The Nice workshop stretched over two full days, bringing together 18 researchers – sociologists, politicists and historians – from France, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, Holland and Germany. Focusing on political violence, the workshop was structured around five principal themes: riots and demonstrations against the State; fighting between social and communal groups; terrorist attacks by domestic separatist groups; violent political groups and, lastly, violence by the State.

In this report the major analytical conclusions will be set forth, and instead of presenting summaries of the various contributions, priority will be given to the conclusive synergies of the different papers.

In the main, participants concentrated on analysing factors explain-
ing the occurrence of political violence. It is this dimension that will guide our thinking here.

Whether it is ethnic, racial, ideological, or social violence, whether against the State or between communities, driven by political, economic, or simply identity-based ambitions, the scholars who met in Nice discussed the reasons for the emergence of violence but also its continuity.

The analysis will be carried out at three levels, namely a macro level, which deals with the reasons for the emergence of violence (economic, cultural, institutional), a meso level, which examines the situational, communicational and organisational factors that impact upon the outbreak and continuity of violence, and lastly, a micro level, dealing with the psychological and cognitive dimensions of violence.

Although these three levels are successively presented here, the attempt to explain the phenomena of political violence necessitates combining them in unequal measure according to the type of violence at work, but systematically keeping this triptych in mind. To so proceed amounts to respecting the urgings of Donatella della Porta who, in her paper, called for a rapprochement between the disciplinary approaches of the sociology of collective action and the analyses of political violence.

I - The macro level

1 - Structural factors

The quasi-totality of the participants stressed the importance of the basic structural factors in the outbreak of violence whether riots, disorganised operations or centred on specific ideological slogans. If the driving force behind the actions seems obvious (violence is the resort of the poor), it is still necessary to recall it at a time when sociological analysis, coinciding with an ideological injunction to inculcate a sense of responsibility, chooses to underscore the more interactive factors. Laurent Mucchielli and Dave Waddington have highlighted the decisive weight of economic factors such as the rate of unemployment, degraded housing or the level of poverty in the riot-hit neighbourhoods in France since the early 1980s (30% unemployment in the Lyon and Ile-de-France suburban areas during the 1980-1990 riots). In the United Kingdom, the race for jobs after the decline of the textile industry and the feeling that there existed a discriminatory policy in favour of certain sections of the population had a trigger effect on the riots. If, according to Laurent Mucchielli, the 2005 riots in France lost their localised character what with more than 300 towns affected to different degrees, the economic dimension on the other hand, along with the effects of the de-schooling of young people, mostly affected working class neighbourhoods. In his study on aggressive supporterism Dominique Bodin also shows
the weight of the working class origin of hooligans, using violence to “express the social frustration experienced by underprivileged youths under acute economic stress”.

Apart from economics, the demographic issue is equally important. Élise Féron was able to show the significant role of demographic differences between communities in Ulster (the same can be said of the creation of borders in Bosnia or Kosovo in Europe), giving rise to a feeling of fear vis-à-vis the “other”, considered threatening because of its invasiveness. Demographic pressure in some families of sub-Saharan African origin living in France, coupled with the lack of economic resources and cramped accommodation leads to male children occupying the streets, thus favouring gang culture, which in turn is highly conducive to the socialisation of violence.

2 - Cultural factors

Several participants stressed the cultural factors that fuel the phenomena of political violence. When we talk of cultural factors, we refer more to people who are the products of professional and local cultures than to a historical-cultural framework that determines acts of violence. Which is why Xavier Crettiez rejects explanations of political violence in Corsica based on historical legacy, which views violence with pro-independence claims as a contemporaneous reflection of the tradition of political banditry or the reactivation of the dismissal of French troops in the 18th century. Although political violence in Corsica can obviously count on local culture, which attaches a lot of importance to the carrying of weapons and to the logic of honour and clannishness, its permanence is primarily explained by the present-day imposition of a culture of violence, which has become a naturalised mode of political expression in the island, an island where there have been 10,000 bomb attacks in the last thirty years.

Among the cultural factors, several contributors underlined the effects in terms of the socialisation of violence within more or less closed groups that have adopted a culture of confrontation, both physical and verbal. If Crettiez emphasises this point in relation to the Corsican nationalists, of whom it can be said that there is not much separating them from the political forces present in the island, unless it is the continuation of violence which acts as a factor of identity, Élise Féron and Alfonso Perez Agote come to the same conclusion about Ulster and the Basque Homeland. In Euskadi, Agote describes the socialising role of cultural practices such as the poteo (the round of bars), which has become more radical in the last few years as only nationalist bars are visited. Confining Basque youth to a cultural universe marked by the glorification of deeds performed by the ETA (reading nationalist newspapers, going to nationalist sports clubs, eating in nationalist restaurants…) has instituted a culture of violence, which in turn has helped to naturalize and legitimize it.
In a completely different context, i.e. the world of football fans, Bodin explains the development of a culture of confrontation, which can be very violent and which manifests itself during football games (logic of the 12th man who combats alongside his team). This culture of confrontation can take a violent turn, for example, the use of symbols of totalitarian horror by Dutch football clubs, provoking their adversaries by means of anti-Semitic insults. Street fights after the match put the finishing touches to this display of violence.

Didier Lapeyronnie, in his analysis of anti-Semitic violence in the 19th arrondissement of Paris (where a large concentration of people of Jewish faith lives) also highlights the culture of violence which clothes the behaviour of youths for the most part of Maghrebian immigrant origin. Anti-Semitic violence has become, says Lapeyronnie, so much part of the daily fare of these youths that it is no longer thought of as such and has become a cultural trait. Furthermore, according to the sociologist, the expression heard many a time “ton stylo fait le feuj” (“your pen doesn’t work”) says a lot about this culture of hate. Racist insults create more than a climate; they establish a local social order which, by trivialising the offence, legitimise the acts of violence, often not even perceived as such. Dave Waddington also talks of the “gangsta rap” culture, very much in vogue in the suburbs of the big metropolises such as London or Liverpool, which has a big impact on the behaviour of youths by diffusing a culture of force, of the super male and of street violence.

Lastly, it is on the police side that the effects of professional culture can be seen. Waddington emphasises, as do many French sociologists working on the police (e.g. Monjardet), the high turnover of police personnel posted in these underprivileged neighbourhoods, which prevents any understanding of the “other” and of their common culture. Olivier Fillieule believes that cultures peculiar to the police should be taken into account, which lead the law and order forces into developing empathy or hostility for a specific group depending on the collective representations associated with the social origin of the police forces. Thus agriculturist and artisan demonstrators are always better understood – and controlled – by the CRS and the French mobile gendarmerie units (often from the same background), than suburban youths or Paris students.

3 - Institutional factors

Violence is also greatly dependent on the institutional framework, which facilitates or accepts it, and on structures born of opportunity.

Jérôme Heurteau, in his analysis of violence in Romania, thus examines the transition period which created opportunities for certain political and social groups in their conquest of power or their efforts to hold on to it. The exploitation by the political authorities of Romanian miners, well organised and flanked by unionist structures close
to the old regime, resulted in violent demonstrations in favour of the post-Communist regime headed in the 1990s by Ion Iliescu. In 1990, 1991 and 1999, demonstrations by miners put an end to protests by the Opposition against the inaction of the post-communist government in the matter of reforms, in a period dominated by the former communist leaders. The activism of the miners became such a standardized method of controlling the Opposition through violence that it came to be known as the mineriades.

On the whole, all contributors laid emphasis on the institutional factors for understanding violence, analysing either the practices adopted by the regime (generally blocking institutional action and thus encouraging violence), the extent of media coverage, the type of police mobilised or the relationship with the elites.

In line with Jean-Louis Briquet’s work, Xavier Crettiez shows that political violence in Corsica was thus less the result of hostility towards the French State than the rejection of a closed political system, which in the island meant clans. By preventing all political expression apart from clannish structures, the major Corsican families sparked off protests against their authority by economically and socially active groups, but who were kept at a distance from the decision-making centres of power: violence was a means of appealing to the State to break the hold of the clans in the Island and enable the political representation of the nationalists.

In the same way, Anne Marinen also insists, in the tradition of Nathalie Duclos’ work on the peasantry, on the weight of the media and the linkages formed since the post-war period between the French political and administrative power and the agricultural trade unions, in reducing peasant violence during the last 40 years. Whereas peasant revolt represents an extremely violent French tradition, the corporatism which brought together the unions and the Gaullist state in order to define public policy on food in France, rendered violent protests against the State difficult, and replaced the traditional peasant revolts with demonstrations in which violence was more symbolic than real. The media coverage of collective actions further helped to pacify these demonstrations at the risk of losing public support. This growing media coverage of social movements tendentiously favoured the pacification of collective action even though some scholars, such as Donatella della Porta, emphasise that it too can, when the identity of the dissenting group is directly linked to violence, lead to a particularly belligerent self-portrayal for political purposes (FLNC in Corsica according to Crettiez or hooliganism according to Bodin).

Violence is also imputable to relations with police forces of different statuses. Thus in Northern Ireland, the religious and political homogeneity of the RUC for many years encouraged the maintenance of republican political violence against a police administration which
it felt – and rightly so – was totally uninvolved if not downright hostile. Fillieule also insists on the level of professionalisation of the police forces responsible for law and order, which varies from country to country and affects the occurrence of violence. He cites the example of the American military police during the Seattle forum or, even better, the Italian police during the Genoa alterglobalisation meeting, as the Italian sociologist, Salvatore Palidda, emphasises. In the same way, the military and civil status of police forces or the tradition of law and order policing (France), or of community policing (United Kingdom), result in professional cultures more or less in favour of the occurrence of violence, as also the type of legislation on civil liberties that conditions the room for manœuvre of the police and therefore of the emergence of violence. On this point, Pierre Piazza has shown the role of the control and surveillance techniques employed prior to demonstrations that reduce the risk of excesses but which, by rigidifying the legislation on infringements, increases the cases of crime. Finally, it is the type of the government in power that conditions the occurrence of violence. Fillieule affirms that the Left-wing political parties are generally more lenient than the Right-wing parties in their acceptance of urban unrest.

Lastly, as Laurent Mucchielli suggests in the case of violence during riots or Élise Féron with regard to republican violence in Ulster, it is important to take into account the relationship between violent groups and the moral, political, and economic elites of the country. Mucchielli talks of the “feeling of the moral legitimacy” of violence when it is in reaction to an injustice on the part of the State. This is what happened in 2005 when a police lie, relayed by the government, over the death of adolescents being chased by the police, brought things to a head. Féron for her part stresses the political utility of violence for certain political representatives, who are sure of their constituencies as long as the latter, shaped by sectarian conflict, are not threatened by a reconciliation which could prove destabilizing. Violence thus is a good method of clearly delimiting communities and electoral territories.

II - The meso-level

Three additional ways of examining the situation are necessary here: the situational, communicational and organisational factors.

1 - Situational factors

By this we mean factors triggering violence brought on by interactions between the dissenters and the police or between political players of opposite leanings.

In the tradition of Frederick Barth, we must lay stress, as Élise Féron has done, on the notion of physical and symbolic “boundaries”, an area of identity-related tension and violence. In Ulster, Féron shows that two-thirds of community-based conflicts took place at the inter-
face between the strictly delimited Catholic and Protestant zones, bounded by walls, wire fencing and no man’s land. Not only is violence born of the more or less organised confrontation between communities in these frontier zones but more than that, it contributes to strengthening the existing boundaries and perpetuating the antagonisms. The logic of hooliganism studied by Dominique Bodin is also based on the constitution of physical territories in stadiums, often giving rise to very strong conflicts at their peripheries. Dave Waddington and Laurent Mucchielli also take an analytical look at areas symbolically invested by youths from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, who build their territory like a private place barred to government representatives. Most of the violence generally stems from the reflected rivalry between the police and the proletarianized youth for the monopolisation of these places/symbols.

The importance of symbolic places is also underscored by Anne Marijnen who shows in the case of peasant demonstrations, the importance of a centre such as Brussels, which over time has become the principal space of protests (sometimes even violent) of the decision-making authorities in the agricultural sphere. The centrality of a common agricultural policy in Europe, as well as the encouragement given by national authorities to protest against the decisions made in Brussels or Strasbourg have established these places as the main space of protests.

A novel research conducted by CESDIP (CNRS) under the direction of René Lévy and Fabien Jobard on identity checks carried out by the police in public places has also highlighted the stereotyped reflexes of the law and order forces enforcing these controls, and swayed by the physical aspect of the persons being controlled. Youths from an immigrant background, wearing clothes considered “subversive” (hip-hop getup, clothes with hoods, rucksacks) undoubtedly checked more than others. In view of the excesses committed during the identity checks of youths living in sensitive neighbourhoods, this study confirms that the resentment resulting from such police interventions is what triggers their rebellion.

### 2 – Communicational factors

By this we mean the search for factors resulting from the failure of communication that can lead to a lack of understanding and eventually to conflict, or on the contrary, an excess of communication that the people to whom it is addressed find intolerable.

Drawing on the work of Jacques de Maillard and Sebastian Roché, Dave Waddington emphasises the problems of operational command faced by the police, charged with maintaining law and order, and often located far from the place of action, which very quickly results in the failure to perceive the real risks. This point was highlighted in the French case, where the police forces and the army, whose professional cultures differed greatly (CRS and mobile gendarmerie units),
together occupied the field of operations. This remote governance and possible lack of coordination engenders violence more than it controls it.

These communication defects are to be found at a very different level in the actions of violent players. Lapeyronnie in his study on racial and anti-Semitic violence, points to deficiencies in the language of young people from underprivileged families, suffering from economic insecurity, who often do not go to school. Violence can be understood as a form of expression taking precedence over the inability to verbally express one’s opinions. The propensity to use violence to make oneself heard should be seen in relation to the limited vocabulary of these youths. Crettiez, Boubeker and Agote also show that violence as a means of affirming one’s identity, for example in Corsica and the Basque homeland or on European soil by young Muslims, also applies to those who have not integrated properly into the local cultural (or religious) fabric: violence then serves to reinforce one’s identity in the process of integration (or even to invent it), replacing language and culture in this vital process.

Violence also results from an excess of communication when the latter seeks to stigmatise a group or denounce a collective practice. Mucchielli and Waddington, also Bovenkerk, speaking of racial violence in Holland, showed the detrimental role of partisan political elites responsible for propagating false rumours, proposing erroneous interpretative frameworks in which suburban adaptation = Islamism dominates, or using a belligerent rhetoric to target specific groups (for example, the inflammatory words uttered by Nicolas Sarkozy on the necessity of (“washing out the scum of the suburbs with a Kärcher”). The impact of the media coverage of certain violent events, whether in Corsica with clandestine press conferences by the FLNC, or in certain riot-hit suburbs, also promoted the spread of violence in France in 2005 at the local level (media coverage in no way explains the spread of violence across the country, but it intensifies local rivalries and can lead to an escalation of violence).

3 - Organisational factors

By this we mean all the factors pertaining to the organisational apparatus of violent groups. This mainly concerns the rivalry between violent organisations – frequently the source of conflicts – as well as the importance of sociability networks that encourage violence by legitimising it, and even organising it.

Donatella della Porta lays particular stress on the organisational dynamics, often secessional, operating in political violence, especially when it is carried out by clandestine groups. The examples of the Red Brigades in Italy, the Red Army Fraction in Germany or the caricature-like case of Corsica analysed by Xavier Crettiez (more than 50 groups were counted following the splintering of the FLNC), bear testimony to this reality. The race for access to rare resources
such as the media or institutional power, when it is not money from racketeering, often leads to divisions in illegal organisations, which further increases violence. This escalation is because of the need to project the group as the principal representative of the struggle, to monopolise access to resources, and due to the fact of being trapped in an inevitably fatal sectarian logic. Anne Marinen also shows, in a completely different field, this tendency towards radical competition among the peasantry: the emergence of farmers unions challenging the major traditional unions (the Confédération paysanne in France versus the FNSEA) inevitably leads to the adoption of more extremist forms of action leading to the de-legitimisation of the FNSEA’s neo-corporatist policy and bringing together discontented farmers under the banner of an action (violence), culturally still valued among the peasantry.

Lastly, the issue of networks and the effects of socialisation also need to be studied. Donatella della Porta rightly insists on this point. Violence only rarely occurs as a sudden and unexpected shift. It is the result of a specific career characterized by a singular socialisation and through encounters and networking likely to facilitate induction into a high risk activism (according to Doug MacAdam). She also examines the places of socialisation (neighbourhoods, bars, associations, squats...) that can promote acceptance of violence or even plan it. Isabelle Sommier thus shows the role of squats as places of integration and acceptance of a culture of illegality among the ultra-left circles in Europe. In the same way, Wilhem Heitmeyer, working on extreme right violence in Germany, insists on the propagative role of gang culture and the socialisation of violence during concerts or visits to immigrant neighbourhoods. Didier Lapeyronnie makes the same point in the case of anti-Semitic violence where learning the vocabulary of scorn vis-à-vis Jews and fighting, are carried out as part of a gang, within the neighbourhood. In the Basque areas, Alfonso Perez Agote also lays emphasis on the *Abertzale* world created by the radicals who inculcate violence and its acceptance by young Basque nationalists, all going to the same bars where the reminder of Spanish police atrocities is constant (posters, songs, oral testimonies). The *kale borroka* – street war – which gathers together the young *Abertzales* of Bilbao and Donostia – thus serves as a test of the socialisation of violence. The fact that all the current ETA leaders have gone through the *Kale borroka* is proof of the power of this socialisation rite. The importance of the ‘conveyors’ is crucial here. The latter can be political, religious, or associational leaders or, in the case of the suburbs, locally influential personalities, who promote induction into a violent career by legitimising illegality and offering the person a training framework.
III - The micro-level

At this level we will stress, as all the participants to the workshop have done, the importance of the psychological and cognitive factors underlying the phenomena of political violence.

1 - The psychological factors

Five psychological factors were alluded to during the discussions:

- The first, not concerned with possible individual pathologies of violence, focuses on the psychological conditions that facilitate blanking out the moral barriers and encourages the lapse into violence. In this regard, highlighting the effects of the clandestine nature of these organisations (Donatella della Porta) is crucial. When it is total as in the case of ETA (Basque) or the IRA, the Red Brigades or the Red Army Fraction militants, the psychological consequence of isolation and the feeling of being constantly hunted, can be formidable and so explain violence. Here it is not violence – as Xavier Crettiez shows us – that encourages illegality but illegality that encourages violence.

- The second, as Laurent Mucchielli and Alfonso Perez Agote point out, is the feeling of humiliation and belittlement that is at the root of violence. Even if it is difficult to collectively measure an individual feeling, Mucchielli insists in the French case on what he calls “the innumerable humiliations accumulated” by young people from immigrant backgrounds living in working class neighbourhoods. The humiliation of the daily dose of racism, refusal to give jobs, rejection by the school system and, of course, the experience of victimisation during dealings with the police, particularly when being checked. Perez Agote, in the Basque case, situates this feeling of humiliation in the historical process of an armed struggle. Several testimonies of the ETA’s founder members have shown that the feeling of humiliation in view of the inaction of the moderate Basque nationalists in the face of Francoist oppression had made them want to “lift their heads” through the use of violence.

- The link between violence and enhancement of self-esteem is therefore fundamental. Dominique Bodin illustrates this in the case of European hooligans. Violence will help to “transform inequality into social success, exclusion into social recognition”. With regard to underprivileged youths, violence has become an effective means of collective assertiveness – all the more powerful as it is rare in our ultra-pacific world – which enables groups devoid of resources to achieve for a brief moment a balance of power which is in their favour.

- Dave Waddington also stresses, as certain researchers were able to do by linking violence with the assertion of masculinity
the sexual dimension of riots in the United Kingdom in the 1990s. According to Waddington, this type of male violence by young men, unemployed and discriminated, is partly explained by their thinking that their masculinity has been devalued in the eyes of young women (sisters, girlfriends and close friends) holding higher degrees, and who are relatively well integrated in professional life. Often they are also mothers, with high self-esteem. Violence can then become a form of re-assertion of one’s masculinity when the dominating role of men seems to give way before the social and professional reality of women.

Lastly, we will highlight the group-effect that produces violence. Jerome Heurteau referring to the miniérides, Bodin to hooliganism, Heitmeyer to extreme right wing violence and Palidda to police brutality in Italy, all emphasise the crucial role played by the constituted group in furthering violent activism. The united group forces respect of its dynamics which disallows any individual free riding phenomena: violence thus often occurs because of compliance with the collective law and the refusal to break the group dynamics. Not only does the group produce practical consensus but it also produces group thinking which legitimises violence and makes contestation difficult. This point leads us to stress the final aspect, namely the cognitive dimension of the promotion of violence.

2 - Cognitive factors

The cognitive dimension of violent collective action was underlined in various works of diverse intellectual origin, reminiscent of the pioneering works of Ted Gurr, highlighting the normative and utilitarian justifications of collective violence before operating a political shift, or the works of William Gamson and David Snow – in the tradition of Erving Goffman’s frame analysis – completing the paradigm of resource mobilisation by emphasising the ideological thrust of action.

Violence makes use of the induction of what the American sociologist Anthony Obershall has called the “the cognitive framework of crisis”, proposing a vision of social reality based on fear, fear of the other, accentuating the threat to the group and the imperious necessity of reacting before fading away. Alfonso Perez Agote has described this cognitive framework in the Basque case, which is entirely based on what he calls an “imaginary prophecy”, deeply rooted in the collective Abertzale mentality. This prophecy, which says that “nothing has changed with the introduction of democracy in Spain”, legitimises violence and promotes it by implicitly designating the government in Madrid as neo-Francoist, fascist and genocidal in relation to the Basques. In the same way, Élise Féron shows that the continuing
violence by Orangemen in Ulster depends on a framework of perception of reality based on “the assumption of power by the Catholics”, the coming republican domination which, inevitably, will seek to take revenge on the loyalists. Taking this cognitive perspective within each violent group into account is central: very often violence is consistent with the interpretative framework of the environment of the group that it creates and maintains. But it is not alone in doing this and in all likelihood finds in the media and in politicians effective intermediaries who confirm its vision of the world.

At this level, researchers such as Franck Bovenkerk or Wilhem Heitmeyer working on racial violence or Dominique Bodin on hooliganism, underscore the role of political parties and/or political elites who do frame bridging, i.e. treating certain groups as enemies or a threat in the current scenario (Muslims identified as terrorists since 9/11), or frame extension, i.e. generalising on the basis of dubious assumptions (“suburban revolts are the premise of an ethnic or religious war”). On his side, Didier Lapeyronnie, from his observations of anti-Semitic players among youths from an immigrant background” in the 20th arrondissement of Paris, talks of “racist violence from below”, without external agents, while drawing attention to the risk presented by well known personalities who could offer a legitimising framework for practices inherent in the group’s culture (for example the French “comic” actor Dieudonné).

Lastly, we will lay stress on the interpretative framework of the police forces who are supposed to maintain law and order during the various rallies. Pierre Piazza in his study of police identification of criminals in France, before the streamlining of the process by Alphonse Bertillon (early 20th century), shows the method by which the police prepared a photographic memory of criminal circles by accentuating the traits supposedly representing criminal prototypes : photos with threatening faces, sardonic grin, gloomy expression, etc…. Fillieule also convincingly shows that the level of repression is often dependent on the perception by the field police and their superiors of the legitimacy of the protesters. Thus new dissenting groups, undefined and of doubtful legitimacy (the alterglobalisation) are clearly less well received than the traditional groups (workers). There too the phenomenon of frame bridging can operate by disqualifying the alterglobalisation, libertarian militants and the hippie culture as a whole.

**Conclusion and prospects**

At the outcome of this rich encounter, the participants raised general questions that we feel should be the focus of further studies on political violence:

- It is important in the first place to have more in-depth knowledge of the materiality of violence. Too often analysts of political violence are satisfied with noting conclusions without
paying attention to the strictly material dimensions of violence. If the studies on State violence through policing (Fillieule, Bruneteau, Monjardet) have emphasised the technological revolution undergone by the latter, the analysis of violence during demonstrations does not take it sufficiently into account. Basically, it is a European data bank of acts of political violence that is lacking: statistics on attacks, demonstrations, riots, political assassinations, racist violence, etc…. This detailed data base (places, weapons, demands, type of victim, type of target, political motives….) would be difficult to compile, but will be of primary usefulness in order to better define political violence on the continent.

- An anthropological analysis of violence also needs to be perfected. Violence, over and above the political message that it expresses verbally, is also an act whose cultural significance should be studied. Here we will highlight the very forms of violence practised: from riots to mass massacres, the repertory of the violence practised is very telling of the group cultures that are responsible for it. Sometimes it can situate these acts in the historical tradition, an anthropological depth that gives them meaning, as in the case of the analysis of violence in Colombia. Over and above the acts themselves, we need to understand the groups that commit them, their specific cultural practices and references, and consequently come up with better answers.

- As Donatella della Porta invites us to do, it is essential to break down the academic barriers between researchers working on political violence and terrorism and those working on the sociology of collective action and social movements. This divide is mainly explained by the fact that many specialists of terrorism, especially in the UK and the United States, are also anti-terrorist players, that field experience seems much more complex for the former than for the latter and that the very notion of terrorism is criticised by the social movement scientists. For all that, the tools of analysis pertaining to the sociology of collective action are of primary utility for understanding terrorism and its logic at a time when numerous terrorist movements are linked to the bigger social movements (ETA, Islamist movement) and social movements are accused of luring youths into terrorism (ultra-leftists in France, Greece and Italy). Similarly, studies on riots encourage a dialogue between the sociology of collective action and the sociology of crime in order to understand the dynamics of certain ghettoised territories.

- More difficult to undertake and often resulting in certain reservations on the part of researchers in the social sciences, the problem of studying violence from a psycho-sociological perspective however seems interesting. By setting aside dated studies on the psychology of crowds or the “laws of imitation”,
we feel that the group-effect on individual psychologies, the psycho-sociology of bandwagon behaviour in violent activism, the impact of ghettoisation and clandestine compartmentalisation of the formation of a particular type of mentality open to violence, should be taken into account. More daringly, it would be interesting to focus on the attraction of violence for certain groups, its Dionysian use, based above all on the assessment of social marginalisation, intellectual isolation, boredom or the certainty that violence is a means of assertion for those who do not have many legal resources, etc.

Lastly, in sectors where historical, statistical and institutional analyses still dominate, we must insist on the necessity of conducting field surveys where direct confrontation with the proponents of violence and their discourse of legitimisation, can prove instructive. Even if they are often difficult to undertake, namely with regard to political violence (both in relation to the forces of unrest and the forces of law and order), when it involves, for example, in vivo observations to test the action logic, or life stories to reconstitute “careers”, it is clear that this type of investigation is necessary to fulfil the need for knowledge today.

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