Chapter III
Conceptualizing Violence: Types and Nature

Introduction

The contemporary refugee crisis has posed one of the biggest challenges in memory to the cohesion of the European Union and some of its core values: freedom of movement, common borders, and pluralism. It heightened anxieties over identity and culture, feeding on economic insecurity and mistrust of governing elites that grew over decades with globalization and financial crises (New York Times, Sunday Review 21-04).

The above New York Times News is a common feature of any 24-hour news service which reports multiple events of violence globally. Violence as such is multidimensional, for example any harm caused by outside forces in the form of natural catastrophes, terrorism, demonstration, rioting or revolt, the state, military conflict, various kinds of warfare, major offensives, strategic assaults or domestic abuse.

Violence is an unavoidable part of human existence. It is ubiquitous and its large scale occurrence in various time and space proves its pervasiveness and frequency. The concern on violence has increased rather than decreased since the supposed end of the cold war, partly because of the numerous interethnic and inter-regional conflicts that have emerged around the world in the last decade of the twentieth century. Identifying the causes of violence in certain ways or determining an instance of violence as the consequence of any motive or ideology can itself be regarded as a kind of violence. This would be manifested when a determination is acted upon, leading to conceptions of justified violence, necessary violence, sufficient force etc. There is no doubt that the last 150 years have witnessed an escalation of violence increasingly among urban population who has been the victims of the several causes of violence.
Situating “Violence”

In his work, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida*, Hent De Vries (2002) offers a basic and inclusive definition of violence as entailing “any cause, any justified or illegitimate force that is exerted physically or otherwise by one thing on another” (Vries 1). Violence as a condition of possibility is thus presupposed by any act of force. Any real violence (physical, psychological, social etc.) might seem to presuppose an ideal (*a priori or transcendental*) violence or even a radical non-violence. Yet the reverse is true as well: the thought of violence seems necessarily constrained by circumstances and contained by history.

While defining the term *violence*, David Riches (1986), an anthropologist pointed out the perspectives of the performer, the victim, and the witness. According to David Riches, violence is a term used rhetorically, not analytically, and its most constant meaning is that it signals acts whose legitimacy is itself an object of conflict. Violence is effective and is accessible to anyone; hence it is likely to be resorted to frequently in disputes by parties who cannot gain their ends by other means.

As such it can be seen that Social Sciences have had a problem in defining “violence”; usually considering its many denotations (Michaud, 1986; Collins, 2008; Crettiez, 2008). In doing so, many approaches start and end with an enumeration of the various actions that fall under the general heading of “violence”. The following is one example of such a list:

1. To violate (do violence to) a church, a country’s borders, a confidence, a promise, a treaty, one’s office.
2. Obscenity does violence to one’s senses.
3. Do violence to the dignity of another.
4 Do violence to a scriptural text.

5 A threat of violence.

6 Acts of violence such as to murder, maim, injure bodily.

7 Crimes of violence.

8 Violence of a storm.

9 Violence of pain.

10 Violent (impassioned) words.

11 A violent death.

12 Violent (severe) punishment (Wade 369).

Webster’s *Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* gives the following meanings of “violence”: An exertion of any physical force so as to injure or abuse (Schinkel 18). *The Oxford Universal Dictionary* defines violence as: The exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on or cause damage to persons or property (Schinkel 18). As a transitive verb, “to do violence to” is related to “violate.” It is important to keep the meaning of the word violence distinct from terms like power, force, strength and authority.

Hannah Arendt (1970) laments on today’s frequent use of those terms synonymously with violence. She explains that violence and power are more nearly opposites in that violence is increasing in our time because power is eroding from our governing institutions. Violence has its roots in a concept of force, hence the primary dictionary definition of violence is “the exercise of (physical) force.” It is derived from the Latin noun violentia (‘vehemence’, ‘impetuosity’) and the adjective violentus (‘vehement’, ‘forcible’, ‘impetuous’, ‘violent’) and it appears to have become an independent word in Anglo-French and Old French somewhere around the fourteenth century. The verb to which both violentia and violentus relate is violare, meaning “to outrage”, “to dishonor” or “to treat with violence.”
Johan Galtung is the first to formulate a less restricted definition of violence. Galtung (1968) defines violence: as “the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is” (Galtung, 168). This definition has become quite famous, and there are two reasons for this. First, Galtung comes up with a notion of structural violence as a specific form of violence that has been innovative and therefore widely discussed. Second, Galtung’s discussion of violence is conceptually meticulous. It is one of the most thorough analyses of the phenomenon. Now, violence as the cause of the difference between the actual and the potential has been further explicated by Galtung as follows: “Violence is that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance” (Galtung 168). And he elsewhere adds that violence concerns not only the cause of the difference, but also the cause of maintaining the non-decrease between the actual and the potential (Galtung 172). A further requirement to speak of violence is the unavoidability of the actual: “When the actual is unavoidable, then violence is not present even if the actual is at a very low level” (Galtung, 169). In short, for Galtung violence is an influence, something which constrains human action and also human beings. He then distinguishes six dimensions of violence:

(i) **Physical vs psychological violence:** Physical violence is characterized by somatic hurt. Within the category of physical violence, Galtung further distinguishes between “biological violence”, “which reduces somatic capability and physical violence as such” (Galtung 169). An example of the latter is the imprisonment of a person or the uneven distribution of access to transportation. Psychological violence, “violence that works on the soul” includes lies, brainwashing and indoctrination, but also threats. All of these decrease mental potentialities.

(ii) **A negative and a positive approach to influence:** Like “negative” and “positive” freedom, one can speak of negative influence and of positive influence as violence. The first includes cases of punishment that lead to decreased potentialities, whereas the second refers to rewards that have positive result. Both are called “violence” by Galtung, because in both cases, the effect is decreased potentialities. An example of the somewhat counter-intuitive form of positive violence is the rewards given to consumers in a consumer’s society, which “is reward oriented, based on promises of euphoria, but […] also narrows down the ranges of action” (Galtung 170).
According to Galtung, such violence is more manipulatory and less overt than negative forms of violent influence are.

(iii) **An object hurt vs no object hurt**: Galtung states that there are cases where no object of violence exists, such as when a group of people throw stones around, or when nuclear arms are tested. However, he does state that such occasions usually amount to the threat of physical violence, which is a form of psychological violence. The same applies, according to Galtung, to the destruction of material things.

(iv) **A subject acting vs no subject acting**: This distinction refers to the agency of violence. And here, Galtung makes an important distinction: “We shall refer to the type of violence where there is an actor that commits the violence as personal or direct, and to violence where there is no such actor as structural or indirect” (Galtung 170). His concept of structural violence, as opposed to personal violence, has been innovative in research on violence. It enables Galtung to speak of violence, as an avoidable negative influence on a person’s potential, even in cases where a performing subject is absent. A major reason for structural violence is the uneven distribution of resources. According to Galtung, structural violence exists when people are starving “when this is objectively avoidable” (Galtung 171). He therefore also refers to structural violence as “social injustice.”

(v) **Intended violence vs unintended violence**: This distinction derives its relevance from the question of guilt, which, in Judeo-Christian ethics and Roman jurisprudence, has been more relevant than the matter of consequence of action. When the distinction between intended and not intended violence is not made, one is not only unable to distinguish intended instances of personal violence from unintended instances thereof, but one will also have a hard time recognizing structural violence for what it is. One may, as Galtung says, in “catching the small fry and letting the big fish loose” (Galtung 172).

(vi) **Manifest violence vs latent violence**: This is the final distinction Galtung discusses. It partly concerns the observability of violence, for manifest violence is violence, personal or structural that is observable. Latent violence is, however, not simply to be equated to unobservable violence. Rather, by “latent violence”, Galtung
intends a situation, “so unstable that the actual realization level “easily” decreases” (Galtung 172). With these six distinctions, with the covering distinction between personal and structural violence, and with clear-cut definitions of these concepts, Galtung’s take on violence has been sufficiently elaborated on.

(vii) **Galtung’s ‘extended definition’ of violence:** Galtung puts it like this: “We are rejecting the narrow concept of violence – according to which violence is somatic incapacitation, or deprivation of health, alone (with killing as the extreme form), at the hands of an actor who intends this to be the consequence” (Galtung 168). One might argue that a common definition of violence is even more restricted than somatic “incapacitation”, since “violence” is very often quite simply equated with intentional direct physical hurt. Violence as intentional direct physical hurt is probably the archetypical form of the narrow, yet highly common, conception of violence. As such, it is equally “pre-conceptual” as the popular notions of a circular trajectory of the earth around the sun, and of the idea that atoms are ball-shaped material substances. Galtung has his specific reasons to reject it in favour of a broader, more inclusive notion of violence. This has to do with the context of Galtung’s article. In Galtung’s article, the definition of violence is merely a step towards a definition of “peace.” He rejects the narrow conception of violence on account of it leading to a rejection of too little when the ideal is peace. So many things that are in contradiction to peace would go undetected. That is why, according to Galtung “an extended concept of violence is indispensable” (Galtung 168). Although the concept of structural violence has found its way into the canon of social sciences, there is, in general, little sympathy for the extended concept of violence per se. At least, when it comes down to the practice of research, there seems to be relatively little support for it. One exception is the concept of symbolic violence, as coined by Pierre Bourdieu. A commonly heard critique of the extended concept of violence is, for instance, reflected in the entrance of violence in the Routledge *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (1998) where it is stated with respect to Galtung’s definition and the extended definition of violence in general. However, Graig contests the views of Galtung in saying that his proposition faces several difficulties: “It is confusing, politically unhelpful and evades a central problem about violence. It is confusing because people do not ordinarily mean by ‘violence’ any and every form of social injustice, they mean such things as beating people up or torturing them with electrodes […]. Moreover, the expansive sense of violence does not help with an
agenda of social reform, because it encourages the cosy but ultimately stultifying belief that all social evils are really one and hence will yield to the one solution […]. It is therefore preferable to operate with a concept of violence, which is both narrower than that of structural violence and less morally loaded than […] it” (Craig 616).

**Theorizing “Violence”**

Sartre, in his Preface to Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) goes much farther in his glorification of violence than Sorel in his famous *Reflections on Violence* (2012), whose argument he wishes to bring to its conclusion by saying that Sorel’s utterances are fascist. This shows to what extent Sartre is unaware of his basic disagreement with Marx on the question of violence, especially when he states that “irrepressible violence...is man recreating himself,” that it is through “mad fury” that “the wretched of the earth” can “become men.” (Besteman 22) These notions are all the more remarkable because the idea of man creating himself is strictly in the tradition of Hegelian and Marxian thinking; it is the very basis of all leftist humanism. But according to Hegel, man “produces” himself through thought, whereas for Marx, who turned Hegel’s “idealism” upside down, it was labour, the human form of metabolism with nature that fulfilled this function. Although one may argue that all notions of man creating himself have in common a rebellion against the very factuality of the human condition—nothing is more obvious than that man, whether as member of the species or as an individual, does not owe his existence to himself—and that therefore what Sartre, Marx, and Hegel have in common is more relevant than the particular activities through which this non-fact should presumably have come about, still it cannot be denied that a gulf separates the essentially peaceful activities of man, “To shoot down an European is to kill two birds with one stone...there remain a dead man and a free man,” says Sartre in his Preface (Fanon 56). This is a sentence Marx could never have written. Even Hannah Arendt in her work *On Violence* (1970) quoted Sartre in order to show that this new shift toward violence in the thinking of revolutionaries can remain unnoticed even by one of their most representative and articulate spokesmen, and it is all the more noteworthy for evidently not being an abstract notion in the history of ideas. (If one turns the “idealistic” concept of thought upside down, one might arrive at the “materialistic” concept of labour; one will never arrive at the notion of violence.) No doubt all this has logic of its own, but it is one springing from experience, and this
experience is utterly unknown to any generation before. Arendt’s articulation of the formation of the political presents an opening to the interaction between violence, law and justice.

Walter Benjamin’s inquiry into the connection between violence and law opens a new way to conceptualise the interrelationship. Jacques Derrida’s response enables the opening up of justice, justice as deconstruction, which is situated near violence and law. Benjamin’s *Critique of Violence* (1986) and Derrida’s response in *Force of Law* (Anidjar 2002) provides an insight into the interaction of violence, law and justice as the end. Benjamin presents the figure of violence and how it has been linked to law. He attempts to circumvent the process whereby violence and law are traditionally bound together. Derrida on the other hand, attempts to locate the sphere of justice by searching for a justice that is free from violence. Benjamin’s text is a radical attempt to rethink the notions of justice and law. His text presents a departure from the traditional binds of legal theory; that is the opposition between natural and positive law. Natural law is concerned with ends, while positive law is concerned with means. Benjamin breaks open the means and the end distinction in order to free the notion of violence from the domain of legal judgment. It is also important to note what Benjamin means by *violence*. There is a shift in meaning in the English translation from the original word *Gewalt*. As *Gewalt* does not only mean violence, it can also mean legitimate force, authorized violence, legal power, as when one speaks of *Staatsgewalt*, state power (Derrida 262). Hence, the notion of violence (*Gewalt*) that is articulated by Benjamin has a multifaceted meaning that must be kept in mind.

In establishing a *critique of violence*, Benjamin opens up the established boundaries of legal reasoning, natural and positive law. There is a natural opposition between the two positions, which have resulted in natural law as only being able to criticise ends and positive law that of means. Benjamin’s text attempts to break through the means and end distinction stating: “if justice is the criterion of ends, legality is that of means” (Benjamin 237). Both schemas of legal argument are used to *justify* their dominion. In order to reconceptualise the nature of violence and its relationship with law, then the horizon of thought needs to be outside the boundary of both natural and positive law, outside both means and ends. Benjamin sketches a *philoso-phico-historico* view of law, thereby rupturing the nature of law (Benjamin 238). Violence is
misconceived in natural law through its justification based upon its ends. While in positive law, all violence must have proof of its historical origin (Benjamin 238). Violence is bound within the structure of law. Central to developing a condition of justice is breaking free from violence.

Benjamin develops throughout the Critique of Violence in the limitations of the means and end distinction, realising that both natural and positive law permit violence in one way or another. This violence is entwined with law (Benjamin 247). The condition now becomes one of just ends attained by justified means [and] justified means used for just ends (Benjamin 247). Violence sees however that justified means are irreconcilable with just ends (Benjamin 247). This tension leads Benjamin to attempt to break through the structure of legal reason. He searches for a different space for violence. It is never reason that decided on the justification of means and the justness of ends: fate-imposed violence decided on the former, and God on the latter (Benjamin 247). It is the establishment of mythic and divine violence that can enable the nature of violence to be founding and preserving, opening the space between law and violence.

Benjamin, by breaking the nexus of legality, positions the role of violence and the law as conceived through the distinctions of mythic and divine violence. These elements both demand something from the subject. Their interaction moves us closer to an attempt for justice that is not bound by violence.

Violence has remained mostly a matter of theory and rhetoric where the clash between generations did not coincide with a clash of tangible group interests. This was notably so in Germany, where the tenured faculty had a vested interest in overcrowded lectures and seminars. In America, the student movement has been seriously radicalized wherever police and police brutality intervened in essentially non-violent demonstrations: occupations of administration buildings, sit-ins, et cetera. Serious violence entered the scene only with the appearance of the Black Power movement on the campuses. Negro students, the majority of them admitted without required academic eligibility, regarded and organized themselves as an interest group, as the representatives of the black community. Their interest was to lower academic standards. They were more cautious than the white rebels, but it was clear from the beginning
(even before the incidents at Cornell University and City College in New York) that violence with them was not a matter of theory and rhetoric. Moreover, while the student rebellion in Western countries can nowhere count on popular support outside the universities and as a rule encounters open hostility the moment it uses violent means, there stands a large minority of the Black community behind the verbal or actual violence of the black students. Hannah Arendt mentioned the general reluctance to deal with violence as a phenomenon in its own right. If we turn to discussions of the phenomenon of power, we soon find that there exists a consensus among political theorists from Left to Right to the effect that violence is nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of power. “All politics is a struggle for power; the ultimate kind of power is violence,” said C. Wright Mills (Besteman 25), echoing, as it were, Max Weber’s (Besteman 25) definition of the state as “the rule of men over men based on the means of legitimate, that is allegedly legitimate, violence.” The consensus is very strange; for to equate political power with “the organization of violence” makes sense only if one follows Marx’s estimate of the state as an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class. Violence, finally, according to Hannah Arendt, is distinguished by its instrumental character. Phenomenologically, it is close to strength, since the implements of violence, like all other tools, are designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength until, in the last stage of their development, they are substituted for. Even Weber’s definition of the state has to be seen as a historical particularism that applies only to a modern state that exists relatively autonomous vis-à-vis a civil society. The increasing appropriation of physical violence by the state has led to several paradoxes. To begin with, the appropriation by the state of a huge potential of violence has had enormous violent effects in the form of colonization and world wars. It is hard to maintain that, after having acquired a reservoir of violence, modern states didn’t use it as well. In connection to this, sociologists like Giddens (1984) and Bauman (1998) have observed that the decrease of private violence went hand in hand with a far-reaching militarization that has brought about sophistication and a technique of violence. Bauman thus holds that “the civilizing process is not about the uprooting, but about the redistribution of violence” (Schinkel 31)

Paradoxically, the state has become both the most potentially “violent” modern institution, and the most frustrated victim, as in modern times a violent crime first and foremost offends not God or king, but the state. Moreover, the subject of what used to
be regicide is no longer a king that apparently fell out of grace with God or the gods; it is the “innocent victim”, the political individual, and his or her death is first of all punished as it is unlawful, because it offends the state, like any murder (Schinkel 31). A more problematic paradox is that all violence cannot be legitimate. In other words, the state cannot succeed in gaining a true monopoly of violence, eradicating all private violence, since then it would become obsolete. Legitimate violence therefore exists by virtue of the existence of non-legitimate private violence. One might therefore say that without private violence, the state would lose its core function, and that the practice of the state would imply explicitly working towards its own destruction, at least insofar as it is based on the intended dissolving of all private violence. Both these paradoxes are de-paradoxized by means of normativity that exists in the modern semantics of violence. According to this, “ethics of violence” remains what is deemed “good” as defined by the state, whereas private, illegitimate violence is “bad” and “evil.” This leads to the almost exclusive reservation of the term “violence” for cases of private violence (Schinkel 31). As Bauman maintains:

“…one category of coercion is called ‘enforcement of law and order’, while the nasty word ‘violence’ is reserved only for the second. What the verbal distinction hides, though, is that the condemned ‘violence’ is also about certain ordering, certain laws to be enforced – only those are not the order and the laws which the makers of the distinction had in mind” (Bauman 141).

Violence can be defined empirically in numerous ways. Certain empirical events are said to constitute “violence.” Each of those definitions will probably uncover aspects of violence, but none of them wholly captures what violence amounts to in the social process. In searching for a definition of violence, the first move is to get out of the paradox of simultaneously seeing and not seeing, of highlighting aspects and at the same time blotting others out. Therefore to define violence ontologically, and defining it as reduction of being, we need to explain what it means to define violence ontologically, and precisely what it is that makes the definition of violence as reduction of being preferable over/against alternatives, perhaps almost always becoming more commonsensical. In order to explain this definition, we need to draw on a number of sources in philosophical and sociological thought. The notion of violence as reduction of being is implicitly and at times even explicitly present. This is therefore not an
entirely new definition, and its conceptual systematization has been lacking until presently; it has deep roots. Philosophically, one might call it a radicalization of Enlightenment anthropology; sociologically, it is a radicalization of symbolic interactionism. Each time this definition of violence has come up in the history of thought, it has not been carried through to the end. It is often dealt with inconsistently. This is due to what can be called biaphobia – literally, a fear of the force of life, analogous to what Nietzsche called “denial of life.” Since violence causes the reduction of being essential to all (social) life; the fear of violence is indeed a denial of life. Even in an extended definition like that of Stuart Henry (2000), which explicitly refers to the reduction of a person, it is maintained that “acts of violence, then, are acts that make others powerless to maintain or express their humanity, that is, that deny their ability to make a difference” (Henry 20). It is thus assumed that there is no way of being human without reducing human being.

The dominant philosophical and social scientific traditions of thinking about violence have always in one way or another been intricately bound up with commonsensical notions of violence. That does not mean they have not seen violence along the lines of a reduction of being at all. They in fact have, and termed it “dehumanization.” This negation of the being of another being is, however, not restricted to such “beastly acts” as Dostoyevsky (1956) notes, “animals rarely engage in ‘beastly acts of violence’ when compared to humans” (Schinkel 58). Related to the notion of dehumanization is that of a denial of existence, which, for instance, allows Dante to say that “violence may be done against the Deity, in the heart denying and blaspheming him” (Schinkel 58). On a more worldly note, according to Carl Schmitt (2007) the essence (Wesen) of the political lies in the friend–enemy opposition, which he bases on the negation of the existence of the other (Schmitt 27). Such a negation of the otherness of the other will always necessarily have to take place. This is what the humanist tradition has never wanted to realize. It is informed by a biaphobic will to eradicate all violence, while it cannot escape the performance of violence itself. In order to come to a further clarification of the definition of violence as reduction of being, we will agree with Heidegger (1959) that “humanism” has not been “human” enough. Extreme violence may be dehumanization, but dehumanization is an all too human process. Randall Collins (1974) has even said that “torture and mutilation are distinctively human acts; they are indeed advanced human acts’ (Collins 422). This is because the
torturer or the mutilator “could not even attempt his arts without a capacity for taking the role of the other” (Collins 422). Lesser forms of violence – (inter)action in which the aspect of violence is not highlighted in an extreme sense – are in fact “all-too-human.” For it is human to reduce human beings to but a few aspects of their being. Every humanization is at the same time dehumanization. Every process of dehumanization is still, albeit in extreme cases in the smallest possible respect, a humanization. The humanist idea of being human does not acknowledge the aspect of reduction of being in every letting, for it places the concept of dehumanization outside the realm of the human. This is a philosophical dilemma that Kant’s statement that “the pure gift is the recognition of the humanity of the other” (Bauman 91) suggests. The sociological qualification would be that “sociology posits that social agents do not perform gratuitous acts” (Bourdieu 150). Following the humanism of his times, Heidegger (1949) writes that he sees the human in terms of “value.” Yet it is precisely such a value that makes Dasein an object – an object of (e)valuation (Schinkel 58). Humanism reduces human beings to “things”, precisely in its attempt to formulate a positive idea of the essence of the human, which excludes violence. Heidegger has laid bare the biaphobic inconsistency in the humanist tradition, but at another level he displays it.

First, it is relevant to state that, drawing on Heidegger’s exposition of the biaphobic inconsistency of “humanism”, violence can be conceptualized in other ways as that aspect of human (inter)action which consists of the simultaneous subjectification and objectification of a (human) being. Reducing the ontological horizon of the other to a few selected aspects, one cannot suggest reduction in violence in everyday experience even if a horizon is kept ready at hand for the possibility of aspect-changes. The other is both a subject and object in any interaction. Only in extreme cases of violence the reduction of being has been recognized and classified under the notion of “objectification.” With respect to the Nazi concentration camps, for instance, Hannah Arendt (1968) has spoken of a way of “transforming the human personality into a mere object.” For Primo Levi (1965) extreme objectification of a human being in the context of a prisoner of the concentration camp is characterized as “a man whose life or death can be lightly decided with no sense of human affinity, in the most fortunate of cases, on the basis of a pure judgment of utility” (Levi 33). In Marxist literature, Verdinglichung has always been understood as a reduction of human beings to mere
objects – objects that were or are even fetishized (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1944). In a similar vein, Paul Tillich (1959) has said that “a profound insight has been developed in modern literature, namely, that one of the fundamental expressions of sin is to make the other person into an object, a thing” (Tillich 210). To a certain degree, however, no one escapes objectification, since to be a subject, to be able to be, is to have always already been reduced. A reduction, an objectification, has always already taken place. Sartre has extensively written about the everyday objectifications that are the “stuff” of violence. In his existential ontology, a rupture is experienced by a cogito, a being-for-itself, and the other: “Between the Other and myself there is a nothingness of separation” (Sartre 230). The Other is the no-itself: “Others are the Other, that is the self which is not myself. Therefore we grasp here a negation as the constitutive structure of the being-for-others” (Sartre 230). The “Other” is the negation of the for-itself, and this is only possible, according to Sartre, as the experience of an object. Just as the being-in-itself is nihilated in order for the being-for-itself to be, the Other can only be conceived as “objectness” (objectité). Being-for-itself necessarily objectifies the Other, and it is objectified by the Other itself (Sartre 236). For the Other is a negation of the self as cogito, since it is not self, but the Other. When posited as a subject, the Other is an object of my thoughts (Sartre 229). This objectification of the Other is necessary, according to Sartre, because self-consciousness can only appear as self-consciousness for an Other. The Other is the “one who sees me”, and to whom I appear as an object. Being-for-itself needs from the Other a recognition of its being (Sartre 237). The inherently conflictual relationship between self and Other is due to the fact that both self and Other rely on each other in order to recognize themselves as being-for-itself (compare Hegel 147). And they do so, in Sartre’s terminology, as “objectness.” Subject and object become, in a sense, conflated categories: “The peculiar possibility of apprehending me as an object is the possibility belonging to the Other-as-subject” (Sartre 296). This, in turn, is only possible because the Other is an Other-as-object. There is no escaping this simultaneous subjectification and objectification. It becomes especially apparent in the phenomenon of shame, but also in love, since love, according to Sartre, is also the enslavement of the Other, specifically as freedom. Sartre saw violence as basic to being-for-itself, but he did not appreciate the positivity that this violence of everyday life always is. Only when the other is reduced in his being in the sense that he is not allowed to exist in light of other aspects of his being violence turns from primarily constitutive to primarily destructive to the being of the other. This
difference is merely a matter of scale: the extent to which the other is reduced – and there is no reducing the other – equals the level of violence towards the other. It is to be stressed that this reduction is always a reduction in the double sense of a reduction of the ontological horizon of the other to certain aspects, and a reduction of the possibility of aspect-change. A higher level of violence is described by Sartre as exercised by the sadist. The sadist is involved in a purely instrumental utilization of the other: “the sadist treats the Other as an instrument in order to make the Other’s flesh appear” (Sartre 402). Here, there is no changing the aspect of the objectness of the other. The other cannot be considered to be some-thing other than the thing he is conceived to be by the sadist. The sadist, or in general, the person we call “violent” in a practical sense takes the objectness of the other at one point in (social) time to be the whole of the being of the other. To a killer, the only selected aspect of the being of his victim is the latter’s objectness in a literal sense: his materiality, the *res extensa*, is in fact always transcended by a horizon of aspects of being. The killer is not oblivious to that horizon and it may very well provide the motive for his actions, but he simply ignores it and refuses to make it count above the aspect that is actualized. Yet the very fact that we can and always need to reduce the other to but relatively few aspects of his being indicates that the other is always more than what he, at any given time, is. The commonsensical notion of violence applies to cases of violence where this ontological “fact” is omitted from interaction as a constitutive force. Sartre’s existential ontology is written entirely from the perspective of the cogito. However, violence is not only restricted to situations between the “self” and the “Other.”

Michel Foucault (1982) provides an elaborate sociological account of *subjectification and objectification*. Foucault shows how humanist efforts to “socialize” lead people to a new kind of subjectification. In the end, it even leads to the subjectification of man as “man”, a human being, endowed with universal value, as a knowing “subject” against a world of soulless objects to be known to man. This objectness is incorporated into the human subject by means of various disciplinary techniques. The human sciences then become the “disciplines which will […] treat men as objects” (Schinkel 61). It is not Foucault’s intention to show that processes of subjectification are a specifically modern product, but rather that, in modernity, these take a new and more immanentized, even incorporated shape. In his study of the rise of the prison, he claims that a panoptic model was born in the eighteenth century. For our
purposes, it is interesting to note that this model was accompanied by a discourse that sought to get rid of the excessive violence of pre-modern punishment and torture. Foucault, however, sees in the coming of a disciplinary society another kind of violence based on a more meticulous control over social subjects. This control was effectuated through classifications that were devised to subject individuals into disciplined subjects of society. This was a society that sought to discipline and to include, instead of to avenge and to exclude. A criminal code was developed that was able to do this. Control becomes control over the body of the inmate; space and time become socially constructed parameters of the body of the prisoner. Especially in his earlier work, Foucault relates this development to the rise of modern capitalism. It has often been argued that workers have had to be “socialized” into the role of capitalist production workers (Schinkel 62). Foucault sees in the rise of panoptic discipline the development of what he later called a dispositive – a power–knowledge constellation – in which the individual was subjected as a homo economicus. For Foucault, knowledge and power are correlative bound together. Power has the effect of control and subjectification, which at the same time amounts to objectification. As Foucault says, “my objective [...] has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects” (Foucault 208). He thus distinguishes certain modes of objectification that are not directly relevant here, except for the sheer fact that these modes of objectification produce subjects. The fact that the ways in which people are subjectified are historically relative – they differ in each episteme or dispositive – means that each cultural construction of “man” reduces man to something less than he actually is.

Power, for Foucault, is not simply something (certain) people have and use to suppress others; it is rather immanent to the field of relations those people constitute. In *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Foucault coins the expression the tactical polyvalence of discourse to indicate the duality inherent in processes of subjectification (Foucault 132). These do not simply concern a relation between a master and a slave, but the productivity of power means that while homosexuals, for example, are subjectified to fit in to a certain violent vocabulary, the same vocabulary in turn provided them with a means of emancipation. Both aspects characterize the discourse of homosexuality: while homosexuals are medicalized and thus disqualified as belonging to a social
context of “perversity” that discourse at the same time allows them to emancipate; it allows for a discourse-in-return to exist (Foucault 134). A similar productivity of violence is found in the normalization that takes place in the procedures of discipline (Foucault 187). What Foucault’s work highlights in exemplary fashion is that dehumanization is constitutive of humanization. Only from a “humanistic” point of view – a view which is not human enough – can one condemn dehumanization as being wholly destructive and negative. While Foucault writes on power, the ontological perspective on violence developed here can be elaborated in a similar way with a view to the social productivity of the reduction of being.

To define violence as a reduction of being is to move past a biaphobic deontology that sees only one aspect of violence – its destruction – and to allow for the constitutive aspects of violence to be highlighted. We must therefore reinterpret the humanist–Marxist critique of reification and regard it as a necessarily Janus-faced social process. This critique has in fact not recognized its own violence in presupposing the objectification of a human subject. This subject is the product of a process of reification or objectification itself (Schinkel 63). The subject is a simplification, or, in other words, a reduction. It is always more than itself. The reduction is what enables the subject to be, and whatever more it is than a subject; it can only be a subject. It is not surprising that at the heart of Kant’s moral philosophy is the synthetic practical a priori to consider each human being as an end in itself. The definition of violence put forward here explicitly entails the idea that, while Kant’s concept of “humanity” may yet be a biaphobic construct, it does recognize that people are instrumentalized and that morality depends on the degree to which the other is always at the same time regarded as an end in itself, which would be the degree to which an aspect-change is allowed for.

The reduction of life to “biopolitics” is one of the main threads in Agamben’s work, in his critical conception of a homo sacer, reduced to “bare life”, and thus deprived of any rights. Homo Sacer is, according to ancient Roman law, a human being that could not be ritually sacrificed but whom one could kill without being guilty of committing murder. Agamben uses the concept as the underpinning for a fresh decoding of the major political difficulty in our century: the rise of the worst sort of totalitarianisms, with Nazism at its apex. Agamben's concept of the homo sacer rests on a crucial distinction in Greek between “bare life” and “a particular mode of life” or
“qualified life”. In the book *Homo Sacer* (1998), particularly in the essay, “The Camp as the ‘Nomos’ of the Modern”, Agamben evokes the concentration camp of World War II. According to him, “the camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule” (Agamben 168-69). Agamben says that “What happened in the camps so exceeds (is outside of) the juridical concept of crime that the specific juridico-political structure in which those events took place is often simply omitted from consideration” (Agamben 166). The conditions in the camps were “conditio *inhumana,*” and the incarcerated somehow were defined outside the boundaries of humanity. Where law is based on vague, unspecific concepts such as “race” or “good morals,” law and the personal subjectivity of the judicial agent are no longer distinct.

In the process of creating a state of exception these effects can compound. In a realized state of exception, one who has been accused of committing a crime, within the legal system, loses the ability to use his voice and to represent one self. The individual not only is deprived of his/her citizenship, but also of any form of agency over his/her own life. As Jacques Ranciere (2004) says, “Agamben identifies the state of exception with the power of decision over life” Within a state of exception, when a detainee is placed outside of the law, he is according to Agamben, reduced to “bare life” in the eyes of the judicial powers.

Within the state of exception, the distinction between *bios* (the life of a citizen) and *zoê* (the life of *homo sacer*) is made by those with judicial power. Agamben (2005) has used the example of prisoners in Guantánamo Bay, and their situation, if legally-speaking actually comparable with those in the Nazi camps. The detainees of Guantanamo do not have the status of Prisoners of War; they have absolutely no legal status. They are subject only to raw power; they have no legal existence. In the Nazi camps, the Jews had to be first fully “denationalised” and stripped of all the citizenship rights remaining after Nuremberg, after which they were erased as legal subjects. Agamben's idea of “State of Exception” investigates the increased power of governments, which they employ supposedly in times of crisis. Within a state of emergency, Agamben refers to the state of exception, where constitutional rights can be diminished, superseded and rejected in the process of claiming the extensive power of a government:
“In every case, the state of exception marks a threshold at which logic and praxis blur with each other and a pure violence without logos claims to realize an enunciation without any real reference” (Agamben 40)

Here, Agamben (2005) refers to a continued state of exception by the Nazi state of Germany under Hitler's rule: “The entire Third Reich can be considered a state of exception that lasted twelve years. In this sense, modern totalitarianism can be defined as the establishment by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system” (Agamben 2)

The political power over others acquired through the state of exception, places one government — or one form or branch of government — all powerful, operating outside of the law. During such times of extension of power, certain forms of knowledge shall be privileged and accepted as true and certain voices shall be heard as valued, while of course, many others are not. This oppressive distinction holds great importance in relation to the production of knowledge. The process of both acquiring knowledge, and suppressing certain knowledge, is a violent act in a time of crisis.

It is also important to keep in view the context in which Fanon (1963) was writing about the necessity and justifiability of violence to fully appreciate the proper significance of his ideas. Here, it would not be out of place to point out Fanon’s writing not meant to be philosophical reflections on the questions but have engaged the attention of academic philosophers regarding the justification of violence. Fanon was actively involved in the Algerian Revolution (1954-1961) and as a participant he had given serious thought to the conditions of the Blacks and the Arabs in the African countries. He was of the opinion that colonialism has done a severe damage to the self-image and dignity of the colonized, for their national culture was brutally destroyed by the colonial masters. Therefore, the content of Fanon’s writings should not be ignored when his ideas are examined for understanding their philosophical implications.

Fanon has analysed the phenomena of alienation. Under the degrading conditions of French colonialism the Arabs and the Negroes lose their sense of identity.
Colonialism is inherently racist and unjust. It represents impoverishment, political tyranny and psychological emasculation. The native is defined in biological terms and is declared insensitive to ethics. The master race tries its best to persuade the native to accept his inherent racial inferiority. He contended that a Negro is doubly alienated. His actions are predetermined by the white settler and he himself is over determined by his black skin. The essential needs of the enslaved are not fulfilled. They are freely arrested, beaten and starved. Fanon concluded that violence under colonialism is political, military, cultural and psychic. Through violence, colonial power forced new structures on the subject nation. Colonial relationships are established on the basis of systematic exploitation of the natives. The colonial products are sold at minimal prices in conformity with the demands of the market whereas the finished goods are imported from the metropolitan country at excessive prices. The economic organization is restructured keeping in view the mother country’s needs and this is carried out by brutal force. This violence has its imprint not only on the institutional framework but also on human relationship. The antagonistic relationships between the colonized and the colonizer are characterized primarily by violence.

During the first phase, violence tends to do away with the psychological inertia and alienation of the colonized. This violence has a socio-psychological function and in this form it is a catalytic experience that is a necessary precondition for organized liberation struggle. Thus, for Fanon, the cult of violence was neither a hangover of the alleged African tribal legacy of savagery or barbaric but a means of purification. By killing the enemy, the colonized frees himself of his reified status; he overcomes his inferiority complex and becomes once more a human being. Though the spontaneous outburst of violence is necessary as a psychological preparation of the colonized yet Fanon believes that it must be quickly organized and politicized if it is to be successful. Violence is effective when it is socialized i.e. it is given a social direction. Violence should be utilized as part of a rationally planned struggle. For Fanon, violence acts as a binding force between individuals since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain which has stood up to react against the settler’s violence. The armed struggle mobilizes the people; it throws them in one direction, i.e., the common aim to get liberated from the foreign yoke. Violence on a national scale liquidates tribalism and regionalism. This liquidation is a preliminary condition for the unification of the people. The violence of the colonized is an answer to the acts of coercion perpetuated against
him. The violence of the native is an act of emancipation. As counter violence aims in principle at removing the existing authority based on force while superseding the factors conductive to alienation. The quality of Fanon’s violence is not that of a social sadist or for the social domination of the oppressed. Here, it will be worthwhile to distinguish between creative violence and destructive violence.

Fanon justifies violence on the ground of means-ends relationship. Violence and revolution are found to be the only effective modes of bringing change in the structure of society. These help in adjusting the asymmetrical racial and power relation inherent in a system. A revolution should not only transform the social institutions and regimes but also to bring about a profound transformation in men. Fanon provided this empirical description or a sociological explanation of the political phenomenon of decolonization which he thought was always a violent one. It is shaping of the reality in accordance with historical necessity wherein Fanon joins the Marxist tradition by maintaining that through understanding or through natural methods the society cannot be changed. All social change and in fact the entire historical process comes into being only through social action or praxis in which the actors are the individuals, the colonized in the case of Fanon who make history in accordance with socio-historical laws. It is only through this kind of social and political action that property relations can be brought to a symmetrical pattern and the power relations be readjusted. In a way it is overcoming violence through violence for colonization is imposed through violence only. Fanon goes beyond Marx in postulating the significance of creating and recreating an ideology to invent and to rediscover a new man, a total man who is not desensitized, but is aware of his historical role in redeeming the humanity. Fanon does not advocate for any ad hoc use of violence but as an encompassing force across an entire range of political system. It seems that even though Fanon is not very clear about the concept of violence but he seems to be sure of its functional efficacy, i.e. of its power to deliver the goods. Hannah Arendt, C .Wright Mills and Max Weber all agree in defining violence as the most flagrant manifestation of power. Fanon speaks about the moral justification of violence in the context of means-end relationship.
Violence and the Media

In the media literature, definition of violence varies widely. There is no consensus. Violence is narrowly defined as physical harm, while others take a broader perspective, including aggression, conflict or antisocial behaviour. Some scholars present formal definitions, but others treat violence as a primitive concept. These conditions make it very difficult to synthesize findings across media studies. Over three thousand studies have been conducted during the past four decades in the United States alone that suggest that there is a “correlation” between social aggression and violence presented on the big and small screens. According to the American Psychological Association, by the time an average American child is ten or eleven years old, he/she would have seen 8000 murders and 10,000 acts of violence on television. Few studies on the subject have been conducted in India, and it is found that Indian children are not yet exposed to the excessive violence that American children are, at least on television. However, with the arrival of satellite television which is dominated by American films and television programmes, the Indian children are no doubt likely to get exposed to more and more violence. Of course popular Indian films too have a surfeit of violence, much of it stylized, but some of it vivid and realistic, often bordering on the pornographic. There have been cases of children and adults imitating screen violence in the modus operandi of gangsters, robbers and murderers. Such cases get prominent coverage in the press and the other media. But, this does not mean that screen violence or media violence is the only contributory factor of violence in the society. What is of greater concern is the effect of “desensitization” that could result from repeated exposure to scenes of violence in programmes, cartoons and news. Exposure to violence constantly and on a daily basis can desensitize us to violence in real life. It might lead us to believe that some groups are “naturally” violent and such stereotypes might continue.

In this regard, Walter Lippmann (1922) looks at newspaper as the dominant form of mass media of his time which presents the public with information about events that people can’t experience in real life. Thus, the media are powerful agents of socialization because they give the public a great deal of information that can’t be confirmed by sources other than the media. Berger and Luckmann (1966) extended Lippmann’s ideas by theorizing that socialization consists of three main processes:
1. **Internalization**

2. **Externalization** and

3. **Objectivation**.

*Internalization* is the process by which people learn about their social world thereby becoming a product of it. People learn to observe the rules and lessons of society. *Externalization* is the process of typifying behaviour either on a small scale or on a large scale. On a small scale, people express attitudes and behaviours as they interact with one another in a social world. Particular attitudes and behaviour become common in certain situations that turn into habits. On a large scale, we can see that certain behavioural patterns may be continually exhibited by a wide range of people. *Objectivation* is the process by which the externalized products of human activity attain the character of objectivity, i.e. they become accepted as legitimate. When these patterns are used by others, this typified pattern can be institutionalised. Once an institution becomes established, it controls human conduct with its previously defined patterns of conduct. As people confirm to these patterns, the institution gain credibility and acceptance. Over time, institutions are regarded as having a reality of their own. In this case, they are said to be have been “objectified.”

Violence in the news and in comic strips is rarely talked about. While the portrayal of violence in the press and broadcast media is condoned because it is supposedly “factual” and deals with real life incidents. The caricatures of violent fights and clashes between heroes and villains are condoned because they are presented in a light and humorous manner.

The debate about the extent media portrayal of violence affect audience attitude and behaviour has been extraordinarily polemical in nature. What is required is a critically informed path between/among different models with an intellectual reorientation and a repoliticization of the entire field of study. This involves more than merely re-theorizing “media violence” beyond the argument about whether representations of individual acts of violence produce particular responses in individual readers or viewers. This also includes focusing to an extent media’s representation of everyday violence whether they could be
considered as normal and legitimate. It is also interesting to note whose ideological and economic interests such acts of media violence might be serving. Hence, we need to examine how media violence is implicated in the structural legitimization of the place and position of influential groups in society.

Today there is a pressing need to consider how authentic media contents are, such as news, current affairs, reality shows and documentaries that use violence more so in highly spectacular imagery in order to attract and maintain audience rating. It may be, as Höijer’s research suggests, that factual violence serves to increase our compassion towards victims of real violence. There is equally the possibility that reporting about war, terror and conflict may increase compassion while serving particular political ends for soliciting public support for example in case of the US and the British led invasion of Iraq. We also need to examine how factual reporting and representations of violence might contribute to a public sense of inevitability around real violence, and increased tolerance for aggressive actions in everyday life. Here, a commonly used definition is that a media representation of violence will contain “the overt expression of physical force (with or without a weapon) against self or other, compelling action against one’s will on pain of being hurt or killed, or actually hurting or killing (Gerbner et al 10-29). There is an extensive view of violence that includes violence against animals, inanimate objects, and verbally threatening behaviour (National Television Violence Study, 1997). Such definitions have enabled the analysis of just how much violence is portrayed in the media. Yet, defining precisely what counts as a media representation of violence is perhaps less interesting than examining why certain types of depiction are deemed problematic. By exploring the debate from this perspective, interesting patterns in the identification of media violence as a “problem” emerge.

However, criticism of such a position came from the older, self-proclaimed “respectable Press” catering to middle-class readers. Middle-class social reformers of the time were of the view in general that penny newspapers encouraged working-class readers to revel in the salacious details of certain events – train crashes, steamboat explosions, industrial fires and violent crime. An additional concern was that others could use the details in the reports, in
relation to crime reporting, to plan further criminal acts (Goldberg 27-52). Rather than focusing on the question of whether violent media content influences the behaviour of audience, researchers such as Schlesinger and Tumber (1994) informed by these theories ask how the contexts of media production shape the selection, framing and characterization of both factual and fictional media content on violence. For example, Schlesinger and Tumber have investigated how crime reporting represents women and argue that it often stereotypes them as sexually provocative and often fails to take sufficient precaution against sexual attacks. Other researchers have examined the phenomenon of crime reconstruction and “reality” police programmes, and have argued that they tend to encourage fears around crime that encourage a discursive identification with law and order politics, and that the programmes fail to reflect how crime and violence are linked causally to structures such as poverty, racism and sexism (Anderson 1995; Cavender 1998).

However, returning to the argument made earlier in the section on “Violence and Media”, instead of perpetuating the dualisms of the effects versus no effects debate on media violence, I believe that it is essential to engage in greater research effort investigating who are the key beneficiaries of the existing system of production, representation and consumption of media violence. What is needed is a more nuanced and politically aware understanding of the complex ways in which the growing “normalcy” and “everydayness” of media violence influences our relationship with each other in the world. The need for more critically informed research in this area has become more urgent in the light of new trends in the mediation of violence in which the boundaries between factual and fictional media formats have become increasingly blurred.

Definitions of violence normally presented in media research have tended to emanate from Western points of view. In order to further de-westernize, and thus enrich public debates, there is a need for examination of a wider array of media cultures than currently exists. As such, it is important to come to grips with how media violence is variously used in different cultural settings:

• for propaganda purposes;
• to resist oppressive political and cultural regimes;
• as an instrument of oppression of disadvantaged groups in society; and
• for purposes of entertainment.

Various Dimensions of Understanding Violence

To differentiate various meanings of the concept of violence semantically, it can be categorized as follows:

a. Physical violence—aimed at harming, injuring, or killing other people—indubitably stands at the center of the whole issue of violence. This form of violence is always exercised in a manifest manner and is mostly intentional. Heinrich Popitz “considered people’s relative freedom from instinctual behavior, which brings a far-reaching release from social factors enforcing or inhibiting action, to be the anthropological basis of this kind of violence (Imbusch 23). The fact that people need not exercise violence, but may always have the choice to do so, is what makes violence so disturbing: violence is a behavioral option that can be used at any time.” It does not require lasting superiority of power because its power stems from the elemental vulnerability of the human body. The use of physical violence thus produces effects by itself; it has no cultural preconditions, it is universal, and does not have to be understood differently.

b. Psychological violence – causes harm to the mind, the soul and the psyche of a person. Although it remains tied to the physicality of human existence it is not only far harder to detect but can also be considerably more inhumane than physical violence. Psychological violence is based on words, gestures, pictures, symbols, or deprivation of the necessities of life, so as to force others into subjugation through intimidation and fear, or allowing specific “rewards.” Psychological violence certainly includes some forms of psychological cruelty in particular forms of torture. Whereas physical violence involves a strong connection between cause and effect and its results are to a great extent predictable; the effects of psychological violence cannot be predicted in the same way since they can be eluded by the victim through a range of defense mechanisms by taking refuge, or by suppression. Physical violence always causes open, visible harm or injuries, whereas psychological violence works undetected, it is not outwardly visible.
c. **Institutional violence** goes beyond direct personal violence insofar as it not only describes a specific modality of social behaviour, but also is directed toward lasting dependence and submission syndrome. We are dealing here with violence’s regulatory function, as exercised by state security services (police, secret services) or state organizations (e.g., the military). Their physical, coercive interventions must be regarded as violence, even if in principle the police enjoy a bonus of legitimacy over their opponents when they employ violence in a democratic context. It is the criterion of legality/illegality or legitimacy/illegitimacy that makes institutional violence either as unproblematic or as injustice. This immediately becomes apparent when we look at the limits of the state monopoly of violence, which may seem to be clear-cut, but is quite blurred in concrete instances—in the form of police attacks, implementation of the death penalty, particular types of warfare, or various forms of combating insurgency and terrorism.

d. **Structural Violence**—The concept of structural violence was originally formulated by Johan Galtung (1975). He introduced it to complement his concept of direct violence and to encompass all those kinds of violence which result from systemic structures and are reflected in the various forms of anonymous mass impoverishment and the death of huge numbers of people worldwide. There is definitely human responsibility involved here, but the blame can no longer be individually apportioned. For Galtung these problems ultimately result from the violent structures of global society themselves. Galtung considers that structural violence is always present when there is no direct perpetrator but a permanent state of violence. Violence must therefore be inherent in the social structures of a society or systems. Accordingly, Galtung considers that “when people are influenced in such a way that their current somatic and mental fulfillment is less than their potential fulfillment” (Imbusch 24). Violence has thus become a cause for the difference between the Real and the Possible, between what is and what could have been at a particular level of social development. The criteria which Galtung cites to define this gap are firstly global wealth and the corresponding level of available knowledge, and then the uneven distribution of resources, unequal power conditions, and the differentiated opportunities that are available.

e. **Cultural Violence** -- The concept of **cultural violence or symbolic violence** has different connotations. The introduction of the concept of cultural violence by Johan
Galtung (1990) was of central significance. Galtung defined cultural violence by extending his concept of structural violence to include those aspects of culture which can be used for justifying or legitimizing direct, illegitimate institutional (or structural) violence. Cultural violence is aimed at making other forms of violence appear just or at least not unjust and thus making them acceptable for society. Religion, ideology, language, art, science and media are particularly suited to this task. The real or potential legitimation of violence is thus the sign by which cultural violence can be recognized. By comparison, Pierre Bourdieu saw symbolic violence as being the violence embodied in concepts, language, and systems of symbols aimed at obscuring, veiling and glossing over unspoken conditions of rule. Conditions of power and government and the structures of violence they embody, he wrote, become unrecognizable to the extent that they seem normal and accepted. Discrimination and deception is thus already attendant to the very symbol, or systems of symbols, and therefore anyone who is fond of a particular system of symbol, or uses it, is inevitably exercising symbolic violence, at times unwittingly (Imbusch 25).

In addition there is another understanding of symbolic violence that lays special emphasis on the symbolism of exercising violence and comprehends violence as language or cultural expression. Symbolic violence as linguistically conveyed are such mental acts of violence in the form of spoken words, for example, that includes shouting, abusing, offending, slandering, libeling, discrediting, belittling, disparaging, debasing, ignoring, or making a fool of someone, including humiliation and character assassination. It is built into language and communication in the form of hate speech—words with a racist or sexist overtone aimed at injuring the personal, ethnic, or sexual integrity of a person (Imbusch 25). Verbal violence, which can also be found in the media in the form of propaganda, is aimed at intimidating and belittling others. Although it is termed symbolic, its mode of effect actually makes it more a variant of psychological violence.

f. **Ritualized forms of violence** must also, like metaphorical descriptions, be distinguished from the central concept and semantics of violence. Ritualized violence here does not mean public burnings as in the Middle Ages, ritual sacrifices or prescribed routines of torture, but those forms of communicative (social) violence which, if they can be categorized at all, tend more toward manifest physical violence
because they do not constitute use of force against another person with the aim of overcoming their resistance or causing them harm or injury, which would amount to acts of power as defined by Popitz. Rather, such violence is embedded in an action or interactive scenario and directed toward a different goal. This violence is overwhelmingly theatrical and functions without malicious intent to injure—either through conveying the domination and subordination processes of violent acts of power with their clearly recognizable victim and perpetrator roles in purely symbolic ways, or by doing without them at all. Such staged “violence” is based on the voluntariness and equality of the participants. These forms of violence, which are frequently found in specific subcultures, help to build the community through their characteristically playful-ritual form and are not destructive, not least because they are standardized and regimented in a particular way.

**Manifestations of Violence**

To bring out the specific characteristics of all the central categories of violence, it is helpful to systematize the diverse manifestations of violence. This applies when violence is differentiated according to the type and number of agents involved, their degrees of organization, or their legitimacy.

1. **Individual Violence**: One general manifestation of violence is individual violence. This is exercised by individual perpetrators (or by individuals in peer groups) against strangers in the street, in public spaces or public institutions, and also exercised in the private sphere against friends and relatives, etc. There can—but need not—be a social relationship between perpetrator and victim. Individual violence can be directed not only against people but also against objects and take the form of vandalism or damage to property. It can also take the form of theft and robbery and constitute offenses against property.

2. **Collective violence**: It represents the opposite of individual violence, and its public character also makes it the opposite of private violence. The term collective violence is used in particular to designate those forms of violence, which to a certain degree are under the control of a leadership—however legitimized—and for which a particular degree of organization and a public challenge are constitutive elements.
Group size is of crucial importance for this definition and must exceed a particular number of people, since otherwise we are merely dealing with simple group delinquency or gang violence (street gangs, hooligans, etc.). Typical examples of collective violence are rebellions and pogroms, along with social revolts and violent mass protests. However, the latter represent a gray zone, which verges on political violence, which includes principally terrorism, guerilla movements, rebellions, revolutions, civil wars, and coups d’état.

3. **State Violence**: The last form of violence, albeit one which is extremely heterogeneous in itself, is state violence. The applications of the concept of violence in connection with the political structure of the state are diverse and in each case denote highly differing types and forms of violence, to which serious analyses of violence should give careful consideration, since they also display various qualities of violence. These extend from the legitimate state monopoly of violence to forms of state terrorism and war. If today in the leading Western industrialized countries state violence is sometimes no longer perceived as such, or only in exceptional cases, this is above all because the democratic state essentially employs its legitimate monopoly of violence for maintaining order. This can by no means be taken for granted, as history shows—for long periods it was more the exception than the rule. This also becomes clear from a glance at the many Second and Third World countries where the state possesses only a very patchy monopoly of violence, and has frequently become an agent of violence itself as a power-wielding institution.

The first variant of state violence is thus the legal violence of the state, which occurs in constitutional democracies in the form of the state monopoly of violence and is considered legitimate. Max Weber (1978) was one of the first to realize that every state is a coercive institution founded on violence and that specific means of physical violence are characteristic of the modern state by definition. In this sense Weber viewed the state as a relationship of rule of people over people based on means of legitimate violence.

The observation that the modern state is based on violence is also correct in a much more direct sense, considering that the development of the state as a form of government and the successful enforcement of its monopoly of violence in Western
Europe was not only a historically unique process, but resulted only after lengthy and exceedingly violent and costly clashes—the ultimate monopolization of violence was by no means a clear and foregone conclusion. Both in Europe and the United States, nations were born and states built through bloody civil strife, revolutions and wars, which frequently caused chaos and almost always plunged the population into misery.

A third variant of state violence are the violent attacks of particular state agencies in combating crime and illegal violence. These are often overreactions, and the level of force and repression is at issue. Here we are dealing with disproportionate operational strategies at demonstration in raids, in combating terrorism, in belligerent police deployments which cause tense situations to escalate, and the use of ever more effective weapons. Excessively tightened laws, states of emergency and security legislation can be out of proportion to the situation and also are constitutionally dubious in the way they seriously undermine liberal constitutional rights.

Dictatorships is a further variant of state violence. The despotic violence exercised by dictatorships is based not only on the state’s monopoly of violence but also on other state organizations and institutions (such as the domestic use of the armed forces) and turns their potential violence against the population. The threat of violence and the actual exercise of violence can fluctuate so that it is possible to distinguish “soft” dictatorships (which rule by tightened surveillance, pressure, repression, and repealing democratic rights) from “hard” dictatorships (which use direct violence, severe repression, persecution, and torture as means of keeping down and intimidating the population or particular sections of it).

The Weberian notion of the state being in complete and absolute control of power does not apply in many non-western multinational states. Most civil war affected states are characterized by their weakening hold over the monopoly of violence. As Giddens (1987) points out, in such states, “it is almost always the case that significant elements of actual or potential military power exist outside the control of the central state apparatus” (Giddens 57). In a scenario in which the “monopoly of the means of violence eludes the state”, the state gives in to the temptation of using
its superior military strength to subdue dissent and subjugate those challenging its authority. When this occurs the result is wanton mayhem and anarchy.

Distinguishing between Legitimate and Legal Violence

One typology of violent phenomenon, which is in many respects fundamental, is the distinction between legality/illegality and legitimacy/illegitimacy. This, however, cuts across all the previous distinctions because it is not about “differences in scale” of violence, but rather about the infringement of norms and values. Distinguishing between legal and illegal violence allows us to typologize a first pair of categories—democratically legitimized violence as opposed to criminal violence. The basis for characterizing an act of violence as criminal is its previous official labeling as illegitimate and its successive establishment as illegal in criminal law. Criminal violence can be a part of almost all the forms of violence treated above, extending from damage to property, robbery, injury, and killings in organized crime and mafia-type structures. Criminal violence occurs in two forms and takes on a different quality in each case. As instrumental violence it is in a strict sense always a means for achieving a particular end. Expressive violence, on the other hand, is essentially about working off violence, so the victim or the particular object affected is only a kind of substitute or pretext for the violent perpetrator. The criminalization of particular actions defined as violent is subject to historical change, it depends on sensitivity to violence and the sociopolitical perceptions of it.

Genocidal Violence

Labeling and negative stereotyping when taken to extremes manifest themselves in ethnic cleansing and genocide. When “prejudices” and “negative stereotyping” become an organized ideology doing utmost harm is not hard to locate. Many deeply divided societies practice forms of ethnic, religious, racial and other forms of segregation. When this segregation is institutionalized and receives the support of the ruling regime this practice assumes the form of an organized ideology. Much contemporary genocide that resulted after a short lived or prolonged civil war have had a sustained ideological basis. In Rwanda, for example, the Belgian colonial authorities introduced a framework of systematic division between Hutus and Tutsis while letting the former harbour ancient
grudges against the latter. Bosnian Muslims who experienced ethnocide at the hands of their Serbs leaders has a long history of institutional antipathy.

According to the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such:

a. Killing members of the group;
b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Owing to their own anxiety and fears, marked by a psychological state of unease, individuals and groups seek out bonds with those with a similar background. As insecurity grows violence facilitates the process of ethnic outbidding and outflanking which in some instances mutates into genocidal practices. As Barabara Walter (1999) notes, “Hutus picked up machetes and killed their neighbouring Tutsis not only because they hated each other, but also because they feared their own life would be at risk if they failed to do so” (Misra 53). The spurious ideology that converts these people from loving family men to butchers is often presented to them in the garb of nationalism. Since the difference between groups of individuals in a given society, is often only relational, an externally induced idea about superiority, patriotism, fear and such other concepts would appear to provide the overwhelming motives behind the individual’s participation in violence, carnage or massacre.

Moreover, mass participation in genocide also has its basis in the framework of reward and punishment. As Pamela Oliver (1984) suggests, “if everyone cooperates, no one gets punished, but if everyone defects, everyone must be punished. Thus positive incentives are given to cooperators” (Oliver 125-6). Fears of extreme consequences beyond their control often drive citizens to support violence in order to avoid becoming a “victim.” An individual in such a situation has little or no independent choice and is made impotent by the larger social situation around him, and it is the “fear which causes citizens to act on ideas and claims they believe are more likely to be false than true. This is not irrational but a rational response to the huge cost of being wrong” (Walter and Snyder 294).
However, Genocide is not always the work of the uneducated, uncivil, violent and deranged. Genocide has an abiding appeal for those who are modern and educated. According to Michael Freeman (1995),

“When leaders of modern state bureaucracies bear grand designs and are emancipated from social constraints, we have the recipe for genocide. The design legitimates genocide. The state bureaucracy is its instruments. The paralysis of society encourages it. The conditions propitious to the perpetration of genocide are thus special, yet not exceptional. They are neither immanent in, nor alien to modern society” (Freeman 208).

It is, according to Smith(1991), “a modern phenomenon that includes those cases where we know that mass death of a cultural group was premeditated and the basis of that targeting was exclusively the existence and membership of that cultural group” (Smith 31). Zygmunt Bauman (1991) in this regard comments that “‘modern’ genocide is genocide without purpose. It is a means to an end. The end itself is anchored to a grand vision, of a better and radically different society” (Bauman 91-2). An ethnic pogrom or genocidal war is waged not because the community or regime waging it feels superior, but because it doubts its own superiority and the consequent violence is an attempt to square it in social Darwinist terms. It might appear that in some ways evolutionary heritage is responsible for endowing communities with an inherent tendency for in-group amity and out-group hostility. As such, the intent and subsequent participation in genocidal practices by a particular community is not always impulsive or idiosyncratic in its response. Very often it is a reflection of centuries of successive disappointment, humiliation and vengefulness. The massacre of Bosnian Muslims by their Serb detractors, Hutus by Tutsis and Armenians by Turks all fit into this narrative. The longing to rescue the image of a “glorious unadulterated” past can at times be found to be at the heart of much ethno-communal violence which sometimes translates into genocide. In the event of a group’s or community’s inability to undertake projects of physical elimination of the “other” it may encourage and adopt additional tactics to achieve the intended goal of purification of the society from “undesirable” beings. Subtle cultural differences can in some instances lead a community to go an extra length to produce a genuine genetic distance or assimilation. Contemporary ethnic cleansing and genocidal practices are also inherently misogynistic.
The analysis of violence ought to be central in social and political analysis for we can’t discuss the ultimate foundations of state power without recognizing how coercion and the use of force articulate within political consent. Ultimately, we all have to make judgments about the legitimacy or otherwise of acts of violence on the basis of the ethical and political values to which we adhere. Central to any such consideration is the question of whether or not we assess violence. For social anthropologist David Riches maintains “a strategically, consciously employed resource Or, to put it more simply, should we start off by thinking that violent acts have purposes and intentions behind them?” (Schlesinger 1)

Many acts of violence, whatever their causes, are easily recognized as violent across divergent systems of interpretation and belief. It is this quality that has made the communicative or symbolic and expressive dimensions of violence so interesting and pertinent for contemporary debate. However, to acknowledge frequent ease of recognition of acts of physical force or material destruction (such as assassinations or bombings) is but to offer a starting point. As David Riches (1986) further observes: “From the standpoint of witnesses on one side of a divide (ethnic or otherwise), the violence perpetrated and displayed by people on the other side comes to symbolize the existence of an alternative way of life”(Riches 14). Putting it differently, the interpretation of violence may work as a way of codifying the world into “friends” and “enemies” of separating “us” from “them”. Here, the guiding thread is to ask how communicative strategies may be linked with political violence in contemporary liberal democracies. In this connection, it is impossible to ignore the major role the media play in constructing our perceptions of the public domain and the legitimacy or illegitimacy of those who act within it.

There is no well-demarcated, well-accepted concept of violence. On the contrary, as many contemporary commentators have pointed out, “violence” is a term that suffers from conceptual devaluation or semantic entropy. It is used as part of a discourse of social pathology in which we are perpetually threatened with disorder and decline, a discourse which is more than alarmist and catastrophic. As the historian Eric Hobsbawn (1977) has observed, for most citizens of liberal democracies such dark imaginings are not connected with the realities of everyday life, for physical violence narrowly understood is still a remote experience:
“Directly, it is omnipresent in the form of the traffic accident—casual, unintended, unpredictable and uncontrollable by most of its victims… Indirectly, it is omnipresent in the mass media and entertainment … Even more remotely, we are aware both of the existence in our time of vast, concretely unimaginable mass destruction… and also of the sectors and situations of society in which physical violence is common and probably, increasing. Tranquility and violence coexist” (Hobsbawm 209-10).

Probably, since Hobsbawm wrote the passage quoted, decades ago, consciousness of the balance of terror has become more acute in many sectors of the populations of Europe, and in the post – Chernobyl years to be aware of what the aftermath of nuclear war would mean is surely vividly present to all who think. The past decades have also seen the growth of various forms of political violence, often nationalist in origin, sometimes anti-systemic, used both within national confines and across them. This has gone under the label of “terrorism” and has contributed to a sense of instability out of all proportion to its material, as opposed to its symbolic, importance. In the case of “transnational terrorism”, deriving from theatres of conflict such as the Middle East, physical violence is often transported from one context to another. The same could be said when sectoral conflicts such as that in Northern Ireland are fought out on the British mainland. But these are only the best publicized faces of terrorist violence, the internal repression practiced by states against their own citizens on the whole received much less attention.

As such, to talk of contemporary violence that carries with it the risk of being all embracing, of aggregating many diverse manifestations of the use of force and their effects; these might include all or any of criminal violence, public disorder and military actions. Alain Chesnais author of study of violence during the past two centuries, proposes that: “Violence in the strict sense, the only violence which is measurable and indisputable is physical violence. It is direct injury to persons; it has three characteristics : it is brutal, external and painful. It is defined by the material use of force” (Schlesinger 7).

Sociologist Robin Williams (1981) almost echoes similar sentiments:

“the clearest cases of violence are those which cause physical damage, are intentional, are active rather than passive, and are direct in their effects. Yet, a
further attempt to circumscribe what is meant by violence comes from the philosopher Ted Honderich, who suggests that ‘An act of violence .... is a use of considerable or destroying force against people or things’, a use of force that offends against a norm” (Schlesinger 7)

Though violence may or may not entail physical harm, we may conclude that a person’s humanity is violated whenever his or her status as a subject is reduced against his or her will to mere objectivity, for this implies that he or she no longer exists in any active social relationship to others, but solely in a passive relationship to himself or herself (Sartre’s en-soi), on the margins of the public realm. For this reason, it may not matter whether a person is made an object of compassion, of abuse, of attack, or of care and concern; all such modalities of relationship imply the nullification of the being of the other as one whose words and actions have no place in the life of the collective.

The twentieth century, as Lenin predicted, is a century of wars and revolutions, hence a century of that violence is believed to be the common denominator. There is however, another factor in the present situation, which though predicted by nobody, is of at least equal importance that is the instrumentality of violence. The technical development of the implements of violence has now reached the point where no political goal could conceivably correspond to their destructive potential or justify their actual use in armed conflict. Hence, warfare- from time immemorial as the final merciless arbiter in international disputes-has lost much of its effectiveness and nearly all its glamour. The “apocalyptic” chess game between the superpowers, that is, between those that move on the highest plane of our civilization, is being played according to the rule “if either ‘wins’ it is the end of both”; it is a game that bears no resemblance to whatever war games preceded it. Its “rational” goal is deterrence, not victory, and the arms race, no longer a preparation for war, can now be justified only on the grounds that more and more deterrence is the best guarantee of peace. Since violence - as distinct from power, force, or strength – always needs instruments, the revolution of technology, a revolution in tool making, was especially marked in warfare. The very substance of violent action is ruled by the means-end category, whose chief characteristics, if applied to human affairs, has always been that the end is in danger of being overwhelmed by the means which it justifies and which are needed to reach it. Since the end of human action, as distinct from the end products of fabrication, can never be reliably predicted, the means
used to achieve political goals more often than not of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals.

Moreover, while the results of men’s actions are beyond the actors’ control, violence harbours within itself an additional element of arbitrariness; nowhere does good or ill luck, play a more fateful role in human affairs than on the battlefield, and this intrusion of the utterly unexpected does not disappear when people call it a “random event” and find it scientifically suspect; nor can it be eliminated by simulations, scenarios, game theories, and the like.

**Conclusion**

Violence is an exceedingly complex concept, which should not be subject to casual evaluations. This is particularly true because the effects of violence, depending on the context, cannot always be clearly classified as positive or negative. The long-term perspective is also difficult to determine since there is very little knowledge about the empirical trends of violence. Zygmunt Bauman (2000) wrote: “It is not possible to say with any claim to objectivity whether modern history is a history of increasing or decreasing violence because it is impossible to ‘objectively’ measure the total amount of violence. All previous estimates of the historical trends of violence have had no chance of lasting recognition—due to the nature of the issue they are no less controversial and disputed than the legitimacy of coercive measures or the classification of these as violence (depending on the question of legitimacy)” (Bauman 32). Although human behaviour has always had the option of violence, every society has also found means and ways of stemming violence and preventing it from becoming endemic, at least, in the long term. Not least, this points to the self-domestication of people as cultural beings, which began during processes of civilization. However intermittent this development may have been, people have learned to reflect on and adjust their behavior while withstanding aggressive impulses and the allure of violence - this is a core of their sociality (Imbusch 35).