASS SOCIETIES: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

When thoroughly exploring the twofold dimension, *effective* and *affective*, of physical violence, it is worth asking about the kind of subjective affectation or influence that was pursued with effective executions. To answer this question, we shall start by defining the social groups involved in these practices, and summarize the links among them.

The collective 'A' is formed by those who promoted and conducted the execution, that is, the group with the ability to design and carry out this kind of public event. Direct executioners could also be included in 'A', when the different roles of promotion and execution are assumed by different people. The collective 'B' refers to victims, usually politically and/or economically dependent individuals who are often named as 'criminals' in the case of law-mediated punishments, or as 'servants', 'maidens', 'assistants', 'guardsmen', 'captives', 'slaves', etc. in ceremonial sacrifices, especially when these were performed at the funerals of high-order individuals.

However, this social practice is not restricted to 'A' and 'B' but includes a third group, 'C', formed by the public or audience that attends the execution or is informed of it. This third component is paramount as without 'C' or with 'C' just vaguely informed of 'deaths' or 'absences', we would be speaking of a different phenomenon, of what are known as 'disappearances', in which executors try to erase any trace of the victims, even denying that there have ever been any.

A first interpretation of the executions could be built on the following considerations:

- a) The executions were a demonstration of power by the ruling group ('A').
- b) The immediate aim of this demonstration was to impress collective 'C', as a means to achieve a further and higher goal: its submission and obedience and, therefore, the maintenance or increase of the power of 'A'.

This interpretation fits the model of repressive or coercive violence. According to this model, society is divided between repressors and repressed whose mutual relationships are 'transparent', without being hidden or distorted by lies, mistakes, ignorance or alienation. All parties would be fully aware of their real social roles, what they are capable of and what they should avoid. Only oblivion could threaten 'transparency'. This is why periodic public executions are needed to recall and update a basic social knowledge: who has the supreme power, that of deciding on life and death, who holds rulership, command and privileges, and what powerful actions these are capable of performing. Overall, the line between repressors and repressed groups is well marked: repressive violence keeps each group in its social place; violence simply highlights and updates those positions through public performances.

The model of repressive violence is common sense and could be applied to many cases. However, without denying this interpretative approach, what if, within the framework of class societies, this kind of public violence did *something other* than repress?

LIVING AS HOSTAGES

The victimization caused by economic exploitation in class societies can be increased through the public communication of certain forms of physical violence, often sur-

rounded by ceremony. In these practices the executed victims are easily identifiable, but the victimization process does not stop at their corpses. Victimization extends to broader social groups and reaches full social effectiveness when it is firmly established who has the power to procure physical damage and who knows they are not free from being subjected to it. From now on, a new internal division arises in society, that between executors and potentially executed individuals; between those who are capable of harming and people at risk of being seriously harmed.

Neurobiology and clinical and evolutionary psychology have provided some answers about how people react when facing being at risk of serious, even lethal, physical damage (Cantor and Price, 2007; Cantor 2009). The human species, like other mammals, develops a range of defensive behaviours: (a) avoiding places where risk situations may arise, (b) immobility, (c) flight, (d) aggressive resistance and struggle, and (e) appeasement.

For the problem at hand, appeasement is of special interest, since it tends to be a kind of reaction adopted when:

- (a) the specimen is threatened by members of the same species,
- (b) escape is not a feasible alternative and
- (c) the specimen facing the source of risk has little or no chance of success, after having recognized the inferiority of their own force/capability.

In this sense, appeasement is a defensive strategy which can be understood as a ‘reverse flight’: instead of moving away from the threat, it is about approaching its source by adopting a submissive role to try to placate it, making clear that it should not be afraid of active resistance. One of the ways to do so is to ‘alienate’ oneself by identifying as much as possible with the threatening subject. Although there may be a prior and conscious assessment of the risks, these types of defensive responses are unconsciously generated in the amygdala and the hippocampus, and may be left out of any rationalization or imposed on it.

Linking the living conditions of most of the population in class societies with the concept of ‘seclusion’ invites us to consider mechanisms and explanations applied in similar situations. If ‘seclusion’ describes a social relationship (ontological), it is feasible to look for epistemological tools applied by other disciplines at social scales. The search has led us to the so-called ‘Stockholm syndrome’, related to the Freudian ‘identification with the aggressor’⁴ or, as it is classified today in Psychology, a variety within the wider label of ‘post-traumatic stress’, namely ‘Complex Post-traumatic Stress Disorder’ or ‘complex PTSD’ (Herman, 1992; Friedman, 2015; Schnyder and Cloitre, 2015). This expression refers to certain psychological effects of the often repeated suffering, of damages and threats that seriously endanger the physical integrity of oneself or of close people. Therefore, it is a form of victimization, often a long-lasting one. Their effects, however, apparently deny victimization, as positive feelings towards those who promote and execute the suffering are observed.

The manifestation of the syndrome at different social scales

Victimization cases related to the ‘Stockholm syndrome’ typically refer to occasional, small-scale occurrences such as kidnappings and robbery with hostages, although it has been recently described in a wider range of situations such as coexistence in prison, military and sectarian environments, proxenetism and male violence against women and children in the domestic sphere⁵. Before testing its application to extended and long-lasting social situations, it is important to state which conditions and effects define it.

Psychological research on the ‘Stockholm syndrome’ underlines a number of conditions required in order for it to develop (Graham *et al.* 1994, pp. 33-37; Rawlings and Graham, 2007, p. 690)⁶:

- a) The ‘hostage’ perceives that the ‘captor’ is a real threat to his/her survival.
- b) The ‘hostage’ perceives that the ‘captor’ shows signs of benevolence towards him/her (such as he ‘feeds me’ or ‘does not kill me’).
- c) The ‘hostage’ is acquainted with the captor’s perspective on the situation and about the objectives pursued by the captor, while being largely unaware or poorly informed of alternative understandings or points of view.
- d) The ‘hostage’ has few feasible alternatives to their current situation in mind.

Considering these conditions, the ‘hostage’ may develop a series of behaviours:

- a) Emergence of a positive emotional bond towards the ‘captor’.
- b) Identification with the subjective perspective of the ‘captor’.
- c) Hostility towards individuals or groups opposed to the ‘captor’ or their interests⁷.

In light of these arguments, it is worth considering the following behaviours of class-divided, civilized societies.

- (Regarding point ‘a’: *Emergence of a positive emotional bond felt by the “hostage” towards the captor*). The cult, idolatry or veneration towards leaders and leadership as a social need and individual virtue is characteristic in societies with centralized governments. Especially in early civilizations, this cult came to be expressed in theocratic political systems that stated that a divine entity conceded the ruler’s right to hold absolute power or, what is more, that the ruler was her/himself a supernatural being or god. The figures of ‘Ruler’-‘Master’-‘Father’ are closely related in most civilizations, often perpetuating and increasing the scale of previous patriarchal relations. In most of the recent or contemporary state societies, the withdrawal of this religious covering does not hide

the paramount importance of personalized leadership in the maintenance of command and obedience relationships, despite it being referred to under the secular attribute of ‘charism’.

- (Regarding point ‘b’: ‘Hostage’s’ identification of the subjective perspective of their ‘captor’). Identification with particular perspectives also conforms to broad popular adherence to institutionalized ideologies and religions. Believing, even fanatically, in a fantasy or ideal construction is something socially real. This identification with the official perspective held by the ‘captor’ could be compatible with the concept of ‘alienation’ in the Marxist sense: the material conditions governed by the captor-exploiter achieve the effect of alienating (‘being taken out of oneself’, from their real conditions of life) the dominated-exploited subject.
- (Regarding point ‘c’: Hostility manifested by the “hostage” towards individuals or groups opposed to the ‘captor’ and/or their interests). General hostility toward the ‘Other’. In fact, the identification of the ‘Other’ is built dialectically with that of the ‘We’/‘Ourselves’, ‘contributing towards’ setting the stage for future policies of exclusion, if not aggression. It is worth connecting this point with the praise of identity feelings and, hence, with chauvinism, patriotism, racism and ethnocentrism, shared by broad sectors of the population.

Overall, the argument suggested here is that, under certain

- (a) economic (productive specialization, economic exploitation, dependence),
- (b) social (internal fragmentation, external isolation),
- (c) political (concentration of power),
- (d) and subjective (particularization of individual and group experiences; hierarchically controlled public communication channels) circumstances, complemented by public physical violence practices,

large social groups may become ‘hostages’, threatened with serious damage or death. Then, they can develop victimized collective behaviours comparable to those described by the ‘Stockholm syndrome’. As a result, the consolidation of asymmetric economic and political relations in class societies is enhanced.

Phenomena such as alienation and the success of ideologies that emphasize fear, punishment and obedience, coupled with strong attachment to identity-related and discriminatory feelings may have been triggered by the conditions described above. These social phenomena produce perplexity and lack of understanding. Usually, attempts to explain it are made according to two premises: (1) humans have the ability to think rationally and act sovereignly accordingly, and (2) individual rational thinking is modelled by education. Thus, it is concluded that all irrational or contrary to self-interest behaviour is the product of ignorance, idiocy or, more likely, of having re-

ceived a wrong, misleading, biased education (such as ideological ‘indoctrination’, ‘brainwashing’, etc.). Hence, any attempt to change that state of affairs should reveal a hidden or distorted truth, and this should be spread by means of a new proper education. The intention here is not to deny the value of education for social change. Simply that, in addition to strictly discursive/pedagogical practices, the success of certain ideologies could be also approached in the light of psychobiological responses rooted in the impulse of survival.

Fear of a threat triggers defensive behaviour. Fear is a feeling that can be learned⁸. Learning can arise from harmful experiences in one’s own skin or by being a spectator and/or acquainted subject of the suffering of other people. Conversely, fear can be lost. Therefore, the strategy of the ‘captor’ included how to publicly exert physical violence and how to store it in social memory to keep alive the fear that has been provoked. Kings, heroes, victorious warriors and priests will be the directors and main characters of public performances intended to be overwhelming and frightening. After that, monuments, tombs, artistic images, written records and oral traditions will try to keep fear in the social remembrance and in ‘culture’.

FINAL REMARKS

This work arose from a twofold goal. On the one hand, to try to solve an apparent paradox: why a large number of openly violent, discriminatory and asymmetric economic and political systems have not only proved to be durable and expansive, but have enjoyed the explicit approval and complicity of many of their victims. On the other hand, to address this issue by avoiding idealistic explanations, either by appealing to the force of embraced cultural principles, through strictly discursive, educational practices, or by assuming that there will always be powerful, strong minds imposing themselves on ‘weak’ or ‘faint-hearted’ spirits. Instead, the proposal developed here seeks to approach this issue by contextualizing the problem in class societies in light of an explanatory link (psychobiological response). It could be summarized as follows.

- Under conditions of (a) developed division of labour, (b) economic exploitation, and (c) restricted experiences, information and mobility, the exploited population is objectively victimized (damaged).
- In these conditions, physical violence orchestrated, executed and communicated by members of the ruling class can produce positive feelings towards them from a significant proportion of the exploited class or classes.
- This positive affectation, a neurological response in favour of survival in particular situations, could turn into explicit support and allegiance fostering the maintenance, strengthening and spread of deep political-economic asymmetries.
- The feeling of positive affectation adds a new type of damage to that produced by economic exploitation: psychological alienation.

The proposal outlined in this paper could be applied particularly to class societies or civilizations. However, it could be interesting to explore other social contexts and questions as the relation between settled life, the first household units, the seclusion of women inside the ‘home’ and the origins of patriarchy that extends to the present day. In any case, future research will need, first, to gain knowledge of the material living conditions of social groupings: is there a balanced sharing between their respective contribution to the production of goods, subjects (reproduction) and maintenance, and their participation in the use and consumption of all that is socially produced? What, in short, are the material conditions in which different groups develop their lives, regardless of the shared speeches, self-consciousness and expectations to which they could admit? Secondly, it promotes an investigation into the forms of violence exerted within a society, starting with those objectively revealed by physical damages. Thirdly, it encourages research on how violence is communicated to large audiences and embedded in social memory.

Perhaps the persistent, unconditional and sincere adherence of many people to violent, xenophobic, patriarchal, racist, classist, elitist and antisocial leaders and governments may cease to be a paradoxical phenomenon, or the disheartening finding of a supposed essential human foolishness or stupidity. After all, it may be the response of fragmented, specialized, immobilized, exploited and dependent human groups, conscientiously and conveniently damaged and threatened, in pursuit of an autonomy and survival that they perceive beyond their reach.

Does the foregoing lead to fatalism? Of course not. The struggles against the forms of exploitation and exclusion in class societies openly show that victimization does not irretrievably lead to resignation, obedience or blind allegiance to the will of the dominant power. A further line of research, closely related to those mentioned in this section, would explore the ways to avoid or overcome the ‘Stockholm syndrome’. However, before that, it needs to be explained why class societies have been spreading in the last five thousand years to now have become the worldwide hegemonic political model. It is not about certifying the inevitability of these situations or acknowledging their irreversibility, but to find the reasons for their undeniable success, at least temporarily.

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NOTES

- 1 Mainly weapons, traces of sudden destruction in abandoned settlements, mass graves and specific burials attributed to violent deaths, as well as figurative representations (paintings, engravings, etc.) of weapons, armed individuals and scenes of combat, execution and sacrifice (Lull *et al.*, 2006).
- 2 The list of publications on this subject is currently very large. For illustrative purposes of general scope, see Campbell (2014), Carman (2013), Dolfini *et al.* (2018), Fernández-Götz and Roymans (2017), García Piquer and Vila (2016), Guilaine and Zammit (2001), Keeley (1996), Martin and Frayer (1997), Meller and Schefzik (2015), Otto *et al.* (2006), Pathou-Matis (2013), Ralph (2012).
- 3 I focus here only on forms of physical violence that have a ceremonialized expression (‘executions’, ‘sacrifices’). Nevertheless, probably less formalized expressions of violence, such as battles, could have had similar social outcomes if they have been communicated to a large audience.
- 4 Freud (1954 pp. 125-136).
- 5 The bibliography in this regard is very extensive. See, for example, Chesnay (2013), Demarest (2009), Goetting (2007), Graham *et al.* (1994), Jameson (2010), Montero (2001), Namnyak *et al.* (2008), Rawlings and Graham (2007), Speckhard *et al.* (2005).
- 6 Metaphorically, I will refer to the parties involved using the terms ‘hostage’ and ‘captor’. It should be remembered that the modern definition of this syndrome came after a famous case of hostage robbery in the Swedish capital.
- 7 A hostility that, in some cases of kidnapping, was aimed at the police officers who released the hostages, and also at the government departments that ordered the police operation.
- 8 Experimentation has shown that in humans there are very few innate fear triggers. One, perhaps the only one, is strident sounds (Kalat, 2015, p. 371).

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